

2022
Impact Report

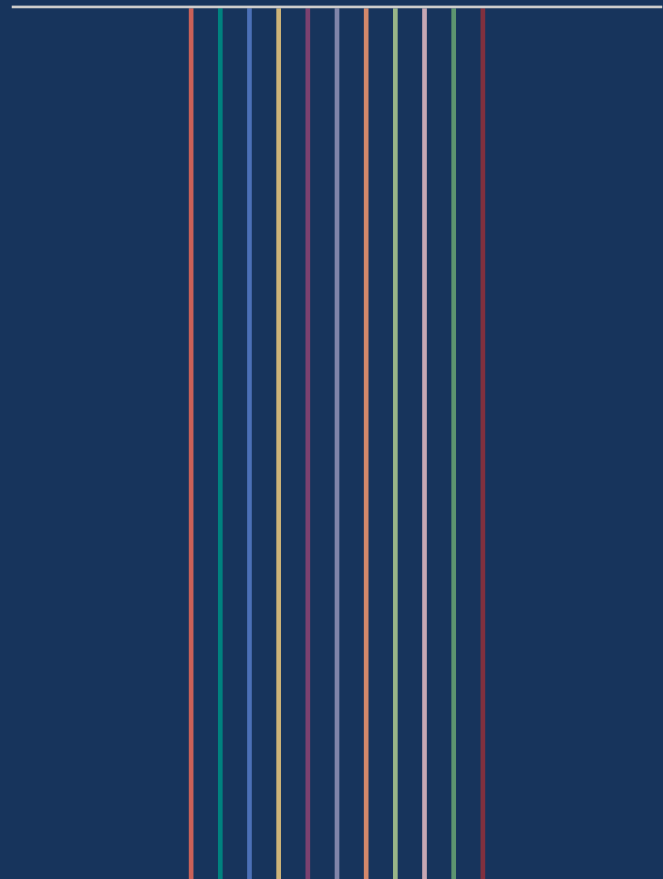


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Letter from the CEO

Dear Friend,

It's hard to believe that not so long ago, the internet was a less-than-friendly place for Jewish texts. Back in 2011, the second result in a Google search for "Talmud" was an antisemitic website. This shocking discovery was one of the things that drove our co-founders Joshua Foer and Brett Lockspeiser to launch Sefaria — and today, thanks in no small part to their effort, web-based Torah is thriving. From day one, our team has been committed to providing free and unfettered access to the Jewish canon to learners the world over. With 598,000 average monthly visitors to our library in 2022 — including a record 684,000 in October — it's no wonder that users like Jason Rosenberg of Tampa are calling us "one of the most powerful, revolutionary technologies in Jewish history." And we're just getting started.

2022 was a banner year for Sefaria, not only in terms of growth but our game-changing content acquisitions. We continued to prioritize access to the core canon by digitizing highly sought-after texts, including English translations of Midrash Rabbah and Maimonides' Mishneh Torah. We worked to add resources that made these texts more accessible, such as the Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon (the BDB) — the most comprehensive and widely used scholarly dictionary for Torah study today — generating an overwhelming response from our users. And we invested in content areas underrepresented in digital format, like Chabad Chasidut, notably adding a full bilingual edition of its foundational text, the Tanya.

Meanwhile, our engineering team has continued to work day in and day out to maintain, deepen, and expand the Sefaria learning experience to better serve our users. Among our new features this year were a search-in-book function, a highly requested feature that allows users to look up terms within a specific text; and version preferences, which lock in users' preferred translations by default. As our traffic increased, we also took the time to fortify our backend infrastructure to ensure a smoother study experience for all users.

We would like to extend our immense gratitude to our supporters, foundations and individuals alike, who have made this ongoing work possible. At the start of last year, we set ourselves a stretch goal of raising \$1,000,000 in gifts of \$1,000 and under from our community of users. I'm humbled to share that we exceeded that stretch goal, raising a total \$1,017,480 — by far the most we have ever raised, and a 30 percent increase from our small-dollar success last year. This community support accounted for 20 percent of our budget last year and is indicative of Sefaria's critical role in contemporary Jewish life and learning.

