

STRINGING THE PEARLS

The JPS inadvertently failed to include Section 8: Selected Books in James Diamond's new book ***Stringing the Pearls: How to Read the Weekly Torah Portion***. We apologize to our readers for any inconvenience that this has caused.

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Section 8: Selected Books

Throughout these pages I have referred to several books that in various ways open up the world of the Bible. They have been crucial resources for me and they will be no less valuable to you. In addition to them, I want to note a few more that are, if not required reading, then highly recommended for anyone who wants a basic presentation of the "what," the "where," the "when," and the "how" of the remarkable 39-volume anthology that is the TANAKH. The following books are not commentaries or readings of the weekly portions but excellent treatments of key aspects of the Humash and the TANAKH.

Elliot Rabin. *Understanding the Hebrew Bible: A Reader's Guide*. Jersey City, NJ: Ktav Publishing House, Inc., 2006. Clear, concise, nontechnical, and thorough.

George Robinson. *Essential Torah: A Complete Guide to the Five Books of Moses*. New York: Schocken Books, 2006. Lucid, informative, and comprehensive. It contains synopses of all 54 parshiyot.

Cyrus H. Gordon and Gary A. Rendsburg. *The Bible and the Ancient Near East, 4th ed.* New York and London: W. W. Norton & Co., 1997. Delineates the full historical and cultural matrix out of which the Bible springs and in which it has to be seen.

Hershel Shanks. *Ancient Israel: From Abraham to the Roman Destruction of the Temple, 2nd ed.* N.p.: Prentice Hall, 1999. A good, readable account of the Bible's historical context with emphasis on archaeological findings.

James L. Kugel. *How to Read the Bible: A Guide to Scripture, Then and Now*. New York: The Free Press (Simon and Schuster), 2007. An excellent account of how modern Biblical scholarship does and does not relate to modes of reading in antiquity and whether such scholarship does or does not undermine religious faith. More than half the book deals with the Pentateuch.

James L. Kugel. *The Bible As It Was*. Cambridge, MA, and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1997. A valuable, fascinating, deeply learned, and readable account of how the Pentateuch was read in antiquity (from the 3rd century B.C.E. to the 1st century C.E.). Clarifies the relationship between TANAKH and midrash.

Robert Alter and Frank Kermode. *The Literary Guide to the Bible*. Cambridge MA and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1990. The title says it all, as do the names of the two major literary critics who do the guiding.

Marc Zvi Brettler. *How to Read the Bible*. Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 2005. The focus here is strictly historical-critical and so the title overreaches a bit since the book does not deal with other ways to process the biblical text, for example, the literary.

Joseph Telushkin. *Biblical Literacy: The Most Important People, Events, and Ideas of the Hebrew Bible*. New York: William Morrow, 1997. A useful resource when you want a quick reference to people, places, and key concepts in the TANAKH.

Martin Buber. *On the Bible*. New York: Schocken Books, 1987. Eighteen essays that develop Buber's unique approach to the Bible. Edited by Nahum N. Glatzer.