

Essential Reading (Version 1.1)

Compiled by Devir Kahan

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This list is compiled for two primary reasons: First, as a reference tool for my own use as I discover things that I find to be helpful or of particular importance and would like to recall for later reference. Second, as a reference tool I can give to others upon being confronted with someone's curiosity in a particular subject. This list represents (some of) the trajectory of my own thought, influences, and development and is suggested reading as such with the intended result of giving the reader a robust, well-rounded, outlook in each area. It is my belief, at the very least, that one who has read all that is listed below will have a rather good grasp on things, and will then be capable of developing and formulating his or her own, more precise and personal approaches.

Inclusion of a book or source on this list does not necessarily equal my endorsement or agreement with everything contained therein. Indeed, some of the items listed below are obviously far simpler than others, but hopefully the reader can take the good and discard the bad with each. Further, each source may lead to others, and so it would be wise to explore full websites of individual articles, links, and so forth.

It should also be noted that a source will not be listed twice on this list. It is placed under the section in which I see it as most fitting. Needless to say, there is much cross-over between sections, and a source listed under one heading may well be useful for the understanding of another heading as well.

In addition to all the items listed below, the reader should be familiar with, in at the very least the most general way, the works of Rambam, Ramban, R. Yehudah HaLevi, R. Saadia Gaon, R. Shimshon Raphael Hirsch. One should also, of course, be familiar with the entirety of Tanach, and, in general, learn and study as much as possible. There are certainly many things not listed here that a person should be familiar with. In short, the more you know, the better you will feel. Knowledge and scholarship is power.

This entire document is in no particular order whatsoever. And, of course, this is very much a work-in-progress, by design. I hope the reader finds it useful.

Belief In God

Books:

God, Man and History by Eliezer Berkovits

The Devil's Delusion by Dr. David Berlinski

Nonsense of a High Order: The Confused World of Modern Atheism by R. Moshe Averick

Articles/Essays:

Faith & Doubt by R. Dr. Norman Lamm

<http://www.lookstein.org/articles/faithanddoubt.htm>

Faith and its Justification by Shubert Spero

http://www.jstor.org/stable/23257380?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents

Science Increasingly Makes the Case for God by Eric Metaxas

http://www.wsj.com/articles/eric-metaxas-science-increasingly-makes-the-case-for-god-1419544568?mod=hp_opinion

Irrational Atheism by Crispin Sartwell

<http://www.theatlantic.com/national/archive/2014/10/a-leap-of-atheist-faith/381353/>

Is Atheism Irrational? by Gary Gutting

<http://mobile.nytimes.com/blogs/opinionator/2014/02/09/is-atheism-irrational/>

Rabbi Soloveitchik and Belief in God by Shubert Spero

<https://muse.jhu.edu/article/22068>

Faith is the Defeat of Probability by Possibility by R. Lord Jonathan Sacks

<http://www.rabbisacks.org/faith-defeat-probability-possibility/>

The Will To Believe by William James

<http://educ.jmu.edu/~omearawm/ph101willtobelieve.html>

Permission To Believe In God series on Torah Musings by R. Gil Student

<http://www.torahmusings.com/tag/belief/>

It's Easy to Be an Atheist if You Ignore Science by R. Moshe Averick

<http://www.algemeiner.com/2016/08/10/its-easy-to-be-an-atheist-if-you-ignore-science/>

Shiurim/Lectures:

Is Orthodox Faith Reasonable? by Dr. Sam Lebens

When Am I Justified In My Belief? by R. Dr. Aaron Segal

Other Resources:

On The Bookshelf

<http://www.jewishpress.com/indepth/interviews-and-profiles/on-the-bookshelf-12/2016/05/27/0/>

How Do We Know That God Exists? thread on *Mi Yodeya*

<http://judaism.stackexchange.com/questions/13764/how-do-we-know-that-god-exists/13767#13767>

Age Of The Universe & Evolution (“Science Vs. Torah”)

Books:

The Great Partnership by R. Lord Jonathan Sacks

The Challenge of Creation by R. Dr. Natan Slifkin

The Cambrian Explosion and Signature in the Cell by Dr. Stephen C. Meyer

Articles/Essays:

Dealing with the Deluge by R. Natan Slifkin

<http://www.rationalistjudaism.com/2010/10/dealing-with-deluge.html>

Shiurim/Lectures:

