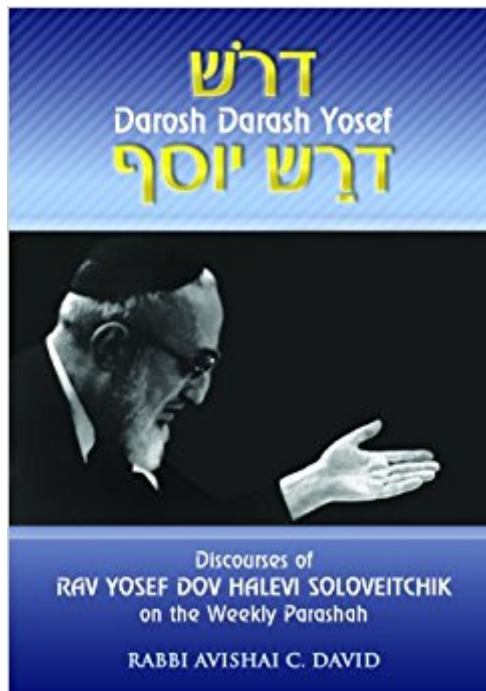




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Discourses Of Rav Yosef Dov Halevi Soloveitchik On The Weekly Parashah: Darosh Darash Yosef



Synopsis

Principally drawing from end-of-Shabbat lessons and discourses given by the Rabbi Yosef Dov Soloveitchik during his time in Boston, this compendium also includes Soloveitchik lectures from his tenure as the rabbi of Congregation Moriah in Manhattan and his summer lecture series. Compiled by Rabbi Avishai David, a student of Soloveitchik, this collection serves as a comprehensive introduction to the thought of one of the great Talmudists of the 20th century, a man who drew from a vast reservoir of Jewish and general knowledge to bring Jewish thought and law to bear on the interpretation and assessment of the modern experience.

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Customer Reviews

Harav Avishai David who lives in Beit Shemesh is known as an outstanding Torah scholar and God fearing person. He learned under the tutelage of Rav Yosef Dov Halevi Soloveitchik z"l for a number of years and has compiled for publication essays of a homiletic, philosophic and exegetical nature on each of the Parshiyot of the Torah that he heard from the Rav (Rav Yosef Dov Halevi Soloveitchik). In the course of a summer visit to Eretz Yisroel, I reviewed a number of these essays and I enjoyed all that which I read. It is patently clear that the author was exceedingly careful to transmit the content utilizing the precise terminology of our Rebi. Certainly, the ideas are eminently worthy of publication since they represent the well known positions of our Rebi and were written with great precision. --Rabbi Hershel Schachter Rosh Yeshiva and Rosh Kollel, Yeshivat Rabbenu Yitzchak Elchanan, Yeshiva University It is with awe and trepidation that I write these words of

recommendation for the compilation of Divrei Torat Harav zt"l on the Parshiyot Hashavua, authored by my dear friend Harav Avishai David Shlit"a. Awe, for the magnificent Divrei Torah recorded herein. Trepidation, for the Rav's words and ideas are words and ideas fit for a Malach Hashem, and we, his mortal students, shake with fearful emotion, lest they fall on our oftentimes deaf ears. The Rav's Divrei Torah are both profound and inspirational. They command us to respond with a deeper faith and with a stronger commitment to Torah. May the Almighty help us to respond fully to that charge so eloquently delivered. --Rabbi Hershel Reichman Rosh Yeshiva, Yeshivat Rabbenu Yitzchak Elchanan, Yeshiva University

Rabbi Avishai C. David is a former student of Rabbi Yosef Soloveitchik zt"l. He is the rosh yeshiva, or dean, of Yeshivat Torat Shraga in Jerusalem, a post-high school yeshiva program for young men, as well as the rabbi of a synagogue in Beit Shemesh, Israel.

Excellent d'var torah from a great sage!

Rabbis interpret Torah in different way. Tradition speaks of seventy ways, with the number seventy indicating a large number. Rabbi Avishai C. David offers his recollections of the views of Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik (1903-1993) on the weekly Torah portions read in synagogues. Rabbi David uses his own words. His book is significant because Rabbi Soloveitchik is very much admired; most Jews refer to him as "The Rav," the rabbi, par excellence. The volume is published by Urim Publications, the OU Press, and Yeshiva Torat Shraga, showing that the teachings in it are the views of a large segment of Judaism. The Rav considered Moses Nachmanides (known as Ramban, 1194-1270) as the best Bible commentator. In his book on the Rav, The Rav Thinking Aloud, Rabbi David Holzer quotes him saying: "In my opinion, the Ramban has contributed much more to the philosophy of religion" than Maimonides. Maimonides, he continues, was "over-educated and over trained.... The Ramban used more intuition than logic." Rabbi David says it this way in his volume: "Major decisions in people's lives are often not a function of rational calculation but based on impulse and intuition." The Rav, in short, emphasizes faith, rather than reason. The Rav, as most rabbis today, focuses on Midrashim. He quotes a Midrash on the weekly portion and offers his view of what the Midrash is teachings. Rabbi David says that the Rav was interested in "the spiritual message that (the Torah) conveys... (the) moral precepts and norms that translate into practical deeds." The following are examples. Deuteronomy 33:4 states: "The Torah that Moses commanded us is the heritage (Hebrew, morasha) of the congregation of Jacob." He

quotes the midrash: "Do not read morasha (heritage) but me'orasa (betrothed)" and he teaches that the "intimate connection between a Torah scholar and his learning is compared to a betrothal." He mentions Rashi to Genesis 17 that the patriarch Abraham sought the advice of a man called Mamre whether he should circumcise himself. He asks: "Why was it necessary for Abraham to get advice?" and he develops a sermon as an answer. He cites a Midrash on Genesis 37:28 that Joseph's brothers bought shoes with the money they acquired when they sold Joseph and he develops a lesson from this story. Like Ramban, the Rav accepts Midrashim as true facts, not legends, parables, or sermons. Thus, it is true, as a Midrash states, that "other worlds preceded this one." He teaches that God is involved every day in everything that happens on earth, even deciding what leaves should fall from trees. He mentions kabbalistic and hasidic notions frequently and accepts them as true. He sees humans being able to influence and change God, and sees original sin influencing future innocent generations. He states that the "het ha-kadmon (primordial sin of Adam and Eve) caused the immanent God to become transcendent and remote." But people can and must remedy the situation: "The goal of the covenant is to restore that intimacy." He follows the talmudic view of Rabbi Akiva, and not his contemporary Rabbi Ishmael, that every word of the Torah and even its spelling has meaning. There is no repetition. Thus he reads lessons into words and ideas that are repeated. In short, Rabbi David offers readers not only an interesting and thought-provoking book, but the approach to Torah as taught by one of Judaism's foremost thinkers.

After years of publications of Rav Yosef Soloveitchik's amazing insights only in lengthy essay form, this book provides digestible units of thought. The brief essays are provocative and interesting, conveying the Rav's great breadth of Torah scholarship and unusual grasp of philosophy, history, and current events. I was engaged from the beginning of Genesis until the end of Deuteronomy. It is sure to be appreciated by all audiences regardless of level of Jewish studies background.

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