

Notes

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Glossary

Moses Isserles	Moses Isserles lived in 16th Century Krakow, Poland. He wrote the authoritative legal commentary of the Ashkenazi (Western and Northern European) communities, called the <i>Mappah</i> (or tablecloth) which was quickly integrated into Joseph Caro's Shulchan Aruch.
Maimonides	Moses ben Maimon, known as Maimonides or the RaMBaM, was born in Spain in 1137 and died in Egypt in 1204. He was renowned for his writings in philosophy, on the Torah, for his legal codes and his written responses to specific legal problems.
Menorat Ha-Maor	Lit. 'The Shining Candelabra' was both the pen name and a well known book by Isaac Aboab who lived in Spain in the 14th Century. He created this work to be read aloud in the synagogue (although later it also was read in the home), to educate and inspire.
Mishneh Torah	Maimonides compiled this complete 14 volume code of Jewish law through studying the Talmud and the important legal codes written by his predecessors. The Mishneh Torah is still one of the most the most important sources for study and guidance today.
Shulchan Aruch	Lit. 'the Laid Table' was compiled by Joseph Caro in Israel in the 16th Century. It was and remains one of the most authoritative sources of <i>halachah</i> , or Jewish law. Joseph Caro drew on earlier works by authorities writing in and for the Sefardi world, of Spain and Northern Africa. Hence, Moses Isserles' commentary, on the Ashkenazi practices of the day, were soon added and incorporated into the one magisterial work.
Talmud	The Talmud is the literary, theological and legal well-spring of the Jewish imagination. Compiled by rabbinic scholars in Babylon in the 7th Century, it is ordered in a non-rational associative way. The language of the Talmud is Aramaic and Hebrew. The shorter Palestinian Talmud or Yerushalmi was completed in the Land of Israel in around the 5th Century.

וְאֵת-אִמְךָ

A Note on Translation

Translation is always an act of interpretation. That is why it is always best to learn to read and understand Hebrew yourself.

It is surprisingly easy, with a good curriculum such as *Aleph Isn't Tough* by Linda Motzkin, UAHC Press, 2001.

Translation and gender

Many of the texts in this study unit refer to the duties of the son. In their day this may have reflected the norm that women were responsible for the welfare of their parents until they were married. At that point their duties transferred to their husband and their parents-in-law. Some later texts, however, make it clear that both sons and daughters are included. Today, we should probably read these texts as referring to both. I have tried to translate them with two aims in mind. Fidelity to the intentions of their authors, and relevance for us today. Please feel free to read them all in a more gender neutral way.

These translations were made by Rabbi Shulamit Ambalu. Any faults are her own.

Further Reading

If you want to read just one book, see *Creating an Ethical Jewish Life - A Practical Introduction to Classic Teachings on How to Be a Jew* by Byron L. Sherwin and Seymour J. Cohen, Jewish Lights Publishing 2001

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