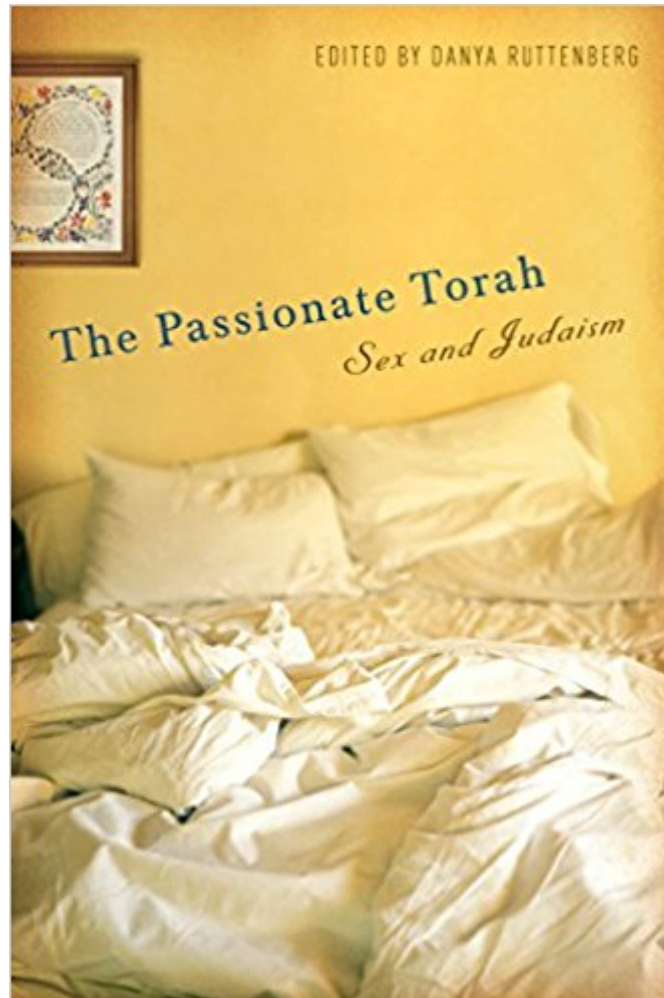




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The Passionate Torah: Sex And Judaism



Synopsis

In this unique collection of essays, some of today's smartest Jewish thinkers explore a broad range of fundamental questions in an effort to balance ancient tradition and modern sexuality. In the last few decades a number of factors—post-modernism, feminism, queer liberation, and more—have brought discussion of sexuality to the fore, and with it a whole new set of questions that challenge time-honored traditions and ways of thinking. For Jews of all backgrounds, this has often led to an unhappy standoff between tradition and sexual empowerment. Yet as The Passionate Torah illustrates, it is of critical importance to see beyond this apparent conflict if Jews are to embrace both their religious beliefs and their sexuality. With incisive essays from contemporary rabbis, scholars, thinkers, and writers, this collection not only surveys the challenges that sexuality poses to Jewish belief, but also offers fresh new perspectives and insights on the changing place of sexuality within Jewish theology and Jewish lives. Covering topics such as monogamy, inter-faith relationships, reproductive technology, homosexuality, and a host of other hot-button issues, these writings consider how contemporary Jews can engage themselves, their loved ones, and their tradition in a way that's both sexy and sanctified. Seeking to deepen the Jewish conversation about sexuality, The Passionate Torah brings together brilliant thinkers in an attempt to bridge the gap between the sacred and the sexual. Contributors: Rebecca Alpert, Wendy Love Anderson, Judith R. Baskin, Aryeh Cohen, Elliot Dorff, Esther Fuchs, Bonna Haberman, Elliot Kukla, Gail Labovitz, Malka Landau, Sarra Lev, Laura Levitt, Sara Meirowitz, Jay Michaelson, Haviva Ner-David, Danya Ruttenberg, Naomi Seidman, and Arthur Waskow.

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Customer Reviews

I wasn't a giant fan of Ruttenberg's biography so I was skeptical about this book. I was pleasantly surprised that I really enjoyed reading this book of essays. Since they are essays by many different people, there is some unevenness but generally the quality is very high with a lot of new thought about a very old subject. My favorite essay was the one by Jay Michaelson and as a result I bought his two recent books.

This book was approached by person who wanted to think about ethics and sexuality from a Jewish point of view. I am 58 and these are still questions I wonder about. By choosing to include a large series of essays, many issues are discussed from ritual purity, desire for children, status of women, homosexuality, androgyny, and birth control. The most important discovery of this book is that the many of the issues are discussed in an understanding way by such books of Jewish learnings as the Bablyonian Talmud. Judaism has been struggling with these type of issues for its length of days. Most essays start with the tradition, but say with more knowledge we need to modify our understanding of the tradition and its values. There are, of course, the political tract pieces you are bound to find in this a series of essays that unsatisfyingly since they see things in with only one lense. But even here, there are things to learn and think about. This is good book to clearly bring up the issues and help us progress to an even better Jewish ethic on these issues, which help individuals cope in a good and holy way with the passions of life.

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