

Post-Yeshiva and Seminary

Reading List

INTRODUCTION

- 1. This suggested reading list has evolved in response to the demand from both young women and men leaving seminary and yeshiva and from older students for a guide to how to continue their Jewish reading and learning once they leave the 'bubble' of Yeshiva/Seminary life.**
- 2. There are tens of thousands of wonderful sefarim on the market and my list is not intended to be comprehensive or definitive. It also unavoidably reflects my own particular tastes. Many of these are books have had and continue to have a significant impact on me, and they could be helpful for a broad range of students. The list is aimed at an intelligent (although not necessarily 'academic'¹) student who is interested in seeing a range of perspectives and approaches. Inevitably, given the broad range of halachic and hashkafic approaches within the contemporary orthodox world, not every book will appeal to every reader. Some will be too 'academic' for some people and some will be too 'frummy' for others. Individuals can, and should, seek the advice of their own religious mentors as to what material will best suit them personally. I also recommend that you do your own on-line research about the authors I have listed. Many of them have written and audio shiurim on line and you can get your own feel for their style and substance. One of the additions I have made to this updated list is links in the footnotes for books reviews.**
- 3. This list is not short, but don't be overwhelmed. You don't have to read them all! I have divided the list into over 30 categories. Look into the areas you're most interested in and try some out.**

¹ For the student interested in a more academic selection of books on some of these topics, I have made some broader suggestions in the footnotes. I am conscious that my own purview now includes more academic scholarship, due partly to the doctorate I am currently (2024) pursuing at YU. By definition, the academic perspective is not religiously motivated. In some areas it will present views which are wholly incompatible with Orthodox thought. In others, the lines are blurred (which may be even more challenging). In yet others, the academic scholarship is entirely consistent with traditional Orthodox hashkafa and may indeed be an important resource in deepening religious commitment. I have indicated in my notes where works are of an academic nature and the reader should consult with their own religious advisors on which books would be helpful for them.

4. This list is limited to books, rather than digital and on-line resources, although I have flagged a few websites in my footnotes. Many students today are more likely to look on-line before opening a sefer. For a detailed list of on-line sites and resources see the following link on my website - <https://rabbimanning.com/links/> . I hope to keep this updated fairly regularly.
5. I have purposely limited the recommendations to secondary sources, mostly in English. I have also included a few Hebrew sefarim which should be accessible (at least to some degree) by many yeshiva/seminary leavers.
7. Students should always look to the primary sources – Tanach, Gemara, Midrash, Rishonim, Acharonim and their respective commentaries – where they are able. I have not included these classics (such as the Sefer HaChinuch, the Kuzari etc) in my list but HUNDREDS of these primary sources are now available in English translation and I strongly advise that you read them.
8. Most of the books on this list are available from Jewish book stores² or from online stores – both Jewish (eg., Maggid/Koren, Mosaica, Feldheim, Artscroll etc) and Amazon. If you click the link on the title, it will take you to amazon.com and I will receive a small commission 😊
9. I have chosen only a few books in each heading. There are many more. If there is an area or issue that specifically interests you, please feel free to be in touch with me and I will try to make other suggestions.
10. If YOU have comments, thoughts and ideas of books that you think I should read and/or should be added to the list, please be in touch with me – rabbi@rabbimanning.com

² As for recommended book stores - in Jerusalem, Manny's Book Store in Mea Shearim has a wide range of English titles. But for a broader and more eclectic range which crosses many hashkafic boundaries try Pomeranz Bookseller near Ben Yehuda. Judaica Book Center also has good stock and service. Don't forget the numerous second-hand book shops in Yerushalayim which often carry kodesh books too (and occasionally real gems!). A great bookstore in Teaneck is The Judaica House. Good annual book sales are the YU Seforim Sale at YU in February, the Mosad HaRav Kook sale and the parallel Mercaz HaRav sale (in the yeshiva) in Kiryat Moshe in Nissan (mostly Hebrew sefarim) and the sales at the Yemei Iyun BaTanach at Yeshivat Har Etzion in Alon Shevut at the beginning of Av.

1. CHUMASH AND COMMENTARIES

The Living Torah³

R' Aryeh Kaplan

Rav Hirsch on Chumash⁴

Frameworks

R' Mattis Weinberg⁵

Between the Lines of the Bible (2 Parts)

R' Yitzchak Etshalom⁶

The Philosophy of Hebrew Scripture

Yoram Hazony⁷

Redeeming Relevance⁸

R' Francis Nataf

What's Bothering Rashi

R' Avigdor Bonchek

Patterns in Rashi

R' Yisrael Herczeg

Pshuto Shel Mikra

R' Yehuda Cooperman

trans. R' Immanuel Bernstein⁹

R' Yoel Elitzur¹⁰

Places in the Parasha

Rashi's Commentary on the Torah

Canonization and Resistance in the

Reception of a Jewish Classic¹¹

Eric Lawee

³ An interesting English translation of the Chumash, with helpful historical and contextual notes, maps and charts.

⁴ Available in an older and also a more recently published English translation. Read it slowly and carefully to build a picture of Rav Hirsch's worldview.

⁵ A very out-of-the-box thinker drawing unconventional conclusions from a massive range of sources. Like nothing you've seen before.

⁶ One of the few English-speaking representatives of the 'Gush' school of Parshanut. See also R' Menachem Leibtag's website – www.tanach.org

⁷ Hazony is a leading voice in the growing school of Torah observant academic thinkers in Israel. This mind-opening work on the seismic shift in philosophical thinking introduced by the Chumash will change the way you relate to the text. A book that not only educates and inspires, but also makes you proud to be Jewish!

⁸ A fresh look with at most of the key themes in Chumash. R' Nataf is an original thinker with passion and vision and is able to reframe the Chumash in a thought-provoking way.

⁹ R. Bernstein has arranged and translated R. Yehuda Cooperman's monumental work on Chumash. For anyone able to access the original Hebrew of R. Cooperman, that is certainly recommended. For a book review see <https://jewishaction.com/books/reviews/review-of-pshuto-shel-mikra/>. R. Bernstein was a close talmid and a cousin of R. Cooperman and his many sefarim – both his *Dimensions* series on Chumash and also his many books on the Chagim - are highly recommended.

