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Review of *Talmud Reclaimed*

Talmud study in today's world tends to be dominated by traditional yeshiva and academic approaches that employ different methodologies. Their adherents pursue different goals and struggle to engage in dialogue with each other. In an ideal world, scholars trained in each approach to Talmud study would argue, borrow, reformat, refine, hold each other to account, and ultimately learn with each other in order to enhance our understanding of a complex and often enigmatic text.

Talmud Reclaimed is a fine example of how the pursuit of this ideal can offer insight to everyone who studies Talmud. Phillips has taken the time to learn more about how academics view the nature of Talmud and development of halakhah. He offers a reconstruction of Rambam's approach to how halakhot are divided between those understood to represent an unchanging Sinaitic tradition, and those legislated by later generations and thus subject to reinterpretation. Phillips also places the different approaches taken by Sephardi and Ashkenazi sages to extracting the law from the Talmud in conversation with contemporary legal theories. The presentation, which is traditional enough to be absorbed by a yeshiva-trained reader, also challenges conventional views of how halakhicists typically conceptualize the nature and process of halakhic change. We are all better off for his efforts.

Thank you,



Chaim Saiman