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JUDAISM

Introduction

1. JEWISH LITERATURE

1.1 Targums

Targum (“translation”, or “interpretation”) means any of several translations of the Hebrew Bible or portions of it into the Aramaic language. The word originally indicated a translation of the Old Testament in any language but later came to refer specifically to an Aramaic translation. In the post-exilic period, Aramaic began to be widely spoken in the Jewish community alongside the native language, Hebrew. Eventually Aramaic replaced Hebrew for most purposes, and the Bible itself required translation into the widely used vernacular language. Thus, the Targum was born. The **targumim** (plural of targum), were explanations and expansions of the Jewish scriptures that a Rabbi would give in the common language of the listeners, i.e., in Aramaic. This had become necessary by the end of the 1st B.C., as the common language was in transition and Hebrew was used mainly for schooling and worship. Eventually it became necessary to give explanations and paraphrases in the common language after the Hebrew scripture was read. The Targums that were used in rabbinic Judaism are the following:

1) **Targum Onkelos** Ascribed by tradition to the proselyte **Onkelos**, this translation, which covers the Torah or Pentateuch, is considered to be the oldest and it is the most widely used of all the Jewish targums. It most likely originated in Palestine among the Jews of Babylonia. In the Babylonian Talmud it is referred to as “our Targum”.

2) **Targum Jonathan**: As with **Onkelos**, some traditions ascribe this targum to Jonathan ben Uzziel, a pupil of Hillel. probably originated in Palestine. Targum Jonathan contains renderings of the Former Prophets (Joshua, Judges, 1-2 Samuel, 1-2 Kings) and the Latter Prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the Twelve Minor Prophets).

3) **The Palestinian Targums:** While *Onkelos* and Jonathan were used mainly in the East, a distinctively Palestinian targum, covering the Torah only, was composed and used in the West. The two complete versions of the Palestinian targum that survive are **Targum Neofiti** and **Targum Pseudo-Jonathan**. This Targum is known as “Pseudo-Jonathan”, because a common abbreviation for it in the medieval period “TY” (for Targum Yerushalmi, or Jerusalem Targum) was incorrectly read as “Targum Yonatan”). Incomplete versions of the Palestinian Targum survive, known as the Fragment-Targum and other fragmentary witnesses have been discovered in the Cairo Geniza.

4) **Targums to the Writings:** The latest of the rabbinic targums are those to the Writings, the third division of the Hebrew Bible. Judging by the dialect of Aramaic, they were composed at different times and places. The Targum of Job, Targum of Psalms, and Targum of Chronicles are all similar in language to the Pseudo-Jonathan Targum. The Targums to the Five Megilloth (Festival Scrolls) - Ruth, Esther, Song of Songs, Lamentations, and Qoheleth (Ecclesiastes) - all contain long interpretive additions. The Targum of Proverbs may be the latest of all; parts of it were copied from the translation of Proverbs found in the Syriac Peshitta. There are no targums of Ezra, Nehemiah, or Daniel.

1.2 Midrash

Midrash is a form of rabbinic literature, the word ‘Midrash’ is based on a Hebrew word meaning “interpretation” or “exegesis”, from the root **72**, “to study”, “to investigate”. The term Midrash (“exposition” or “investigation”; plural. Midrashim) is also used in two senses. On the one hand, it refers to mode of biblical interpretation prominent in the Talmudic literature; on the other, it refers to separate body of commentaries on Scripture using this interpretative mode Midrash is a way of interpreting biblical stories that goes beyond simple exposition of religious, legal, or moral teachings. Thus, it fills in many gaps left in the biblical narrative regarding events and personalities that are only hinted at. The original purpose of midrash was to resolve problems in the interpretation of difficult passages of the Hebrew Bible, using Rabbinic principles of hermeneutics and philology.

There are two types of midrash: midrash Haggadah and midrash Halakhah. Midrash Haggadah can best be described as a form of storytelling that explores ethics and values in biblical texts (Haggadah literally means “story” or “telling” in Hebrew.) It can take any biblical word or verse and interpret it to answer a question or explain something in the text. Whereas midrash Haggadah focuses on biblical characters as they pertain to values and ideas, midrash

Halakhah (from the root *halak*, “to go”) focuses on Jewish law and practice. Midrash Halakhah attempts to take biblical texts that are either general or unclear and to clarify what they mean.

1.3 Talmud

The Talmud (“instruction” or “learning”, from a root “teach” or “study”) is a central text of Rabbinic Judaism, considered second to the Torah. It commonly refers to a compilation of ancient teachings regarded as sacred and normative by Jews. It is the most significant collection of the Jewish oral tradition interpreting the Torah. The Talmud has two components: the Mishnah (c. 200 A.D.), the first written compendium of Judaism’s Oral Law, and the *Gemara* (c. 500 CE), an elucidation of the Mishnah and related Tannaitic writings that often ventures onto other subjects and expounds broadly on the Hebrew Bible.

In addition to the written scriptures Jews have an “Oral Torah”, a tradition explaining what the scriptures mean and how to interpret them and apply the Laws. Orthodox Jews believe that God taught the Oral Torah to Moses, and he taught it to others, down to the present day. This tradition was maintained only in oral form until about the 2d century A.D., when the oral law was compiled and written down in a document called the Mishnah. Over the next few centuries, additional commentaries elaborating on the Mishnah were written down in Jerusalem and Babylon. These additional commentaries are known as the *Gemara*. The *Gemara* and the Mishnah together are known as the Talmud. This was completed in the 5th century C.E.

