



Renewal: A Guide to the Values-Filled Life

Shmuley Boteach

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Our culture is showing the cracks of a growing fracture. Soaring divorce rates; a crippled economy that rewards the few and punishes the many; religious-fueled hatred; record rates of depression—the headlines paint a grim picture. We inhabit a society that desperately needs fixing. But as Rabbi Shmuley Boteach reveals in his new book, *Renewal*, our society can be made whole again when we as individuals make the choice to live a life based on values.

For too long, conversations about values have been derailed by political movements trying to score points over hot-button issues like gay marriage or abortion. Boteach, one of our wisest and most respected counselors and spiritual experts, reaches deep into our history and into our shared religious legacy to revive the key universal values of Judaism for our struggling world. He presents these age-old ideas as guideposts for the challenges of modern times. These values, whose roots are in the Bible and thousands of years of Jewish spiritual living, can be applied to anyone in the modern world—from Christians and Muslims to atheists and agnostics—who want to renew their existence and recommit themselves to the most precious things in life.

Renewal shows everyone how to use the timeless values of the Hebrew Bible and Judaism to live a more fulfilling, modern life.

Destiny

Unlike the Greeks, who believed that life was scripted from birth, the Jews believe in destiny. In short, they reject the idea of tragic fates and instead champion the individuals' capacity to create their own destiny through individual choice.

Redemption

Christians and Muslims emphasize salvation, or the need for man to become spiritual—to refine his character and earn a place in heaven. But Jews believe in world redemption, the capacity for the individuals to make heaven here on earth for the betterment of the community.

Action

What you do is more important than what you believe. Good deeds always supersede good dogma.

Enlightenment

Jews are an infinitely curious people and believe that the great bane of existence—boredom—can only be cured by knowledge.

Marriage

Marriage refers not just to the institution, but rather the softening of the masculine by exposure to the feminine. A culture that does not know how to respect women is bound to collapse.

Struggle

It is wrestling with our nature, rather than attaining perfection, that constitutes true righteousness. Everyone is somehow flawed, but righteousness is found in the struggle to do right amid a predilection to act selfishly.

Sacred Time

Whereas other religions sanctify space, Jewish values privilege special moments. The Sabbath day, the holiest day of the week, provides a time for connecting with family and friends.

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