



Aggada  
Syllabus Spring 2018 Spring Semester

02 372 80/81

2 Credits

**course objective**

An in depth study in the non-legal sections of the Talmud. The student will be introduced to the "Aggadic" sections of the Talmud in an attempt to understand the underlying philosophy of the Talmudic sages. Primary sources will be consulted, where necessary literary analysis will be employed.

**Students will be presented with primary texts and major commentaries. Texts will be studied and analyzed both in context, and within the larger literature.**

1.

Topic: Interplay of Halacha and Aggada - Drinking on Purim

Primary source: Megila 7b

**Additional readings:**

Sanhedrin 65b, Shabbat 156b, Chulin 8a

Bialik "Halakhah and Aggadah," in Revelation And Concealment.

Aharon Arend - The Purim Meal of Rabbah and R. Zera - Explanation of Talmudic Commentators, BDD 8 1999 (Hebrew)

2.

Topic: The Purim Story through the Prism of the Talmud and Midrash

Primary source: Talmud Bavli Megila 10b, 12a,b

**Additional readings:**

Rivkah Lubitch, "A feminist's look at Esther" Judaism: Vol. 42, No. 4, Fall 1993

3.

Topic: Is Esther Written in the Torah?

Primary source: Talmud Bavli Hullin 139b

**Additional readings:**

Tikunie Zohar 57b

4.

Topic: The Four Sons in the Jerusalem Talmud

Primary source: Jerusalem Talmud Pesachim 10:4 (37d)

**Additional readings:**

Rabbi Ari Kahn, "The Wicked Son in the Passover Haggadah", **AVAILABLE** <http://arikahn.blogspot.co.il/2009/04/wicked-son-in-passover-haggadah.html>

Rabbi Mishael Zion, Wicked: 20th Century Lessons from the Art of the Wicked Child <http://textandcity.blogspot.co.il/2012/03/wicked-20th-century-lessons-from-art-of.html>

5.

Topic: Tal, Dew and Resurrection

Primary source: Talmud - Megilah 31a, Rosh HaShana 10b  
Sanhedrin 97b

**Additional readings:**

Rabbi Ari Kahn, "THESE BONES WILL LIVE!"  
<http://arikahn.blogspot.co.il/search?q=these+bones>

6.

Topic: THE STUDENTS OF RABBI AKIVA

Primary source: Yevamot 62b

**Additional readings:**

Sperber Minhagi Yisrael 101-111, Emanations 83-96  
Redemption and repentance in Talmudic Judaism, Ephraim E. Urbach,  
Collected Writings in Jewish Studies 264-280

7.

Topic: The "threat" of Rav Shimon bar Yochai

Primary source: Pesachim 112a,

**Additional readings:**

Yerushalmi Taanit 4:8, Rambam Milachim 11:3, San. 12a, Brachot  
61b (Yerushalmi Brachot 9:7) Ben Yohoyoda Pesachim , אבני שוהם  
פרשת ואתחנן cited in Korman 179 note 18, Korman 172-183

8.

Topic: Rav Shimon Bar Yochai

Primary source: Shabbat 33b

**Additional readings:**

Sukkah 28aSukka 45b

"The Education of R. Shimon bar Yohai" Rubenstein J. L, Talmudic  
Stories, 105-138

9.

Topic: The First Man

Primary source: Chagiga 13b-14a

**Additional readings:**

Midrash Rabbah - Genesis II:5, Midrash Rabbah - Genesis III:7, Midrash  
Rabbah - Genesis XII:3, Guide for the Perplexed 1:7

Kaplan, Aryeh, Immortality, Resurrection, And the age of the Universe;  
A Kabbalistic view 1-15, 75-127

10.

Topic: Jesus in the Talmud

Primary source: Sanhedrin 43a, Sanhedrin 107b Sota 47a,

**Additional readings:**

Herford "Christianity in Talmud & Midrash" 50-54, 83-86

11.

Topic: "Rabbi" Eliezer ben Durdiya

Primary source: Avoda Zara 17a,

**Additional readings:**

Yoma 85b Mishna & Gemara, Rambam Comm. on the Mishna, Tosfot Yishanim "Teshuva", Rambam Yad, Teshuva 4:1; Yoma 29a (top line) Rashi, Rambam Guide sec. 3 chapter 8, Peli "On Repentance" (Soloveitchik) 269-277

12.

