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Torah Tutor: A Contemporary Torah Study Guide by Rabbi Lenore Bohm

In *Torah Tutor*, Rabbi Lenore Bohm draws on a lifetime of teaching about the Torah, the first five books of the Hebrew Bible, starting with Genesis. Early reviewers of the book praise the timeliness of the themes lifted up in this contemporary self-guided study, which is ideal for individual seekers and group discussions.

“Reading this may become one of the most meaningful parts of your week, renewing, enriching and energizing you,” says the Foreword by Rabbi Sally J. Priesand, America’s first woman ordained as a rabbi.

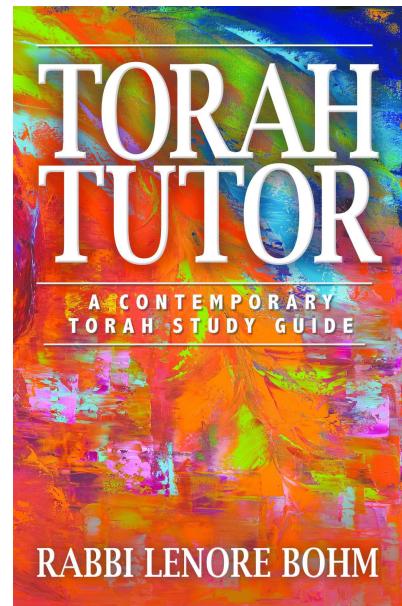
Priesand calls *Torah Tutor* “a well-researched volume relying on the wisdom of diverse scholars. *Torah Tutor* is organized according to the weekly portion, or *parasha*. After summarizing the parasha’s basic events, Bohm draws our attention to verses that stand out, some of which we may not have realized originate in the Torah. This is followed by ideas to think or talk about, making the portion easy to approach for individual study or group discussion. Finally, Rabbi Bohm offers a focus phrase to strengthen our spiritual awareness during the week.”

Whether reading as an individual or discussing the weekly readings with others, Priesand says these reflections will lead to moral, spiritual and intellectual growth. Each reader is likely to uncover different treasures in these pages. “Where we are in our own lives at a particular moment enriches the search and the discovery,” she writes.

Christian reviewers find the same is true as they also seek to study these shared sacred books. “As a Christian, I have always loved the stories and wisdom in the Bible. Rabbi Bohm expresses that same love in *Torah Tutor*. With each portion of the Torah, she lovingly crafts questions and insights that draw us into the heart of God,” says the Rev. Sharon Buttry, an author and peace activist in American Baptist Churches.

Scholars praise the breadth and depth of the book. Jessica Pressman, Professor of English and Comparative Literature, San Diego State University, writes: “Rabbi Lenore Bohm offers her heart and wisdom but also, importantly, her expertise in arranging, managing, and navigating the immensity of Torah study. In this short, brilliantly organized book, Rabbi Bohm provides scaffolding for accessing Torah—for learning to talk about, think, and focus on Torah. This is a gift of a book by a very gifted rabbi.”

Rabbi Lenore Bohm was born in New York to Viennese refugees from Hitler’s Europe. She grew up in Atlanta, Georgia. She was ordained from Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion (HUC-JIR) in 1982, among the first 50 women to become rabbis.



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Most of Lenore's career has been spent in San Diego, California, as a pulpit rabbi and as a Jewish educator for a variety of non-profit organizations, including Jewish Family Services, Jewish Community Center and the Leichtag Foundation. For two years, Lenore served Congregation Beit Shalom in Adelaide, Australia. Lenore was part of the first rabbinic cohort of the Institute for Jewish Spirituality. Lenore studied Contemplative Spiritual Leadership at The Shalem Institute for Spiritual Formation in Washington, DC, and Spiritual Direction at the University of San Diego. She studied Christian Feminist Theology at Claremont Graduate University.

Lenore earned her BA in English from Carnegie Mellon University. For two years, she attended an innovative interfaith seminary in Washington, D.C., called INTERMET in which aspiring rabbis, ministers and priests studied the Bible, pastoral care and social justice issues together, while each interned at a congregation of their own denomination. She received her MA in Hebrew Letters from HUC. Lenore received her Doctor of Divinity from HUC-JIR in 2007. Currently, she serves as Rabbi-in-Residence at Temple Solel in Cardiff-by-the-Sea. She also leads Torah Study at Congregation Beth Israel in San Diego.



Rabbi Bohm has four adult children and seven grandchildren.

Advance Praise for Torah Tutor:

"Rabbi Bohm's important work opens up each weekly Torah portion in ways that will touch the soul of individual seekers and will serve as the basis for creating community through shared study and conversation. Her beautiful language is accessible and rich, allowing Torah to touch our hearts and minds. This book provides a compelling and persuasive argument for the contemporary relevance of Torah study, explicitly in its introduction, but implicitly on each and every page. This new book is a vital resource for adult learners, rabbis and educators."

Rabbi Leon A. Morris, President of Pardes Institute of Jewish Studies, based in Jerusalem and New York City

"What I really love about this book is its accessibility. A lay-leader could pick it up and use it to lead a Torah study group with great success. Yet at the same time, it offers a grounded, scholarly, feminist perspective on each Torah portion, offering a rich source of sermonic material. A genuinely useful book!"

