Entering the Gates of the Talmud: A Field Guide to Talmud



Download the full reader here.

How does one enter the gates of Talmud?

The Talmud is a complex work, with a style of study that can bring learners to wisdom and exasperation in equal measure. While tens of thousands of people study the Talmud every day, we often forget to ask the most basic questions about this great book. We put together a field guide to the Talmud, with words and wisdom on some of the questions that keep us up at night, such as:

- *Why is the Talmud so complex, and what does its complexity say about our world?*
- *What is the aesthetic history of the page of the Talmud?*
- *What does the Talmud offer contemporary life?*

In this special Talmud reader, we bring you our favorite insights on the Talmud, with interviews, essays, Talmudic texts that speak to today's challenges, and more. We spoke with some of the leading thinkers and scholars of the Talmud, and put it all together for your reading pleasure. There are four sections to this reader:

1. INTERVIEWS: WORDS TO CONSIDER

• Why is the Talmud so complex? David Bashevkin, Ari Bergmann, and Chaim Saiman on the Complexity of the Talmud
• Why Does the Talmud Look the Way It Does? Michelle Chesner on the Aesthetics of the Talmud

2. ESSAYS: WORDS FROM FRIENDS

Our Favorite Essays On the Talmud, From Our Friends to You
• Essay 1: David Bashevkin on the Authority of the Talmud
• Essay 2: Michelle Chesner on the Bromberg Talmud
• Essay 3: Ari Bergmann on Abbaye and Rava

3. TEXTS: WORDS TO LIVE BY

Although the study of Talmud has carried the Jewish people on its back for millenia, it can be hard at times to find
the human heart of the Talmud, and to draw its meaning for our lives.
• How to Disagree: Three Talmudic Teachings for Our Time
• How to Live with a Broken Heart: Three Talmudic Teachings for Our Time

4. BOOKS: WORDS READ IN THE FUTURE
A Curated List of Our Favorite Books On the Talmud, So You Know Where To Go From Here

We built this reader to be read online or printed at home, so read it from the comfort of your couch, share it with your friends and family when you're finished, and learn some of the texts with a loved one if you're feeling it.

Above all, the Talmud carries a love of dizzying proportions throughout history, so we hope that you appreciate our homage to this great work, and that your table is more interesting for having this reader on it.

Have questions, comments, or hate mail for us? Let us know what you think, at info@18forty.org.