

# Reading Guide



EREWHON






## ★ Book Discussion Questions ★

These suggested questions are to spark conversation and enhance your reading of *The Republic of Salt*

1. Barsilay is reluctant to become king and repeatedly asserts that there is no ethical way to re-create the empire. Naftaly and other characters disagree. Do you think Barsilay is correct, particularly with everything that is at stake?
2. For most of the book, Naftaly is frustrated with Barsilay's failure to see him as an equal even though he, too, fails to see himself that way. Do you think a Mazik and a mortal can ever have an equal relationship? Do Toba and Asmel have the same issues, or has Asmel's time without his magic given him a better understanding of Toba and her earlier life?
3. The other characters seem to regard Toba Bet as the same person as the original Toba, while she herself does not. Who do you think is right? Do you think Asmel and Elena's opinions are formed by grief? By convenience?

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4. Tsifra seems to have a relatively low opinion of most mortals—and most Maziks, too, for that matter. The notable exception to this is Elena, whom Tsifra seems to admire both for tricking Tarses and for raising Toba after her mother's death. Up to this point, Tsifra and Elena have never met. What do you think will happen if they eventually encounter one another, especially considering that Tsifra was the person who murdered Elena's granddaughter?
  5. Do you feel ultimately that Rafeq is a good person? Is he more morally gray than, say, Elena or Tarses?
  6. Do you think it was reasonable for Barsilay to offer forgiveness to some of Tarses's people but not others? Do you think he made this choice for logical or personal reasons?
  7. One of the cornerstones of the Zayiti economy is goods produced by mortals, which can't be made by magic—in particular, spices. What sorts of things do you think would hold intrinsic value to people who can meet all of their basic needs through magic?
  8. Among Maziks, magic, memory, and the sense of self are all inextricably linked. How much do you feel that memory and selfhood are related?
  9. In *The Pomegranate Gate*, Elena describes demons as “bits of animated angry magic.” Do you think that assessment has borne out? What do you think the nature of a demon is, compared to that of a mortal or a Mazik?
  10. What do you think has happened to Tsidon and the Peregrine?