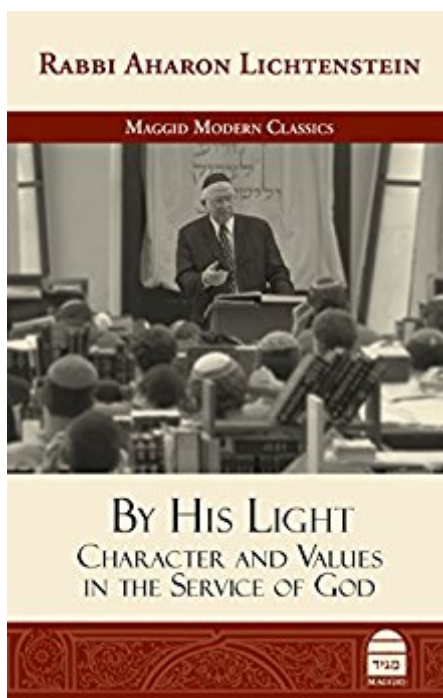


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By His Light: Character And Values In The Service Of God



Synopsis

In this volume, Rabbi Aharon Lichtenstein explores the development of the religious personality. He advocates a life centered on the service of God, but recognizes multiple paths to this goal.

Acknowledging that both the Jewish value system and human experience are multifaceted, he examines the relevant issues from an unusually wide perspective. Rabbi Lichtenstein's essays reflect not only a staunch commitment to Halakha and a firm grounding in rigorous Torah study, but also a deep spirituality, a profound moral sensitivity, and a keen awareness of both the challenges and opportunities of modernity. While being enlightened by Rabbi Lichtenstein's penetrating analyses and wide-ranging learning, the reader will also be inspired by the beauty of his vision of the religious life.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Fantastic shiurim from the Godol Horav Hagaon, Rav Aharon ZT"L, Zechusoy Yogen Olainu. Well written, very articulate, as was the style of this world renowned Godol. I personally studied under the Rov during 1976-1977, and I am very familiar with his style and presentation, as is clearly shown in this particular edition. Very highly recommended as a worthwhile study on various Jewish topics.

Very clear perspectives, and his typical in depth analysis on a broad spectrum of topics.

One of the few remaining eloquent spokesman and true role models for centrist orthodoxy that is true to those values but uncompromising in his dedication to Torah, Hasmada, and Avodas Hashem.

I generally try to steer away from superlatives, but anyone with any familiarity with the teaching, the character, the ethical fiber, the psychological sensitivity, the erudition, the sophistication and the purity of Rav Aharon Lichtenstein will be hard-pressed to avoid superlatives. For he is simply one of the greatest Rabbis of our times, if not the greatest. Who in the world today can boast the mastery of the entire gamut of the Rabbinic cannon, at the same time as boasting a mastery, appreciation, and sensitivity to the fruits of the Western intellectual and cultural tradition? In fact, 'boast' is certainly the wrong word because Rav Lichtenstein's humility is as spell-binding as his intellectual stature. By His Light is a collection of essays that offers a relatively succinct and yet profound introduction to all of these elements of Rav Aharon. The sensitive reader cannot fail to be impressed by the array of topics that he covers with such sophistication, creativity and laser-sharp insight. Furthermore, as one reads these essays, one starts to catch a glimpse of the persona of the thinker that produced them: a person who is very much in touch with the human condition, hugely insightful and intellectual, and yet living a life of faith that is refreshingly child-like in its purity and simplicity. The two volume Leaves of Faith is also a fantastic and important collection, but this book, By His Light, is perhaps the better introduction.

Rabbi Aharon Lichtenstein is a great Jewish teacher. In these essays he probes insightfully into fundamental questions of Jewish life. His treatment is characterized by balance, a vast knowledge and tremendous integrity. These are essays which have to be read thoroughly and carefully. The reward will be great.

The first chapter of this book discusses the relative merits of a life of working vs. a life of learning. The author reaches certain conclusions which are contradicted in later chapters. Most of this book deals with questions involving man's relationship to God, issues of repentance, connectivity etc. Not much is said here that has a lot of insight, or that we haven't read and heard many times before. The few chapters which actually deal with the ostensible subject matter of the book, character and values in the service of God, don't say much on the subject, and give the reader the distinct impression of being inconclusive. The best chapter is the final one, which discusses the place of

"Centrist Orthodoxy," but which, necessarily by its very nature, tends to destroy its own subject matter by labelling it so blatantly. It has an aura of "we are Centrist Orthodox, therefore we think this and do that," which may strike one as a rather backwards way of viewing reality. Finally, the book has far too many grammatical and syntax errors in the text. I would suggest a proof reader for any subsequent printings.

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