To continue to build on these remarkable achievements, our leadership engaged in a rigorous strategic planning process in 2022 to set us up for an auspicious launch to Sefaria's next chapter. I can't wait to share those exciting new developments in the coming months, and look forward to kicking off Sefaria's second decade with help from our supporters, new and old. Thanks to your enduring support, the future of digital Torah is looking very bright, and I couldn't be more proud. Read on to see more about our work in 2022.



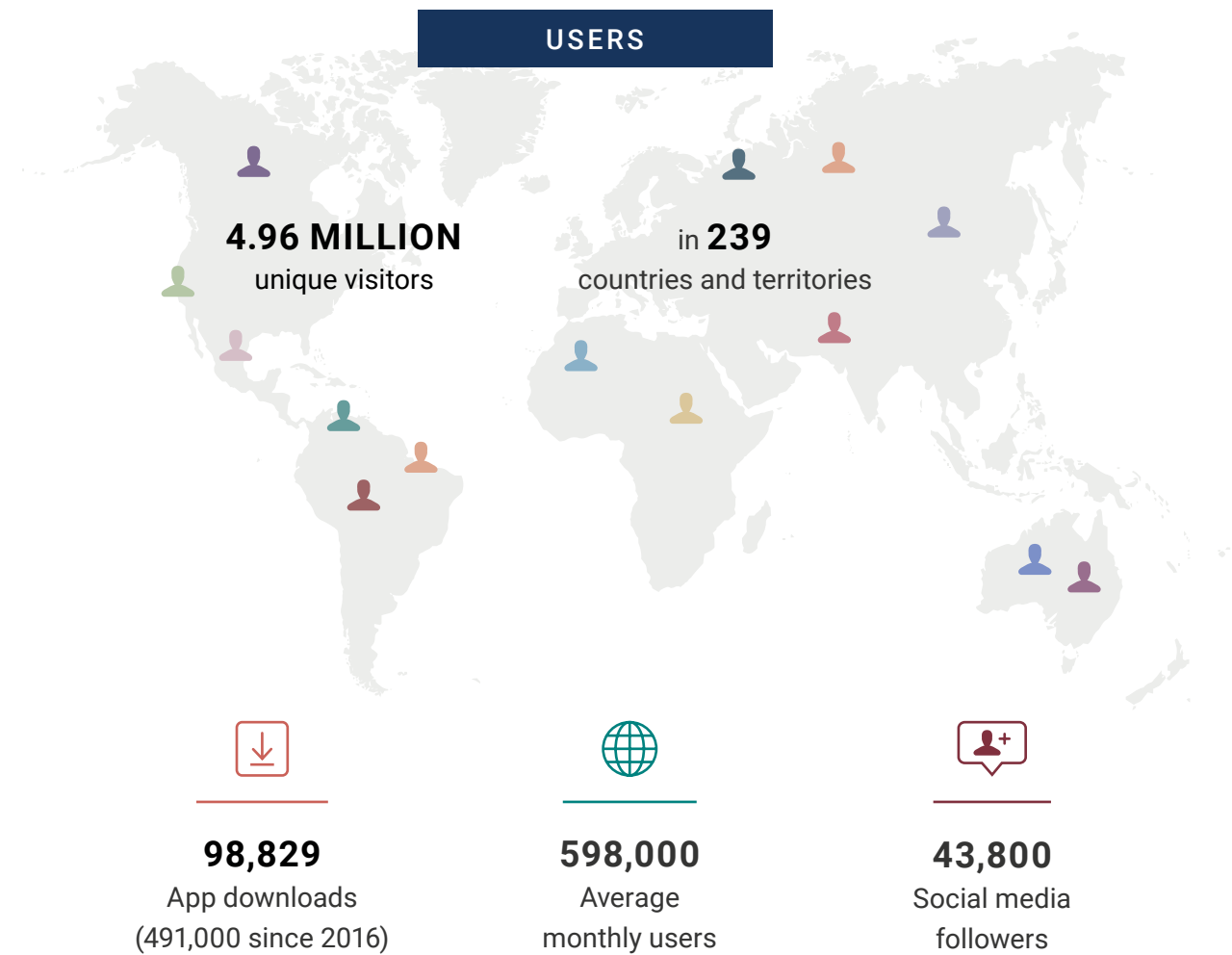
Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Daniel Septimus".

