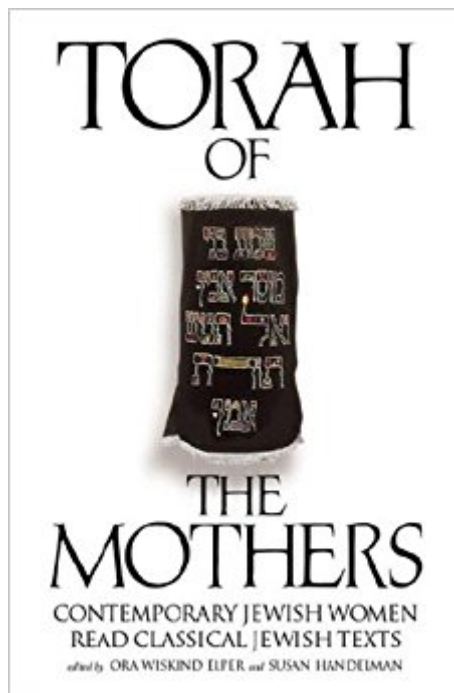




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Torah Of The Mothers: Contemporary Jewish Women Read Classical Jewish Texts



Synopsis

Combining erudition with a deep concern for the daily aspects of spiritual life, *Torah of the Mothers* is a landmark collection of essays and teachings culled from years of Bible and Jewish study by highly accomplished female Torah scholars and educators. Contributors such as Rachel Adelman, Erica Brown, Ilana Goldstein Saks, Simi Peters, and Leah Rosenthal bring their own area of expertise to bear, providing novel and refreshing insights into biblical and rabbinic texts. Each also offers thought-provoking commentary on the ever-present themes of exile and redemption, which are intrinsic to the ongoing saga of the Jewish people. These contemporary women also reflect upon the teachers who have personally influenced and inspired them, individuals such as Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik, Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan, and Nechama Leibowitz.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Since we would like to believe that Judaism and the Torah are for men and women, and since women have their own perspective on subjects, this volume is an important contribution to Judaism. The volume contains twenty-three chapters by twenty-three female Orthodox contributors, all college graduates and most with post graduate degrees. The book is divided into four parts. The first five chapters discuss significant Jewish teachers, such as Rabbi Soloveitchik and Nechama Leibowitz. The next seven chapters analyze biblical texts, including what the story of the daughters of Tzafchad says about women's issues. Four chapters on readings of rabbinic texts follow, such as an evaluation of three parables about a king and his daughter. The final section of seven chapters

addresses "exile and redemption," such as "Exodus and the Feminine in the Teachings of Rabbi Yaakov of Izbica." An example is the story of Tzafchad's daughters in Numbers 27:1-9. The daughters petitioned Moses for a change in the then-existing practices to allow them to inherit land. The author uses the story to show how modern women can petition rabbis for changes in Judaism. Eight logical steps are described. The first two are that women should: (1) identify the underlying spiritual principle that is being violated and (2) bring up the issue at the right time. This author suggests that rabbis should follow Moses' example and listen with an open mind. Another example is a detailed analysis of a midrashic tale about Rabbi Hanina ben Dosa, a very poor man. Unable to afford a sacrifice, he travels to a desert and carves and paints a stone to offer to the Temple. He cannot carry the stone to Jerusalem and angels help him. The author identifies dozens of narrative elements in the tale and suggests how they can be understood.

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