

Four Levels of Torah Study  
 Developed by Rabbi Nahum Ward  
 and his Torah Study Class, January 1990

	Rabbinic Hermeneutic PRDS	Four Worlds	Element Character	Relationship to Text	Method	God's Witness
1	Pshat "simple" or "plain" historical	Assiyah Body	Earth Action	black & white- reading the black	Any questions about text! Retell story. What elements strike you! Any surprises!	Reporter at scene Get facts-who! what! why! where! when! What happened! Retell story in own words. What catches your attention! Go back to text for answers to questions.
2	Remez "hint"	Yitzerah Heart	Water Feelings	reading the white reading between the lines hints to something else	Take all the pshat into your hearts. Explore your heart's connection to the text. Write down what comes up for you in Torah narrative. Explore in Torah narrative.	Investigative reporter What is it you'd like to know more about! Inquire more about one of these questions. Imagination is God-given. Go into archives of our own imagination. Expand on text. Fill in white spaces between words and letters. Develop narrative of text. Write down, draw, dance, etc.
3	Drash "expound" metaphorical	B'riyah Mind	Air Intellect	What is the pattern! What comes to awareness!	Search for parallel text- gezarah shav similar form elsewhere What text or other event does this remind you of? What issues and questions does it bring up for YOU? Look for something in this that reminds you of something else. Analogize, generalize	What is this text calling into your awareness! What interests you in text! Explore your reaction.
4	Sod "mystical" "secret"	Atzilut Soul	Fire Spirit	mystical, secret, hidden meaning of text deep meaning of text soul talk of text	Opening of Self in relationship to God, partners with God Letting go Open ourselves up to God's wisdom Opening to Who is it in us that knows.	Letting a deeper part of ourselves come into the process. Enter mediative state. How are we supposed to carry this story back into our lives! What is God teaching us! Read again meditatively. Ask God to be present inside and join you in being with text. Meditate or write what comes. Allow deeper part of yourself to come up. How does God want me to be in this situation!

# Torah Experience Cycle