¹⁰ An English translation of Rav Elitzur's fascinating sefer explaining how understanding of the geography of Eretz Yisrael can give a deeper appreciation of pshat. For a review see <https://traditiononline.org/review-places-in-the-parasha/>

¹¹ See review at <https://traditiononline.org/book-review-eric-lawee-rashis-commentary-on-the-torah-canonization-and-resistance-in-the-reception-of-a-jewish-classic/>

2. TANACH AND COMMENTARIES¹²

The Queen You Thought You Knew
 The Beast that Crouches at the Door
 Peshat Isn't So Simple
 Tanakh – An Owner's Manual¹⁴
 Psalms That Speak to You
 Maggid Studies in Tanach
 Maggid Tanach Companions¹⁵
 Koren Tanakh Of The Land of Israel¹⁶

R' Dovid Fohrman¹³
 R' Dovid Fohrman
 R' Hayyim Angel
 R' Moshe Sokolow
 R' Yitzchak Bell

3. SHABBAT

The Sabbath
 Sabbath: Day of Eternity
 The Sabbath
 Shabbat - A Day To Create Yourself

Dayan Dr. Isidore Grunfield
 R' Aryeh Kaplan¹⁷
 R' Abraham J Heschel¹⁸
 R' Warren Goldstein

4. CHAGIM AND THE HOLIDAYS

Book of Our Heritage
 The Festivals in Halacha

Eliyahu Kitov
 R' Shlomo Zevin

¹² In general terms many of the exciting new ideas in Tanach are emerging from the 'New School' of Tanach study based in Yeshivat Har Etzion ('Gush') and its sister college, Michlelet Herzog. Most of this is in Hebrew although some is emerging in English, for example R' Menachem Leibtag – tanach.org, through writers such as Dr. Yael Ziegler and more broadly in the Maggid publications.

¹³ One of the few Rabbanim outside Israel producing really exciting and novel work on Tanach.

¹⁴ An important read! Short guide to the important background issues that a person should be aware of – historical, textual, interpretive – when learning Tanach.

¹⁵ The Maggid Studies in Tanach - <https://korenpub.com/collections/maggid-studies-in-tanakh> and separate Maggid Tanach Companions <https://korenpub.com/collections/maggid-tanakh-companions> have opened a new window in English language Tanach commentary. Pulling significantly from the Tanach school of the Gush, these series are, in my view, important reading for the student who wants to understand the bridge between the beit midrash and academic bible study, especially in those areas where the academic scholarship can actually deepen religious understanding and commitment.

¹⁶ Shemot, Vaykira and Shmuel have been released as of 2024.

¹⁷ Read **EVERYTHING** you can by R' Aryeh Kaplan. You can pick up many of his works together in The Aryeh Kaplan Anthology.

¹⁸ A controversial figure who was closely associated with the Conservative movement and JTS for much of his life. Some of R' Heschel's views on other issues are outside the 'comfort zone' of most Orthodox thinkers today, but this specific sefer on the meaning of Shabbat is a classic and a must read.

Patterns in Time
The Exodus You Almost Passed Over

R' Mattis Weinberg¹⁹
R' Dovid Fohrman

5. PRAYER

The World of Prayer

R' Eli Munk

6. MIDRASH

The Juggler and the King
Learning to Read Midrash
The Crowns on the Letters
Fresh Fruit & Vintage Wine

R' Aharon Feldman
Simi Peters
R' Ari Kahan
R' Yitzi Blau

7. CONTEMPORARY HALACHIC ISSUES

Contemporary Halachic Problems
Gray Matter
Dalet Amot & others
Headlines
Search Engine
The Encyclopedia of Jewish Values
Guide to the Complex
Torah in a Connected World -
A Halakhic Perspective On Communication
Technology and Social Media²⁰

R' J. David Bleich (7 vols)
R' Chaim Jachter (4 vols)
R' Ari Enkin (10 vols)
Dovid Lichtenstein (3 vols)
R' Gil Student (2 vols)
R' Nachum Amsel (2 vols)
R' Shlomo Brody

R' Jonathan Ziring

8. HALACHA²¹

8.1 Generally

פניני הלכה – ר' אליעזר מלמד²²

¹⁹ Only 2 vols ever came out – Chanukah (a mind-stretching read) and Rosh Hashana.

²⁰ For review see <https://traditiononline.org/review-torah-in-a-connected-world/>

²¹ Hundreds of halacha sefarim are published every year and it is now possible to find something in English on almost everything. I have listed only a few areas of halacha and a few of the sefarim in those areas – see Kohelet 12:12!

²² An important and senior posek in the Dati Leumi world in Israel. Some of his rulings have proved controversial in some communities. Many of his halacha works are available on-line in English translation at <https://ph.yhb.org.il/en/>

8.2 Hilchot Shabbat

The 39 Melochos

The series (now 6 or 7 sefarim) by

The Halachos of Shabbos

The Halachos of Muktzeh

The Halachos of Refuah

Shabbat and The Modern Kitchen

שמירת שבת כהלכתה – ר' יהושע נויבריט²⁶

שבת – ר' יוסף צבי רימון²⁷

R' Dovid Ribiat²³

R' Simcha Bunim Cohen

R' Shimon Eider²⁴

R' Yisrael Pinchas Bodner

R' Yisrael Pinchas Bodner

R' Levi Halperin²⁵

8.3 Hilchot Chagim

Chol HaMoed

The Halachos of Pesach

Hilchot Moadim

R' Dovid Zucker/R' Moshe
Francis

R' Shimon Eider

R' David Brofsky

8.4 Hilchot Berachot

The Halachos of Brochos

Halachos of K'zayis

The Laws of B'rachos

וזאת הברכה – ר' אלכסדר מנדלבוים

R' Yisrael Pinchas Bodner

R' Yisrael Pinchas Bodner

R' Binyomin Forst

8.5 Monetary Halacha

The Laws of Tzedakka and Maaser

Halachos of Other People's Money

R' Shimon Taub

R' Yisrael Pinchas Bodner

²³ Very comprehensive. Try to read at least some of the detailed Hebrew footnotes at the back.

²⁴ Unfortunately only on a few of the melachot up to Bishul.

²⁵ An old book (1986) in terms of technology but an excellent presentation of some of the principles of hilchot Shabbat. See parallel volume Kashrut and the Modern Kitchen.

