

THE AUERBACH CENTRAL AGENCY FOR JEWISH EDUCATION SEIDMAN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER



A Selected Webography and Bibliography on “Engaging with Classical Jewish Texts”

Compiled by
Nancy M. Messinger, Director of Educational Resources

I. Webography

1. Biographies of famous rabbis throughout history - <http://yucs.org/%7Ejyuter/notes/glossary.html>
2. Chapters on Jewish literature - <http://www.authorama.com/chapters-on-jewish-literature-1.html>
3. Comprehensive listing by category - global Jewish database - http://www.digento.de/zusatz/101413_01
4. Jewish law research guide - <http://library.law.miami.edu/jewishlaw/jewishguide.html>
5. Jewish Theological Seminary links on Jewish history and literature - <http://www.jtsa.edu/library/guides/history.shtm>
6. Judaic archival project - http://www.digento.de/zusatz/101413_01
7. Judaic glossary - <http://www.indiana.edu/%7Elets/help-services/QuickGuides/bar-ilan/judaicglossary.html>
8. A map of the Oral Law - Beautiful colorful representation of the development of the Talmud, including references to R. Akiba, Geonim, Jerusalem Talmud, etc. - <http://www.ort.org/ort/edu/rolnik/halacha/halacha.htm>
9. An overview of how to study Torah - http://www.myjewishlearning.com/daily_life/TorahStudy/How_to_Study_Torah.htm
10. A survey of Rabbinic literature - <http://ohr.edu/judaism/survey/survey.htm>
11. A timeline of Jewish texts - http://hillel.myjewishlearning.com/texts/about_jewish_texts/What_Are_Jewish_Texts/Timeline50.htm
12. Wikipedia article on Rabbinic literature - http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rabbinic_literature

This webography and bibliography is available online at www.ajae.org -
Click on **Educational Resources: Bibliographies and Webographies**, and then “**Engaging with Classical Jewish Texts.**”

NMM:brk 10/06

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II. Bibliography for Adults

Back to the Sources: Reading the Classic Jewish Texts edited by Barry Holtz. New York, NY: Summit Books, 1986.

The first complete modern guide to the great books of Jewish tradition, what they are, and how to read them.

Biblical Literacy: The Most Important People, Events, and Ideas of the Hebrew Bible by Joseph Telushkin. New York, NY: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1997.

A retelling of many of the stories of the Bible, mainly in the light of traditional commentaries. Part II of the book discusses legal and ethical issues, and includes a list of the 613 Commandments.

Entering the Biblical Text: Exploring Jewish Values in the Torah by Ronald H. Isaacs. Hoboken, NJ: KTAV Publishing House, 2000.

Twelve Biblical stories are presented with contemporary problems and various commentaries that address the issues. Students are encouraged to re-read the text and to formulate their own answers.

The Everything Torah Book: All You Need to Understand the Basics of Jewish Law and the Five Books of the Old Testament by Yaakov Menken. Avon, MA: Adams Media, 2005.

A popularly written explanation of Jewish beliefs and law, plus a discussion of the salient points in each of the Five Books of Moses. It purports to give a beginner all he or she needs to understand the basics of Jewish law and the *Humash*.

Gateway to the Mishnah: A Selection of Original Mishnah Texts, with Translation, Historical Introductions, Religious and Legal Commentary, and a Concise Dictionary of Hebrew Terminology by Isidore Fishman. Bridgeport, CN: Hartmore House, 1976.

Chapters from the *Mishnah*, in Hebrew and English, on a large variety of subjects including ritual law, civil law, holidays, etc. Footnoted commentary in English based mainly on traditional commentary.



A Guide to Jewish Prayer by Adin Steinsaltz. New York, NY: Schocken Books, 2000.

This is a step-by-step explanation of the daily services, Shabbat and holiday prayers, and special prayers. It includes chapters on the history of the synagogue, the roles of the rabbi and cantor, music in synagogue services, and more.

Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash by Hermann L. Strack. Philadelphia, PA: The Jewish Publication Society, 1945.

More than an introduction, this book includes compilations of classical *midrashim* and detailed reviews of variant texts.

The Living Talmud: The Wisdom of the Fathers and its Classical Commentaries, Selected and Translated with an Essay by Judah Goldin. New York, NY: New American Library, 1957.

A translation of *Pirke Avot* - “the teachings of the Jewish sages on the conduct of human life and thought,” with scholarly commentaries.

