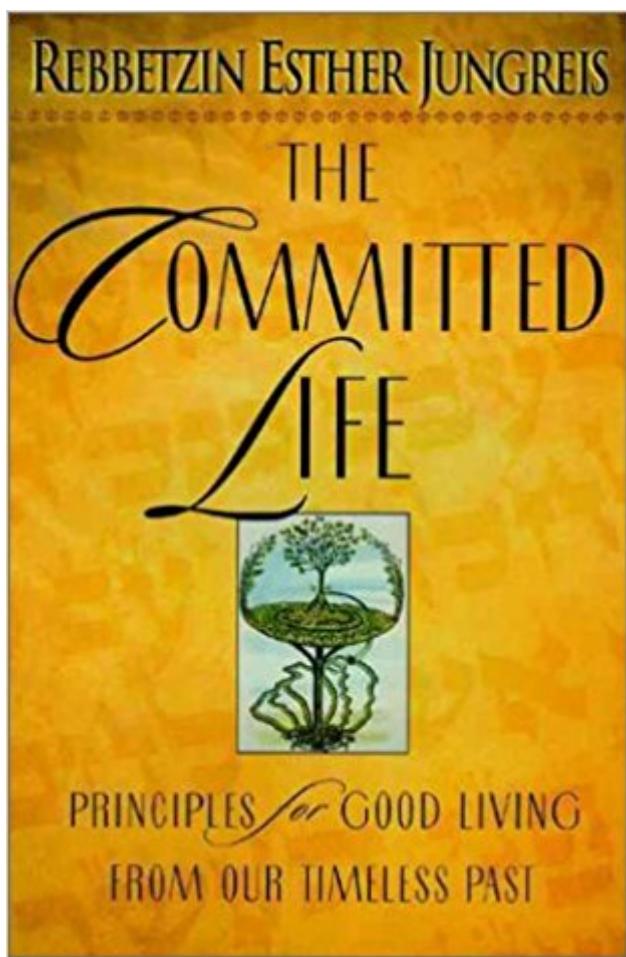


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The Committed Life: Principles For Good Living From Our Timeless Past



Synopsis

The search for meaning in our lives has become a particularly difficult quest. The high-pressure world we live in, with its emphasis on material goods, has eclipsed the timeless values of commitment and spirituality. Today success is measured not by what we are, but by what we possess: the cars we drive, the clothes we wear, the trinkets we buy. As a result, more and more people live with self-doubt, depression, ennui, and familial dysfunction. Relationships are stalled. Personal growth seems unattainable. In the end, the things we buy offer us no comfort. We grow old, lonely, and afraid, wondering how we could have done it differently. The Committed Life teaches us a better way. Rebbetzin Esther Jungreis has been reaching out to people and helping others find happiness her entire life. By age six she was smuggling food and messages into Nazi detention camps during World War II, thereby learning her first lesson of the Torah: "You shall not stand idly by while the life of your brother is in jeopardy." Today she is a dynamic and inspiring leader who has devoted her life to combating the spiritual wasteland surrounding us. The Rebbetzin knows that many of us are in trouble. She has heard countless cries for help escaping the emotional vacuums that have become our lives. Twenty-five years ago, she founded Hineni (Hebrew for "Here I am"), an outreach organization that has ignited the hearts and minds of people throughout the world. Her popular classes, based on the teachings of the Torah and focused on what is truly important in life, draw thousands every week. Filled with wisdom as timeless as the Torah itself, The Committed Life is for anyone eager to connect with ancient wellsprings of faith. Each chapter offers its own riveting lesson on such pivotal subjects as responsibility, forgiving, banishing fear, gratitude, anger, commitment to marriage, depression, faith, and hope. This is a book that you will want to keep on your bookshelf and pick up again and again for help dealing with the many restrictions of daily living. Written with the Rebbetzin's rare combination of honesty, love, and chutzpah, the stories here are universal and yet so deeply personal that reading them is like having her speak to you in your own home. This inspirational guide will give you the sustenance you need to lead a more fulfilling and committed life. Drawing on the timeless wisdom of the Torah, Rebbetzin Esther Jungreis reminds us of the principles necessary for living a better and more committed life: Commitment Inviting G-D Into Your Life Responsibility/Accountability Charity--Tzedukah Prayer Forgiveness Banishing Fear Compassion Faith Hope Gratitude Time Gaining Control Over Yourself Committing To Marriage the Sabbath Creating A Family the Legacy Of Grandparents" A Long Life is not good enough, but a good life is long enough." "Let me share with you the formula our sages proposed for change and personal growth. 'A man,' they teach, 'is shaped by his deeds and actions' [Sefer Ha Chinuch, The Book of Education]. Now this may not sound like