²⁶ Now in third edition in Hebrew. There is an English translation of the second edition, but the Hebrew (with footnotes) is far better – worth struggling through!

²⁷ Rav Yosef Zvi Rimon has now brought out 4 volumes on Hilchot Shabbat. Some have been translated into English. They are filled with Rav Rimon's trademark charts and diagrams, which makes them very user friendly.

The Laws of Ribbis
 A Matter of Interest
 Pure Money
 Ma'aser Kesafim
 Making It Work

R' Yisroel Reisman
 R' Mordechai Kanner
 R' Shlomo Cohen (2 vols)
 ed Cyril Domb
 R' Ari Wasserman

8.6 Hilchot Bein Adam Lechavero

Ahavat Chesed
 The Right and the Good
 Divine Footsteps
 False Facts and True Rumors
 Words Change Worlds
 The Laws of Outreach

Chafetz Chaim
 R' Daniel Feldman²⁸
 R' Daniel Feldman
 R' Daniel Feldman
 R' Menachem Salasnik
 R' Avraham Edelstein

8.7 Hilchot Tefilla

Priority in Prayer
 Rigshei Lev (on women's tefilla)
 אשי ישראל – ר' ישראל פופיפר

R' Yisroel Feinhandler
 R' Menachem Nissel

8.8 Hilchot Kashrut

Kashrus in the Kitchen Q&A
 The Laws of Kashrus
 Food – A Halachic Analysis

R' Avi Wiesenfeld
 R' Binyamin Forst
 R' Yehuda Spitz

8.9 Hilchot Shemitta

Shemita

R' Yosef Zvi Rimon²⁹

8.10 Hilchot Aveilut

Hilchot Avelut
 Death and Bereavement

R' David Brofsky
 R' Abner Weiss

²⁸ One of the senior and inspiring talmidei chachamim from the world of YU.

²⁹ One of the leading poskim in the Religious Zionist world.

8.11 Hilchot Niddah

Halachos of Niddah	R' Shimon Eider
Laws of Niddah	R' Binyomin Forst (2 vols)
The Laws and Concepts of Nidda	R' Zvi Sobolofsky

8.12 Other

From Sinai to Ethiopia ³⁰	R' Sharon Shalom
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9. JEWISH THOUGHT AND HASHKAFa

The Nineteen Letters	R' Shimon Refael Hirsch
Chorev ³¹	R' Shimon Refael Hirsch
Introduction to Horeb ³²	R' I. Grunfield
Handbook of Jewish Thought (2 vols)	R' Aryeh Kaplan
The Aryeh Kaplan Anthology (2 vols)	R' Aryeh Kaplan
Living Inspired	R' Akiva Tatz
Worldmask	R' Akiva Tatz
Letters to a Buddhist Jew	R' Akiva Tatz
Will, Freedom and Destiny	R' Akiva Tatz
Permission to Believe/Receive ³³	R' Lawrence Keleman
Essential Essays on Judaism	R' Eliezer Berkovits
The Eye of the Storm ³⁴	R' Aharon Feldman
Judaism Reclaimed ³⁵	R' Shmuel Phillips

³⁰ A detailed comparison of the traditional practices of the Ethiopian community with the normative halachic system.

³¹ A MUST!!! Not the easiest of quick-reads but so worth tackling. Look at the 19 Letters first and then graduate to Chorev.

³² Effectively a book in itself. Often printed in the front of English editions of Chorev.

³³ Two short books setting out a basic outline of some of the classic philosophical and traditional proofs for the existence of God and the Authenticity of the Torah. There is MUCH more to say and R' Keleman's books are (intentionally) fairly simplified. Read them as a starting primer and then research the individual topics in more depth.

³⁴ A collection of thought-through essays outlining the Charedi hashkafic position on many contemporary issues. Quite fiery in places!

³⁵ An excellent read. A very intelligent presentation of hashkafic positions on rationalism, mysticism and much more. Presented from an broad and open-minded Charedi perspective. Highly recommended. See review at <https://jewishaction.com/books/reviews/judaism-reclaimed-philosophy-and-theology-in-the-torah/>

Talmud Reclaimed ³⁶	R' Shmuel Phillips
Hashgachah Pratis ³⁷	R' Aryeh Leibowitz
The Paths of Providence ³⁸	Chaim Gross
Rupture and Reconstruction ³⁹	R' Haym Soloveitchik
The Choice to Be ⁴⁰	R' Jeremy Kagan
Torah U'Madda ⁴¹	R' Norman Lamm
Faith and Doubt	R' Norman Lamm
Books of the People	ed. Stuart Halpern
Torah and Western Thought	ed. R' Meir Soloveitchik
Illuminating Jewish Thought (2 vols) ⁴²	R' Netanel Wiederblank
A Guide for the Jewish Undecided	Sam Lebens ⁴³
Maimonides Confrontation with Mysticism ⁴⁴	Menachem Kellner ⁴⁵
Science in the Beit Midrash ⁴⁶	Menachem Kellner
Torah in the Observatory ⁴⁷	Menachem Kellner
The Limits of Orthodox Theology ⁴⁸	Marc Shapiro
Must a Jew Believe Anything? ⁴⁹	Menachem Kellner

³⁶ See <https://blogs.timesofisrael.com/book-review-talmud-reclaimed-an-ancient-text-in-the-modern-era/>

³⁷ A good analysis of some of the key questions surrounding Divine Providence.

³⁸ An excellent and comprehensive work on all of the key issues surrounding Divine Providence – also nicely written in a very readable way.

³⁹ Really a long article and available free online. An important insight into how 20C Orthodox Judaism emerged.

⁴⁰ An excellent contemporary presentation of classic hashkafic themes from the Maharal and other mystical sources on the issue of free choice. Much of this hashkafa is the backbone of modern Jewish teaching on these issues.

⁴¹ An analysis of the fundamental defining doctrines of Modern Orthodoxy and the synthesis between Kodesh and Chol. A critical read for someone trying to work out what the Modern Orthodox world stands for.

⁴² Two mammoth books which give a wide array of comprehensive sources on some of the 13 Ikarim.

