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Practical Talmud Dictionary (English And Hebrew Edition)



Synopsis

An indispensable tool for all students of the Talmud on every level. With over 3,500 definitions, appendices, abbreviations, and more. Authoritative, easy-to-use, vowelized Aramaic text with English translation. Revised edition. A publication of the Ariel Institute. 336 pps.

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The Babylonian Talmud is written in Hebrew and Aramaic. The glosses/ commentaries on it are written in Rabbinic Hebrew which is a combination of the above two languages spanning 1,500 years. If you really want to learn gemora (Aramaic for Talmud) you will need some references if you are not familiar with the language. This as well as one by Aryeh Carmell, Aiding Talmud study, are very useful. They contain the key words, the code words, which enable the student to get into the discussion which is really what the gemora is all about. It is a lively discussion by brilliant minds on Torah and related matters. They truly wanted to know what Hashem asked of us and they discussed it as necessary. Jews are called the People of the Book. The book being referred to is really the Talmud, the oral Torah, without which one cannot comprehend the written Torah. In yeshivos and Jewish study centers we learn gemora. We are not sitting day and night and learning tanakh (Pentateuch, Writings, Prophets) though we are expected to know them well. This was my experience in yeshivo in Israel and America. There are also other reference books such as the Jastrow dictionary to Aramaic which is a little too big for my taste. Yosef Schechter's Otsar HaTalmud is very nice but you need to know Hebrew to use it. If you read modern Hebrew there are many good books to help you. However, the most important thing for the learner is to just DO IT!

Don't read translations, don't hesitate, don't think too much about what or how to do it. Just pick a piece and get started. Just do a little at first. Later, if you do this regularly, you will find yourself naturally learning more and more easily. Take a text in the original language and just read it out loud several times.

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