



Our responsibility is to love God and to love our neighbour which is what Jesus taught and it's also what Judaism taught - and that would make sense because Jesus was Jewish.

— Amy-Jill Levine —

AZ QUOTES

“I knew that, although the New Testament could be read as being anti-Jewish, *it did not have to be read that way.*”

“A Southern Jewish scholar offers great, even humorous, insight into Jewish-Christian relations by seeking to understand and affirm Jesus’s Jewishness. This one is a keeper.”—*Kansas City Star*

THE MISUNDERSTOOD JEW

THE CHURCH
AND THE SCANDAL
OF THE
JEWISH JESUS



Amy-Jill Levine

Our Jewish Roots: Biblical Insights from the Rabbis

Part 2

I. Introduction: Course Purpose

II. Review of Major Themes

A. The Rabbis

B. Torah: Radical Responsibility

1. A Revolutionary Story
2. God's Faith in Us
3. Doing Something for God

III. Rabbi Heschel, Rev. King, and the God Who Suffers

IV. A Closer Look (cont.)

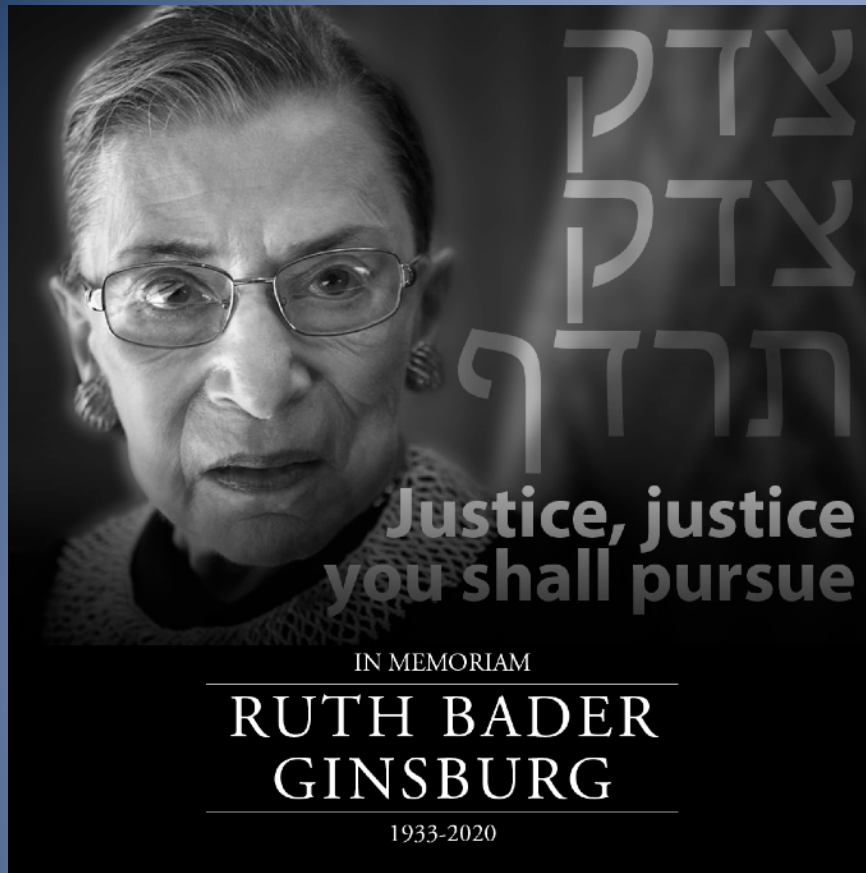
M. Shabbat Shalom

N. Keeping Kosher and Creation Care

O. Arguments for the Sake of Heaven

P. The Fear of the Lord

V. Conclusions: Life Before Death



“My heritage as a Jew and my occupation as a judge fit together symmetrically. The demand for justice runs through the entirety of Jewish history and Jewish tradition. I take pride in and draw strength from my heritage, as signs in my chambers attest: a large silver mezuzah on my door post, [and] on three walls, in artists’ renditions of Hebrew letters, the command from Deuteronomy: ‘Zedek, zedek, tirdof’ – ‘Justice, justice shall you pursue.’ Those words are ever-present reminders of what judges must do that they ‘may thrive.’”