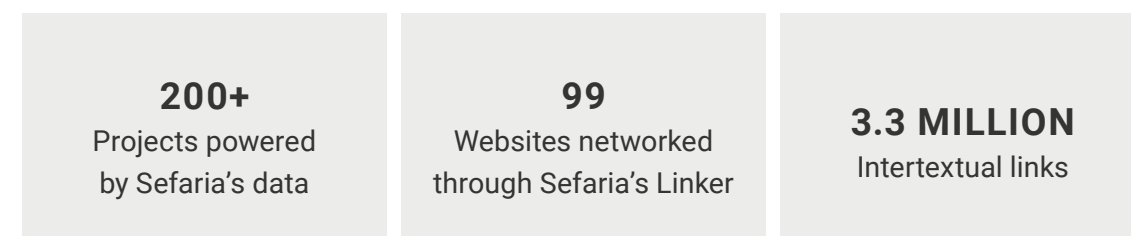
Daniel Septimus
CEO

By the Numbers 2022

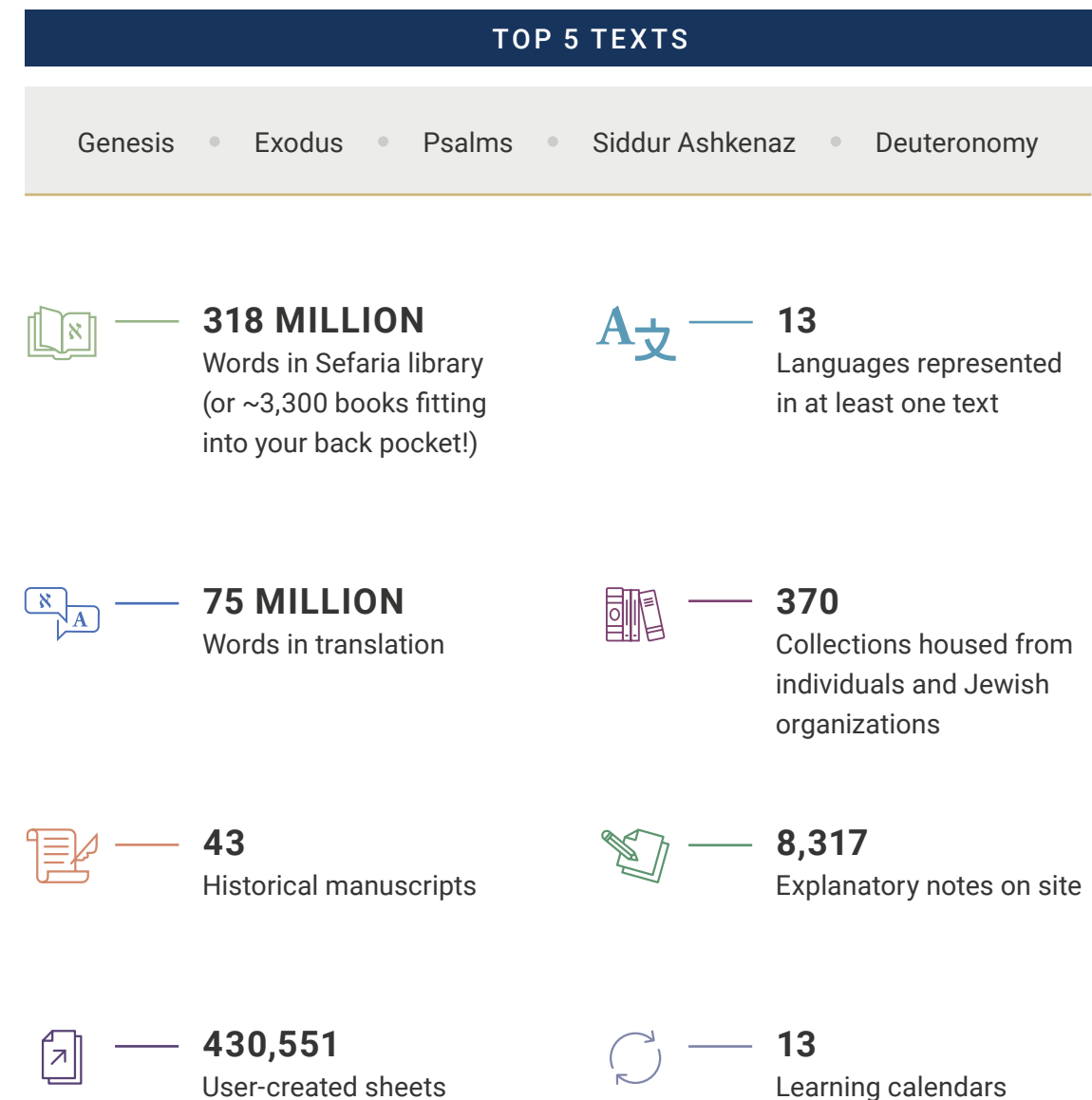
Our Reach



Our Digital Infrastructure



Our Library



Year in Review

HERE'S WHAT YOUR SUPPORT ALLOWED US TO ACCOMPLISH THIS YEAR



A Growing Library

TEXTS IN ENGLISH TRANSLATION

We grew our library to 318 million words, prioritizing English translations of canonical texts. Highlights include:

- **Midrash Rabbah**, a classic collection of stories and insights about the Torah, which will be the first full English translation of Midrash Rabbah available for free to all. (All five Megillot have been added already, and the full translation of the five books of Torah will be completed and added to the site in early 2024.)
- **Maimonides' Mishneh Torah**, a groundbreaking 14-volume legal code that is one of the most significant works of Jewish law.
- **Two New English Torah Translations**: The Contemporary Torah, a gender-sensitive adaptation of the Jewish Publication Society's 1962 translation, and Professor Everett Fox's acclaimed Schocken Bible.

REFERENCE WORKS THAT MAKE THE CORE CANON MORE ACCESSIBLE

- **Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon (BDB)**: With definitions for every word of the Bible, the BDB is the most comprehensive and widely used scholarly dictionary for Torah study.

BRINGING MORE VOICES INTO THE GREAT TORAH CONVERSATION

- Expanding our library with four new works of women's Torah, including **Karati Bekhol Lev** by renowned Israeli scholar Dr. Michal Tikochinsky and **Dirshuni: Contemporary Women's Midrash**.
- Spotlighting Torah from marginalized communities: **From Sinai to Ethiopia: The Halachic and Conceptual World of Ethiopian Jewry** by Rabbi Sharon Shalom.



A More Intuitive and Inviting Site

We're always working to improve the experience of navigating the Jewish library on Sefaria's platforms. Here are a few highlights that made for a more personalized and seamless learning experience this year:

- **Version Preferences**: Versions of texts now "follow" users as they move from book to book, locking in their preferred translation by default.
- **Improvements to Search**: Users can now filter more easily to find topics, texts, and sheets, and search for keywords directly in any text.
- **Language Pages**: We've enhanced our site to meet the needs of our growing international audience by linking to all available translations directly from the sidebar of our homepage.



