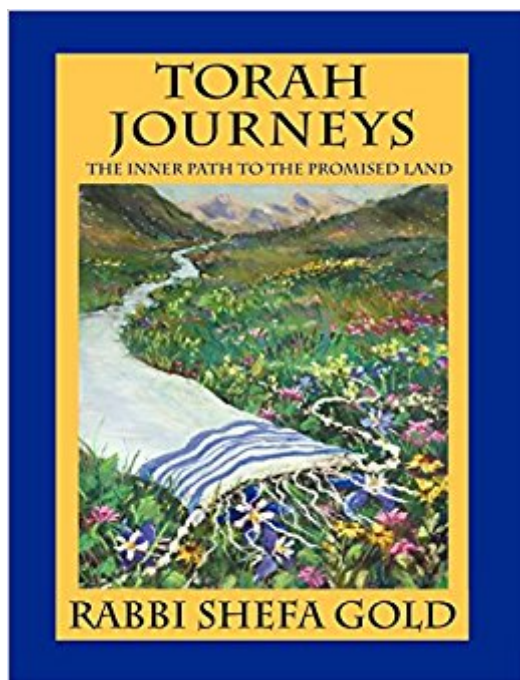


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# Torah Journeys: The Inner Path To The Promised Land



## Synopsis

The Torah is the map. You are the territory. Each weekly Torah portion brings us a blessing, a challenge and an opportunity for spiritual transformation. An inspiring guide to finding your way through the landscape of Torah... and finding the Torah in you. A stunning debut from the innovative pioneer of Jewish chant and popular voice of Jewish Renewal.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"If you dare be addressed by God -- read it. If you dare be transformed by God -- practice it." -- Rabbi Rami Shapiro Author of The Divine Feminine

Shefa Gold is renowned in Jewish Renewal circles and beyond for her teachings, particularly in the realms of chanting, meditation, and connecting to the sacred. She received rabbinical ordinations from both the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College, and Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi. In Torah Journeys, Rabbi Gold reveals a blessing and a challenge hidden in each weekly Torah portion. Rabbi Gold teaches that the Torah is happening now, and that its stories - from the Creation in Genesis through the death of Moses at the end of Deuteronomy - are about each individual's life journey. Drawing from her spiritual search as an adept in an array of practices, Rabbi Gold offers transformative practices for each week, ranging from meditation to visualization to chant. Torah Journeys is the fruit of the religious journey of an engaging teacher with an impressive grasp of Jewish texts and liturgy. Her experience of other traditions inspired Rabbi Gold to search out similar

tools in Judaism to expand consciousness, become fully human and know God. Rabbi Gold shares with us her insightful approach to Bible study and personal growth. The result is poetry for the soul. Torah Journeys is a book that is not merely about Jewish Renewal, but in fact, gives the reader tools to do it.

Torah Journeys represents Rabbi Shefa Gold's life work--not only the specific work of her own life, but also her template for a life of spiritual work based in the quintessential Jewish text, the Five Books of Moses, Chumash, or Torah, as it is variously known. As a student and teacher of Torah myself, I have long relied upon Rabbi Gold's fresh, embodied visions and powerful chants to take me deeper into Torah text, and then to turn me outward, back into my own life, with expanded awareness and with new spiritual tools. Now she has gathered her years of teaching into a beautifully conceived and lovingly executed volume. Her writing is carefully crafted, poetic and evocative, bringing alive the spiritual qualities embedded in the Biblical text in a way that is both accessible and deep. Moving us through the year-long cycle of Torah readings, Reb Shefa reveals how, each week, we might wrest blessing, accept challenge, and receive guidance from words of sacred scripture that often seem, to our modern sensibility, opaque or even repulsive. There is great hope and great joy in this work, for it is predicated on the assumption that we human beings can grow, can expand our awareness, and move through difficult and painful patterns by mining layers of resonance already held in suspension within our own, time-honored traditions. In fact, these pages dance alive the true meaning of the word "tradition"--from the Latin tradere, to "carry forward" or to "carry across." Indeed, Torah Journeys does carry us, again and again, into sparkling lands of clarity and grace, vast mind-spaces in which students and spiritual practitioners, Jew and non-Jew alike, can come to appreciate anew the riches of an ancient text through a lens that seeks always to transform challenge into blessing and questing into practice. This book can become a life companion, to be read and cherished year after year.

Rabbi Gold has brought such joy to my life with her wisdom, her chants, her way of relating everyday situations to the holy.

This is a book I find myself coming back to over and over. First, I read it week by week. Now, several years later, I leave it by my favorite chair to pick up and turn to almost every Shabbat. With Rabbi Gold's help, I look at the weekly portion not just in its historical context, or through the eyes of the ancient rabbis, but as a guide to my inner spiritual journey. Thank you, Rabbi Gold!

## EXCELLENT

Very pleased with the book and delivery.

For about two decades, Rabbi Gold has been gifting the world with memorable sacred songs and chants. This is her first book, and it's been worth waiting for. In it, she relates to Torah with the same artistic sensibilities that have infused her music. She has a gift for articulating inner conversations, giving voice to the Work of being true to one's highest self. Perhaps this is why the prose is relatively vivid for a book dealing with Torah, and why it excels in its genre. This book looks unblinkingly at Torah through the eyes of an earnest and experienced traveler on spiritual paths. She does not set herself up as a guru telling us what to think; rather, she models for us a process of textual encounter and introspection that we can make our own. With the highest respect for Torah and with a straightforward style that is never preachy, she shows us how to employ the biblical text as a mirror that we can turn on our inner selves, to help us see more clearly what we sometimes hide from our own view. Many urbane, contemporary Jews find certain parts of the Torah boring, unredeemably sexist, or otherwise primitive; it is most instructive to see what Rabbi Gold makes of those aspects: she challenges herself to embrace all of Torah, to read it in such a way that makes the text sacred to her. One anecdote that she relates (p. 18) sums up well the noble goal of this book. One afternoon, she was describing to a friend what the ongoing discipline of writing this book was like: "You can't sit back and criticize . . . what you don't like in the Torah. Instead, you must search for those same difficulties in yourself and then engage in a process of healing and purification. Instead of blaming, you have to take responsibility." And as she was expounding thus, she heard "a voice speaking every so gently yet firmly" in her ear: "And you could live your whole life that way." The book is at the same time a highly personal interpretation of Torah and a spiritual manual. It contains one chapter for each of the fifty-four "parashot" (the Hebrew term for the traditional segments of the Torah nominally studied and read by Jews according to an annual cycle). Each chapter distills from that biblical passage both a blessing and a spiritual challenge for one's life; it also offers concrete guidance for spiritual practice(s) that promise to help us appreciate the former while facing the latter. A multi-layered introduction and several practically oriented appendices round out the book. Although the author often draws upon concepts from other faith traditions, and although she has academic training in Bible, this book's enterprise is thoroughly Jewish and religious in both language and scope. For example, it engages "the Torah" rather than

"the Pentateuch." And it pays no regard to questions of the historical origin or development of the biblical text, which it takes as a given.

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