Appoint for yourselves judges and officials throughout your tribes, and they shall judge the people with righteous justice. Justice, justice shall you pursue, in order that you may live and take possession of the land that the Lord your God is giving you. (Deut. 16:18, 20)

“Any judge who issues a true judgment, it is as if he [or she!] became a partner to the Holy One in the creation.” (Shabbat 10a)

ימים נוראים
DAYS OF AWE





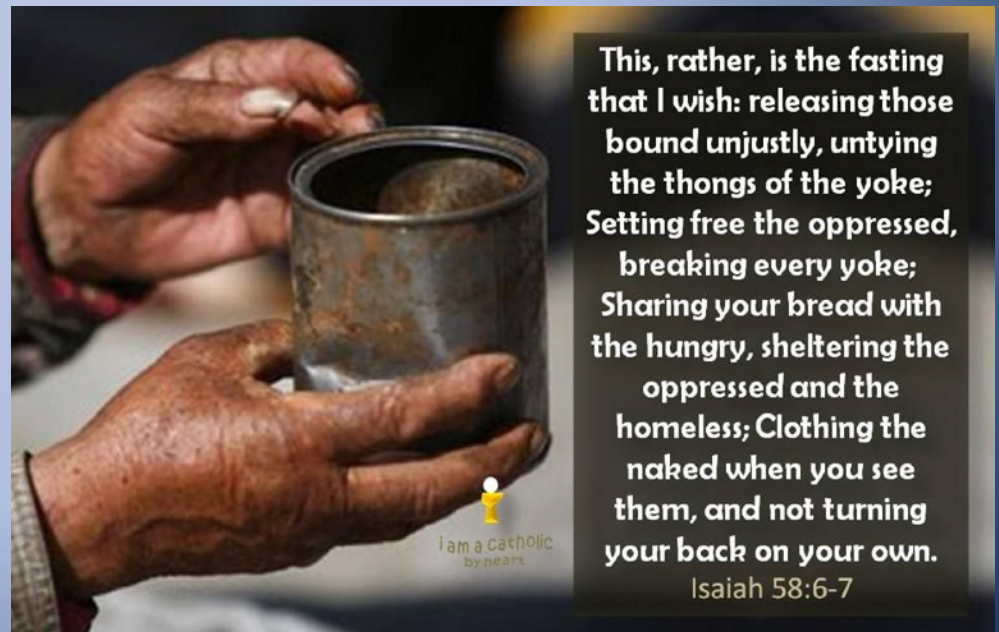
TASHLIKH

“Who is a God like you, who pardons sin and forgives the transgression of the remnant of his inheritance? You do not stay angry forever but delight to show mercy. You will again have compassion on us; you will tread our sins underfoot and hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea.”

(Micah 7:18-19)

True Fasting

“Day after day they seek me out; they seem eager to know my ways, as if they were a nation that practices righteousness and has not forsaken God’s justice. Such fasting as you do today will not make your voice heard on high.” (Isaiah 58:2, 4)



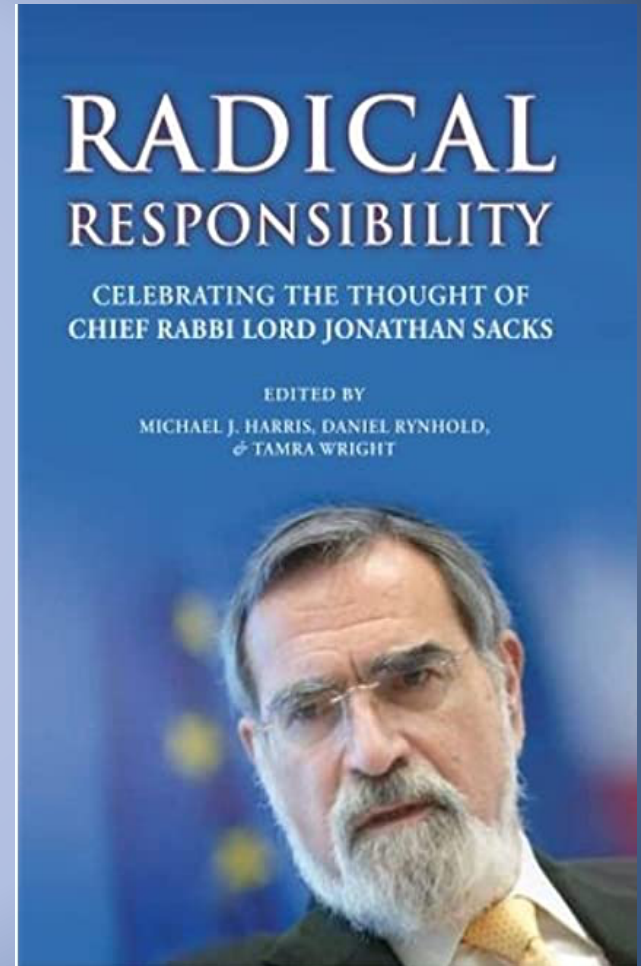
This, rather, is the fasting that I wish: releasing those bound unjustly, untying the thongs of the yoke; Setting free the oppressed, breaking every yoke; Sharing your bread with the hungry, sheltering the oppressed and the homeless; Clothing the naked when you see them, and not turning your back on your own.