Learning Resources to Bring Our Library to Life

Sefaria strives to make the Jewish library not only available, but truly accessible. Two highlights from this corner of our work:

- **Midrash Rabbah Learning Journeys**: To accompany the launch of our new English translations of Midrash Rabbah, we created two multi-part email **Learning Journeys** on the topics of Ruth and Esther Rabbah, designed to introduce the text to newcomers and help them dig deeper into them.
- **Sefaria for Rabbis**: To help bring Sefaria to every Jew, we set out to train students at nearly all major rabbinical schools in the United States. We also launched our new [Sefaria for Rabbis](#) landing page — a place for current and aspiring rabbis to find professional development opportunities, sign up for a dedicated newsletter, and explore curated Sefaria resources geared towards enriching their community's learning.

Sefaria's Impact

In the ten years since our founding, Sefaria has emerged as a stronghold of modern Jewish culture, flourishing at the intersection of Torah and digital innovation and paving the way for the future of Jewish learning. As the buzz surrounding Sefaria increases, more and more people are joining in on the conversation and generating excitement around living Torah. The numbers speak for themselves: an average of 598,000 people use the Sefaria library each month; 55,000 people receive our emails; and more than 43,000 people now follow us across Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. And those are just the people we touch directly! In reality, we cannot begin to capture Sefaria's overall impact using internal analytics alone. In making our resources free and easily shareable, countless people downstream of our users encounter our digital Torah through their rabbis, educators, public thought leaders, and friends — in their classrooms, news sources, and in the virtual public square.

Here's a glimpse at Sefaria's impact on Jews of all kinds, all over the globe this past year.

I A Game-Changing Resource for Rabbis and Educators

Rabbis and educators are the beating heart of the Jewish world, the nodes through which our shared tradition gets passed on. Sefaria has emerged as a critical resource for that critical population, with rabbis and educators continuing to tell us how game-changing Sefaria is to their work. Here are a few examples from 2022:



Rabbit Sara Zober
@RebbeSMZ

I'm telling you, Sefaria is going to change EVERYTHING about Jewish study. Before this moment, these were books that biblical scholars and rabbis pretty much used. And now my folks in my little Torah study can use them.



Jason Rosenberg
@RabbiRosenberg

Sefaria is quietly becoming one of the most powerful, revolutionary technologies in Jewish history. Its ever-expanding pool of resources is making Jewish texts available on a scale which was unthinkable just a few years ago. Thanks to everything behind this amazing project!



Rabbi Elisa Koppel
@rabbiisa

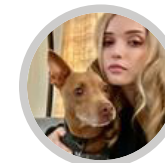
This is not a drill. BDB is on Sefaria. Making it even better. I have said before and will again: the best innovation in Judaism of the past century.

II Our Influence on Influencers: Powering the Jewish Conversations of Today and Tomorrow

Sefaria's easily sharable digital content has empowered social media influencers to create vibrant discourse around Jewish ideas. On TikTok, Instagram, and Twitter, influencers use Sefaria's texts as a springboard for important Jewish conversations, with our library serving as the go-to resource for grounding Jewish ideas and shaping arguments.



Kenden Afond, author of the award-winning *Feeding Women of the Talmud, Feeding Ourselves: Uplifting the Voices of Talmudic Heroines and Honoring Them with Simple, Vegan Recipes*, credits Sefaria with powering the project. She noted, "Without Sefaria, the probability of *Feeding Women of the Talmud* coming together is low to none...It felt like Sefaria was an open tab on my chromebook during the entire eight month project. I had never studied Talmud before this project. Having the Talmud text online allowed me to conceptualize, plan and execute this project."



