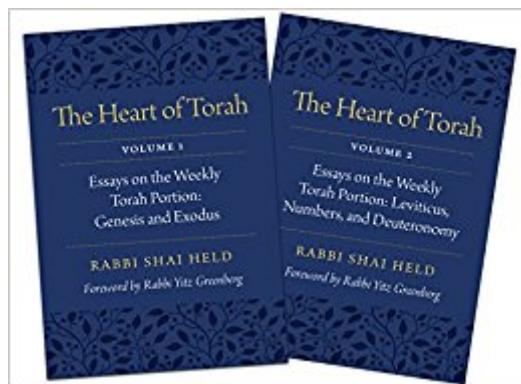


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The Heart Of Torah: Essays On The Weekly Torah Portion



Synopsis

In *The Heart of Torah*, Rabbi Shai Held's Torah essays two for each weekly portion open new horizons in Jewish biblical commentary. Held probes the portions in bold, original, and provocative ways. He mines Talmud and midrashim, great writers of world literature, and astute commentators of other religious backgrounds to ponder fundamental questions about God, human nature, and what it means to be a religious person in the modern world. Along the way, he illuminates the centrality of empathy in Jewish ethics, the predominance of divine love in Jewish theology, the primacy of gratitude and generosity, and God's summoning of each of us with all our limitations into the dignity of a covenantal relationship.

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"The Heart of Torah is a stunning achievement: textually learned, theologically profound, ethically challenging, spiritually uplifting, and psychologically astute. If you want to know what it can mean to read the Torah today with your whole heart and your whole mind, read this book."---Rabbi Sharon Brous, founder and senior rabbi at Ikar, Los Angeles"Shai Held deftly brings the wisdom of Torah to bear upon the contemporary human condition. Christians who read this book can discover fresh dimensions within the biblical text, see more clearly where there is common ground between Jews and Christians, and better grasp what it means to understand and live in this world as God's world."---Walter Moberly, professor of theology and biblical interpretation at Durham University"Shai Held is one of the most important teachers of Torah in his generation."---Rabbi

David Wolpe, author of David: The Divided Heart"Shai Held is an extraordinary figure in the world of Torah. Combining deep knowledge of classical Judaica, wide and insightful reading from the religiously diverse world of biblical and theological scholarship, and a keen sense of the human heart, he has produced a set of essays that people from a wide range of affiliations will find well worth reading and pondering."--- --Jon D. Levenson, Albert A. List Professor of Jewish Studies at Harvard Divinity School and author of the National Jewish Book Award winner Resurrection and the Restoration of Israel: The Ultimate Victory of the God of Life"Whatever your level of Torah proficiency or your religious outlook, The Heart of Torah will make you think, ask questions, revisit familiar understandings, and gain a new appreciation for the ability of our written and oral tradition to surprise, elevate, and challenge us all. Rabbi Held consistently sheds new light on seemingly familiar texts his interpretation of an eye for an eye is alone worth the price of the volumes and insistently prods us to become better Jews and better human beings.Ã Ã If you want solid scholarship, you will find it here; if you want religious inspiration, you will find it here, too. That all-too-rare combination makesÃ Ã The Heart of TorahÃ Ã precious indeed."--- --Rabbi Asher Lopatin, president of Yeshivat Chovevei Torah Rabbinical School"The greatest Jewish books arise from authors who combine deep learning in traditional sources with a keen awareness of the intellectual, moral, and spiritual currents of their time and place. Such is Rabbi Shai Held s breathtaking new commentary on the Torah. Expertly weaving together a tapestry of core stories from the Hebrew Bible with their interpretive trajectories over the ages, he has created a masterful compendium brimming with immediate relevance to the contemporary reader. Wherever you place yourself on the Jewish spectrum or beyond you will rise from reading this extraordinary work renewed, challenged, and deepened."--- --Rabbi Aaron Panken, president of Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion

Rabbi Shai Held is president, dean, and chairÃ Ã in Jewish Thought at MechonÃ Ã Hadar and directs its Center for Jewish Leadership and Ideas in New York City. He is the author of Abraham Joshua Heschel: The Call of Transcendence andÃ Ã a recipient ofÃ Ã theÃ Ã Covenant Award for excellence in Jewish education. Rabbi Yitz Greenberg is one of the preeminent Jewish thinkers of our time.

The Bible still speaks to us, in part because of its ideas and teachings, in part because of the long tradition of interpreters who help us see and hear its secrets that otherwise we might miss. Shai Held takes his place in the great chain of those bible teachers. He has so much to give if we're

ready to receive.

Rabbi Shai Held's writings make the Torah come alive. He brings the Torah to bear on some of the most fundamental issues in the human condition, especially kindness towards others. This book is deep yet accessible. His writing is powerful and will challenge you to be your best self.

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