Topic: The Repentance of Resh Lakish

Primary source: Bava Metziah 84a

**Additional readings:**

"Rabbi Johanan and Resh-Lakish" Wiesel, Élie, Alei Shefer (1990) 175-194

**Course requirements**

**Mastery of basic texts, including commentaries, understanding of ideas.  
Attendance, participation, and final exam**

**grade will be given in numbers**

**30% of grade will be based on attendance and participation**

**70% of grade based upon the final exam**

**BIBLIOGRAPHY:**

Alon, Gedalia. Jews, Judaism, and the classical world, Jerusalem, the Magnes Press, Jerusalem, 1977, p. 1-17

Bialik, H. N. Revelment And Concealment : Five Essays Translated by Zali Gurevitch Ibis Editions Jerusalem 2000

Braude, W.G., Pesikta Rabbati (Yale Judaica series 18), New Haven 1968

Freedman, H., & Simon M., Midrash Rabba (10 vols) London 1939

Epstein, I. The Babylonian Talmud Soncino press London

Gilat, Y.D. R. Eliezer Ben Hyrcanus – A Scholar Outcast. Bar Ilan University Press, Ramat Gan 1984,

Ginzberg L. The Legends of the Jews (Volumes 1-6) Philadelphia, 1913-1928

Goldin, J., Fathers according to Rabbi Nathan (Yale Judaica series 10), New Haven 1955

Goshen-Gottstein A, The Sinner and the Amnesiac  
The Rabbinic Invention of Elisha ben Abuya and Eleazar ben Arach, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000

Kahn, A, Emanations Targum Michigan, 2001

Kahn, A, Explorations Targum Michigan, 2002

Kahn, A, Echoes of Eden Gefen Jerusalem 2011

Kaplan, Aryeh, Immortality, Resurrection, And the age of the Universe; A Kabbalistic view Ktav Hoboken N.J. 1993

Kaplan, Aryeh Sefer Yetzirah, Weiser, Maine 1990

Korman, A. Deciphering Aggadot, Tel Aviv 1991 (Hebrew)

Lichtenstein, A, Leaves of Faith (volume one Ktav Publishing House 2003

Neusner, J., The Talmud of the Land of Israel: A Preliminary Translation Chicago Studies in the History of Judaism -1989- University of Chicago Press

Chajes, Z.H., The Students' Guide Through The Talmud, 2 ed., Jacob Shachter, Yashar Books, 2005

Feldman, A, The Juggler and the King, Feldheim, Jerusalem 1990

Urbach, E. The Sages - Their Concepts & Beliefs Jerusalem, 1979

Rubenstein, J. L., Stories of the Babylonian Talmud Baltimore 2010

Rubenstein, J. L, Rabbinic Stories (Classics of Western Spirituality) New Jersey 2002

Rubenstein, J. L, Talmudic Stories: Narrative Art, Composition, and Culture, Baltimore 1999

Saperstein, M. Decoding the Rabbis Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England: Harvard University Press, 1980

Urbach, Ephraim E. Collected Writings in Jewish Studies. Edited by Moshe D. Herr, Robert Brody, Jerusalem: Magnes Press 1999

### **Articles:**

Aharon, Arend – “The Purim Meal of Rabbah and R. Zera - Explanation of Talmudic Commentators” BDD 8 1999(Hebrew)

Edwards, Laurence L. "Rabbi Akiba's Crowns Postmodern Discourse and the Cost of Rabbinic Reading" *Judaism: A Quarterly Journal of Jewish Life and Thought* Vol. 49, No. 4, Fall 2000

Goshen Gottstein, A, "Rabbi Eleazar b. Arakh: Symbol and Reality," *Gafni, Jews and Judaism in the Second Temple, Mishna and Talmud Period*

Gottstein, Alon Goshen. "Four Entered Paradise Revisited." *The Harvard Theological Review* 88, no. 1 (1995): 69-133

Harvey, W.Z. "The Pupil, the Harlot and Fringe Benefits" *Proof texts* 6 (1986) 259-264

Levine, N, "Reading Crowned Letters and Semiotic Silences in Menachot 29b" *Journal of Jewish studies*, vol. liii , no. 1, spring 2002

Lubitch R, "A feminist's look at Esther" *Judaism: Vol. 42, No. 4, Fall 1993*

Rosensweig, M, "*Elu Va-Elu Divre Elokim Hayyim: Halakhic Pluralism and Theories of Controversy.*" *Tradition* 26:3, 1992.

Urbach "*Ha Masorot al Torat ha Sod bi Tequfat Ha Tannaim*" "Studies in the Talmud, Halacha and Midrash". *World Congress of Jewish Studies 7, Studies in the Talmud, Halacha and Midrash* (1977)

Urbach, E.E.: *Studies in Mysticism and Religion Presented to G.*

Scholem *The Magnes Press; Jerusalem* (1967), Heb. sect. 1–28

van der Heide, A. "PARDES: Methodological Reflections on the Theory of the Four Senses", *Journal of Jewish Studies* 35 (1983), pp. 147-159

Wiesel, Élie, "Rabbi Johanan and Resh-Lakish" *Alei Shefer* (1990) 175-194

**required material for the exam, all primary texts and commentaries, including material discussed in class.**