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MIDLER, BETTE (1945–), U.S. singer, entertainer, and actress. Born in Honolulu, Midler entered show business as a member of the *Fiddler on the Roof* cast on Broadway in 1964. She gained notoriety as a popular performer in the Continental Baths cabaret, a meeting place for homosexuals, and then scored a hit single with the frequently recorded "Do You Wanna Dance?" (1974). She followed this success with her top-selling album *The Divine Miss M.* and a popular film of her live act called *Divine Madness* (1979). Midler turned actress in a movie loosely based on the life of Janis Joplin, *The Rose* (1981), which earned her an Academy Award nomination for Best Actress. Midler, who was named after legendary film icon Bette Davis, starred in subsequent films such as *Down and Out in Beverly Hills* (1986), *Ruthless People* (1986), *For the Boys* (Oscar nomination for Best Actress, 1991), *The First Wives Club* (1996), *Drowning Mona* (2000), *Isn't She Great* (2000), and *The Stepford Wives* (2004).

Over the years, among other TV guest spots, Midler appeared on Johnny Carson's *Tonight Show* 24 times, starting in 1970 and including the final program in May 1992. She also appeared in the TV movie *Gypsy* (1993) and produced and starred in the sitcom *Bette* (2000–1).

On the Broadway stage, Midler appeared in *Fiddler on the Roof* (1964–72), *Bette Midler Special Concert* (1973), *Bette Midler's Clams on the Half Shell Revue* (1975), *Bette! Divine Madness* (1979), and *Short Talks on the Universe* (2002).

For her multiple talents as an actress, writer, singer, and performer, Midler won a host of awards. In 1974 she received a special Tony Award "for adding luster to the Broadway season." She won four Grammy awards, including the 1973 Best New Artist and the prestigious Record of the Year in 1989 for her rendition of her #1 hit "Wind Beneath My Wings" from the movie *Beaches*. She won three Emmy awards and was nominated for another four. In 1987 she received the American Comedy Awards' Lifetime Achievement Award in Comedy, as well as the American Comedy Award in 1988, 1989, 1993, 1996, and 1998. Her writings include *A View from a Broad* (1980) and the fable *The Saga of Baby Divine* (1983).

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[Jonathan Licht / Ruth Beloff (2nd ed.)]

MIDRASH (Heb. מִדְרָשׁ), the designation of a particular genre of rabbinic literature containing anthologies and compilations of homilies, including both biblical exegesis (see *Hermeneutics) and sermons delivered in public (see *Homiletics) as well as aggadot (see *Aggadah) and sometimes even halakhot (cf.

*Midreshet Halakhah), usually forming a running commentary on specific books of the Bible.

The term Midrash itself derives from the root *drsh* (שְׁרַד) which in the Bible means mainly "to search," "to seek," "to examine," and "to investigate" (cf. Lev. 10:16; Deut. 13:15; Isa. 55:6; et al.). This meaning is also found in rabbinic Hebrew (cf. BM 2:7: "until thou examine [tidrosh] thy brother if he be a cheat or not"). The noun "Midrash" occurs only twice in the Bible (11 Chron. 13:22 and 24:27); it is translated in the Septuagint by βίβλος, γράφη i.e., "book" or "writing," and it seems probable that it means "an account," "the result of inquiry (examination, study, or search) of the events of the times," i.e., what is today called "history" (the word history is also derived from the Greek root ἱστορεῖν which has a similar meaning). In Jewish literature of the Second Temple period the word Midrash was first employed in the sense of education and learning generally (Eccl. 5:1:23), "Turn unto me, ye unlearned, and lodge in my house of Midrash," which the author's grandson translated into Greek, "house of instruction or of study"; compare the similar development of the Latin *studium* which originated in the verb *studeo* which means "to become enthusiastic," "to make an effort," "to be diligent," etc. and only in a secondary sense, in the post-Augustan era, in the sense of learning (with diligence and the noun *studium* passed through the same stages of meaning; cf. Ger. *studium*; Fr. *étude*, etc.).