⁴³ Sam Lebens is one of the impressive cadre of young (or youngish) committed Orthodox religious thinkers who are also first-rate academic scholars – in his case Analytical Philosophy. Highly recommended for anyone who is philosophically minded and has questions on the Principles of Faith, especial for those who are engaged by Pascal's Wager. For a review see <https://traditiononline.org/book-review-samuel-lebens-a-guide-for-the-jewish-undecided-a-philosopher-makes-the-case-for-orthodox-judaism/>

⁴⁴ Kellner deals with around 10 key hashkafic issues, showing how the Rambam's perspective differed from that of the proto-kabbalists of the day. Highly recommended.

⁴⁵ Kellner was an academic in Haifa University with a specialism in the Rambam. He combines a fairly traditional personal approach (coming from an observant background) with a sharp academic analysis and a very readable writing style. He has many other books too, most of which I would recommend.

⁴⁶ On the Rambam's philosophy and hashkafa.

⁴⁷ On the Ralbag - Gersonides

⁴⁸ A controversial book. Shapiro analyses positions in the history of Jewish thought on the 13 Ikarim of the Rambam. The book is designed to show that many authorities disputed the Rambam's conception of the Ikarim. Given that these Ikarim are central to many people's definition of Orthodoxy today, the book was bound to raise a storm, and it did! Read with caution.

⁴⁹ Like Shapiro's book, Kellner analyses the 13 Ikarim, asking if they are as simply defined as we sometimes think.

The Rebbe, The Messiah and the Scandal of Orthodox Indifference ⁵⁰	R' David Berger
The Messiah Problem ⁵¹	R' Chaim Rappaport
Orthodox Forum Publications ⁵²	
Faith Without Fear ⁵³	R' Michael Harris
Seeking His Presence ⁵⁴	R' Chaim Sabato
By His Light	R' Aharon Lichtenstein
Leaves of Faith	R' Aharon Lichtenstein (2 vol)
Faith Shattered And Restored ⁵⁵	R' Shagar
Reason To Believe ⁵⁶	R' Chaim Jachter
Crisis and Covenant - Jewish Faith After the Holocaust	R' Jonathan Sacks
The Dignity of Difference	R' Jonathan Sacks
Daas Torah ⁵⁷	R' Doniel Eidensohn
Strauss Spinoza and Sinai ⁵⁸	ed. Jeffrey Bloom
Judaism Straight Up ⁵⁹	Moshe Kopell
Questioning Belief ⁶⁰	R' Rafael Zarum

⁵⁰ A sharp critique of the post-Rebbe messianism of the Chabad movement

⁵¹ An intelligent and spirited response to R' Berger's book from a major talmid chacham connected with Chabad

⁵² The Orthodox Form produces a book every year or so containing excellent articles on contemporary hashkafic issues, especially those affecting the Modern Orthodox world.

⁵³ An overview of the issues defining and challenging Modern Orthodoxy in the early 21st century. A good synopsis of what MO hashkafa should (but may not always) be. For a review see <https://www.thejcc.com/life-and-culture/books/review-faith-without-fear-l6i736o9>

⁵⁴ Some of the thought of R' Aharon Lichtenstein is now available in book form (see also following). It is important reading for those who value a passionate middle ground. Much more is available on <https://www.etzion.org.il/>

⁵⁵ One of the few books in English translation of the works of Rav Shagar. If you are interested in an excursus into Post-Modernist thought as understood through the prism of Chasidut, this is a great starting point!

⁵⁶ One of the most important books out on Emunah issues in the modern world. An important read after Rabbi Keleman's books "Reason to ...". R' Jachter updates the arguments, brings a more critical and analytical perspective and also brings source from the leading thinkers in the non-Charedi world – Rav Lichtenstein, Rav Soloveitchik etc. For a review see <https://blogs.timesofisrael.com/book-review-reason-to-believe-rational-explanations-of-orthodox-jewish-faith/>

⁵⁷ A collection of sources in Hebrew and English on a vast array of hashkafic issues. Also, the Aspaklaria Encyclopedia is a fantastic resource on hashkafic issues. You can buy the 30 volume set if you want, or you can access the whole thing free on line! - <https://www.aspaklaria.info/>

⁵⁸ This is probably the most advanced popular book on hashkafa, aside from more specialist academic works. A selection of essays from some the leading Orthodox thinkers of our time. Very highly recommended for someone who want to read a very intelligent 21st century presentation of why a person would want to be Orthodox. For a review see <https://www.yu.edu/news/strauss-spinoza-and-sinai-review-yeshiva-university>

⁵⁹ Highly recommended – see review at <https://traditiononline.org/book-review-moshe-koppel-judaism-straight-up-why-real-religion-endures/>

⁶⁰ Another recent book on emuna issues which bother the Jew who has been exposed to science and academia. See review at <https://blogs.timesofisrael.com/book-review-questioning-belief-torah-and-tradition-in-an-age-of-doubt/>

One People Two Worlds⁶¹

R' Ammiel Hrisch and R' Yosef Reinman

What Bad Things DON'T Happen to Good People⁶²

R' Saul Rosenblatt

The Human Challenge

R' Avraham Edelstein

The Confused World of Modern Atheism⁶³

R' Moshe Averick

10. JEWISH PHILOSOPHY⁶⁴

God, Man and History

R' Eliezer Berkowitz

Maimonides and the Book that Changed Judaism⁶⁵

Micah Goodman

Introduction to Medieval Jewish Philosophy⁶⁶

Daniel Rynhold

In the Footsteps of the Kuzari

R' Shalom Rosenberg

The Philosophical Quest

R' J. David Bleich

Where Halakha and Philosophy Meet

11. HOLOCAUST ISSUES

Man's Search for Meaning

Viktor Frankl

Out of the Depths

R' Israel Meir Lau

⁶¹ A unique dialogue between an Orthodox Rabbi and a Reform Rabbi. Definitely worth reading – see review at <https://jewishaction.com/books/reviews/2003-one-people-two-worlds/>

⁶² An important book on how to process personal loss and grief and maintain a healthy perspective on emuna. R' Rosenblatt is very qualified to write this as a talmid chacham who, tragically, lost his young wife to cancer. Strongly recommended.

⁶³ See review at <https://www.israelnationalnews.com/news/348574>

⁶⁴ There are hundreds more books one could list on Jewish Philosophy, both Medieval and Modern. Feel free to contact me for suggestions.

⁶⁵ An introduction to understanding Moreh Nevuchim

⁶⁶ A very readable and helpful book. Very highly recommended.

