

Translations of the Hebrew Scriptures (Tanakh) into English

Robert Alter. *The Five Books of Moses: a Translation with Commentary*. W.W. Norton, New York, 2004. Excellent introduction discussing translation issues, history of text and previous translations. Notes indicate where translation is based on sources other than Masoretic text. Alter has also translated later portions of Tanakh with significant introductions: *Ancient Israel (The Former Prophets: Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings)*. Norton, 2013. *The Wisdom Books: Job, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes*. Norton, 2010. *The Book of Psalms*. Norton, 2007.

Everett Fox. *The Five Books of Moses: a New Translation with Introductions, Commentary, and Notes*. Schocken, New York, 1995. Modeled after the Buber/Rosenzweig translation into German, goal is preservation of the Hebrew nature of the text rather than smooth rendering in English. Excellent introduction.

Richard Elliott Friedman. *Commentary on the Torah with a New English Translation and the Hebrew Text*. Harper, San Francisco, 2001. This is the text I recommend as a starting point for participants in Beth El's weekly discussion group. Introduction and notes based on traditional Jewish commentaries and informed by current scholarship.

Jewish Publication Society, 1917 (Old JPS). Translated by committee of Jewish biblical scholars and modeled after the King James version. Like the King James, it emphasizes the literal meaning of the Hebrew and uses archaic English forms (thou, shouldst, etc.). This translation was used by the Soncino Press, London, in their bilingual editions, widely used in traditional synagogue settings: *The Soncino Chumash* edited by A(braham) Cohen and *The Soncino Edition of the Pentateuch and Haftorahs*, edited with commentary by J(oseph) H(erman) Hertz.

Jewish Publication Society, 1985 (New JPS). Translated by a later committee of Jewish scholars, with greater emphasis on readability and taking into account scholarly developments since the 1917 version. Available in various versions, with and without Hebrew and commentaries from the JPS. This translation, modified in 1999, primarily to include gender neutral language, is the basis for contemporary editions used in many synagogues:

The Torah: A Modern Commentary. Edited by W. Gunther Plaut, Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1981. Revised by David E. S. Stein, Union for Reform Judaism, 2005.

Etz Hayim: Torah and Commentary. edited by David L. Lieber, The Rabbinical Assembly and the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism, 2001.

The New JPS translation is also the basis for *The Jewish Study Bible*, a complete tanakh with multiple introductions and background essays, edited by Adele Berlin and Marc Zvi Brettler, published by Oxford University in 2004.

The Jerusalem Bible, Koren Publishers, Jerusalem, 1989. Translation by Harold Fisch, based on M. Friedlander's 1881 *Jewish Family Bible*, in comparison with Isaac Lesser's 1845 translation and "other later translations." (Not to be confused with the Catholic Jerusalem Bible).

The Stone Chumash and other ArtScroll editions published by Mesorah Publications, and edited by Nosson Scherman are based on traditional Jewish commentaries rather than a literal translation.