Isaiah 58:6-7

BUILDING GOD'S KINGDOM

“Judaism is not a faith transacted in the privacy of the believer’s soul. It is a social faith. It is about networks of relationship. It is about families, communities, and ultimately a nation, in which each of us, great and small, has a role to play.”

“Read Torah and you will immediately note that it is not a formula for the salvation of the soul or the acquisition of inner peace. It is about [social] welfare and the treatment of employees,...justice and the impartial application of the law, charity and the alleviation of poverty. **It is about the construction of a society.**”



TORAH: A REVOLUTIONARY STORY

Redemption: liberation of enslaved immigrants from the oppressive powers of the state. “In your steadfast love you led forth this people whom you redeemed” (Ex. 15:13)

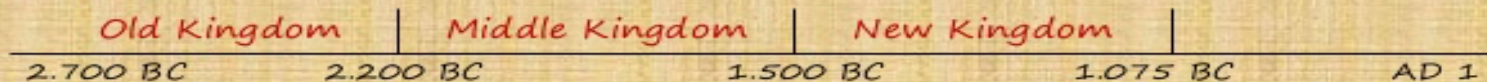


The Egyptian Empire

Ancient Egyptian History was divided into three periods:



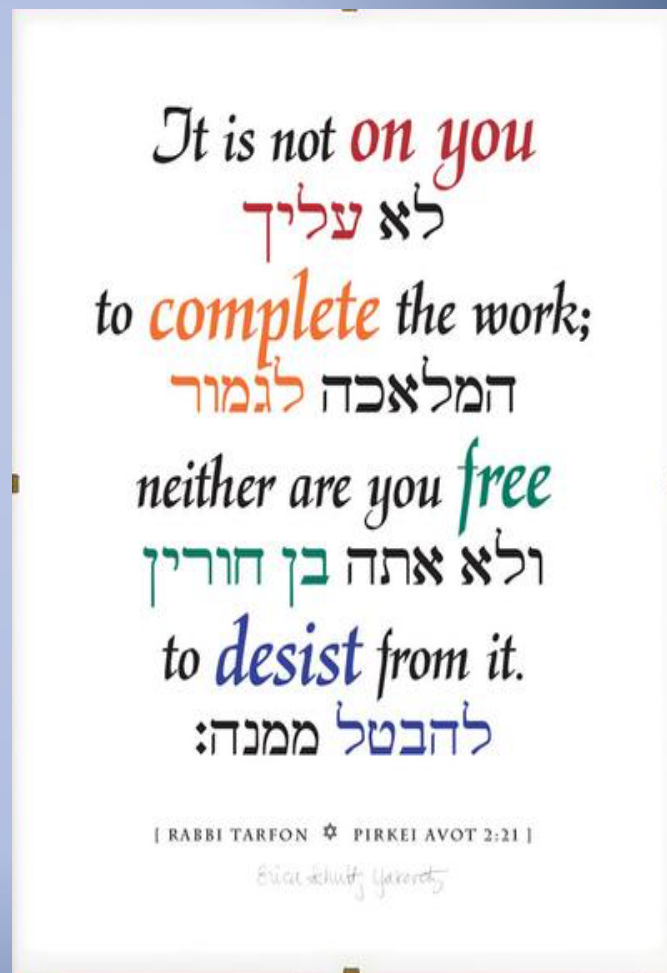
Time line



GOD'S FAITH IN US

Torah teaches “the daring idea that more than we have faith in God, God has faith in us.” Rabbi Jonathan Sacks

- Created in God's image (Gen. 1:26-28)
- Given dominion over creation
- Given creative work to do (Gen. 2:15)
- Made covenant partners with God to bring blessing to the world (Gen. 12:2-3; 18:18; 22:18)



Doing Something for God



Have them make a sanctuary
for me, and I will
dwell among them.