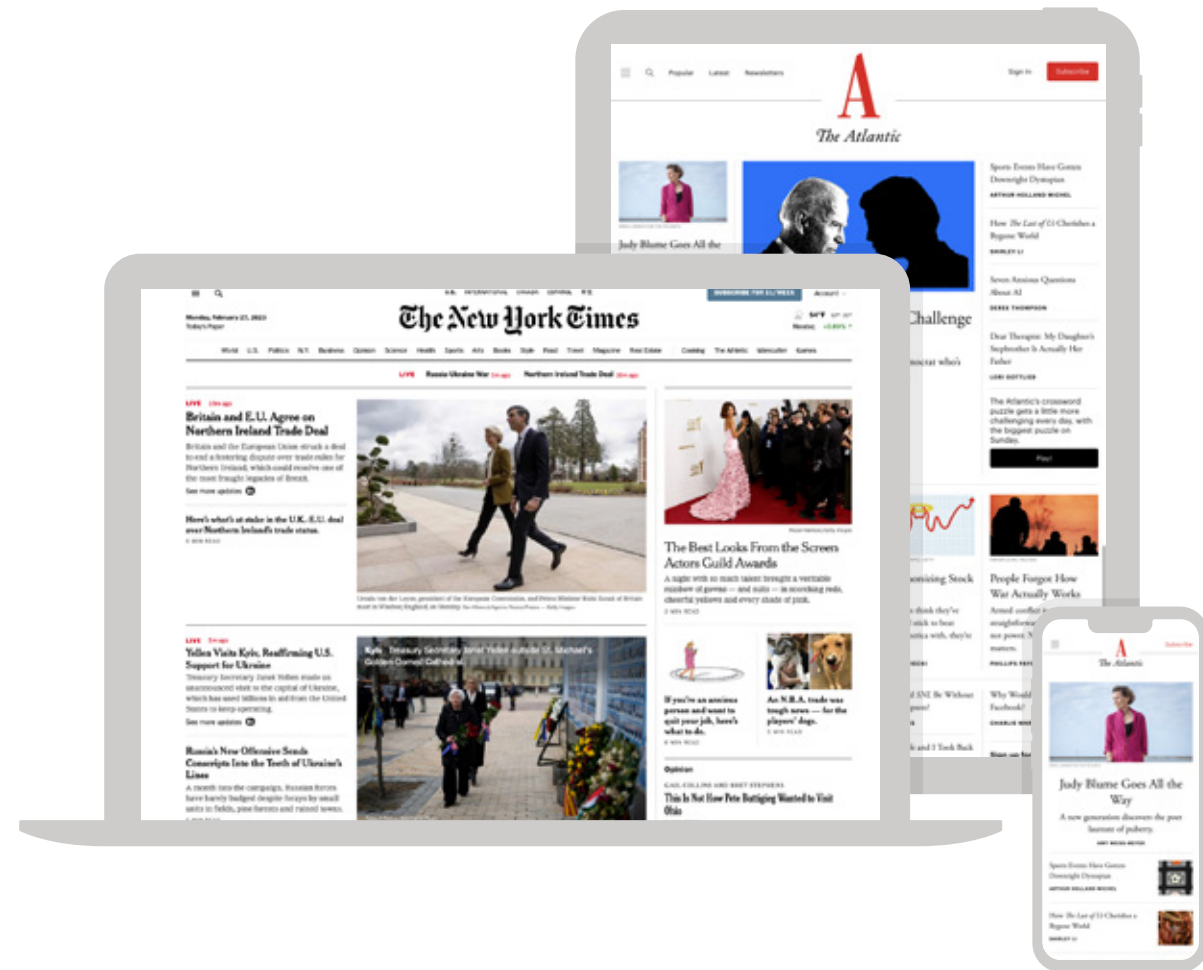
Social media influencer and Moishe House Artist-in-Residence **Miriam Anzovin** has developed a major following (54.2K followers across TikTok, Twitter, and Instagram!) for her brilliant but accessible overviews of the daily page of Talmud, and regularly notes that she could not do this work without Sefaria. "@SefariaProjectSO GLAD YOU EXIST FOR ALL OF US!!!! Couldn't do any of the things I do without @sefaria!!!"