1.4 Mishnah

The Mishnah or Mishna (“repetition”, from the verb *shanah*, meaning “to study and review”) is the oldest authoritative post biblical collection and codification of Jewish oral laws, systematically compiled by numerous scholars (called *tannaim*) over a period of about two centuries. The term Mishnah basically means the entire body of Jewish religious law that was passed down and developed before 200 A.D., when it was finally codified by Rabbi Yehudah haNasi (Judah the Prince). It supplements the written, or scriptural, laws found in the Pentateuch. It presents various interpretations of selective legal traditions that had been preserved orally since at least the time of Ezra (c. 450 B.C.). The Mishnah is divided into six sections called *sedarim* (“orders”). Each seder contains one or more divisions called *masekhtot* (“tractates”). There are 63 *masekhtot* in the Mishnah.

1.5 Tosefta

Tosefta, (“supplement” or “addition”), a collection of oral traditions related to Jewish oral law, dated to the 3rd and 4th B.C. In form and content the Tosefta is quite similar to the Mishnah, the first authoritative codification of such laws. Both the Tosefta and the Mishna represent the work of Jewish scholars called *tannaim* (“repeaters”, “teachers”), who, for the most part, lived in Palestine and spent some 200 years gathering, evaluating, correlating, and selecting the most important traditions from a vast and heterogeneous mass of material that developed from the time of Ezra (c. 450 bc). Though experts are not quite sure why two separate collections came into existence, it is probable that the *Tosefta* was meant to complement the Mishnah by preserving certain traditions, proofs, examples, and explanations of oral law that came to light during the years of research.

1.6 Halakkah and Haggadah

The subject matter of the oral Torah is classified according to its content into Halakkah and Haggadah and according to its literary form into Midrash and Mishnah. Halakkah (“law”) deals with the legal, ritual, and doctrinal parts of Scripture, showing how the laws of the written Torah should be applied in life. Haggadah (“narrative”) deals with the nonlegal parts of Scripture, illustrating biblical narrative, supplementing its stories, and exploring its ideas. The term Midrash denotes the exegetical method by which the oral tradition interprets and elaborates scriptural text. It refers also to the large collections of Halakkeic and Haggadic materials that take the form of a running commentary on the Bible and that were deduced from Scripture by this exegetical method. In short, it also refers to a body of writings.

2. RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND OF JUDAISM

2.1 The Rudiments of Jewish Religion

(a) Monotheism: There is only one God. He controls the events of nature and history according to his divine design, which is beyond human comprehension. The chief emphasis of Judaism was the unity and transcendence (i.e, existence or experience beyond the normal or physical level) of God. The Jewish creed in Deuteronomy 6:4 affirmed monotheism in contrast to the multitude of deities in the pagan world. Judaism also taught the possibility of a relationship with God by emphasizing the fatherhood of God.

(b) Awareness of being the Chosen people of God: God chose Abraham and his descendants as his special people and promised that they would become a great nation.

(c) Land: God also promised Land (Canaan)to his people.

(d) Covenant people: God made a covenant with his people at Mount Sinai where he gave the Law to them through Moses.

(e) Obedience: God created human beings to keep all of his commandments and thereby establish a relationship with him. Jews emphasized the need for obedience both to the moral law and the ceremonial law.

(f) Messiah: During the intertestamental period the doctrine of the advent of a political deliverer, the Messiah, also gained strength. Jewish literature, in general, does not suggest that the Messiah is divine and it does not focus on his redemptive suffering for human beings. Most Jews believed that God would use a human being to bring deliverance from Rome by military force. Some felt, however, that God himself would bring the deliverance and then present the Messiah as ruler.

(g) Judaism was a nationalistic religion, but it attracted Gentile adherents. Male proselytes to Judaism had to undergo circumcision. God-fearers (e.g., Cornelius in Acts 10:1-2) practiced the moral aspects of Judaism but did not submit to circumcision and rigid Jewish regulations.

2.2 Jewish law

The Jewish authority for life was called *halakhah*, which means Jewish law. It was not simply a set of beliefs but a comprehensive way of life, filled with rules that affected every aspect of life: prayer, diet, clothing hygiene, marriage, doctrine etc. *Halakhah* consisted of both written and oral law.

The written law, the Torah, corresponds to what we know as the Old Testament, divided into the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings. In addition to the written law, Jews followed the customs adopted by the rabbis-the oral law, known as the *Talmud*. When the Jews were exiled in Babylon, beginning in 586 B.C., they no longer had access to a temple in which to gather and offer sacrifices.

Drawing on biblical texts like 1 Samuel 15:22 (“To obey is better than sacrifice”), they began to substitute prayers of repentance and good works as the means of atonement for sin. Because they sought to apply the law to every area of life, a body of oral tradition-interpretation and application-began to develop around the written law of Moses to explain how to implement its commandments in new times and places. After the Jews returned from exile, beginning in 539 B.C., they became increasingly preoccupied with the law, convinced that their exile was

punishment for disobedience and that God would grant them complete freedom when they more completely obeyed His Word. The oral law featured prominently in Jesus' interaction with Judaism centuries later.

The Talmud consisted of wise sayings by devout rabbis, who explained how the Torah was to be interpreted and applied. Once these sayings and teachings were collected in written form in the second century A.D., they became known as the Mishnah. Both oral and written law were considered binding on Jews of the first century.

2.3 The Sects of Judaism

Palestinian Judaism reflected the normal trend toward sectarianism, but it had a greater unity than other religions of the Graeco-Roman world. All Jewish sects professed devotion to the law, but their practice of obedience to the law varied from mere opportunism to punctilious performance. Even the groups mentioned below had various subdivisions that emphasized particular aspects of the law.

2.3.1 Pharisees:

The name Pharisees transcribes an Aramaic word denoting “separated”. The Pharisees were the largest and most influential Jewish group in New Testament times. They accepted the directives of the oral and the written law. Originating with the Hasidim during the time of the Maccabean revolt, they were strongly established during the New Testament period. They received the entire Old Testament canon but gave strong attention to a rigid observance of the oral law or tradition. They believed in the existence of angels and spirits, the immortality of the soul, and the resurrection of the body. Although many Pharisees deserved Jesus’ strong denunciations (see Matt. 23), many others were virtuous, as seen in the example of Nicodemus (John 3: 1-17). Pharisaism survived to become the pattern of modern orthodox Judaism.