12. RAV SOLOVEITCHIK⁶⁷

Majesty and Humility ⁶⁸	R' Reuven Ziegler
The Lonely Man of Faith ⁶⁹	R' Yosef Ber Soloveitchik
Confrontation and Other Essays	R' Yosef Ber Soloveitchik
Halachic Man	R' Yosef Ber Soloveitchik
Halakhic Morality	R' Yosef Ber Soloveitchik
The Emergence of Ethical Man	R' Yosef Ber Soloveitchik
Exploring the Thought of Rabbi Joseph B Soloveitchik	ed. Marc Angel
Reading the Rav: Exploring Religious Themes in the Thought of R. Joseph B. Soloveitchik	Moshe Sokolow
Scholarly Man Of Faith - Studies in the Thought and Writings of R. Joseph Soloveitchik	ed. Ephraim Kanarfogel

13. RAV KOOK⁷⁰

The Essential Writings of Rav Kook	Ben Zion Bokser
Orot	trans R' Bezalel Meor
The Limit of Intellectual Freedom - The Letters of Rav Kook	R' Bezalel Naor
The Philosophy of Rav Kook	Zvi Yaron
Religious Zionism of Rav Kook	Pinchas Polonsky

⁶⁷ If you are interested in the interface of Torah and Modernity, there is a long list of important 20th century English speaking rabbinic thinkers to read and ponder. On that list should be the writings of **R. Eliezer Berkovits**, **R. Nachum Rabinowitz**, **R. Aharon Lichtenstein**, **R. Nathan Lopez Cardozo**, **R. Norman Lamm** and **R. Jonathan Sacks**. Maggid has republished many of their books and essays. For a specific focus on Modern Orthodoxy see: Modern Orthodox Judaism, Menachem Gordon; Modern Orthodox Judaism, Zev Eleff. See also the Orthodox Forum Series - <https://ktav.com/collections/orthodox-forum>. For perspectives on Open Orthodoxy see Journey to Open Orthodoxy, Rav Avi Weiss. Open Orthodoxy is a controversial and, according to some, problematic hashkafa. See also Why Open Orthodoxy is not Orthodox by David Rosenthal and a review of that at <https://www.israelnationalnews.com/news/347854>. Search also on the Seforim Blog - <https://seforimblog.com/> for a lively discussion on this.

⁶⁸ A crucial first resource for someone who wants to plan a guided read through Rav Soloveitchik's works. R. Ziegler presents recommendations and guidance as to which works to read first and detailed analysis on how to learn them.

⁶⁹ Read them in this order. Go on-line to get guidance in how to learn these sefarim – YUTorah and also www.hashkafacircle.com.

⁷⁰ Far more in English on Rav Kook has been published over the last 3 years. Look out for translations and commentaries by R. Betzalel Naor and Chanan Morrison. A vast literature on R. Kook is available in Hebrew, especially by R. Shlomo Aviner.

When God Becomes History
 Gold/Silver/Sapphire from the Land of Israel Rav Kook on Parasha
 ed. Bezalel Naor
 Chanan Morrison

Rav Avraham Itzhak HaCohen Kook
 Between Rationalism and Mysticism Benjamin Ish-Shalom
 Towards The Mystical Experience of Modernity
 - The Making of Rav Kook 1865-1904 Yehudah Mirsky
 Hadarav - His Inner Chambers trans Bezalel Naor

14. DEATH AND MOURNING

The Bridge of Life R' Yechiel Michel Tukichinsky
 The Jewish Way in Death and Mourning R' Maurice Lamm

15. ORAL LAW AND HALACHIC PROCESS⁷¹

15.1 Introductory

The Oral Law	R' H. Chaim Schimmel ⁷²
The Oral Law of Sinai (Mishnah)	R' Berel Wein ⁷³
Vision & Valor (Talmud)	R' Berel Wein
תורה מסיני – יהודה איזנברג ועמירם דומוביץ	
The Making of a Halachic Decision	R' Moshe Walter
The Infinite Chain: Torah, Mesorah & Man	R' Nathan Lopes-Cardozo
The Oral and the Written Torah	R' Nathan Lopes-Cardozo
The Essential Talmud	R' Adin Steinsaltz
Challenge/Anvil/Legacy of Sinai	R' Zechariah Fendel ⁷⁴
Halakhah - The Rabbinic Idea of Law	R' Chaim Saiman
The Narrow Halachic Bridge ⁷⁵	R' Ronen Neuwirth
Living the Halachic Process	ed. R' Daniel Mann

⁷¹ This particular topic is a special interest of mine. I have categorised the books by level.

⁷² Probably the best initial primer in English.

⁷³ These sefarim by Rabbi Wein chart the development of the Mishna and Talmud. Also nicely illustrated.

⁷⁴ 3 sefarim containing charts, maps and analysis of the history of Oral Law, based entirely on classic Torah sources.

⁷⁵ Highly recommended as a perspective of halachic process which acknowledges post-modern themes. For reviews see <https://jewishbookreview.wordpress.com/2021/02/18/the-narrow-halakhic-bridge-new-review-2/> <https://www.jewishpress.com/sections/books/book-reviews/title-the-narrow-halakhic-bridge-a-vision-of-jewish-law-in-the-postmodern-age/2020/11/08/> and <https://rabbijohnnysolomon.com/narrow-halakhic-bridge/>

Bridging Tradition
Divrei Sofrim

R. Chaim Jachter⁷⁶
R' Hershel Schachter⁷⁷

15.2 Advanced⁷⁸

The Dynamics of Dispute
The Open Canon
How Do We Know This
Meta-Halakhah
Not In Heaven
Circumventing the Law

R' Zvi Lampel⁷⁹
Avi Sagi⁸⁰
Jay M Harris⁸¹
Moshe Kopel
R' Eliezer Berkovitz⁸²

Rabbinic Perspectives on Loopholes and Legal Integrity

Elana Stein Hain

⁸³נצחוני בני – ר' אמנון בזק

מסיני ללשכת הגזית – שלמה קסירר ושלמה גליקסברג

מסורת התורה שבעל-פה – ר' שלמה זלמן הבלין

ההלכה כוחה ותפקידה – ר' אליעזר ברקוביץ

והלכה כבית הלל – ר' יובל שרלו

נטע בתוכינו – ר' שמואל אריאל

15.3 Classic Sources on Halachic Process available in English translation

The Path of Torah

Netziv (trans R' Elchanan Greenman)

Maimonides Introduction to the Talmud

trans Tzvi Lampel

The Students Guide through the Talmud⁸⁴

R' Tzvi H. Chayes (trans Jacob Shachter)

The Iggeret of R' Sherira Gaon

R' Nosson Dovid Rabinowitz

⁷⁶ On some of the halachic divergences between Sefardic and Ashkenazi practice. For a review see <https://traditiononline.org/review-bridging-tradition/>

⁷⁷ See <https://traditiononline.org/profile-the-faithful-transmission-of-the-oral-torah/>

⁷⁸ There are many more books that once could recommend in this area. Feel free to be in touch with me for suggestions.