such a revolutionary idea, but it is diametrically opposed to that which our secular world believes--that it is our thoughts and convictions that mold and make us what we are...The mind is tricky, capable of rationalizing, playing games with ideas that the heart finds too demanding or too restrictive, and so Sefer Ha Chinuch advises us to bypass the cerebral, concentrate on our deeds and actions, and just do what we have to do. Through that doing, our personalities, our character traits, will be reshaped and molded until one day we will discover that we have become the new beings that we had hoped to become, that we are connecting to that goodness in our souls, and that we are on our way to fulfilling our mission in life."-- from The Committed Life

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Customer Reviews

Jungreis warns us in her introduction that our generation lacks moral underpinnings, values, and role models, that our homes lack stability and serenity, that our families have become dysfunctional, and that our world is high on bitterness and low on kindness and generosity. The author's father was the chief Orthodox rabbi of Szeged, Hungary, and when the Nazis occupied that city during World War II, the family was taken to Bergen-Belsen concentration camp. In the form of stories based on real-life incidents--including this harrowing family event--Jungreis advises readers on such weighty matters as commitment, responsibility, charity, peace, prayer, forgiveness, banishing fear, compassion, faith, hope, and gratitude. Jungreis, a Jew, quotes from the Torah and the Talmud, but her message is universal. George Cohen

"This is one of the most touching and inspiring books I've ever read." -- Dr. Laura Schlessinger,

author of The Ten Commandments

An amazing book by a wisdom-filled elder of our people! I absolutely loved it! All too often, the only stories we ever hear about Holocaust survivors are those who lost their faith in God because he supposedly was "not there" and failed to rescue the Jews. Why be religious, the skeptics always say, if it doesn't help you to physically survive? But for Rebbetzin Jungreis, descendant of an illustrious rabbinic dynasty and a survivor of the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp, there is more to life than mere survival. God is always there, even under the most horrible conditions that life can throw at us. The question is not how we die, but how we live. As her father taught her -- and she quotes him in the book -- "A long life is not good enough, but a good life is long enough." To Rebbetzin Jungreis, the "good life" is not one filled with material possessions, but rather, a life devoted to God, Torah, and mitzvahs -- a life filled with hope, forgiveness, joy and love. Short or long, such a life is always a good life. After surviving Bergen-Belsen, her father, who had been Chief Rabbi of Szeged, Hungary, before the Nazis came, charged her with a sacred mission: to help renew the faith in God among Jews, which the Nazis had tried to destroy. Rebbetzin Jungreis has devoted her life to doing just that. Her deep spirituality radiates from every page of this book -- not the wishy-washy, self-centered form of "spirituality" so often preached by New Agers nowadays, but the real thing -- the kind of spirituality that takes hard work -- and which manifests itself in a life committed to God and service to one's fellow human beings under any and all circumstances. I especially liked the parts where she talks about about doing tikkun olam (repairing the world) and forgiveness, saying: "To respond to hatred with hatred can only beget further hatred and reduce the world to chaos. Whenever possible, we have to try to communicate by using the formula of our father Abraham by attempting to awaken the Divine spark even in the darkest of souls." (p. 38) Remember, this is from a Holocaust survivor, who personally experienced the darkest chapter in Jewish history. But, unlike many Jews who became embittered and still say "Never forgive," Rebbetzin Jungreis does not allow hatred to fester and poison her soul. Instead, she lights a candle in the darkness, working to heal broken hearts and rescue wounded souls from the abyss. This is a book you will want to read over and over. Whatever your own level of religious observance might be, her personal stories and heartwarming, down-to-earth advice will help you to lead a more meaningful life.

I read this book for a few shabbats, it is so inspiring - full of stories from the Rebbetzin's work and personal life. I could visualise a person who works hard every day for bringing Hashem into the lives

of her own family and other Jews'. Seeing that there were comments that the stories are too focused on the author herself and the language positively so, I'd say it depends on whether you analyse things with an ayin hatov, or an ayin hara. With an ayin hatov you'll only find this so encouraging that you not only want to mend your life and increase your commitment to Hashem by elevating your emunah, but also want to not fear to encourage others to do the same.