(Ex. 25:8)

“We are changed
not by what we
receive but by
what we do.”

“What transformed the Israelites was not what God did for them but what they did for God.”

Rabbi Sacks

THE WAY OF THE LORD:

practicing a righteous, compassionate justice

(Gen. 18:19)



“Justice, justice shall you pursue, so that you may live”

(Deut. 16:20)

Faith as protest

“Shall the judge of all the earth not do justice?” (Gen. 18:25)

“Abraham was the first person in recorded history to protest the injustice of the world in the name of God, rather than accept it in the name of God.”



In Judaism faith means wrestling with God as
Jacob once wrestled with an angel...

(Jonathan Sacks)

Israel: *“You have striven with God and have prevailed.”*

(Gen. 32:28)



Replacing Sacrifices

“Prayer is greater than sacrifices”

R. Elazar

Rav Shmuel bar Unya said: “Torah study is greater than sacrificing the daily offerings.” (*Megillah 3b*)

Loving actions

Avot d'Rabbi Natan 4:21

Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakkai was once leaving Jerusalem. Rabbi Joshua was walking behind him and saw the Temple in ruins.

Rabbi Joshua said, “Woe unto us for the destruction of the Temple, the place of atonement for the sins of Israel!”

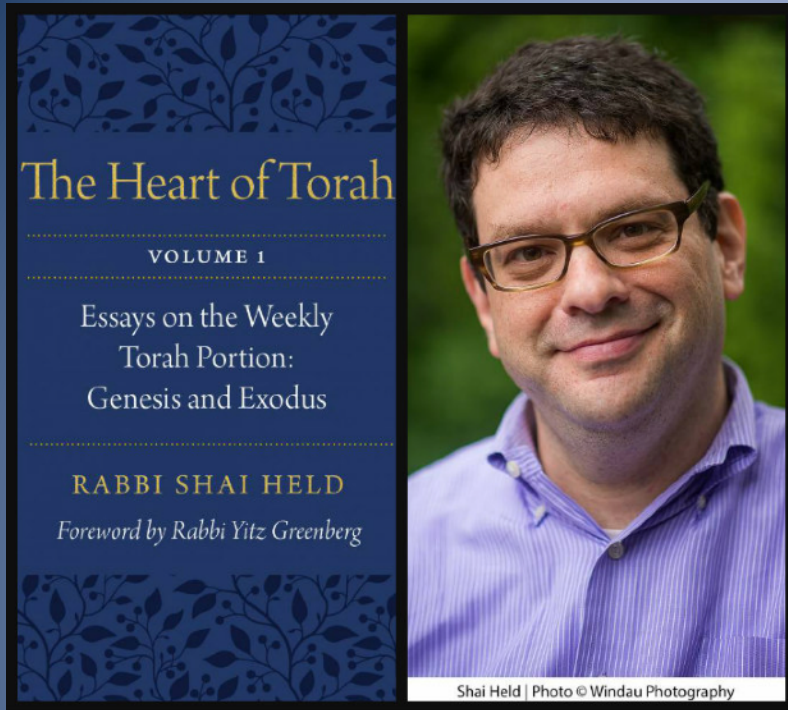
Yohanan replied, “My son, do not worry – we have another form of atonement like it. What is it? Acts of lovingkindness. As it is written: *For I desire acts of lovingkindness and not sacrifice. [Hosea 6:6]*”

“I will praise the name of God with a song; I will magnify him with thanksgiving. This will please the Lord more than an ox or a bull” (Psalm 69:30)

“We will render the calves of our lips” (Hosea 14:2 KJV)

Repentance

“The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit, a broken and contrite heart” (Psalm 51:17)



We can and we must improve ourselves, but we cannot perfect ourselves. We can and we must improve the world, but we cannot perfect it. That is part of what it means to wait for the Messiah rather than pretend that we *are* the Messiah. Yet the door to repentance is always open, and when we fail, God encourages us to get up and keep going.

In creation, God appoints humans as vice-regents, co-rulers responsible for the creation in ways that enable it to flourish and thrive. Human freedom brings responsibility as well, not only for ourselves but also for others. Torah places great weight on human responsibility but harbors no illusions about human nature.

According to Jewish theology, God believes in our ability to renew ourselves and to make real and deep contributions to realizing a more just, decent, and compassionate world. Participating in that grand effort is part of what it means to be human. But we are also asked to live with our eyes open, in full view of just how complicated both we and the world are, and thus of how hard and elusive moral progress really is.