⁷⁹ A detailed look at the origins of machloket with a clear perspective from within the yeshiva world.

⁸⁰ Written using a more academic method and style but based on classic sources - a very comprehensive look at 'Elu v'elu'.

⁸¹ Written as a fully academic study by a Harvard academic - a fascinating insight into the workings of halachic Drash and approaches to Drash throughout history. Only for the more academically inclined.

⁸² A controversial figure in the mid-late 20C Orthodox world. Most of the book is a superb analysis of Oral Law. The end sections on R' Berkovits vision of halachic development often strain at (and beyond?) the fringes of Orthodox thought.

⁸³ If you're prepared to plow through a great Hebrew book on Halachic Process, this is the one. Relatively easy Hebrew. Hopefully it will soon be translated into English. You can also find English translations of Rav Bazak's 65-part course at <https://etzion.org.il/en/series/fundamental-questions-study-oral-law>

⁸⁴ Classic Torah work translated from Hebrew and annotated - detailed and technical analysis for the serious student.

16. ISRAEL AND ZIONISM

Kol Dodi Dofek (Eng trans)	R' Yosef Ber Soloveitchik
Israel – A History	Martin Gilbert
Like Dreamers ⁸⁵	Yossi Klein HaLevi
Rebels in the Holy Land ⁸⁶	Sam Finkel
Messianism, Zionism and Jewish Religious Radicalism ⁸⁷	Aviezer Ravitsky
God, Guns and Israel ⁸⁸	Jill Hamilton
The Balfour Declaration	Elliot Jager
The Virtues of Nationalism ⁸⁹	Yoram Hazony
The Jewish State – The Struggle for Israel's Soul	Yoram Hazony
Eim HaBanim Semeicha	R' Yisachar Teichtel ⁹⁰
Step By Step	R' Chaim Druckman ⁹¹
State of Halakha	R' Aviad Tabori ⁹²
The Jewish State	R' Doron Perez
Ethics of Our Fighters - A Jewish View on War and Morality	R' Shlomo Brody ⁹³

17. BIOGRAPHY

Rav Kook - An Angel Among Men	Simcha Raz
Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch	R' Eliyahu Klugman

⁸⁵ A fantastic insight into Israeli history and politics since 1967 through the life stories of the Paratroopers that took Har HaBayit during the 6 Day War. An important read if you want to understand Left/Right/Religious/Secular issues in Israel today.

⁸⁶ A fantastic work, with great maps and photos, charting the First Aliyah, the early creation of the New Yishuv and the Shemitta crises of the late 19C.

⁸⁷ A clear analysis of the contemporary religious positions on Zionism – pro-, neutral and anti-.

⁸⁸ A fantastic and stimulating account of the lead up and reaction to the Balfour Declaration, focusing on the religious positivity of non-Jewish world leaders which lead to the State of Israel

⁸⁹ A MUST read if you want a new perspective on how to understand world politics in the 21st Century.

⁹⁰ A classic work on Zionism by a previously anti-Zionist Chassidic leader who changed his position during the Holocaust.

⁹¹ Rav Druckman was one of the leading Gedolim of the Religious Zionist world in the late 20th and 21st centuries. Relatively little of his work has been translated into English. This is a classic work on the gradual unfolding of redemption from the Religious Zionist perspective.

⁹² A selection of essays on central halakhic issues that pertain to the establishment of the State of Israel and the IDF. For review see <https://traditiononline.org/review-state-of-halakha/>

⁹³ For review see <https://blogs.timesofisrael.com/book-review-ethics-of-our-fighters-a-jewish-view-on-war-and-morality/>

Rav Kook - Mystic in a time of Revolution ⁹⁴	Yehuda Mirsky
R' Yehiel Jacob Weinberg	
Between the Yeshiva World and Modern Orthodoxy	Marc Shapiro ⁹⁵
Maimonides	Joel Kraemer
Maimonides – Life and Thought	Moshe Halbertal ⁹⁶
Nachmanides – Law & Mysticism	Moshe Halbertal
Rabbi Esriel Hildesheimer	David Ellenson
My Uncle The Netziv/ Recollections ⁹⁷	trans Moshe Dombey
A Tzaddik in our Time ⁹⁸	Simcha Raz
Rebbe ⁹⁹	Joseph Telushkin
The Genius (on the Vilna Gaon)	Eliyahu Stern
The Pillar of Volozhin (on the Netziv)	R' Gil Perl
Rashi	Abraham Grossman ¹⁰⁰
With Might and Strength – R. Shlomo Goren: an autobiography	
Rabbi Shear Yashuv Cohen – Between War and Peace	Yechiel Frisch
The Rabbinate in Stormy Days – R. Yitzchak Herzog	Shaul Mayzlish
Mavericks, Mystics & False Messiahs	R' Pini Dunner
Ta'aroch LeFanei Shulchan (Heb) - R. Yehiel Mikhl Epstein	R' Eitam Henkin ¹⁰¹
Sarah Schenirer and the Bais Yaakov Movement	Naomi Seidman ¹⁰²
The Sages (5 vols)	R' Benny Lau ¹⁰³
Masters of the Word (3 vols)	R' Yonatan Kolatch

⁹⁴ Also a great initial primer for the thought of Rav Kook.

⁹⁵ Another controversial figure from the Modern Orthodox world. Superb researcher and sharp social commentator!

⁹⁶ Halberthal is an Israeli academic with a very accessible writing style. His biographies focus significantly on the philosophy of the relevant thinkers. His is certainly writing from an academic not 'religious' perspective, but his material provides a very helpful window into the religious thought of these figures.