Rabbi Sandra Lawson, Director of Racial Diversity and Inclusion at Reconstructing Judaism: "I can't tell you how awesome this would have been to have while I was studying to be a rabbi!"



Award-winning **Rabbi Danya Ruttenberg** tweeted in June that "@SefariaProject is a great gift to the world." In her latest book *Making Amends in an Unapologetic World* (2022), she writes that we "live in the Great Golden Age of Sefaria."



III Jewish Texts in the Public Square

With the ability to hyperlink to our free and open database, Sefaria texts ground public conversations that directly reference Jewish primary sources. Over the course of this past year, Sefaria links showed up across the media, including these articles in the [New York Times](#) and [The Atlantic](#). Yair Rosenberg’s Atlantic article, [“How to Learn about Jews From Jews, Rather Than the People Who Hate Them,”](#) featured Sefaria **first** in a list of resources to counter the public’s prevailing focus on antisemitism. “When we do not focus on the richness of our heritage — like our texts,” wrote Rosenberg, “we lose the very elements of it that have enabled the tradition to repeatedly overcome efforts to stifle it...”

“Thanks to Sefaria, going straight to the source has never been simpler.”

IV A Global Torah Movement

Sefaria’s impact is not limited to advanced learners or those in the public sector who benefit from our easily sharable content. In fact, Jews of all backgrounds and abilities benefit across the globe. Here are a few things we heard from members of the Sefaria community this year:

“As a Jew in a small town where we are lucky to have a minyan, Sefaria has given me a tool to stay connected, embrace independent study and be a better ambassador of our amazing faith.”

“I love this so much and cannot overstate the factor that @SefariaProject has been in my ability to study Torah myself, which in turn is allowing me to mend my relationship with Judaism.”

“I periodically think about creating the Jewish bookcase of my dreams, but then remind myself that money is finite and @SefariaProject is still free.”

“30 years ago (at 40 years of age) I converted to Judaism and set a (rather lofty) goal of being able to read the entire Torah. It wasn’t until recently, thanks to all the folks at Sefaria, that I was able to really begin navigating my way through the Tanakh.”

“I love Sefaria. So much of the info I have used in my conversion journey is there.”

“I am a Rosh Kollel in Israel. I give shiur 2 hours everyday over Zoom and Sefaria is our library for Jewish texts. The power of the virtual library has changed the way we learn. We have been learning together for 25 years, but having all the texts only a click away is a game changer.”

Finances

Sefaria accrued \$4.75 million in revenue in 2022. Expenses for general operating and special projects totaled \$4.8 million. Below is a breakdown of Sefaria's 2022 financials:

Revenue



- Foundation Grants
- Individual Donors
- Other Income

Expenses

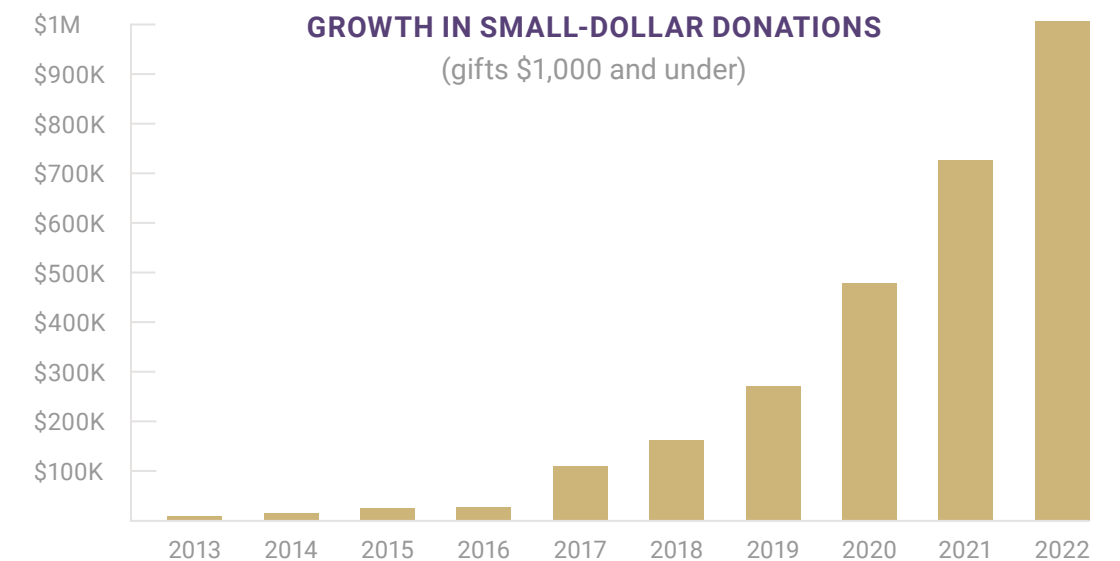


- Education and Engagement
- Content Acquisitions and Library Acquisition
- Product Maintenance and Development
- Operations and Organizational Management
- Fundraising

To learn more about Sefaria's financials, you can look at the latest 990 at sefaria.org/ways-to-give or you can explore [Guidestar.org](https://www.guidestar.org).

Fundraising

2022 was a year of giving back by the Sefaria community. We continue to be astounded by the ongoing generosity of our users: **9,646 people and institutions made donations**, with about **half giving to Sefaria for the very first time**. With their support, we surpassed our **stretch goal of raising more than \$1 million dollars in donations of \$1,000 or less** – a major milestone for Sefaria. Our community's generosity plays an increasingly key role in helping Sefaria maximize its impact on the Jewish community and make Jewish learning accessible to all. Looking ahead, Sefaria will seek to increase the proportion by which this collective resource is supported by the community of learners it serves. We continue to be blown away by our community's willingness to pay it forward for future generations, supporting free access to Jewish texts now and forever.



At a Glance

- **9,646** Total donors
- **4,733** First-time donors
- **\$1,017,480** Raised in donations of \$1,000 or less
- **30%** Increase in gifts of \$1,000 or less
- **\$304,703** Raised from **1,750** Sustainers
- **144** Days of Learning sponsored

Join Us

THANK YOU TO OUR MAJOR SUPPORTERS IN 2022 AS WELL AS THOSE WHO HAVE CHOSEN TO REMAIN ANONYMOUS.

Founder's Circle

Jim Joseph Foundation
William Davidson Foundation

Partners

Koschitzky Family
Maimonides Fund

Innovators

Raanan and Nicole Agus	The Lucius N. Littauer Foundation
Aryeh B. and Elana Bourkoff	Micah Philanthropies
Crown Family Philanthropies	Irving Montak Foundation
Sally Gottesman	Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Philanthropies
Hilary and Mo Koymfman	Jorian Polis Schutz
Joshua Kushner	Walder Foundation

Builders

Yitz Applbaum	Sender and Tali Cohen
Joshua and Dinah Foer	The Friend Family Philanthropic Fund
The Arev Fund	John and Debra Dawn Westheimer
Gary and Lois Claar	

We are thankful to the following individuals and organizations for their generosity:

David Nimmer
Dechert LLP
Leading Edge
Mark Cohen and Pearl Cohen LLP



Learn

Learn with Sefaria. Join the 500,000+ people visiting Sefaria every month to learn Torah, build source sheets, and keep the great, millenia-old Jewish conversation going.



Share

Have you published or translated a text that you'd like to share on Sefaria? Reach out to our content team at hello@sefaria.org.



Donate

Your support keeps our library open and free for all, forever. Join the thousands of people who contribute what they can to keep Sefaria going.



Sponsor

You can now make a more permanent mark by sponsoring a Day of Learning or a text in honor or memory of a loved one.



Stay Connected

Like us on Facebook, follow us on Instagram and Twitter. Sign up for our newsletter to keep abreast of our latest text releases, features, and updates.

To get involved, email samantha@sefaria.org.

 Sefaria