Another wonderful book by Esther Jungreis Z'L. Through her books one feels as if she is having a conversation with the reader. Her recent passing is a great loss.

As an avid reader of books on Jewish thought and philosophy, I can most assuredly say that this book changed my life and touched my heart like no other book of its genre. Rebbetzen Esther Jungreis is a master teacher, a true gift from G-d and treasure in our generation. A woman who walks with the Almighty. Her genuine warmth and love for every Jew is palpable and can be felt on every page of this magnum opus on Jewish thought. As a child survivor of Bergen Belsen, she lost her beloved grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins in the fiery furnace known as the Auschwitz death camp. Despite this most devastating loss, her own personal flame was never extinguished during those dark days of living hell. Through the deep love and inspiration of her beloved parents and holy grandparents, she resolved to live her life in the quest to fulfill the Torah obligation of "Tikkum Olam", healing the world. Her raison d'etre became to reach out to every Jew with love, compassion and kindness, to emulate all of G-d's attributes and to educate all of humanity to the greatness of our Creator. Her journey has taken her to the four corners of the globe, as she touches the hearts and souls of all she meets. It is safe to say, that after reading and hearing Rebbetzen Jungreis' message your life will never be the same. This book is a profound and inspiring compendium of personal stories that will move the reader to tears and will bring to the surface emotions that were either long buried or that we never knew existed. After reading "The Committed Life" one can begin to understand that our role on this earth is to glorify G-d's name and to become closer to His holy Torah, while developing an understanding and appreciation of G-d's commandments. We begin to understand the enormous power of prayer, of communication with G-d as a way to achieve closeness and solace during trying times and even in good times. We begin to understand that each and every day is a gift from G-d and that we should wake up in the morning with a lionlike resolve to serve our Creator. We learn how to deal with the vicissitudes of life, and how to confront the multitude of challenges that life presents for us, both on a personal and communal strata. The words, Koomoo L'Avodas HaBoreh (I awake to serve the Creator) should

become our mantra. We begin to understand that through learning Torah, over time our lives begin to change, and as we become inculcated with Torah values our actions and behaviors reflect this great wisdom. We begin to understand that all the material wealth that we spend our time amassing in this world means nothing in the whole scheme of things. The Rebbetzen emphasizes that only through learning Torah will we have acquired great wealth and our learning and dedication to Torah will ultimately be our inheritance to future generations and through which G-d will judge us when we are called by Him. It is clear that Rebbetzen Jungreis' thorough knowledge of Torah places her in the category of generations of great Torah scholars. Her book is replete with quotes from the Torah and Talmud as she expounds on them in such intricate detail. The stories that she relays of her family and of those she has met and counseled resound with the wisdom of Torah and the love that she has for all people. While it would be a very difficult decision for me to make regarding which story touched me the most, I must say that my tears flowed freely upon reading the story of her last visit with her grandfather prior to his deportation to Auschwitz. Without going into the details of the story, it was the defining moment in her life, when she realized that her ancestors had cleared a path for her and we have that same obligation to our future generations. This most important book is a powerful read, surely a welcome addition to any home, school or public library. This book is not only a highly significant historical and religious contribution to the vast compendium of treatises on Jewish thought, but it is one that must be referred to again and again on a personal level.

Love this book. Timeless wisdom. I bought it to share with others.

ok

A must read!

I will admit that I Really disliked this book when I started reading it. The author's style is so self-congratulatory that it bothered me to read it. Her husband was the best husband ever, he was the wisest rabbi ever, and their son once led the most beautiful wedding ever--at least, so writes Rebbetzin Jungreis, who, by her own account, wasn't even at that wedding. Even when I re-read it, she sounded so smug that I could barely stand it. But I read it once at the request of my rabbi and again to let the bigger message sink in. And I do maintain that it is smug--and often theologically simplistic. But the bigger point of the book, how to live a Torah lifestyle and do good in the world, is a good one. Anyone who wants some inspiration in either regard will find this book speaking to the

heart. I ended up loving it and considering the Rebbetzin's voice as one of, perhaps, a well-intentioned Yiddishke bubbe.

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