2.3.2 Sadducees:

Many relate the name of the Sadducees to Zadok, the high priest during the days of David and Solomon. The children of Zadok comprised the priestly hierarchy during the time of captivity (2 Chron. 31:10), and the name persisted as the title of the priestly party during the days of Christ. Historically the Sadducees developed from the priestly supporters of the Hasmonean dynasty during the intertestamental period. Sadducees accepted the Torah or Law as having a higher authority than the Prophets and the Writings. Smaller in number than the Pharisees, they were anti-supernaturalists who did not believe in a bodily resurrection and denied the existence of spirits and angels (Mark 12:18-27) In the New Testament, the

Sadducees were wealthy political opportunists who joined readily with any group who could assist them in retaining power and influence. They were the priestly party, and their influence disappeared with the destruction of the temple in A.D. 70.

2.3.3 Essenes:

The Essenes are not mentioned in the New Testament, and much of our information about them comes from the Jewish historian Josephus. They seem to have been a small ascetic group with very stringent requirements for admission. They probably separated from the Pharisees in disgust over the political aims of the Hasmonean rulers. They refused to practice the sacrificial ritual of the Jerusalem temple because they viewed it as captive to a corrupt priesthood. They did not practice marriage and grew only by receiving converts. Essenes held all property in common. They were sober and restrained in their habits and resembled the Pharisees in their theology.

2.3.4 Zealots:

Zealots were revolutionaries fanatically dedicated to the overthrow of Roman power. They refused to pay taxes to Rome and initiated several revolts against their Roman overlords. One revolt resulted in the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. Though the term Zealot came to be attached to those who led in the uprising of 70 A.D., its use in the New Testament (Luke 6:15) may have been a non-political designation.

2.3.5 Herodians:

Herodians comprised a small minority of influential Jews who supported the Herodian dynasty and, by extension, the Romans who installed the Herods in office. They are not mentioned outside the Gospels (Mark 3:6), where they joined with the Pharisees to plot the death of Jesus.

2.3.6 Scribes:

The scribes were technically a professional group rather than a religious or a political group. Scribes interpreted and taught the Old Testament law and gave judicial opinions on cases brought before them. In Jesus' time most of the scribes were Pharisees, but not all Pharisees had the theological skill demanded of a scribe. Scribes in the New Testament come under the same condemnations given to the Pharisees (Matt. 23:2, 13, 15, 23, 25, 27, 29).

3. COMMON FOCAL POINTS OF JUDAISM

3.1 The Way of Torah:

One holy people for one holy God. First-century Judaism was a highly diverse and variegated phenomenon. The basic, unifying principle that held the different expressions of Judaism together was commitment to the one God through the keeping of the Torah, the covenant made with God at Sinai and mediated through Moses.

The importance of keeping Torah as the fundamental expression of Judaism. The way of Torah was the way to walk in God's favour, bringing blessing for both individual and nation. Transgression of the covenant meant provocation of God's honour by those who should most uphold that honour and thus danger for the individual and the nation. The way of Torah was the way of devotion to the one God and the way of survival under the watchful eyes of the God who blesses the loyal and chastises the disloyal.

a) The Shema: The centrality of Torah and its relationship to walking with the one God is best expressed in the Shema, the closest thing to a creed in early Judaism. Taken from Scripture (Deut 6:4-9; 11:13-21; Num 15:38-41), this liturgical piece was recited twice daily by most Jews, keeping forever in the forefront of their minds the one God and God's prescribed way. The Shema places the doing of the Torah at the centre of the life of the individual, the family and the community. It gives specific directions for mnemonic devices that would help the Jew to keep the obligation to follow Torah ever in the centre of his or her identity. The garments of the males were indeed fringed with tassels, whose sole purpose was to remind the wearer and the onlooker of the distinctive way of life that set the Jew apart from all other peoples.

b) Mezuzah: *Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart ... and write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates* (Deut 6:9, 11:19).

On the doorposts of traditional Jewish homes, a small case is placed upon the doorsteps of the house. This case is commonly known as a mezuzah (Heb: doorpost), because it is placed upon doorposts of the house. It is a constant reminder of God's presence and God's mitzvot (commandments). The *mitzvah* to place *mezuzot* on the doorposts of our houses is derived from Deut 6:4-9, a passage commonly known as the Shema. The words of the Shema are written on a tiny scroll of parchment, along with the words of a companion passage, Deut. 11:13-21. On the back of the scroll, a name of God is written. The scroll is then rolled up and placed in the case, so that the first letter of the Name (the letter Shin) is visible (or, more commonly, the letter Shin is written on the outside of the case).

c) Tzitzit and Tallit: *Speak to the Israelites, and tell them to make fringes on the corners of their garments throughout their generations and to put a blue cord on the fringe at each corner. You have the fringe so that, when you see it, you will remember all the commandments of the LORD and do them, and not follow the lust of your own heart and your own eyes. So, you shall remember and do all my commandments, and you shall be holy to your God* (Numbers 15:38-40).

The Torah commands us to wear *tzitzit* (fringes) at the corners of the garments as a reminder of the *mitzvot* (commandments). The *mitzvah* to wear *tzitzit* applies only to four-cornered garments, which were common in biblical times but are not common anymore. To fulfil this *mitzvah*, adult men wear a four-cornered shawl called a tallit during morning services, along with the tefillin. In some Orthodox congregations, only married men wear a tallit; in others, both married and unmarried men wear one. A blessing is recited when you put on the tallit. See the text of the blessing at Tallit and Tefilin.