Non Literal Interpretation Of Scripture In Jewish Tradition by R. Jeremy Wieder

<http://www.yutorah.org/lectures/lecture.cfm/716561/rabbi-jeremy-wieder/non-literal-interpretation-of-scripture-in-jewish-tradition/>

Other Resources:

Sources on Chazal and knowledge of science:

<http://torahandscience.blogspot.co.za/2006/04/sources-indicating-that-chazal-did-not.html>

Fun Richard Dawkins videos:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SL7CCyuXAS4>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wilaErxzGSE>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=roFdPHdhgKQ>

Exodus & Sinai

Articles/Essays:

The Exodus: Convergence of Science, History and Jewish Tradition by Judah Landa

<http://www.hakirah.org/Vol14Landa.pdf>

Modern Faith In Sinai by Dr. Sam Lebens

<http://thetorah.com/modern-faith-in-sinai/>

Articles on *Mosaic* by Joshua Berman (and others):

<http://mosaicmagazine.com/essay/2015/03/was-there-an-exodus/>

Follow-up: <http://mosaicmagazine.com/response/2015/03/was-israel-taken-out-of-egypt-or-egypt-out-of-israel/>

See also: <http://mosaicmagazine.com/response/2015/03/how-to-judge-evidence-for-the-exodus/> and <http://mosaicmagazine.com/response/2015/03/biblical-criticism-hasnt-negated-the-exodus/>

The Practices of the Land of Egypt (Leviticus 18:3): Incest, 'Anat, and Israel in the Egypt of Ramesses the Great by Richard C. Steiner

Shiurim/Lectures:

How Do You Know the Torah is True: A Study in Comparative Religion by R. Kelemen

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VarUODJ9uPo>

R. Mordechai Becher shiurim on archeology:

<https://torahdownloads.com/shiur-24332.html>

<https://torahdownloads.com/shiur-24333.html>

The Bible and Archeology by Ken Spiro

<http://www.simpletoremember.com/media/a/archeologybible/>

Other Resources:

This thread on Reddit, the comments of user “flubb” in particular:

<https://www.reddit.com/r/AskHistorians/comments/19p1vu/>

do we know if the exodus happened the way its/

Evidence for Torah Mi'Sinai from Morasha syllabus:

<http://www.morashasyllabus.com/class/torahm'sinai1.pdf>

Biblical Criticism

Books:

Fundamental Issues in the Study of Tanach by R. Amnon Bazak

<http://etzion.org.il/en/topics/fundamentalissuesstudytanakh>

Original in Hebrew called “עד היום הזה”

The Documentary Hypothesis by Umberto Cassuto

The Higher Criticism Of The Pentateuch by William Henry Green

Modern Scholarship in the Study of Torah (The Orthodox Forum Series) by R. Shalom Carmy

Articles/Essays:

“No Fear Biblical Criticism” series on *Daf Aleph*

<http://dafaleph.com/home?category=Bible%20Criticism>

On Bible Criticism and Its Counterarguments by R. Nathan Lopes Cardozo

http://www.aishdas.org/toratemet/en_cardozo.html

How The Documentary Hypothesis Has Been Debunked by R.N. Whybray

<https://hesedweemet.wordpress.com/2009/08/24/how-the-documentary-hypothesis-has-been-debunked-r-n-whybray/>

Faith Lectures: Revelation — Torah From Heaven by R. Lord Jonathan Sacks

<http://www.rabbisacks.org/faith-lectures-revelation-torah-heaven/>

On The Bible And Literary Criticism by James Kugel

Orthodox Reactions to the Challenge of Biblical Criticism by Steve Shaw

http://www.jstor.org/stable/23256338?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents

Shiurim/Lectures:

The Origins of Kri and Ktiv and the Integrity of Tanach by R. Jeremy Wieder

<http://www.yutorah.org/lectures/lecture.cfm/788075/rabbi-jeremy-wieder/the-origins-of-kri-and-ktiv-and-the-integrity-of-tanach/>

Inconsistencies in the Torah: Looking Beyond R. Breuer and Source Criticism by R. Dr. Joshua Berman

<http://www.yutorah.com/lectures/lecture.cfm/764032/rabbi-dr-joshua-berman/inconsistencies-in-the-torah-looking-beyond-r-breuer-and-source-criticism/>

