



# **Daily Reflections on Idolatry: Reading Tractate Avodah Zarah of the Babylonian Talmud**

*Joshua A. Fogel*

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Comprised of rabbinic debates in the aftermath of the destruction of the Second Temple (70 C.E.), the Talmud has provided the basis for Jewish ethical and practical norms for centuries. It is also an extremely long and forbiddingly difficult work that has accumulated countless commentaries just as complex. A recent translation with extensive notes has made the Talmud more accessible to English-language readers, but the textual difficulties remain. This volume looks at *Avodah Zarah*, one tractate of the Talmud concerned with idolatry, page by page. Idolatry was one of the cardinal sins for which an observant Jew was to accept death before transgressing. *Daily Reflections on Idolatry* offers a modern commentary with doses of humor and comparative examples in an effort to both explain and humanize the text and make it even more accessible to contemporary readers.



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