Strictly observant Jewish men commonly wear a special four-cornered garment, similar to a poncho, called a tallit katan (“little tallit”), so that they will have the opportunity to fulfil this important *mitzvah* all day long. The tallit katan is worn under the shirt, with the *tzitzit* hanging out so they can be seen.

d) Tefilin: *Bind them as a sign on your hand, fix them as an emblem on your forehead* (Deut 6:8).

The Shema also commands to bind the words to the hands and between the eyes. The Jews follow this by binding to their arms and foreheads leather pouches containing scrolls of Torah passages. Like the *mezuzah*, *Tefilin* are meant to remind the people of God’s *mitzvot*. It is bound to the head and arm, committing both our intellect and our physical strength to the fulfilment of the *mitzvot*.

e) Menorah: One of the oldest symbols of the Jewish faith is the *menorah*, a seven-branched candelabrum used in the Temple. The priests lit the *menorah* in the Sanctuary every evening and cleaned it out every morning, replacing the wicks and putting fresh oil into the cups. The instructions for construction of the *menorah* is found in Ex 25:31-40. It has been explained that the *menorah* is a symbol of the nation of Israel and the mission to be “a light unto the nations” (Isa 42:6).

The nine-branched *menorah* used on *Chanukkah* is commonly patterned after this menorah, because *Chanukkah* commemorates the miracle that a day's worth of oil for this menorah lasted eight days.

f) 13 Principles of Faith: Rabbi Moshe ben Maimon (“Maimonides” also known as “The Rambam”), the great codifier of Torah law and Jewish philosophy, compiled the “Thirteen Fundamental Principles” (*Shloshah Asar Ikkarim*) of the Jewish faith, as derived from the Torah. Maimonides refers to these thirteen principles of faith as “the fundamental truths of our religion and its very foundations”. These principles, which Rambam thought were the minimum requirements of Jewish belief, are:

1. Belief in the existence of the Creator, who is perfect in every manner of existence and is the Primary Cause of all that exists.
2. The belief in God's absolute and unparalleled unity.
3. The belief in God's non-corporeality, nor that He will be affected by any physical occurrences, such as movement, or rest, or dwelling.
4. The belief in God's eternity.
5. The imperative to worship God exclusively and no foreign false gods.
6. The belief that God communicates with man through prophecy.
7. The belief in the primacy of the prophecy of Moses our teacher.
8. The belief in the divine origin of the Torah.
9. The belief in the immutability of the Torah.
10. The belief in God's omniscience and providence.
11. The belief in divine reward and retribution.
12. The belief in the arrival of the Messiah and the messianic era.
13. The belief in the resurrection of the dead.

These are the basic principles of Judaism. The liberal Jewish groups dispute many of these principles. It is the custom of many congregations to recite the Thirteen Articles, in a slightly more poetic form, beginning with the words *Ani Maamin* –“I believe”-every day after the morning prayers in the synagogue.

3.2 Sabbath

Sabbath is a joyful day of rest and indicates two commandments, i.e., to remember (*zakhor* 1Exod 20,8 *Remember the sabbath day, and keep it holy*) *Shabbat*, and to observe (*shamor* - Deut 5,12 *Observe the sabbath day and keep it holy, as the LORD your God commanded you*) Sabbath. In Jewish literature, poetry and music, Sabbath is described as a bride or queen, as in the popular Sabbat hymn *Lecha Dodi Likrat Kallah* (come, my beloved, to meet the [Sabbath] bride). It is said “more than Israel has kept Sabbath, Sabbath has kept Israel”. Sabbath begins at sundown on Friday and ends on sundown the next day. Synagogue services are held Friday night as well as Sabbat morning. These prayer services follow the usual weekly prayers with additional special prayers added to celebrate Sabbat.

3.3 Sabbath Ceremonials

1. Before sunset on Friday the women of the household light two or more Sabbath candles. This ritual marks officially the beginning of Sabbath. Two candles are lit, representing the two commandments: *zakhor* (remember) and *shamor* (observe).
2. A service welcoming the Sabbath is held at the Synagogue. This includes a song describing the Sabbath as a bride and queen, which is combined with a special welcome into the synagogue for those who are in mourning.
3. On returning home the husband recites “A woman of worth” from Proverbs in praise of his wife, and blesses each of his children.
4. The family dinner begins with a prayer sanctifying the Sabbath over wine (the *Kiddush*). There is also a blessing for the two loaves of plaited bread (*Challah*), recalling the double portion of Manna in the desert for Friday and for the Sabbath.
5. A festive meal is followed by Sabbath songs.
6. The morning service is followed by the reading of the Law, in which the weekly portion from the Torah is chanted from a parchment scroll in sections on behalf of seven members of the congregation. Another member of the congregation chants a reading from another part of the Hebrew Bible (the *Haftorah*). This is followed by an “additional” service, called “Mussaf”.
7. A “third meal” accompanied by singing and philosophical discussion is often eaten at the synagogue hall before the afternoon and evening services.

8. Sabbath ends with a *Havdalah* (separation, division) ceremony in the home, in which a special plaited candle is lit, with its light and shadow symbolising the contrast between the sanctity of the Sabbath and the ordinary weekday life, and the flame is extinguished in wine.

Sabbath is the most important ritual observance in Judaism and is the only ritual observance mentioned in the Ten Commandments. It is primarily a day of rest and spiritual enrichment. Sabbath is not specifically a day of prayer; prayer is not what distinguishes Sabbath from the rest of the week. The blessings of God and the blessing of the seventh day after the first week of creation (Gen 2,2-3) are commemorated by Sabbath observance. The weekly honouring of the Sabbath day proclaims the belief in God, signifies obedience to His Torah, renews the covenant and spiritualizes the use of time. Restriction from work is more strictly enforced on Sabbath. The Talmud even establishes up to 39 categories of work that should not be done on Sabbath.