Darosh both in its nominal and verbal forms is sometimes found in the literature of the *Dead Sea sect as the designation for a certain method, a special technique of learning things – in *halakhah* and in *aggadah* – through rigorous study and painstaking, searching inquiry into the verses of the Bible. This method of Midrash was both ideologically and halakhically one of the fundamentals of the life of the sect: "and that his deeds appear in accordance with the Midrash of the Torah as followed by the holy upright men" (Damascus Covenant 8:29–30; cf. the Manual of Discipline 8:25–26: "If his way is perfect in company, in Midrash, and in counsel"; cf. also *ibid.* 6:24 and 6:6). The nature of this Midrash is testified to by the explicit words: "When these become a community in Israel with such characteristics they separate themselves from the company of the wicked men to go thither to the wilderness to make clear there the way of the Lord, as is written [Isa. 40:3], 'and in the wilderness clear ye the way... make plain in the desert a highway for our God,' that being the Midrash of the Torah [which] he commanded through Moses, to do in accordance with all that is revealed in every era and as the prophets revealed through his holy spirit" (Manual of Discipline 8:12–16); i.e., the Midrash of the Torah is the lesson derived from the verse (4:21–5 5:11). A different method of interpretation is the *pesher, although the Midrash could also contain *pesharim* (see 4Q 174 Florilegium, 1–2, 1 14–19, in: J.M. Allegro, *Discoveries in the Judean Desert*, v: Qumran Cave 4, 1 (1968), p. 53f.). This technique of biblical exegesis which is largely similar to that customary among the Greek grammarians, the students of the classical texts of Homer, and among the Roman rhetoricians, the exponents of Roman law, is found among the Jews

for the first time in the Dead Sea sect (see particularly Book of *Jubilees). Nevertheless these earlier forms of exegesis must be distinguished from rabbinic midrash as a fully developed literary form (cf. **Midreshei Halakhah*: Literary Nature and Relation to Early Midrash). Suggestions to the effect that the *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum* (pseudo-Philo) is a Midrash are without foundation.

Midrashic Literature

It is very possible that the earliest Midrash to come down is the Passover **Haggadah*, the earliest and chief element of which is a Midrash to Deuteronomy 26:5–8 (cf. Sif. Deut. 301). A great part of the midrashic *aggadah* of the tannaitic period is included side by side with the midrashic *halakhah* in the halakhic Midrashim (cf. **Midreshei Halakhah*: The Aggadic Material). On the other hand there are no independent works devoted only to midrash *aggadah* from the tannaitic era (see however **Seder Olam Rabbah* and the **Baraita de-Melekhet ha-Mishkan*). All the extant literary works devoted primarily to midrash *aggadah* were apparently compiled originally in Erez Israel during the amoraic and post-amoraic periods. While the Babylonian Talmud contains a vast amount of aggadic midrash (cf. the Midrash on the Book of Esther in Meg. 10b–17a, and on Lamentations in Sanh. 104a–b), its literary structure follows the earlier tannaitic model, including both *midrash halakhah* and *aggadah* (as in the *midreshei halakhah*), and integrating both of them into an appropriate context following the order of the tractates of the Mishnah, as was done in both the Mishnah and the Tosefta (see **Mishnah: Aggadah* in the Mishnah).

From the point of view of the period of their arrangement and collection the aggadic Midrashim can be divided into three groups: early, middle, and late. The determination of the time of the editing and arranging of the various Midrashim is by no means a simple matter. It is nearly impossible to determine with even approximate certainty the period when a Midrash or aggadic work was compiled (see **Pirkei de-R. Eliezer*). However, it is possible to arrive at a relative date, that is, to determine the relation of a particular Midrash to others (see Table: *Midreshei Aggadah*). To do this one cannot rely on the historical allusions alone or merely on the names of the sages mentioned in the Midrash, nor can one rely on the first mentions of the Midrash and its first citations, since all the Midrashim contain much material from different and extended eras. The lack of historical allusions after a definite period do not suffice to testify to its compilation immediately after that period, just as the lack of mention of a Midrash and of its citation until a certain period does not prove that it was edited at the date nearest to the beginning of that period. In neither case can one rely on the *argumentum a silentio*. A more reliable method for determining priority and lateness among Midrashim is the relationship between the various Midrashim – the use one makes of another – as well as their relationship to other sources. This procedure, however, involves a number of very complex issues, and no consensus has yet been reached on how it should be applied in practice (see **Genesis Rabbah*:

