

Understanding *Hazal* (The Sages) through Literature

Eugene Korn

Rabbi Akiva, Rabbi Yishmael, Rabbi Meir, Rabban Gamliel, Rabbi Eliezer and Rabbi Yehoshua are some of the heroes of the Talmud. Who were they as people? How did experience and history effect their attitudes and halakhah? The Talmud doesn't tell us, but a recent novel, *The Orchard* by Yochi Brandes, describes their lives after the destruction of the Second Temple. We will study this novel, which is a literary blend of Talmud, history and romance told by Rachel, Rabbi Akiva's wife.

Each week we will discuss a section of the English translation of the book, examining how the personalities and history of that time influenced the Talmud, *halakhah* and Judaism. Students will need to buy the book and will be asked to comment on significant passages of each week's reading. They can also read the book in the original Hebrew: "הפרדס של עקיבא"

Schedule: Monday evenings 19:00–20:00 (Israel time)

1. Dec. 7: Introduction, *Tiberias* pp. 1-34
2. Dec. 14: *Tiberias* pp. 34-59
3. Dec. 21: *Lod* pp.61-105
4. Dec. 28: *Yavneh* pp. 107-137
5. Jan. 4: *Yavneh* pp. 137-172
6. Jan. 11: *Yavneh* pp. 172-218
7. Jan. 18: *Bnei Brak* pp. 221-262
8. Jan. 25: *Bnai Brak* pp. 262-303
9. Feb. 1: *Beitar* pp. 307-346
10. Feb 8: *Beitar* pp. 346-381

To register, email to Eugene Korn at ebkorn@gmail.com.