1. Sowing	11. Baking	21. Tying	31. Cutting hide up
2. Plowing	12. Shearing wool	22. Untying	32. Writing two letters
3. Reaping	13. Washing wool	23. Sewing two stitches	33. Erasing two letters
4. Binding sheaves	14. Beating wool	24. Tearing	34. Building
5. Threshing	15. Dyeing wool	25. Trapping	35. Tearing a building down
6. Winnowing	16. Spinning	26. Slaughtering	36. Extinguishing a fire
7. Selecting	17. Weaving	27. Flaying	37. Kindling a fire
8. Grinding	18. Making two loops	28. Salting meat	38. Hitting with a hammer

9. Sifting	19. Weaving two threads	29. Curing hide	39. Taking an object from the private domain to the public, or transporting an object in the public domain
10. Kneading	20. Separating two threads	30. Scraping hide	

These categories are basic tasks such as cooking, construction, repairing, writing, making fires, cutting wood and others that are considered as general labour. There are even restrictions on certain activities that would lead one to inadvertently doing these types of work.

3.4 The Basic Structure of the Sabbath Day liturgy:

a) Warm-up Prayers (These vary depending upon the time of day and occasion).

b) Shema and its Blessings (Beginning with the Call to Worship, and including prayers on the themes of Creation, Revelation, and Redemption).

c) Amidah (Also known as *Ha-Tefillah* or *Shemona Esrei*): the Amidah is the worshiper's opportunity to approach God in private prayer, reciting both the words in the siddur as well as whatever prayers his/her heart may prompt. Because the recitation of this prayer is a central religious obligation, and has always been public by nature, it is often repeated in full by the cantor (*chazzan*) after the congregation has been given time to recite the prayer privately. The weekday version of the Amidah is considerably longer than the Shabbat/holy day version. Both have a tripartite structure: (1) praises of God; (2) petitions on weekdays, and sanctification of the day on holy days; (3) prayers of thanksgiving.

d) Torah Service: The liturgy surrounding the Torah emphasizes God's sovereignty and the Torah as an extension of God's rule in our lives. This is the time in the service for other public business, as well. Prayers for the sick and those who have died are said while the

explication of the Torah portion Torah is open, following the reading a d'var Torah may be delivered, and other announcements are made.

e) Musaf: Musaf (addition), which is a substitute for the additional sacrifice made on Sabbath and other holy days, follows the Torah reading in those communities which retain the *musaf* service.

f) Concluding Prayers: The concluding prayers begin with *Aleinu*, and include *Kaddish* ('holy'; The central theme of the *Kaddish* is the magnification and sanctification of God's name) and a song on Sabbath.

4. TEMPLE OF JERUSALEM

The focus of religious life among the people of Israel and the symbol of Jewish unity and independence.

- a) In Hebrew it was known as בית הבחירה 'house of the sanctuary' בֵּית־הַמִּקְדָּשׁ 'chosen house'.
- b) first built by King Solomon c. 950 BC with the assistance of Phoenician architects. It replaced the portable tabernacle of earlier period and stood on Mount Moriah.
- c) The temple which Solomon erected to the Lord was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar in 586 B.C. After the return from captivity Zorobabel raised it again from its ruins (536-516 B.C.). In the eighteenth year of his reign (19 B.C.), King Herod renovated the Temple of Zorobabel. According to Jewish tradition, the Temple stood on the highest point of Mount Moria, while the royal quarters were built south of its enclosure and on a lower level.

The chief sources of information concerning the plan, construction, and adornment of the Temple are found in Kings 6 and 7 and in the parallel account in 2 Chro 3 and 4. The temple was the political, religious, and economic centre of Israel, wielding enormous influence on the people of Israel. It served as the home to hundreds of daily animal sacrifices and to thousands of seasonal pilgrims attending the annual festivals. The temple area consisted of many chambers and court yards: court of gentile, court of Israelites, court of women, court of priest, Holy of Holies etc. The service at the temple was offered by priests, divided twenty-four groups of families; each group served a week at a time on rotation (see Luke 1,5). The priests and Levites took their turns to serve in the temple and its precincts. With all of the daily sacrifices and purity rituals that accompanied them, the temple remained central in Jewish thinking. Daily public sacrifices were offered in morning and evening; private sacrifices were

also offered daily. The sacrifice on the feast of atonement was officiated by the High priest and he alone entered the Holy of Holies.

5. The Tabernacle (Exodus 25:1-9)

- It is a portable sanctuary, built at the command of God and which accompanied the Israel on their journeys through the wilderness.
- It was in use until the construction of the temple.
- Five names in Scripture describe the Tabernacle. It was called “a sanctuary” (Ex 25:8) denoting that it was set apart for a holy God. “Tabernacle” (Ex. 25:9) reveals that it was the dwelling place of God among His people. “Tent” (Ex. 26:36) designated it as a temporary dwelling place of God. It was called “the tabernacle of the congregation” (Ex. 29:42) because it was where God met with His people. The final expression, “the tabernacle of testimony” (Ex. 38:21), described the law given to Moses, which was kept in the ark of the covenant located in the holy of holies. What an appropriate appellation for the Tabernacle, which stood as a testimony to Israel and the world of God’s truth and glory.

5.1 The Purpose of the Tabernacle:

For almost 500 years, the Tabernacle served as a place for God to dwell among His people and a place where His people could commune with Him (Ex 25:8; 40:34-37). Throughout Israel’s history, there was a propensity toward idolatry; thus, the Tabernacle stood as a visual reminder to Israel that they served the true and living God. It helped keep Israel from the idol worship that was practiced by those living around them as they made their pilgrimage in the wilderness.

Although the Tabernacle made God accessible to the Israelites, He was only approachable in holiness. The structure and service of the Tabernacle showed a sinful people how they could come before a holy God in worship and service (Ex. 29:42-43, 45), offer sacrifice for sin (Lev. 1-7; 16-17), and receive instruction and counsel from the Word of God. Thus, it was a graphic portrayal of God’s redemptive program for Israel. Every aspect of the Tabernacle—from the brazen altar, where sacrifices were offered for sin, to the mediating high priest, who offered the sacrificial blood on the mercy seat—pointed to God’s redemptive plan. The people could only approach God through a blood atonement and a mediating priesthood.