The Redaction of the Midrash). Moreover, even after one arrives by use of this method at a provisional determination regarding precedence, other additional factors must be taken into account (literary forms, language, style, etc.).

The Early Midrashim (the Classical Amoraic Midrashim)

This period, from which it seems only seven Midrashim have come down, is the golden age of the aggadic Midrashim. The most developed and perfect literary forms and constructions are already found in the oldest aggadic Midrash, *Genesis Rabbah*, proving that many generations of development preceded the literary crystallization. Since in general such perfect and developed literary constructions and forms are found neither in the halakhic Midrashim nor in their aggadic section (although here and there mere beginnings can be found), it is probable that the main development of the literary forms came in the amoraic era. Toward the close of this period the assembling, collecting, and editing was begun.

Among its most perfect forms, one should mention the classical proem at the beginning of a complete Midrash or of a chapter, which served fundamentally as the introduction to a homily delivered in public. The classical proem is a prelude to a homily on a certain verse by citing a verse from another source (in most cases from another book, or even from a different section of the Bible, usually the Hagiographa) and connecting it with the chief verse of the homily, the proem concluding with the verse with which the homily itself begins. Thus, for example, the proem to Lamentations 1:1 begins with a verse from the Pentateuch, while the proems to the Pentateuch Midrashim open with a verse usually from the Hagiographa. The proem, scarcely found in the tannaitic literature, was greatly developed and perfected in the time of the *amoraim*, in order to attract, stimulate, and rouse the curiosity of the audience and to emphasize the unity of the biblical books. When gathering and assembling the material the compilers and editors of the Midrashim followed the method of the actual preachers of the homilies and placed the proems at the beginning of the Midrashim and of the various sections. They did not always have proems readily available and in consequence created artificial proems themselves (combining different sayings and a number of homilies together). Sometimes they greatly enlarged the proems so that a simple proem became compound, i.e., it included a number of homilies independent in themselves. Classical proems in their pure form are almost wholly confined to the early Midrashim: *Genesis Rabbah*; *Leviticus Rabbah*; *Lamentations Rabbah*; *Esther Rabbah I*; **Pesikta de-Rav Kahana*; *Song of Songs Rabbah*; and *Ruth Rabbah*. These Midrashim all consist of a collection of homilies, sayings, and *aggadot* of the *amoraim* (and also of the *tannaim*) in Galilean Aramaic and rabbinical Hebrew, but they also include many Greek words.

It seems that all these Midrashim were edited in Erez Israel in the fifth and sixth centuries C.E. Two types can be distinguished: exegetical and homiletical. The exegetical Midrash (*Genesis Rabbah*, *Lamentations Rabbah*, et al.) is a Midrash to one of the books of the Bible, containing comments on the

whole book – on each chapter, on every verse, and at times even on every word in the verse. The homiletical Midrash is either a Midrash to a book of the Pentateuch in which only the first verse (or verses) of the weekly portion is expounded (in accordance with the early *Triennial cycle that was current in Erez Israel, e.g., **Leviticus Rabbah*), or a Midrash that is based only on the biblical and prophetic reading of special

Sabbaths and festivals, in which, also, only the first verses are expounded (eg., *Pesikta de-Rav Kahana*). In both cases, in contrast to the exegetical Midrashim, the homiletical Midrashim contain almost no short homilies or dicta on variegated topics, but each chapter (or section) constitutes a collection of homilies and sayings on one topic that seem to combine into one long homily on the specific topic.

