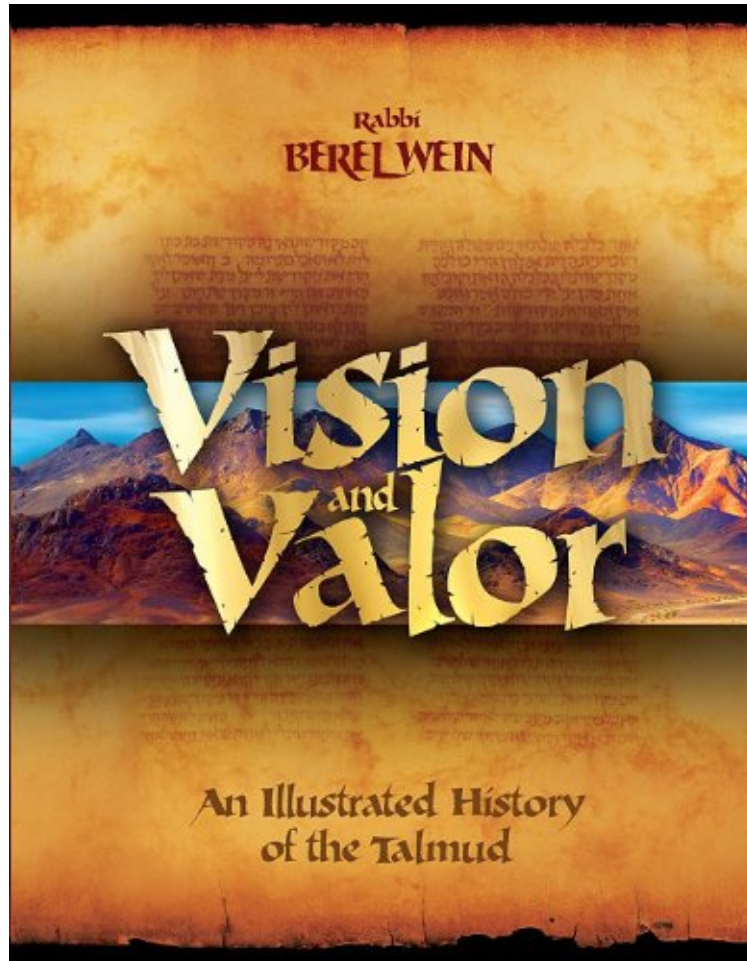


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Vision Valor: An Illustrated History of the Talmud

Rabbi Berel Wein

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Rabbi Berel Wein : Vision Valor: An Illustrated History of the Talmud before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Vision Valor: An Illustrated History of the Talmud:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Get this and the one on the Mishnah By Marc Zucker These are both great books, cannot recommend them enough. I read the first of these, the one on the Mishnah, and had to get this one as well. They are published by different companies, but they look identical in their formatting and quality. They can be given as a gift together, but I do not think that they are sold as a set. 6 of 7 people found the following review helpful. The rabbi offers his view of the Talmud By Israel Drazin Rabbi Berel Wein, one of the leading and highly respected figures of Orthodox Jewry, a man with a large following, offers his readers his understanding of the Talmud and the history of the sages mentioned in it. The book is filled with beautiful pictures of artifacts that existed during the first millennium. The beginning of each chapter has a summary of the dates and relationships to teachers, colleagues, students, and relatives of the sage being discussed. Rabbi Wein teaches that God revealed the written Torah at Sinai

with an Oral Torah that explains it. He writes that God kept the Oral Torah unwritten as a special gift to the Jewish people to differentiate them from non-Jews. He states that the Oral Torah was developed further after Sinai, but all of the developments are grounded in the words of the written Torah. Much of this Oral Torah is in the Talmud. He describes the lives of the seven generations of sages, called Amoraim, "interpreters," who are mentioned in the Talmud. He writes that these Amoraim lived from around 200 CE until the Talmud was completed about 500 CE. He tells the lives of the principle Amoraim, about their families, upbringing, social conditions, jobs, struggles, and ideas. He depicts the conditions of Israel, Babylonia, and nearby countries. He includes dozens of interesting tales that could be understood as true facts or as legends, parables, and sermons. He informs us, for example, that when the third century sage Rav, the first of the Amoraim, came to Israel from Babylonia, the Israeli crops blossomed in his honor. He includes stories such as the talmudic depictions of what occurred in heaven after sages died. He gives the account of Rabbi Yochanan reviving a dead person. Readers who consider these anecdotes impossible could understand them as metaphoric parables. For example, the statement about the blossoming could be read as the joy felt by the people in Israel, the after-death scenes the good thoughts that people had about the deceased, and the reviving of the dead man might suggest that Rabbi Yochanan's teachings inspired his student to a new understanding of a problem that changed his life.

In *Vision Valor*, Rabbi Berel Wein traces the development of the Talmud, the record of the Oral Law of Sinai as refined, debated, and discussed over four centuries in the great Torah academies of the Land of Israel and Babylonia. This beautifully illustrated, footnoted, oversized volume is a necessity for every Jewish home interested in the soul of Judaism, its rituals, values and practices.