

GUIDELINES FOR AUTHORS (October 2021)

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Mission. Making academic biblical scholarship accessible to enrich the study of Torah and related Jewish texts. Our articles aim to offer academic material that is comprehensible and engaging for all readers, while serving as a wide-ranging resource for ongoing academic discussion.

Disclaimer. We focus on illuminating Jewish texts in their historical context rather than making normative claims for any particular Jewish movement or for Judaism as a whole.

Audience. TheTorah.com is read by a diverse Jewish and non-Jewish professional and lay audience, and our material is often used by, and assigned to, college students. Our articles should thus appeal to anyone looking for serious but accessible engagement with the text or subject.

Structure. The article should have one main thesis and a clear, linear flow, taking the reader through an argument step by step and avoiding tangents and backwards references to earlier material as much as possible. In some cases, you may put material that relates to your key point, but is not part of it, in an appendix.

Style. Simple, direct, and concise language is preferred. The familiarity and comfort of our readers with biblical and rabbinic texts, methods, and terms varies widely. Wherever possible, technical terms and academic jargon should be simplified for our non-specialist readers. For technical terms that are necessary to the discussion, including Hebrew or Jewish concepts or critical/academic concepts, be sure to explain or gloss the terms the first time you use them.

Relevant verses or commentaries should be quoted rather than just cited. We do not expect our readers to have a Bible or other literature at their side as they read your article. When introducing a text that may be unfamiliar to the reader, give some context for the verse before quoting and analyzing the text.

2. EDITORIAL PROCESS

Our aim is for the piece to conform to the style of TheTorah.com, while remaining true to the author's argument. We strive to publish articles that are academically sound, while engaging and comprehensible to a lay audience. To achieve this balance, our editorial process is more extensive than professional peer-reviewed journals.

Submission. Please submit your article at least 2 months before its scheduled publication date. We are happy to receive an article earlier. Late submissions may have to be postponed for up to a year, until they can be slotted into a relevant date.

Review. Our initial response to authors about whether the piece will work or not for TheTorah.com, and/or whether it needs major changes from the author and then resubmission, will typically be within two weeks of submission. When you initially submit a piece, even before we edit it extensively, we may suggest restructuring it, tightening its wording, expanding the argument with further avenues of exploration to strengthen the argument or, conversely, cutting sections.

Editing Process. Once the piece is accepted, we engage in three different stages of editing: Structural design, revision, and copy-editing. Articles may be sent back to the author for revisions at each stage, and we ask the authors to respond to our edits and queries within four business days. Articles may change significantly during the course of the editing process, which often includes rewriting to conform to the accessible style of TheTorah.com, while remaining true to the author's argument. The author will have the opportunity to review and further revise.

Publish. Once an article is final, we send a link to the author for a preview and final approval before it becomes publicly available online. The article may also be translated into Hebrew and published on our Hebrew site, TheTorah.co.il. The author will be given the opportunity to review the translation and suggest edits.

3. SPECIFICS, A-Z

Abbreviations. We follow the second edition of the *SBL Handbook of Style*.

Bibliography. We do not include bibliographies. Therefore, footnotes should include the full bibliographic details of the sources cited.

Dashes and Hyphens. For page or date ranges, use an en-dash; for sentence breaks, use an em-dash with no spaces on either side (or an en-dash with one space on each side); for compound words, use a hyphen.

Emphasis. Underlining should not be used to draw attention to significant terms. This can be done with bold in quoted text, and bold or italics in the main text. Such emphasis should be used sparingly, however. (Scare quotes should also be used sparingly.) For foreign-language expressions and titles of books, published documents, newspapers, and periodicals, use italics.

Footnotes. Full references should be included in footnotes, not endnotes. Please avoid lengthy discussion of secondary scholarship; include only the most recent or the most important or relevant secondary sources. Except for *ad loc.*, *idem/eadem*, and *ibid.* (when referring back to something in the same fn), we do not use Latin terms or abbreviations in our citations.

Format. Continuous text: 12 points, 1.5x spacing, 12-point spacing after paragraph setting, no indentation. Footnotes: 10 points, 1.5x spacing, no added spacing between footnotes, no indentation. Our preferred font for all text is [SBL BibLit](#).

God's name. In quotes with the tetragrammaton, such as biblical verses, we prefer to keep the name, and not replace it with an eponym, but we insert a *maqaf* between the first *yod* and first *hey* so that it appears as יהוֹהֶּ. In English, please use YHWH, in all caps. אל or אלהים should be translated as “God.” For texts in which the tetragrammaton has been replaced with an eponym (rabbinic texts, etc.): אדני may be translated as “the Lord” or transliterated as Adonai; יי, 'ה, 'ד or similar locutions, may be translated as “the Lord” or transliterated as Hashem (in texts where this pronunciation of the abbreviation is the intention).