Midreshei Aggadah According to Types and Periods

Agadic Works	Midrashim	Date C.E.	The Era
Apocalyptic and Eschatological Midrashim	Genesis Rabbah <i>Leviticus Rabbah</i> Lamentations Rabbah Esther Rabbah I <i>Pesikta de-Rav Kahana</i> Songs Rabbah Ruth Rabbah Targum Sheni	400–500 500–640 640–900	Classical Amoraic Midrashim of the Early Period (400–600)
Megillat Antiochus Midrash Petirat Moshe ("Death of Moses") Tanna de-Vei Eliyahu ("Seder Eliyahu") Pirkei de-R. Eliezer Midrash Agur (Called "Mishnat R. Eliezer") Midrash Yonah Midrash Petirat Aharon Divrei ha-Yamim shel Moshe Otiyyot de-R. Akiva Midrash Sheloshah ve-Arba'ah Midrash Eser Galuyyot Midrash va-Yissa'u	Midrash Eshaf Midrash Proverbs Midrash Samuel Ecclesiastes Rabbah Midrash Ḥaserot vi-Yterot <i>Deuteronomy Rabbah</i> ¹ <i>Tanhuma</i> ¹ <i>Tanhuma (Buber)</i> ¹ <i>Numbers Rabbah II</i> ¹ <i>Pesikta Rabbati</i> ¹ <i>Exodus Rabbah II</i> ¹ <i>Va-Yehi Rabbah</i> ¹ <i>The Manuscripts of the Tanhuma</i> <i>Yelammedenu Midrashim</i> ¹	(775–900)	The Middle Period (640–1000)
Throne and Hippodromes of Solomon Midreshei Hanukkah Midreshei Yehudit Midrash Hallel Midrash Tadshe	Midrash Tehillim I Exodus Rabbah I <i>Aggadat Bereshit</i> Aggadat Shir ha-Shirim (Zuta) Ruth Zuta Ecclesiastes Zuta Lamentations Zuta	900–1000	
Midrash Aseret ha-Dibberot Midrash Konen Midrash Avkir Alphabet of Ben Sira Midrash va-Yosha Sefer ha-Yashar Pesikta Hadta Midrash Temurah	Midrash Shir Hashirim Abba Guryon Esther Rabbah II Midrash Tehilim II Panim Aḥerim le-Esther (version 1) Lekah Tov (c. 1110) ³ Midrash Aggadah ² Genesis Rabbati ² Numbers Rabbah ² Yalkut Shimoni ³ Midrash ha-Gadol ³ Yalkut Makhiri ³ Ein Ya'akov ³ Haggadot ha-Talmud ³	1000–1100 1100–1200 1200–1300 1300–1400 1400–1500	The Late Period (1000–1200) The Period of the Yalkutim (anthologies)

1. *Tanhuma* Midrash (*Yelammedenu*). 2. All based on the work of Moshe ha-Darshan. 3. These are anthologies

Note: Names in Italics are homiletical Midrashim; the rest are exegetical.

The Difference Between the Early Midrashim and Later Midrashim

In the Midrashim of the middle period a decline is already discernible in the developed literary constructions and forms, especially in the proem, which is not the classical proem but merely an inferior and artificial imitation. After the Muslim conquest there is a gradual strengthening in the influence of the pseudepigraphic and the apocalyptic literature of the Second Temple era (see *Apocrypha and Pseudepigraphy), which had been disregarded by the talmudic rabbis (particularly because of the controversy with Christianity; see *Church Fathers). This influence is apparent both in content and form. In content, there is an increase not only in homilies which refer to angels and demons, the garden of Eden and hell, but even complete topics from apocalyptic literature. In form, there is an increase in the type of aggadic work which does not belong to the genre of Midrash at all. This type is not a compilation but a unified work impressed with the seal of the author, who is a narrator but chooses to attribute his words to the ancients and to ascribe to them statements which they never made (see *Tanna de-Vei Eliyahu). The increase of pseudepigraphic matter can also be seen in authentic Midrashim. In contrast to the early Midrashim there was also an increase of Midrashim and aggadic works in which the *aggadah* is connected with *halakhah* in a variety of forms, some of which are merely transferred from Second Temple literature (e.g., *Pirkei de-R. Eliezer*) and some are the result of internal development by the sages (e.g., *Tanhuma Yelammedenu*). In addition there is also a difference in language. The Galilean Aramaic of the early Midrashim progressively disappears, as does rabbinical Hebrew. Instead there is progressive use of artificial Hebrew, apparently pure and polished and becoming freer from the influences of Aramaic or the admixture of Greek words.