6. ARK OF THE COVENANT

The Hebrew *aron*, by which the Ark of the Covenant is expressed, does not call to the mind, as that used for Noah's Ark, a large construction, but rather a chest. Different names are used in the Bible: The Ark of the Testimony (Exodus 25:16, 22; 26:33, etc.), the Ark of the Testament (Exodus 30:26), the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord (Numbers 10:33; Deuteronomy 10:8, etc.), the Ark of the Covenant (Joshua 3:6, etc.), the Ark of God (1 Samuel 3:3, etc.), the Ark of the Lord (1 Samuel 4:6, etc.). Of these, the expression "Ark of the Covenant" has become most familiar in English.

The Ark of the Covenant was a kind of chest, measuring two cubits and a half in length, a cubit and a half in breadth, and a cubit and a half in height. Made of acacia wood, it was overlaid within and without with the purest gold, and a golden crown or rim ran around it. At the four corners, very likely towards the upper part, four golden rings had been cast; through them passed two bars of setim wood overlaid with gold, to carry the Ark. These two bars were to remain always in the rings, even when the Ark had been placed in the temple of Solomon. The cover of the Ark, termed the "propitiatory" (the corresponding Hebrew means both "cover" and "that which makes propitious"), likewise of the purest gold.

The Ark was first destined to contain the testimony, that is to say the tables of the Law (Exodus 40:18; Deuteronomy 10:5). Later, Moses was commanded to put into the tabernacle, near the Ark, a golden vessel holding a gomor of manna (Exodus 16:34), and the rod of Aaron which had blossomed (Numbers 17:10). According to the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews (9:4), and the Jewish traditions, they had been put into the Ark itself. Some commentators, with Calmet, hold that the book of the Law written by Moses had likewise been enclosed in the Ark; but the text says only that the book in question was placed "in the side of the Ark" (Deuteronomy 31:26); moreover, what should be understood by this book, whether it was the whole Pentateuch, or Deuteronomy, or part of it, is not clear, though the context seems to favour the latter interpretations. However, this may be, we learn from 1 Kings 8:9, that when the Ark was placed in Solomon's temple, it contained only the tables of the Law.

7. SYNAGOGUE

The word "synagogue" from Greek *sunagoge* meaning "assembly"). It is the centre of the Jewish religious community: a place of prayer, study and education, social and charitable work, as well as a social centre. Synagogue is intended for the purpose of prayer; however, a synagogue is not necessary for worship. Communal Jewish worship can be carried out

wherever ten Jews (a *minyan*) assemble. Worship can also be carried out alone or with fewer than ten people assembled together. However, there are certain prayers that are communal prayers and therefore can be recited only by a minyan.

Synagogues probably arose during the exile due to isolation from the temple and the establishment of the law as the norm of life. The main purpose of a synagogue is to teach and propagate the law; frequently it also functioned as centre of Jewish communal, educational, and social activity. In NT days there was no rivalry between temple and synagogue.

After the destruction of Jerusalem temple, the synagogue replaced the temple. The adoption of the *Menorah* and of many liturgical practices from the temple makes this clear. A service of the word emergence of developed in the synagogues instead of the sacrifices offered in the temple and the synagogues set free worship from geographical connection to one place, i.e., Jerusalem.

8. THE SANHEDRIN

The Sanhedrin played an increasingly prominent role in Jewish life. This “supreme court” and legislative body wrapped into one. The Great Sanhedrin was the supreme religious body in Israel. There were also smaller religious Sanhedrins in every town, as well as a civil political democratic Sanhedrin. It was a religious assembly of 71 sages who met in the Chamber of Hewn Stones in the Temple in Jerusalem. The Great Sanhedrin met daily during the daytime, and did not meet on the Sabbath, festivals or festival eves. It was the final authority on Jewish law and any scholar who went against its decisions was put to death. The Sanhedrin was led by a president called the *nasi* (lit. “prince”) and a vice president called the *av bet din* (lit. “father of the court”). The other 69 sages sat in a semicircle facing the leaders.

Being Israel’s supreme legislative and religious body, it administered new laws and was the final authority on *Halakhah*. It also dealt with matters of national importance. In about 30 C.E., the Sanhedrin lost its authority to inflict capital punishment. Local Sanhedrins consisted of different numbers of sages, depending on the nature of the offenses it dealt with. For example, only a Sanhedrin of 71 could judge a whole tribe, a false prophet or the high priest. There were Sanhedrins of 23 for capital cases and of three scholars to deal with civil or lesser criminal cases.

9. JEWISH CALENDAR

a) The Hebrew calendar is a lunisolar calendar, i.e., the months are reckoned according to the cycle of the moon and years are calculated according to cycle of the sun. The calendar year features twelve lunar months of twenty-nine or thirty days, amounting to a total of 354 days.

b) Since the Passover feast is to be celebrated in the Spring (in the month of Nisan), it is necessary to adjust lunar calendar to the solar system of 365 days a year. This is done by intercalating an additional month comprising of 29 days added periodically to synchronize the twelve lunar cycles with the longer solar year. These extra months are added seven times every nineteen years.

c) The beginning of each Jewish lunar month is based on the appearance of the new moon. In ancient times, the new months used to be determined by observation. When people observed the new moon, they would notify the Sanhedrin. When the Sanhedrin heard testimony from two independent, reliable eyewitnesses that the new moon occurred on a certain date, they would declare the *rosh hodesh* (first of the month) and send out messengers to tell people when the month began.

