

Talmud Torah Facts תלמוד תורה

- *Talmud Torah* is defined as Jewish learning, otherwise known as studying the Torah and commentaries.
- Jewish learning incorporates many different parts of Judaism: thought, ritual, history, self-exploration, and values.
- The Talmud teaches that the mitzvah (commandment) of *Talmud Torah* is the greatest of all the *mitzvot*, because when we study and learn the Torah, we gain the understanding and knowledge to perform all the other *mitzvot*. What we learn is who we become.
- There is a midrash that compared Torah to water. Just as water is essential for life, Torah is also essential for our lives. We cannot exist without water, and our bodies are comprised of 98% water.
- The mitzvah of Talmud Torah allows us to make informed choices about how we practice Judaism.
- Talmud Torah is the way through which Jews connect to one another both at home and around the world.
- Another name for the Jewish people is “the people of the book” which highlights the importance of learning.
- Judaism is the first religion to make the knowledge of sacred scripture the responsibility of everyone, not just the religious leaders.
- The Pharisees, who are the forerunners of Judaism as we know it today, are credited with introducing universal Torah study into Judaism about 2000 years ago.

Additional texts on the importance of Talmud Torah:

- “When I pray, I talk to God; when I study, God speaks to me.” (Rabbi Louis Finkelstein)
- “Turn the Torah over again and again. You will find everything in it.” (Pirkei Avot 5:24)
- There was a Roman soldier who came to Rabbi Shammai and said that he would become Jewish if the rabbi could teach him the entire Torah while standing on one foot. Shammai, thinking he was being mocked, angrily dismissed the soldier from his presence. The soldier then went to Rabbi Hillel, who stood on one foot and said, “What is hateful to yourself do not do to your neighbor. That is the entire Torah; all the rest is commentary. Now go and study the commentary!” (Babylonian Talmud, Shabbat 31a)
- "Rav Yosef said: Talmud Torah is greater than saving lives" (Megilla 16b)