

Religion and Politics: A Conversation Amongst Friends

Our Core Texts

Shalom

Yehuda Amichai

Let the Memorial Hill Remember
Let the memorial hill remember instead of me,
that's what it's here for. Let the park in-memory-of remember;
let the street that's-named-for remember, let the synagogue named
after God remember,
Let the Yizkor prayer for the memory of the dead remember.
Let the flags remember, those multicolored shrouds of history:
The bodies they shrouded long since turned to dust.
Let the dust remember.
Let all of them remember so that I can rest.

Commentary by Rashi on Genesis 1:1

Said Rabbi Isaac: It was not necessary to begin the Torah except from "This month is to you," (Exod. 12:2) which is the first commandment that the Israelites were commanded, (for the main purpose of the Torah is its commandments, and although several commandments are found in Genesis, e.g., circumcision and the prohibition of eating the thigh sinew, they could have been included together with the other commandments). Now for what reason did He commence with "In the beginning?" Because of [the verse] "The strength of His works He related to His people, to give them the inheritance of the Nations" (Ps. 111:6).

The Sabbath, Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel

"There is a realm of time where the goal is not to have but to be, not to own but to give, not to control but to share, not to subdue but to be in accord."

The Passover Haggadah

In every generation, you ought to regard yourself as though you had personally come out of Egypt

Ariella

Midrash Vayosha

“And Abraham picked up the knife to sacrifice his son [Isaac].” The angels wept and their tears fell upon the knife so that it could not harm Isaac’s neck. But then his life-breath flew away from him. God said to the angel Michael, “Why are you just standing there? Don’t let him slaughter him!” Michael immediately called out, “Abraham, Abraham!” And Abraham said: “Hineni, here I am.”

Exodus 19:4

I carried you on the wings of eagles and I brought you to Me.

Rabbi Menahem Mendel of Rymanow

[Standing at Mount Sinai] All that Israel heard was the [silent letter] Aleph, the first letter of the first word [of the Ten Commandments].

Each of Us Has A Name- Zelda (Trans. by Marcia Falk)

Each of us has a name given by God and given by our parents	Each of us has a name given by the stars and given by our neighbors	Each of us has a name given by our celebrations and given by our work
Each of us has a name given by our stature and our smile and given by what we wear	Each of us has a name given by our sins and given by our longing	Each of us has a name given by the seasons and given by our blindness
Each of us has a name given by the mountains and given by our walls	Each of us has a name given by our enemies and given by our love	Each of us has a name given by the sea and given by our death.

The Passover Haggadah

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Jonah

Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel

Few Are Guilty... All are Responsible

Hannah Szenes

Blessed is the match consumed in kindling flame.
Blessed is the flame that burns in the secret fastness of the heart.
Blessed is the heart with strength to stop its beating for honor's sake.
Blessed is the match consumed in kindling flame.

Rabbi Tarfon

You are not expected to complete the work in your lifetime,
Nor may you refuse to do your unique part

Rabbi Simcha Bunim Bonhart of Peshischa

Everyone must have two pockets, with a note in each pocket, so that he or she can reach into the one or the other, depending on the need. When feeling lowly and depressed, discouraged or disconsolate, one should reach into the right pocket, and, there, find the words: "For my sake was the world created." But when feeling high and mighty one should reach into the left pocket, and find the words: "I am but dust and ashes."

The Passover Haggadah

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What Are My Core Texts?

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