d) The problem with strictly lunar calendars is that there are approximately 12.4 lunar months in every solar year, so a 12-month lunar calendar is about 11 days shorter than a solar year and a 13-month lunar is about 19 longer than a solar year. The months drift around the seasons on such a calendar: on a 12-month lunar calendar, the month of Nisan, which is supposed to occur in the Spring, would occur 11 days earlier in the season each year, eventually occurring in the Winter, the Fall, the Summer, and then the Spring again. On a 13-month lunar calendar, the same thing would happen in the other direction, and faster.

e) To compensate this, the Jewish calendar uses a 12-month lunar calendar with an extra month occasionally added. The month of Nisan occurs 11 days earlier each year for two or three years, and then jumps forward 30 days, balancing out the drift. In ancient times, this month was added by observation: the Sanhedrin observed the conditions of the weather, the crops and the livestock, and if these were not sufficiently advanced to be considered "spring", then the Sanhedrin inserted an additional month into the calendar to make sure that Pesach (Passover) would occur in the spring.

f) A year with 13 months is referred to in Hebrew as *Shanah Meuberet*, literally: a pregnant year. In English, we commonly call it a leap year. The additional month is known as *Adar I*,

Adar Rishon (first Adar) or Adar Alef (the Hebrew letter Alef being the numeral “1” in Hebrew). The extra month is inserted before the regular month of Adar (known in such years as Adar II, Adar *Sheini* or Adar *Beit*). Note that Adar II is the “real” Adar, the one in which Purim is celebrated. Adar I is the “extra” Adar.

g) The year number on the Jewish calendar represents the number of years since creation, calculated by adding up the ages of people in the Bible back to the time of creation. However, this does not necessarily mean that the universe has existed for only 5700 years as we understand years.

Name	Number	Length	Civil Equivalent
Nissan	1	30 days	March-April
Iyar	2	29 days	April-May
Sivan	3	30 days	May-June
Tammuz	4	29 days	June-July
Av	5	30 days	July-August
Elul	6	29 days	August-September
Tishri	7	30 days	September-October
Cheshvan	8	29 or 30 days	October-November

Kislev	9	30 or 29 days	November-December
Tevet	10	29 days	December-January
Shevat	11	30 days	January-February
Adar I (leap years only)	12	30 days	February-March
Adar (called Adar Beit in leap years)	12 (13 in leap years)	29 days	February-March

10. JEWISH FEASTS

10.1 Passover

Passover is the first feast of the Jewish year and the foundation of all other feasts. It begins on the twilight of 14th day of Nisan (March/April). The Passover commemorates the Exodus from Egypt (Exod 12:1-14; Lev. 23:5; Num. 9:1-14; Num. 28:16; Deut. 16:1-7). It is followed by the seven-day feast of unleavened bread. The feast of Passover and Unleavened Bread are celebrated together because they are so closely linked.

On 13th of Nisan, all the leaven bread is destroyed and from 14 to 21 only unleavened bread is eaten. On the paschal lamb was slain in the temple and its blood was sprinkled before the altar. The roasted goat was eaten with bitter herbs and unleavened bread. Then the head of the household explained the meaning of the Passover rites, which is named Passover *Haggadah* (“explanation”). The *Hallel* (a Jewish prayer, a recitation of Psalms 113-118 as a unit on joyous occasions) is sung. All the Jews wished and tried to be in Jerusalem or its neighbourhood for the feast of Passover.

10.2 Feast of Unleavened Bread

Leviticus 23:6-8: *and on the fifteenth day of the same month is the festival of unleavened bread to the LORD; seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. On the first day you shall have a holy convocation; you shall not work at your occupations. For seven days you shall present*

the LORD'S offerings by fire; on the seventh day there shall be a holy convocation: you shall not work at your occupations. (Also see Ex. 12:15-20; 13:3-10; Num. 28:17-25; Deut. 16:3,4,8).

Following Passover on the 14th of Nisan is the feast of Unleavened Bread on the 15th of Nisan. The feast was to last seven days. On the first and on the seventh day there was to be a sacred assembly between God and His people. The feasts of Passover and Unleavened Bread are two distinct feasts yet since they are so close, they are observed as one event.

Leaven is yeast which is an organism that digests sugar, the product of the yeast is alcohol and carbon dioxide. Yeast is used to make both wine and leavened bread. When yeast is placed in dough the carbon dioxide by-product makes the bread rise while baking burns the alcohol off. Yeast has a decaying effect on both bread and grapes. Leaven (yeast) is symbol of decay and sin in scripture.

10.3 Pentecost

The feast of Pentecost, a harvest festival, is celebrated 50 days after the 1st Sabbath following the Passover. The feast of Pentecost is also known as the Feast of Weeks. It marked the end of the early-summer wheat harvest (Exod 23:16; 34:22; Lev. 23:15-21; Num. 28:26; Deut. 16:9-12).

Scripture has three different names for the feast; each name emphasizes a different aspect of its observance. *Shavuot* in Hebrew means “weeks”. The Hebrew “Feast of Weeks” *Hag Hashavuot* is designated because there were seven weeks counted from the feast of First fruits until this feast was celebrated. (Ex. 34:22, Dt. 16:10; 2 Chr. 8:13) In Numbers the feast is called *Yom Habikkurim* “Day of First fruits”. (Num. 28:26) This was the time when the first fruits of the summer Wheat harvest were brought to the Temple. In contrast to the feast preceding the Barley harvest crop is celebrated in feast of “First Fruits”. The third name, *Hag Hakatzir* is “The Feast of t Harvest” (Ex. 23:16) meant the start of the official summer harvest season. The Talmud and Josephus also called this feast *Atzeret* which meant “conclusion”. Since this was the concluding feast of the first four feasts until the fall feasts. This feast is also known as Pentecost in the New Testament since it celebrated on the “fiftieth” day from the feast of First fruits (Acts 2:1).