Rabbi Kari Tuling, author of *Thinking about God*

"Rabbi Lenore Bohm has written a very accessible, appealing, and challenging book that is a gem for Christians as well as members of the Jewish community. She has done the work of Torah which, as its name implies, 'instructs' and 'guides' adults through key passages of the Hebrew Bible. Using an approach that explains stand-out phrases and verses, offers questions to illuminate the texts and invites readers to make practical connections to their own lives, this book ultimately leads to personal reflection and prayer. With the help of Rabbi Bohm's knowledge and creative insight, adults will discover or rediscover trustworthy wisdom for life in today's world. I heartily recommend this treasure for seekers and for those charged with bringing the scriptures alive for their communities."

Barbara Quinn, RSCJ, Associate Director of Spiritual Formation, Boston College School of Theology and Ministry

"Rabbi Bohm, a popular and beloved teacher of Torah, has crafted a very accessible and rich approach to Jewish sources. Well organized, the materials stimulate thought and conversation while featuring diverse voices and opinions."

Rabbi Deborah Prinz, author of *On the Chocolate Trail*

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"This book is for those more spiritual than religious, for the seekers and the shape-shifters who want to be drawn to Torah but need a guide, a reason, a rabbi. Rabbi Lenore Bohm offers her heart and wisdom but also, importantly, her expertise in arranging, managing, and navigating the immensity of Torah study. In this short, brilliantly organized book, Rabbi Bohm provides scaffolding for accessing Torah—for learning to talk about, think, and focus on Torah. This is a gift of a book by a very gifted rabbi."

Jessica Pressman, Professor of English and Comparative Literature, San Diego State University

"Rabbi Bohm's book manifests excellent teaching skills and important Jewish feminist insight. Throughout *Torah Tutor*, Bohm renders complex religious issues, both ancient and contemporary, easily understandable. The book offers something for every reader, including Jewish and Christian religious leaders preparing to preach. The seeds of many sermons are here! The audience is diverse, including Jews interested in exploring Torah and its relevance to their lives, Christians interested in how Jews today interpret Torah, and those seeking enrichment or personal spirituality. I highly recommend it and plan to return to it often."

Bishop Jane Via, co-founder of Mary Magdalene Apostle Catholic Community in California

"As a Christian, I have always loved the stories and wisdom in the Bible. Rabbi Bohm expresses that same love in *Torah Tutor*. With each portion of the Torah, she lovingly crafts questions and insights that draw us in to the heart of God. Here you will find all the drama of creation and humanity made plain from ancient times. Here you will find parallels and deep connection to the issues and concerns of today. *Torah Tutor* can be used privately or in group study or by clergy preparing messages. Rabbi Bohm demands brave encounters with difficult and disturbing stories in the Torah. She offers a fresh spiritual approach, calling us to love and care more deeply for one another and the world around us."

The Rev. Sharon A. Buttry, retired American Baptist minister, co-author of *Daughters of Rizpah*

"Rabbi Lenore Bohm's *Torah Tutor* is for adults—thinking, questioning, skeptical adults. In it she puts aside children's Bible stories to reveal profound, often contradictory, and sometimes frustrating narrative investigations into what it means to be human. Torah is a tough book for tough adults looking for a challenge that is at the same time political, social, and spiritual. A skilled Torah teacher, Rabbi Bohm is the perfect guide to this indispensable book."

Rabbi Rami Shapiro, author of *The Tao of Solomon*

"We describe Torah as *Torat Hayyim*, a living tradition. This requires that our lives be deeply informed by ancient wisdom and practices, and that Jewish traditions learn and grow from our insights and lived experiences. We are living through a moment of transformation in which ancient Jewish texts are being interpreted by an ever-expanding circle of people. Judaism is being transformed by this generation of learners. And so are we, as people who now have access to Torah study in previously unimaginable ways. This book is a sturdy walking stick, a bridge, and a trail map that invites anyone and everyone to come and drink from the well of Jewish wisdom."

Rabbi Ari Lev Fornari, Senior Rabbi of Kol Tzedek, Philadelphia

"You couldn't do better than picking up this book and reading her commentary, indispensable even among thousands of years of conversation on a text that begs for those like her to help us—even those like me who study and teach it for a living—encounter even more in it. The insights here you won't find anywhere else, and you'll use them every day of your life. Many have written commentaries on the Torah, and this rises up with the very best of them. It really is that good."

Rabbi Scott Fox, Senior Rabbi of Temple Israel of Long Beach, California

"I have attended numerous Torah study sessions with the brilliant Rabbi Bohm over many years. This book is modeled on these sessions—but for a much wider audience. Rabbi Bohm brings the same expertise to her book as her in-person Torah study sessions."

Glenda Sacks Jaffe, Hillel Director, University of San Diego and California State University at San Marcos

"As a participant in Rabbi Bohm's Torah study sessions for over a decade, I heartily recommend *Torah Tutor*. This elegant and eloquent presentation of weekly *parshiyot*, accompanied by insightful commentary, fills the reader of Torah with renewed awe. Rabbi Bohm masterfully weaves contemporary themes and current issues with the wisdom and foresight of our rabbinic sages. *Torah Tutor* is a wonderful companion for those who wish to connect or reconnect to our greatest treasure."

Michael B. Maskin, ABPP, Clinical Professor of Psychology and Psychiatry (retired)

"Rabbi Bohm's book is indeed a treasure—both for those who think that they know the Torah already and for those who have never studied at an adult level before. Her book will open your mind to some of the questions that the Torah asks of us as well as to some of the questions that we should ask when we confront the Bible. I promise you that this is a book that you will find well worth reading—and that you will want to reread many times."

Rabbi Jack Riemer, author of *Finding God in Unexpected Places*

Torah Tutor

A Contemporary Torah Study Guide

Rabbi Lenore Bohm, Author

Foreword by Rabbi Sally J. Priesand

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