⁹⁷ Two different books, both translated selections from the Mekor Baruch by R' Baruch HaLevi Epstein. A window into the 19C Lithuanian world.

⁹⁸ On the life of R' Aryeh Levine.

⁹⁹ A fascinating and inspiring account of the life of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

¹⁰⁰ One of the greatest religious academic figures in this field. Not many of his books have been translated into English.

¹⁰¹ Rav Henkin Hy'd was a Torah genius who was tragically murdered by terrorists in Eretz Yisrael and had already by then written over 50 articles and 4 books. See also Studies in Halakhah and Rabbinic History - <https://amzn.to/3A0Y2Kx>

¹⁰² See review at <https://jewishaction.com/books/reviews/review-of-sarah-schenirer-and-the-bais-yaakov-movement-a-revolution-in-the-name-of-tradition/>

¹⁰³ Rav Lau is a leading rabbinic figure in the Religious Zionist world in Israel and also one of the few such thinkers that also overlaps significantly into the Modern Orthodox community. His set of books on Chazal are available in Hebrew and English. They put together the biographical details of the Rabbis of the Talmud together with a montage of their Torah and mutual interactions so as to give a multi-dimensional view of the Chachamim.

18. TORAH JOURNALS

Tradition Journal¹⁰⁴
 Journal of Halacha and Contemporary Society
 Hakira Journal¹⁰⁵
 Orthodox Forum series
 Torah U'Madda Journal¹⁰⁶
 Techumin¹⁰⁷
 Dialogue¹⁰⁸

19. JEWISH HISTORY

Jewish History Trilogy	
Triumph of Survival, Echoes of Glory, Herald of Destiny	R' Berel Wein
The Sages	R' Benny Lau
Atlas of Jewish History	Martin Gilbert
The Aleppo Codex	Matti Friedman
Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls	Prof. Lawrence Schiffman
From Text to Tradition	Prof. Lawrence Schiffman
Sacred Trash ¹⁰⁹	Adina Hoffman & Peter Cole
The Story of Hebrew	Lewis Glinnert
	Jacob Katz ¹¹⁰

20. MARRIAGE

Made in Heaven	R' Aryeh Kaplan
The Jewish Way in Love and Marriage	R' Maurice Lamm
The River, the Kettle and the Bird	R' Aharon Feldman

21. MYSTICISM & KABBALAH

¹⁰⁴ Also available free on line at <http://traditionarchive.org/archives/>.

¹⁰⁵ Available free on line at <http://173.203.154.59/rhsweb/hakirahbrowsedb.asp>.

¹⁰⁶ Many of which can be downloaded free from YU Torah.

¹⁰⁷ Unfortunately Hebrew only. 44 volume of essays dedicated to Torah, Modern Society and the State of Israel. To subscribe on line to Techmin and other related journals see <https://www.books.zomet.org.il/>

¹⁰⁸ A Torah Journal which represents more of a Yeshivish perspective. They did not bring out many editions and they are quite hard to get hold of – see <https://dialoguemagazine.org/>

¹⁰⁹ On the discovery of the Cairo Genieza.

¹¹⁰ Jacob Katz is considered one of the 20th century's greatest scholars of Jewish History, especially on the development of Orthodoxy in the modern world. Most of his books are in Hebrew, but some are available in English

Endless Light
 The Torah as God's Mind
 Faith and Folly
 Nefesh Hatzimtzum (2 vols)
 Shomer Emunim
 Letters on Kabbalah

R' David Aaron¹¹¹
 R' Nathan Lopes-Cardozo
 R' Yaakov Hillel
 Avinoam Fraenkel
 Avinoam Fraenkel¹¹²
 Ed. JJ Kimche
 Gershon Scholem¹¹³

22. WOMEN AND JUDAISM

Circle, Arrow, Spiral - Exploring Gender in Judaism¹¹⁴
 Jewish Women in Jewish Law¹¹⁵
 Serving the Creator, The Modest Way, Partners in Life¹¹⁶
 Women, Jewish Law and Modernity¹¹⁷
 Understanding Tzniut
 Reclaiming Dignity
 Ma At Mevakeshet

Miriam Kosman
 R' Moshe Meiselman
 R' Getsel Ellinson
 R' Joel Wolowelsky
 R' Yehuda Henkin¹¹⁸
 R' Anthony Manning¹¹⁹
 Rabbanit Oriya Mevorach¹²⁰

23. TORAH AND SCIENCE

¹¹¹ An unconventional thinking with a strong leaning towards the mystical and kabbalistic and new way of integrating these ideas into real life.

¹¹² Avinoam Fraenkel has produce 3 mammoth works translating and analyzing the Nefesh HaChaim and the Shomer Emunim – Introduction to Kabbalah – see <https://avinoamfraenkel.com/>

¹¹³ Anyone seeking a deeper appreciation of academic scholarship on Kabbalah will need to navigate the work of Gershon Scholem (starting with his Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism) and his academic successors, particularly Moshe Idel, Joseph Dan, Boaz Huss, Rachel Ellior and Elliot Wolfson. This purely academic school departs of course from religious analysis on Kabbalah and approaches mysticism from a purely scholarly perspective. There are Orthodox scholars within the world of academic study of mysticism, such as Jonathan Dauber and others. But if you want to really connect with the Torah of kabbalah you need to learn from a real kabbalist!

¹¹⁴ A recent sefer setting out clearly kabbalistic perspectives on 'male' and 'female'. An important read to understand a well-argued and intelligent presentation from a Charedi perspective.

¹¹⁵ Also a very clear and thoughtful presentation by a well know Charedi Rosh Yeshiva.

¹¹⁶ Mostly sources rather than commentary – great for learning through with a chavruta.

¹¹⁷ A more 'centrist' presentation by a senior YU rabbi.

¹¹⁸ Rabbi Henkin is a senior posek from the Modern Orthodox/Religious Zoinist world. His approach is quite unique.

¹¹⁹ For reviews see <https://www.reclaimingdignity.com/media.html>

¹²⁰ This is an outstanding book on tzniut and sexuality, addressed to a young audience who, wittingly or unwittingly, already view the world with through postmodern lens. The book is currently (July 2024) only in Hebrew but Maggid are due to publish it in English. An essential read on these issues.