Images. Your article will be published with an image at the top. This will be chosen by the editors, though an author's input is welcome. In addition, if other images will clarify or highlight something important in the article, please suggest these. (Such images are especially important in articles that deal with archaeology or material culture.) It is best if the image is copyright free or if you have rights to use it, but if not, please let us know from whom we should request permission. (As a rule of thumb, we do not purchase commercial images for use.)

Language. Articles are written with American orthography and punctuation.

Layout. To make our articles engaging to our readers, each article includes:

- *Title*—We welcome your suggestion for an engaging but clear title. The final version is determined by our editors.
- *Teaser*—The title is followed by 1–3 sentences that either explain the main idea of the piece, raise a question, or address an issue that will be discussed in more detail in the article. The final version is determined by our editors.

- *Subtitles*—We use these extensively to aid our readers. These should be centered and bolded. If a section needs to be subdivided, the sub-subheading should be on the left and bolded.
- *Author’s Signature and Bio*—At the end of the article, the author’s picture and the first lines of the bio will appear. This will be hyperlinked to the author’s page, which will feature the full bio.

Length. Each article should be approximately 2000–2500 words long, not counting block quotes and footnotes. We are not overly strict about word count, but significantly longer articles may be rejected, pruned, or divided into two. As each article should focus on one key point, our optimal word-count range is typically feasible. Nevertheless, if you feel that the article needs to greatly exceed this word-count, please be in touch with us before you submit.

Maps. For pieces that need maps, we generally create our own, but doing so will require the input of the authors to help identify toponyms, routes, or other relevant information.

References. For references (first and repeated), we follow a modified form of the second edition of the *SBL Handbook of Style*. For specifics, see our citation style sheet. When referencing biblical passages in the running text, use the full name of the book. Abbreviated names should only be used in parenthetical citations.

Transliteration and Translation. When using Hebrew, Greek, and other original source languages in the running text, we transliterate. We prefer non-academic transliteration, but if an author strongly prefers an academic transliteration, we can accommodate this in the main text, but not in the title or teaser.

For non-academic transliteration, *tzadi* is *tz* (not *ts*), *chaf* can be either *kh* or *ch*, and *chet* is *ch*, not *h* except in standard spellings, such as Beer-lahai-roi, or Korah. *Aleph* (‘) and *ayin* (‘) should be transliterated when they affect the pronunciation of the word, such as when they function as a glottal stop. In most cases, an initial or final *aleph* or *ayin* need not be transliterated. Transliterated words, other than proper names, should be in italics.

We do not have a required translation for the Bible, though we do have a set of default translations that should be used if an author has no other preference:

- Hebrew Bible—NJPS (though “the Lord” should be rendered YHWH).
- Second Temple literature—*Outside the Bible (OTB)* translation;
- LXX (when not included in *OTB*)—*NETS*;
- ANE Texts—*The Context of Scripture* or Carta’s *The Raging Torrent/Bound for Exile*;

- New Testament—NRSV;
- Josephus (when not included in *OTB*)—Brill edition.

Authors are free to use other translations, including their own. Whatever translation is being used should be indicated in a footnote or parentheses after the first quote.

Textbox. When the original language is Hebrew or Aramaic, the original must be included, and the text will be published as a dual language text box. The original language should be first (it will appear on the left), and the English second (it will appear on the right). Both the Hebrew and English should be indented so our formatters will be more easily able to identify what goes in the box. (For Greek, Latin, Arabic, etc. texts, we generally place the original language in a footnote, and present only the translation in the textbox.)

For biblical verses, at the beginning of the Hebrew, we include the full name of the book plus the chapter and verse numbers in Hebrew letters (traditional nomenclature), all in superscript. At the beginning of the English, we include the abbreviated name of the book plus the chapter and verse numbers in standard numerals, all in superscript. For the rest of the verses, we use chapter and verse, but do not repeat the name of the book.

בראשית לבב ויעקב הלך לדרך ויפגועו בו מלאכי אלהים. לבג ויאמר יעקב כאשר ראם מחנה
אלהים זה ויקרא שם המקום ההוא מחנים.

Gen 32:2 Jacob went on his way, and angels of God encountered him. 32:3
When he saw them, Jacob said, “This is God's camp.” So he named that
place Mahanaim.

Thank you for your submission. We look forward to working with you throughout the editing process to make your article as clear and attractive as possible.