The Middle Period

To the period from the Muslim conquest (c. 640 C.E.) to the end of the tenth century belong many variegated midrashic and aggadic works. In addition to the exegetical and homiletical types of Midrash, the above-mentioned composition by a single person belongs to this period. The most important group of Midrashim of this period – all of which are homiletical – are those of the *Tanhuma Midrash* (**Tanhuma Yelammedenu*) group in which the old and the new are used indiscriminately. Of the exegetical Midrashim, particular mention may be made of *Ecclesiastes Rabbah*, *Midrash Samuel*, *Midrash Proverbs* (greatly influenced by the apocalyptic and *Heikhalot* literatures), *Midrash Tehillim I*, *Exodus Rabbah I*, and the series of smaller *Midrashim (*Midreshet Zuta*) to four of the five *scrolls. In all these too, marks of the old and the new, both in content and in form, appear together. Among the aggadic works the most important are: *Seder Eliyahu Rabbah* and *Seder Eliyahu Zuta*; *Pirkei de-R. Eliezer* (compiled apparently close to 750); *Midrash Agur*, also called *Mishnat R. Eliezer*; and a further series of smaller compositions. In most of them external influences from the Muslim (*Pirkei de-R.*

Eliezer) or Byzantine (*The Throne and Hippodrome of Solomon*, etc.) eras can be seen.

The Late Period

To the period of the 11th and 12th centuries belong the very latest Midrashim. Of these special mention should be made of *Midrash Abba Guryon*, *Esther Rabbah II*, *Midrash Tehillim II*, and the series from the school of *Moses ha-Darshan that already border on the anthologies with regard to their period of composition as well as to content. In these Midrashim there is hardly a trace of even an imitation of the classical proem, the Hebrew is completely medieval, and the pseudepigraphic influence both in content and form is still more pronounced. Among the aggadic works of this period particular mention must be made of the *Sefer ha-Yashar* (see *Midrashim, Smaller in supplementary entries, vol. 16) where the Muslim influence is most recognizable.

The Yalkutim (Anthologies)

From the beginning of the 12th century, scholars in various countries assembled anthologies from various Midrashim and aggadic works. To these belong such works as the **Midrash Lekah Tov* (or the *Pesikta Zutarta*) to the Pentateuch and the five *scrolls (of Tobiah b. Eliezer); the **Yalkut Shiloni* to the whole of the Bible (assembled in Germany at the beginning of the 13th century); **Midrash ha-Gadol* to the Pentateuch and scrolls; and the **Yalkut Makhiri* to various biblical books. Anthologies of the *aggadot* in the Babylonian and Jerusalem Talmuds were also collected, especially close to the beginning of the age of printing. Most of the anthologies quote their sources with the original wording and indicate them (an exception being the *Midrash ha-Gadol*).

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MIDRASH ASERET HA-DIBBEROT (Heb. מִדְרָשׁ עֲשָׂרֶת הַדְבָּרוֹת; "Midrash of the Ten Commandments"), a collection of stories, occasionally connected by short homiletic passages, from the geonic period. Various scholars have ascribed different dates to it, ranging from the seventh century to the 11th. The collection cannot be dated later than the 11th century because in that century both Rabbi *Nissim of Kairouan and later the anonymous collector of the legends published by M. Gaster as *Sefer ha-Ma'asiyyot, The Ancient Collections of Agadot. The Sefer ha-Ma'asiyyot and Two Facsimiles* (1894) made use of stories included in it. The work was apparently composed at the beginning of the geonic period, but later stories were added