New Fall Books and Great Holiday Gifts

The Jewish Publication Society

New Fall Books and Great Holiday Gifts 2016
Joseph

Portraits through the Ages

ALAN T. LEVENSON

Searching for Joseph

“An exciting book. Levenson has a wonderful ability to distill classic and contemporary scholarship and mix it with his own original insights in language every reader will find easy to grasp.”

—Marc Lee Raphael, Nathan Gumenick Chair of Judaic Studies at the College of William and Mary

“There is simply no other book quite like this. Levenson’s multilayered treatment of the Joseph story, with its Jewish focus and non-Jewish insights interwoven throughout, gives readers the feeling they are being engaged in intimate conversation. Highly recommended.”—Norman A. Stillman, author of The Jews of Arab Lands in Modern Times

The complex and dramatic story of Joseph is the most sustained narrative in Genesis. Many call it a literary masterpiece, a story of great depth that can be read on many levels. In a lucid and engaging style Alan T. Levenson brings the voices of Philo, Josephus, Midrash, and medieval commentators, as well as a wide range of modern scholars, into dialogue about this complex biblical figure.

Levenson explores such questions as: Why did Joseph’s brothers hate him so? What is achieved by Joseph’s ups and downs on the path to extraordinary success? Why didn’t Joseph tell his father he was alive and ruling Egypt? What was Joseph like as a husband and father? Was Joseph just or cruel in testing his brothers’ characters?

Levenson deftly shows how an unbroken chain of interpretive traditions, mainly literary but also artistic, have added to the depth of this fascinating and unique character.

ALSO OF INTEREST

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Thinking about the Torah
A Philosopher Reads the Bible
KENNETH SEEKSIN

When reason meets Scripture

“Seeskin writes beautifully. He is a master teacher, and hence his book has a directness and simplicity about it that is captivating, and even stunning at times.”—Michael L. Morgan, coeditor of The Cambridge Companion to Modern Jewish Philosophy

“Not only will readers come away with enhanced understanding of and appreciation for key passages in the Torah but along the way they will be introduced to Plato, Aristotle, Maimonides, Spinoza, Kant, Kierkegaard, Cohen, Rosenzweig, Buber, and Levinas . . . [whose words are] made accessible and important for our contemporary understanding of the Torah.”—Menachem Kellner, chair of the Department of Philosophy and Jewish Thought at Shalem College in Jerusalem and author of Must a Jew Believe Anything?

The Bible is an enduring source of inspiration for the human heart and mind, and readers of Thinking about the Torah will be rewarded with an enhanced understanding of this great work’s deeper meanings. Drawing on Western philosophy and particularly Jewish philosophy, Kenneth Seeskin delves into ten core biblical verses and the powerful ideas that emerge from them. He speaks to readers on every page and invites conversation about topics central to human existence: how finite beings can relate to the infinite, what love is, the role of ethics in religion, and the meaning of holiness.

Seeskin raises questions we all ask and responds to them with curiosity and compassion, weaving into his own perceptive commentary insights from great Jewish thinkers. The Bible is concerned with how we think as well as how we follow the commandments, rituals, and customs. Seeskin inspires us to read the Torah with an open mind and think about the lessons it teaches us.

KENNETH SEEKSIN is Philip M. and Ethel Klutznick Professor of Jewish Civilization at Northwestern University. He is the author of several books, including Searching for a Distant God: The Legacy of Maimonides, winner of the Koret Jewish Book Award, and is the coeditor of The Cambridge Guide to Jewish History, Culture, and Religion, winner of the National Jewish Book Award.

NOVEMBER 2016
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“Modern Orthodox Judaism offers an extensive selection of primary texts documenting the Orthodox encounter with American Judaism that led to the emergence of the Modern Orthodox movement. Many texts in this volume are drawn from episodes of conflict that helped form Modern Orthodox Judaism. These include the traditionalists’ response to the early expressions of Reform Judaism as well as incidents that helped define the widening differences between Orthodox and Conservative Judaism in the early twentieth century. Other texts explore the internal struggles to maintain order and balance once Orthodox Judaism had separated itself from other religious movements.”

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Jonah and the Meaning of Our Lives draws on commentaries of Rashi, Ibn Ezra, Kimchi, Abarbanel, and the Malbim, as well as contemporary culture and personal experiences, to reveal the hidden meanings of this perplexing biblical story. In so doing it explores many of the larger questions and topics we face, including human nature, our relationship with God, and how we understand ourselves and lead our lives.

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SADIE ROSE WEILERSTEIN

ILLUSTRATED BY JOE BODDY

“Contemporary expressions have been substituted for outdated ones, and the tempo has been picked up. In other words, K’onton has been much improved [since the original publication], but the main elements of the story and of the holiday remain. The witty, expressive pen-and-ink sketches add to the book’s appeal.”—Marcia Posner, the Jewish Book Council

K’onton—the lovable Jewish “Tom Thumb”—has cast a magic spell on children (and their parents and grandparents) for generations, delighting countless readers of all ages with his mischievous escapades. Now he appears again in K’onton’s Sukkot Adventure, a picture book combining two of Sadie Rose Weilerstein’s classic tales with light-hearted, whimsical drawings by award-winning illustrator Joe Boddy.

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SADIE ROSE WEILERSTEIN (1894–1993) is the creator of the tiny, mischievous K’onton, the hero of many of her short stories, loved by children since the 1930s. Weilerstein was twice awarded the annual Juvenile Award of the Jewish Book Council of America, and the Women’s League for Conservative Judaism granted her their Yovel (Jubilee) Award for her contribution to Jewish children.

JOE BODDY has received the Gold Medallion Award, the Children’s Choice Award, and the Hidden Picture of the Year and Illustrator of the Month awards from Highlights magazine.

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