Tanach Yom Iyun Understanding Tanach in the context in which it was written by R. Dr. Joshua Berman

<http://www.yutorah.com/lectures/lecture.cfm/756994/rabbi-dr-joshua-berman/tanach-yom-iyun-understanding-tanach-in-the-context-in-which-it-was-written/>

Studying Humash in Ancient Near Eastern Context: Assur, Hovah or Reshut? by R. Dr. Joshua Berman

<http://www.yutorah.com/lectures/lecture.cfm/752292/rabbi-dr-joshua-berman/studying-humash-in-ancient-near-eastern-context-assur-hovah-or-reshut/>

Understanding Patriarchal Narratives in the Light of the Ancient Near East by Dr. Barry Eichler

<http://www.yutorah.com/lectures/lecture.cfm/725866/professor-barry-eichler/understanding-patriarchal-narratives-in-the-light-of-the-ancient-near-east/>

Intro to Bible lectures on YU Torah

<http://www.yutorah.org/search/?teacher=80214&collection=1261>

Other Resources:

Pentateuchal Authorship Outline by Dr. John E. Anderson

<https://hesedweemet.files.wordpress.com/2009/08/anderson-pentateuch-outline-longer.pdf>

Did The Exodus Happen? video from BAR by Richard Elliot Friedman

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BC574fS18lc>

Archeology and the Exodus by R. Dr. Joshua Berman

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZOGeusWwl-g>

Current Approaches on TheTorah.com

<http://thetorah.com/current-approaches/>

Familiarity with the following commentaries on the Torah:

R. J.H. Hertz

JPS Commentary by Baruch A. Levine

R. Dovid Tzvi Hoffman

Shadal, Malbim, Abarbanel

Gender Issues

Books:

Judaism and Homosexuality: An Authentic Orthodox View by R. Chaim Rapoport

Articles/Essays:

Orthodox Women Rabbis? Tentative Thoughts that Distinguish Between the Timely and the Timeless by R. Michael J. Broyde and R. Shlomo M. Brody

<http://www.hakirah.org/Vol%2011%20Broyde.pdf>

Women, Tefillin, and the Halakhic Process by R. Shlomo Brody
<http://www.torahmusings.com/2014/02/women-tefillin-and-the-halakhic-process/>
Letter to the Editor by R. Jeremy Wieder
<http://yucommentator.org/2015/12/letter-to-the-editor-3/>
Review Essay — Relating To Orthodox Homosexuals: The Case For Compassion by Uri C. Cohen
Women, Keri'at Ha-Torah, and Aliyyot by R. Aryeh Frimer and R. Dov Frimer

Shiurim/Lectures:

The Changing Landscape of Women and Talmud Torah by R. J.J. Schacter
<http://www.yutorah.org/lectures/lecture.cfm/853205/rabbi-dr-jacob-j-schacter/the-changing-landscape-of-women-and-talmud-torah/>
Man & Woman He Created Them by R. Efram Goldberg:
http://www.yutorah.org/lectures/lecture.cfm/837346/Rabbi_Efram_Goldberg/
Man and Woman He Created Them- Torah View of Transgender
The Role Of Subjectivity In The Issur Negia by R. Jonathan Ziring
<http://www.yutorah.org/lectures/lecture.cfm/828956/rabbi-jonathan-ziring/the-role-of-subjectivity-in-the-issur-negia/>

“Hashkafah”

Books:

Arguments for the Sake of Heaven: Emerging Trends in Traditional Judaism by R. Lord Jonathan Sacks
Torah U'Madda by R. Dr. Norman Lamm
Rabbinic Authority and Personal Autonomy by Moshe Z. Sokol (Editor)
The Nineteen Letters by R. Shimshon Raphael Hirsch

Articles/Essays:

A Judaism Engaged With The World by R. Lord Jonathan Sacks
http://rabbisacks.adlertrust.netdna-cdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Judaism_Engaged_JSacks_webpdf2.pdf
Centrist Orthodoxy: A Spiritual Accounting by R. Aharon Lichtenstein
Torah and General Culture: Confluence and Conflict by R. Aharon Lichtenstein
If There Is No “Da’at,” How Can We Have Leadership? by R. Aharon Lichtenstein
<http://www.aishdas.org/avodah/faxes/daatTorahLichtenstein.pdf>
“Mah Enosh”: Reflections on the Relation between Judaism and Humanism by R. Aharon Lichtenstein
A Jewish Ethic of Leisure by R. Norman Lamm
Of Marriage: Relationship And Relations by R. Aharon Lichtenstein
Are Our Children Too Worldly? by Aharon Hersch Fried
Rupture And Reconstruction: The Transformation Of Contemporary Orthodoxy by R. Haym Soloveitchik
<http://www.lookstein.org/links/orthodoxy.htm>