Our Sacred Texts: Discovering the Jewish Classics by Ellen Singer, with Bernard M. Zlotowitz. New York, NY: UAHC Press, 1992.

This book covers texts from *Tanakh*, Talmud, *Midrash* and medieval Jewish literature and features learning activities in every chapter. A four-unit curriculum.

Pirke Avot: A Modern Commentary on Jewish Ethics edited and translated by Leonard Kravitz and Kerry M. Olitzky. New York, NY: UAHC Press, 1993.

New edition in linear Hebrew/English text; traditional commentaries and modern perspectives.

Pray Tell: A Hadassah Guide to Jewish Prayer, Including Traditional and Contemporary Perspectives by Jules Harlow, et al.

An easy-to use, step-by-step analysis of the meaning of the prayer service. It includes a wide variety of commentary by many contributors.

Saving the World Entire and 100 Other Beloved Parables from the Talmud by Bradley R. Bleefeld and Robert L. Shook. New York, NY: Penguin Books 1998.

This book serves as an introduction to the spiritual and intellectual foundation of the Talmud, the *Aggadah*. It includes a cross-section of parables and stories, illustrating Jewish values.

Searching for Meaning in Midrash: Lessons in Everyday Living by Michael Katz and Gershon Schwartz. Philadelphia, PA: The Jewish Publication Society, 2002.

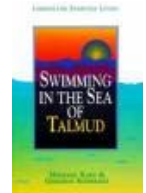
Following an explanatory section on *Midrash*, the authors present a number of *Midrashim* for each book of the Torah. The Biblical source text is shown alongside the text of the *Midrash*.

Sefer Ha-Aggadah: The Book of Jewish Folklore and Legend by H.N. Bialik and Y. H. Rawnitzky, selected, translated and annotated by Chaim Pearl.

This is an abbreviated version of one of the most successful collections of *Aggadah* - the comprehensive term for the vast Rabbinic literature which includes folklore and philosophy, history and parables, ethics and theology.

Swimming in the Sea of Talmud: Lessons for Everyday Living by Michael Katz and Gershon Schwartz. Philadelphia, PA: The Jewish Publication Society, 1998.

This book uses quotes from the six tractates as starting points and applies Talmudic values to contemporary life.



The Talmud: The Steinsaltz Edition - A Reference Guide by Adin Steinsaltz. New York, NY: Random House, 1989.

Using non-technical language, this excellent reference tool explains the structure and content of the traditional Talmudic page. It includes guidelines for Talmudic study, glossaries of Talmudic terms, and halakhic concepts, and more. It is intended for beginners as well as those already immersed in Talmud study.

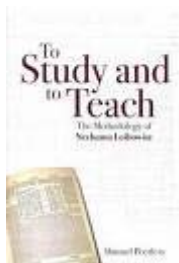
Talmud for Everyday Living: Employer-Employee Relations by Hillel Gamoran. New York, NY: UAHC Press, 2001.

Talmudic passages, highlighting issues of ethics and fairness in such topics as employment contracts, length of working day, and compensation are presented in both the original and English translation. The volume also includes a glossary, notes on individual Talmudic sages, case studies, and discussion questions. The book is organized into seven curriculum units.

Talmud with Training Wheels - An Absolute Beginner's Guide to Talmud

Talmud with Training Wheels - Courtyards and Classrooms: Bava Batra 20b-22a by Joel Lurie Grishaver.
Los Angeles, CA: Torah Aura Productions, 2003.

An introductory teaching tool that provides beginners with the necessary background in a lightly-written fashion. Vol. 1 covers a small section of *Bava Batra* (20b-22a) dealing with the legal principles of *Hazokah* (lit. strength, also "pull") and *Hasagat Gevul* (the infringement of boundaries). The Guide volume provides the history of the *Talmud*, including the social and cultural context, as well other information on layout and style.



To Study and to Teach: The Methodology of Nechama Leibowitz by Shmuel Peerless.
Jerusalem/New York: Urim Publications, 2004.

Intended for use by teachers of Torah (specifically *Humash*) this book explains the methodology used by the legendary master teacher Nechama Leibowitz, z"l, of Jerusalem. It also provides two model lessons, a list of sources, and appendices. See <http://www.jafi.org.il/education/torani/nehama/indexqil.html> for her weekly insights and commentaries on the *Parashah ha Shavuah*.

