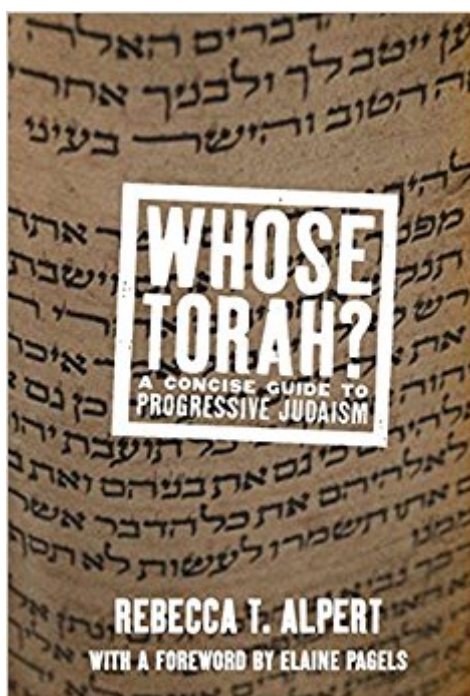


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# Whose Torah?: A Concise Guide To Progressive Judaism (Whose Religion?)



## Synopsis

Rabbi Rebecca Alpert is a leading voice in progressive Judaism. A crusader for reform within the Jewish community, she was one of the first women in Jewish history to be ordained a rabbi. Alpert is a celebrated teacher, an expert on Jewish American religious history, and a key public advocate for progressive social issues in contemporary Jewish life. In *Whose Torah?*, Alpert sketches a compelling portrait of the progressive values that belong to the core of Judaism today. Reaching deeply into the sources of Jewish tradition, she highlights with unflinching moral clarity the textual basis for a truly just vision of life for all who care about sexual, economic, and racial justice and for those who would oppose all forms of discrimination, unjust war, and the destruction of the environment. Alpert also carefully considers what it means to be Jewish in contemporary America—offering both a passionate and deeply learned defense of progressive Jewish identity. *Whose Torah?* will be an essential intellectual resource for progressive Jews and for anyone searching for the religious underpinnings of contemporary progressive politics. Elaine Pagels, Harrington Spear Paine Foundation Professor of Religion at Princeton University, is the author of numerous, widely acclaimed books on Gnosticism and early Christianity, including *The Gnostic Gospels*, *Beyond Belief*, and *Reading Judas*.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Pursuit of tzedek (justice) takes many forms, and Alpert, among the first women to be ordained as a

rabbi and current chairperson of the religion department at Temple University, addresses everything from sexuality, gender and race to war, peace, poverty and the environment under tzedek's capacious umbrella. Throughout this concise introduction, Alpert attempts to show how progressive Jews are reshaping questions about activism and justice. While quick to remind readers that among two Jews there will always be at least three opinions, she manages to cover a wide range of perspectives—biblical, historical, political and personal—with a surprising amount of depth, in a very small space. Replete with introductions (and resulting acronyms) to an array of organizations, movements and leaders within the ever-growing progressive community, this is as much a primer to progressive Judaism for both Jews and Gentiles as an inspiration for just living in the 21st century—whether that means treating our neighbors, our environment or even our enemies well. (June) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Rebecca Alpert is the chair of the religion department and an associate professor of religion and women's studies at Temple University and was one of the first women in Jewish history to be ordained a rabbi. She has written widely on progressive religion and Judaism; among her books are *Like Bread on the Seder Plate* and *Exploring Judaism* (with Jacob Straub). She lives in Philadelphia.

I wanted to love this book, especially as a Jew who seeks out a Torah that speaks to its clear message on Peace and Justice. This book just meanders to the author's interests, does little to hit important points, and misses the boat entirely. I was extremely disappointed, Jews looking to deepen their understanding of the Torah should probably look other places.

Fair account of the world of modern Judaism. The author seems to want the Jewish faith to be more in touch with the religion. I partially agree. There are many Jews who think being Jewish is donating to Israel. At the moment Israel is the Jewish State and a homeland for all who believe as such. However there are many key rituals which many reform leaning Jews seem to disregard. The author seems to want people to believe in the Torah and what it says. He emphasizes the importance of understanding poverty and giving charity or as in Hebrew Tzedakah. The discussion about the Holocaust is reasonable. However the author's change in attitude about the formation and development of the state of Israel is mixed. The author at first favors the state of Israel but dislikes much after the 1967 War. The issue is what are the Palestinians and Arabs doing to help keep the

peace? The suicide bomber attacks are NOT an answer. Israel can be a little less aggressive regarding border issues but they have received their share of hardship from the Palestinians. The author needs to discuss this a little more. At least she is not a self-hating Jew/Israeli which gives me some hope. Different strokes for different folks. Good account of Progressive Judaism. Possibly a broader and slightly more balanced discussion might help.

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