Shiurim/Lectures:

Balancing Torah, Madah, and Culture by R. Mordechai Willig
<http://www.yutorah.org/lectures/lecture.cfm/856505/rabbi-mordechai-i-willig/balancing-torah-madah-and-culture/>

Philosophy

Books:

Lonely Man Of Faith by R. Joseph B. Soloveitchik
Halakhic Man by R. Joseph B. Soloveitchik
Orot by R. Kook
Nevuchei HaDor by R. Kook
Nefesh HaChaim by R. Chaim of Volozhin
Thoughts To Ponder Vol.1 & 2 by R. Nathan Lopez Cardozo
Must A Jew Believe Anything? by Menachem Kellner
The Limits of Orthodox Theology by Marc B. Shapiro
Maimonides' Confrontation with Mysticism by Menachem Kellner
Maimonides the Rationalist by Herbert A. Davidson
Maimonides: Life and Thought by Moshe Halbertal

Morality

Articles/Essays:

The Origin of Nations and the Shadow of Violence: Theological Perspectives on Canaan and Amalek by R. Shalom Carmy

Talmud Torah

Shiurim/Lectures:

Talmudic Methodology 1/3: Why Study Talmudic Analysis by Rabbi Moshe Taragin
<http://www.yutorah.org/lectures/lecture.cfm/857690/rabbi-moshe-taragin/talmudic-methodology-1/3-why-study-talmudic-analysis/>

Shabbos

Articles/Essays:

Getting Shabbos Right by R. Mayer Schiller
https://www.ou.org/jewish_action/07/2013/getting-shabbos-right/

Halacha, etc.

Books:

Horeb by R. Shimshon Raphael Hirsch
Faith and Folly: The Occult in Torah Perspective by R. Yaakov Hillel

Shiurim/Lectures:

Conflicts Between Science and Halakhah: The Responses of Poskim by R. Jeremy Wieder
<http://www.yutorah.org/search/?s=conflicts+between+science&sort=1>

Polemics & Apologetics

(*Not necessarily in a bad way)

Books:

Nine Questions People Ask About Judaism by Dennis Prager and R. Joseph Telushkin

Living Up To The Truth by R. Dr. Dovid Gottlieb

http://ohr.edu/explore_judaism/living_up_to_the_truth/

Other Resources:

<http://www.mesora.org/>

<http://truetorah.blogspot.co.il/2013/08/evidence-of-divine-origin-of-torah.html?m=1>

<http://www.mesora.org/CorroborationII.htm>

<http://judaism.stackexchange.com/questions/36879/potential-issue-with-theory-on-divine-origins-of-judaism>

<http://www.jewswithquestions.com/index.php?/topic/65-proof-from-mesorah-i/>

https://youtu.be/PEg_Oys4NkA

<http://www.torahphilosophy.com/2007/03/could-ezra-have-written-torah.html>

<http://www.torahphilosophy.com/2009/05/atheism-in-nutshell.html>

<http://torahdownloads.com/shiur-1009772.html>

Misc.

Shiurim of R. Israel Chait:

<http://www.ybt.org/fundamentals.html>

<http://www.ybt.org/rchait04-05.html>

<http://www.ybt.org/essays.html>

Shiurim of R. Dovid Gottlieb:

http://www.dovidgottlieb.com/Rabbi_Gottlieb_Tapes.html

<https://torahdownloads.com/s-29-rabbi-dovid-gottlieb.html>

Shiurim of R. Mordechai Becher:

<http://www.simpletoremember.com/authors/a/rabbi-mordechai-becher/>

Shiurim of R. Mendel Blachman:

http://kby.org/english/torat-yavneh/results.asp?file_rav=34&task=search

Shiurim of R. Dr. Akiva Tatz:

<http://www.torahdownloads.com/s-9-rabbi-akiva-tatz.html?page=3>

<http://www.simpletoremember.com/authors/a/rabbi-akiva-tatz/>