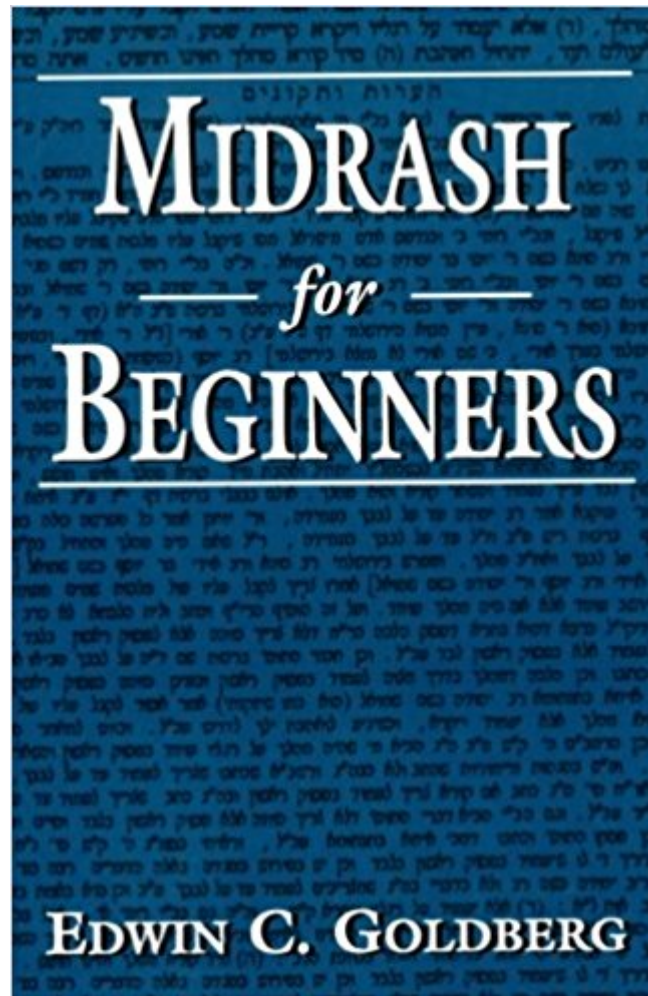




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Midrash For Beginners



Synopsis

In *Midrash for Beginners*, Rabbi Edwin Goldberg presents English readers with an easily accessible entrance into the fascinating and insightful world of Midrash. Instead of trying to explain or define the Midrash and the midrashic process, Rabbi Goldberg gives beginning students the opportunity to explore and study Midrash themselves by focusing exclusively on the biblical character of Joseph. The story of Joseph is one of the best-known and most-loved tales in the Bible. From his rivalry with his brothers, and his father's apparent favoritism, to his being sold into slavery and rising up to become the second most powerful man in Egypt, Joseph's story contains lessons and symbolism that are as relevant to Jews today as they were to the rabbinic commentators of more than a thousand years ago.

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Customer Reviews

One of the enduring features of Judaism are the midrashim, or stories, told by the Rabbis as they interpreted biblical tales for a new generation. According to Rabbi Goldberg, the word "midrash" has two meanings. It may refer to any comment made about a scriptural passage, or it may refer to a particular body of classic rabbinic commentary (Midrash) on scripture collected and edited between the second and ninth centuries. In this brief study, Goldberg uses the term in both senses to introduce the reader to the power of interpretation to expand and extend the meaning of biblical stories. Focusing on the story Joseph (Genesis 37-50), Goldberg sets his own midrashim against both the biblical narratives and the *Genesis Rabbah*, or *Midrash to the Book of Joseph*, to explore the depth and complexity of the character of Joseph. Goldberg's exercise in close reading and

interpretation yields a harvest of bountiful insights into a familiar biblical story. Copyright 1996 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Edwin Goldberg received rabbinic ordination and a doctorate in Hebrew literature from the Hebrew Union College Jewish Institute of Religion. Rabbi Goldberg recently spent a year studying midrash and education at Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Currently, he is at the University of Judaism in Los Angeles (in the Department of Continuing Education). He and his wife, Melanie, have two children, Joseph and Benjamin.

Goldberg's irreverence (e.g. his pop culture references) distracted me from some of his points. The author's shallow knowledge of halakha also comes through, and he is unapologetic about his lack of belief in the divine origin of Torah (Torah mi-Sinai). For a more comprehensive and better-informed introduction to midrash, I prefer James Kugel's "In Potiphar's House."

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