Torah from Our Sages, translation and explanation by Jacob Neusner. Dallas, TX: Rossel Books, 1984.
Neusner's translation of *Pirke Avot* with his own commentary. He places the work in its historical context and makes connections to modern times. In Hebrew and English.

Understanding the Talmud: A Systematic Guide to Talmudic Structure and Methodology by Yitzchak Feigenbaum. Jerusalem/New York: Feldheim Publishers, 1988.

Systematic guide to Talmudic structure and methodology. It isolates key words, phrases and structures in the Talmud and tells you what to ask and look for, how to understand and follow.

What's Bothering Rashi? A Guide to In-Depth Analysis of His Torah Commentary: Bereishis - Devarim by Avigdor Bonchek. Jerusalem/New York: Feldheim Publishers, 1997.

Each volume deals with one of the five books of the Torah. The author guides the student to discover (1) what Rashi is saying, (2) why Rashi feels it necessary to make the comment, and (3) what supports Rashi's comments. Examples are taken from each *sedrah*.

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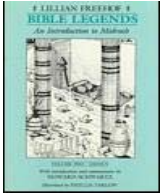
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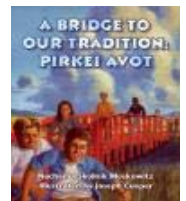
III. Bibliography for Young People



Bible Legends: An Introduction to Midrash by Lillian Freehof, with introductions and commentaries by Howard Schwartz. New York, NY: UAHC Press, 1987. Volume One: Genesis, Volume Two: Exodus.

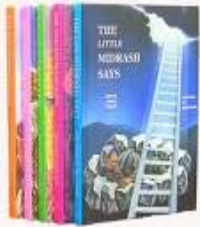
The mysteries of the Bible are “resolved” in these captivating stories. Additional information for young people is provided. (Ages: 10 - 14)

A Bridge to Our Tradition: Pirkei Avot by Nachama Skolnik Moskowitz. New York, NY: UAHC Press, 2001. Accompanying Teachers’ Guide with special section of reproducibles. A Pirkei Avot book for 6th - 8th graders, organized thematically to provide students with the opportunity to study a selection of essential rabbinic texts. The book looks at the text within the framework of character development and responsibilities to improve the world.



A Child’s Book of Midrash: 52 Jewish Stories from the Sages by Barbara Diamond Goldin. Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson, Inc., 1990.

This book presents stories of heroic individuals from the *Talmud* and *Midrash*. (Elementary)

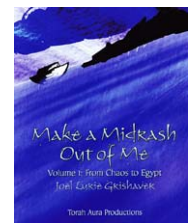


The Little Midrash Says: A Digest of the Weekly Torah portion based on Rashi, Rishonim, and Midrashim, Adapted for Junior Readers and to Read Aloud by R. Weissman. Brooklyn, NY: Benei Yaakov Publications, 1986.

An introduction to Midrash for young readers, with supplementary stories. (Ages: 10+)

Make a Midrash Out of Me by Joel Lurie Grishaver. Los Angeles, CA: Torah Aura Productions, 2004.

This text offers teachers an opportunity to combine drama, creative writing, and art with the teaching of *Torah* and *Midrash*. It encourages students to study Torah, create their own *Midrashic* responses, and study some famous traditional *Midrashim*. (Ages: 10 - 14)



Pirke Avos Activity Book for Teacher and Student by C. Oppenheimer. Brooklyn, NY: Torah Umesorah Publications, 1998.

This workbook provides a four-part program (originally developed for yeshiva first graders) for teaching young students *Pirke Avos* - a “*Pirke Avos* Garden,” Songs, Notebook, and Question of the Week.

Rambam: His Thoughts and His Times: Student Sourcebook, text compiled and edited by Brenda Bacon. The Melton Research Center of the Jewish Theological Seminary, 1995.

Beautifully illustrated text on the Rambam with selections from his works on such topics as *Talmud Torah*, God, *Ta'amei Ha'mitzvot* and messianism. Accompanying teacher's guide: "History" by Brenda Bacon, edited by Marcia L. Kaunfer, et al. (Ages: 13+)



Wise . . . and Not So Wise: Ten Tales from the Rabbis selected and retold by Phillis Gershtator. Philadelphia, PA: Jewish Publication Society, 2004.

Tales derived from *Talmudic* and *Midrashic* folklore, blended with the author's own humor and wisdom. (Ages: 8+)

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