

The Haggadah:

The Haggadah, (“telling” in Hebrew), is a written guide to the Passover seder, which commemorates the Israelites’ Exodus from Egypt. The Haggadah includes various prayers, blessings, rituals, fables, songs and information for how the seder should be performed. Although modern Haggadot (the plural of Haggadah) can vary widely, the tradition of reading a book to guide the seder dates back to the Middle Ages, and some of the elements that make up contemporary Haggadot were used 2,000 years ago.

Mishnah

Published at the end of the second century CE, the Mishnah is an edited record of the complex body of material known as oral Torah that was transmitted in the aftermath of the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE. Rabbi Judah the Patriarch, also known as Rabbi Judah the Prince and Yehudah HaNasi, undertook to collect and edit a study edition of these halachot (laws) in order that the learning not vanish. Although the Temple had been destroyed 130 years prior to its publication, in the world described by the Mishnah the Temple still exists and the laws that governed it are expressed in the present tense.

Talmud

The term literally meaning “study” is the generic term for the documents that comment and expand upon the Mishnah (“repeating”), the first work of rabbinic law, published around the year 200 CE by Rabbi Judah the Patriarch in the land of Israel. Although Talmud is largely about law, it should not be confused with either codes of law or with a commentary on the legal sections of the Torah . Due to its spare and laconic style, the Talmud is studied, not read. The difficulty of the intergenerational text has necessitated and fostered the development of an institutional and communal structure that supported the learning of Talmud and the establishment of special schools where each generation is apprenticed into its study by the previous generation.

Torah

For Jews, the concept of “Torah” is much broader than the books themselves, the delimited concept of the Torah. “Torah” can refer to all of traditional Jewish learning, but “the Torah” usually refers to the Torah she’bi’ktav, the written Torah, also known as the chumash (the five volumes or Pentateuch, sometimes referred to as the Five Books of Moses).

Prayers:

Jewish liturgy can be divided up into three main categories: prayers, blessings and rituals. Prayers are recited on a daily basis, and have a specific structure to them. The Siddur Sefard, or Jewish prayer book, includes the standard texts for the three daily prayer services—Shacharit, Minchah, and Ma’ariv (the morning, afternoon, and evening services, respectively) — as well as the additional services for the Sabbath and holidays. Some siddurim (plural) also include blessings for various occasions and maybe the weekday Torah readings.

Shema - "Hear O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is One

The Shema is an affirmation of Judaism and a declaration of faith in one God. The obligation to recite the Shema is separate from the obligation to pray and a Jew is obligated to say Shema in the morning and at night (Deut. 6:7). The first line of the Shema, "Hear O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is One" (Deuteronomy 6:4) is repeated throughout the prayer services. It is said in the morning blessings, in the musaf Amidah of Shabbat and holidays, when the Torah is taken out of the Ark on Shabbat and holidays, as a bedtime prayer, as part of the deathbed confessional, and at various other times.