

How to Read and Study this Book

This book is an in-depth introduction to Torah through the wisdom of Jewish sages interwoven with my personal relationship to that wisdom.

I suggest reading this book in the order it is written, as I introduce many fundamental concepts and rules of play before I present in-depth teachings. There is a logical development to the teachings and stories I offer.

You can also open this book at any page and dive in. After all, the great work of rabbinic thought, the Talmud, begins on page ב (bet), the second letter of the Hebrew alphabet, rather than page א (aleph), the first letter. This hints that we are always stepping into the middle of an ongoing story when we study Torah.

When you study the Torah teachings, slow down your pace. Read the teachings more than once. Mull them over. Close your eyes and contemplate their wisdom. Study with a partner. Studying Torah is different than most reading. Although I have endeavored to clarify the teachings, it still takes time to understand Torah and our profound sages. As the Rabbis say:

The one who studies Torah 100 times cannot be compared to the one who studies it 101 times (Babylonian Talmud, Chagiga 9:b).

Each time we go over a Torah teaching, it reveals more, and our understanding grows.

Sarah and Avraham, the first mother and father of the Jewish people, play an essential part in this book. When they first appear in the Torah, they are called Sarai and Avram. Later, God changes their names to Sarah and Avraham. I use their original names when I offer a teaching about those names or when I quote from the Torah.

MY PERSONAL STORIES BEGIN WITH the first five words in capitals.

Indented bold paragraphs are quotes. Direct quotes from English texts have quotation marks around them. All other indented bold paragraphs are my translations.

The fiery Hebrew word on the cover is *שׂשׂוּי* (*shaashuai*) my delight. It is found in the verse:

If your Torah were not my delight I would be lost in my distress (Psalms 119:92).

Torah is God's delight. Torah is my delight.

My hope is that the spacious design layout of this book offers breathing room and open spaces for you to discover the delight of living Torah in your life.