10.4 Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement)

The Hebrew name for the Day of Atonement is *Yom Kippur*. The word *Yom* means “Day”, and *Kippur* is derived from the Hebrew word *Kaphar* meaning “to cover”. Atonement, in essence, means “to cover”. During the period of Yom Kippur, the high priest was to make “a covering” for the sins of Israel committed in the year. The feast of Yom Kippur falls on the 10th day of Tishri, the seventh month of the Hebrew Calendar.

10.5 Sukkot (Feast of Tabernacles)

The feast of Tabernacles is the final feast of the seven established by the Lord for Israel in Leviticus. The feast is the most joyful of the seven feasts. This feast commemorates Israel’s fellowship with God in the wilderness. This feast also celebrates Israel’s rest with the Redeemer, the Lord God, who rescued the nation from Egyptian bondage. Tabernacles foreshadow a future day of God’s redemption of humanity when the world will be at rest following God’s judgment on the nations.

The Hebrew name for Tabernacles is *Sukkot* meaning “booth” or “hut” made of leaves. English word is derived from the Latin *tabernaculum* meaning booth or hut. God told the nation of Israel to live in huts made of branches and leaves for seven-days in the month of Tishri to remember the time they were in the wilderness and had to live in tents for 40-years. This feast was also known as “The Feast of Ingathering” (Ex. 23; 16). Tabernacles is the final feast falling on the 15th of Tishri, five days after Yom Kippur (Atonement). This feast was to last seven days. The first and the eighth days were “Sabbaths”, no work was to be done, and Israel was to rest (Ex. 23:16; Ex. 34:22; Lev. 23:33-36, 39-43; Num. 29:12-38; Deut. 16:13-15).

10.6 Feast of First Fruits

The feast of First Fruits is celebrated on the 1st Sunday after Nisan 15th and is accompanied by the offering of the first harvested barley to God. The feast of First Fruits took place on the second day of the feast of Unleavened Bread, according to Jewish timing it takes place on the 16th of Nisan. The feast takes place on the first day following the Passover of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. This corresponds with the reaping of the barley harvest (Lev. 23:9-14; Num 28:26).

10.7 Hanukkah

The feast of *Hanukkah* is also known as the Festival of Lights and Feast of Dedication, is an eight-day Jewish feast commemorating the rededication of the Temple (the Second

Temple) in Jerusalem at the time of the Maccabean Revolt of the 2nd century BC. The name “*Hanukkah*” derives from the Hebrew verb “*han*”, meaning “to dedicate”. *Hanukkah* is observed for eight nights and days, starting on the 25th day of Kislev according to the Hebrew calendar, which may occur at any time from late November to late December in the Gregorian calendar.

The festival is observed by the kindling of the lights of a unique candelabrum the nine branched Menorah or *Hanukiah*, one additional light on each night of the holiday, progressing to eight on the final night.

10.8 Purim

Purim (“lots”) is a Jewish feast that commemorates the deliverance of the Jewish people in the ancient Persian Empire from destruction in the wake of a plot by Haman, through Esther. Purim is generally celebrated by giving mutual gifts of food and drink and giving charity to the poor. The Book of Esther is recited.

11. EVENTS AND RITUALS OF THE LIFE CYCLE (translation using google lens)

Life- cycle events and rites of passage for a Jew solidify his religious identity and strengthen his bond with the community.

11.1 Berithmila

The male child is circumcised on the eighth day and welcomed into the covenant. The Hebrew naming of the child takes place at the same ceremony. A similar naming ceremony (*barit hahayim, habat*) is performed for girls, but it is not as public as the naming ceremony for boys.

11.2. Bur Mitzvah Bat Mitzvah

In traditional Jewish society, puberty occurs when boys reach the age of 13 and girls when they reach the age of twelve. On the other hand, in reform movements, boys both and girls, when they complete thirteen years of age respectively. It can be seen as a coming-of-age ceremony. Boys officially read their first Torah. Traditionalists observe this observance only in the case of boys, with public prayers and readings from the Torah.

11.3 *Kidushin* (Marriage)

According to Jewish tradition, marriage was called *kidushin* (sacred marriage). In the early days of the rabbinic period, there were two distinct ceremonies involved in marriage.

Kidushin or consent. Then, within a year, the two parties became one in the legal marriage or *Nissuin*. In the Middle Ages, these two distinct ceremonies became one. The ketubah will be read aloud before the *Nissuin* ceremony. A ketubah is a marriage contract prepared in advance and handed over to the bride before the wedding.

In ancient times it was the father who arranged the marriage of sons and daughters. The groom's mother will symbolically break a bowl or glass. This means that the marriage is as unbreakable as a broken glass and it cannot be put back together again. This ceremony indicates that divorce is not allowed. Moreover, divorce was likened to the destruction of the temple.

The bride and groom are led to the *hoopa* (marriage stage) where the marriage takes place. Since the Middle Ages, the practice of hoisting the *hoopa* on four poles in a rectangular shape, using painted cloth, began in the synagogue. There are several rituals that must be followed when using a *hoopa*. Four unmarried men chosen from the families of the bride and groom are to hold the *hoopa* aloft on four poles. This canopy is thought to be the future home where the bride and groom are going to live. Moreover, it also indicates that marriage is conducted under the heavenly canopy.

The special celebrations of the bride and groom are called *Hinnah*. Friends and family members come to the bride's house and apply *henna* (henna) on her hands. Traditionally, before the wedding, the groom performs a ritual bath which is called *mikve*.

12.4 Levirate Marriage

The Bible says that a woman whose husband died childless should marry her husband's brother in order to have children (Deuteronomy 25:5-6). The firstborn thus born to her would be that of her dead brother, and thus his lineage in Israel would not go away. The story of Tamar and Judah in Genesis 38 is the first such marriage in history.

Conclusion

NB: - Jeevitha chakrathinte sambhavangalum acharangalum – chapter 12, pp-77-85.

Yahoodarude charithram deivalaya thakarcha muthal adunika yugam vare – chapter 16, pp-105-111.