The Great Partnership	R' Jonathan Sacks ¹²¹
In The Beginning	Nathan Aviezer ¹²²
Fossils and Faith	Nathan Aviezer
The Science of G-d	Gerald Schroeder
The Science in Torah	R' Yehuda Levi
Torah and Science	R' Yehuda Levi
The Science of Torah	R' Natan Slifkin ¹²³
The Challenge of Creation	R' Natan Slifkin
Torah Chazal Science	R' Moshe Meiselman ¹²⁴
Challenge	Cyril Domb /R' Aryeh Carmell ¹²⁵
Encounter	H. Schimmel/Aryeh Carmell

24. GEMARA AND TALMUDIC METHODOLOGY

Journeys in Talmud	R' Immanuel Bernstein
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25. BIBLICAL CRITICISM AND ACADEMIC APPROACHES TO TEXTS¹²⁶

The Documentary Hypothesis	R' Umberto Cassuto ¹²⁷
A Journey Through Torah	Ben Zion Katz ¹²⁸
BeEinei Elohim VeAdam (Heb)	ed Yehudah Brandes
To This Very Day	R' Amnon Bazak

¹²¹ Perhaps the most important book in the list. A MUST read for a thinking Jew in the modern world.

¹²² Aviezer and Schroeder are religiously observant scientists with interest perspectives and a strong 'kiruv' focus. They often disagree about the science as well as the Jewish conclusions!

¹²³ Rabbi Slifkin stirred up a major controversy with these sefarim in 2004. Some major Torah leaders sought to put the books in cherem. Others rallied around R' Slifkin. Yet others felt that the controversy made it harder to bring a much needed and reasoned critique against R' Slifkin's positions.

¹²⁴ R' Meiselman has written a response (although not in name) to R' Slifkin's sefarim. Both approaches should be read and considered. As in all such works, a good science background (or someone to advise you who knows their science) is always recommended to check that the science data is up-to-date and correctly represented.

¹²⁵ This, and its sequel, Encounter, are old classics. The science discussed has often been superseded BUT read them for the methodology as to how a thinking modern observant Jews tackles apparent and real conflicts between science and religion.

¹²⁶ This topic has had something of a revival recently. Clearly it is not new and there are classic responses to the 19C schools of Wissenschaft Des Judentums. There is some good online discussion of this (and some bad!!). Look for the material coming from Har Etzion, in particular R' Menachem Leibtag and R' Amnon Bazak.

¹²⁷ A classic (1930s) refutation of the Documentary Hypothesis.

¹²⁸ A modern analysis of flaws and circular argumentation in the recent incarnations of the Documentary Hypothesis.

Ani Ma'amin¹²⁹

R' Joshua Berman

26. JEWISH CALENDAR

Understanding the Jewish Calendar

The Challenge of Jewish History¹³⁰Jewish History in Conflict¹³¹

The Great Zmanim Debate

New Heavens and A New Earth

: The Jewish Reception of Copernican Thought¹³²

Calendar and Community

Nathan Bushwick

R' Alexander Hool

Mitchell First

R' Ahron Notis

Jeremy Brown

Sacha Stern

27. SEXUALITY¹³³

Judaism and Homosexuality

Talking about Intimacy and Sexuality¹³⁵Halachic Positions¹³⁶R' Chaim Rappaport¹³⁴

Dr Yocheved Debow

Yaakov Shapiro

28. SOCIAL JUSTICE AND ETHICS

Defending the Human Spirit

The Soul of Jewish Social Justice

Morality, Halakha and the Jewish Spirit

R' Warren Goldstein¹³⁷

R' Shmuly Yanklowitz

R' Shubert Spero

¹²⁹ R' Josh Berman is one of the main authors on the rare (but important) meeting of orthodox thought and academic biblical studies. Definitely not for everyone, but people who are already interested in/bothered by this area will gain from his writings.

¹³⁰ A new analysis of the old question of the missing 164 or so years in the Jewish calendar during the Second Temple Period. Not an academic but a very comprehensive overview of the issue from traditional Torah sources.

¹³¹ A very comprehensive assessment of over 100 opinions on the missing years.

¹³² See review at <https://www.jeremybrownmd.com/new-heavens-reviews>

¹³³ See also Women & Judaism section.

¹³⁴ By far the best book out there on Jewish perspectives on these issues. R' Rappaport is a major talmid chacham and the book is fantastically sourced and researched. It is also written with a quest for authenticity at the same time as sensitivity.

¹³⁵ A very good book, aimed at adolescents and those counselling them. There is very little written on these issues from an authentic Jewish perspective.

¹³⁶ A very interesting book by an even more interesting author. Note that the book is very explicit and takes an unabashed approach on these issues. Shapiro does not come with rabbinic approbations but very little on this subject will. For a review see <https://tallirosenbaum.com/2015/03/15/halachic-positions-a-book-review/>. For a podcast on these issue see <https://www.intimatejudaism.com/about/>

¹³⁷ Very impressive Chief Rabbi of S. Africa. This is his PhD thesis. Hear and read his other material where you can.

29. CHASIDUT

Shem MiShmuel
The Quest for Authenticity

trans. R' Zvi Belovski¹³⁸
R' Michael Rosen

30. CHINUCH AND CHILDREN

Planting & Building
What Do You Really Want?

R' Shlomo Wolbe
Rabanit Shayna Goldberg

31. MEDICAL ETHICS

Dangerous Disease & Dangerous Therapy
Jewish Medical Ethics
Sacred Training - Halakhic Guidebook for Medical Students
Jewish BioEthics
Jewish Guide To Practical Medical Decision-Making
The Anatomy of Jewish Law
Halakhic Realities – 2 vols Organ Donation and Brain Death
Matters of Life and Death

R' Akiva Tatz
R' Immanuel Jakobovits
ed. Jerry Karp
Fred Rosner, R' J David Bleich
R' Jason Wiener
Edward Reichman
Albert Matalon

¹³⁸ If you're interested in the Shem Mishmuel/Ishbitz and have time to read R' Belovski's doctoral thesis - *Harmonisation As Theological Hermeneutic The Interpretative Methodology Of Rabbi Shemuel Bornstein Of Sochaczew*, you can find it here - https://phaven-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/files/document_part/asset/759221/YJ4tOLCNKTNAQILYfJxjLc5Vkt0/belovski.phd.pdf