

BERNER

Listening to the Heart of Genesis

For those seeking a fresh, contemporary approach to the stories and themes of Genesis, this book offers an inspiring gateway into the heart of the ancient text. Both newcomers and seasoned readers will benefit from Rabbi Leila Gal Berner's invitation to personal contemplation. Basing her work on a Christian method of reading Scripture—*lectio divina* (reading the holy)—Rabbi Berner's adaptation for Jews as *kriat ha-kodesh* (reading the sacred) is welcoming and accessible to readers of all faiths.

After retelling each story from a very human perspective, Rabbi Berner advances rabbinic perspectives that have illuminated each biblical saga over the centuries. In addition, she brings the text to life with contemporary stories of real people whose experiences echo the biblical stories. A final section to each chapter suggests probing questions for personal contemplation and meditation, which can be used both by individual readers as part of a spiritual practice and also by groups of spiritual seekers. Group leaders will find a helpful facilitator's guide to structure their sessions. Beginning with Rabbi Berner's own classes, groups have formed throughout North America using her method.

"For Jews who long to enrich their daily life with the depth and wonder of Torah, for fellow travelers who have long felt that there is a life-changing power in the stories of the Hebrew Bible, these pages are your guide. Rabbi Berner introduces us to *kriat-ha kodesh*—'reading the holy' with a mixture of autobiographical, rabbinical, and midrashic wisdom. The result is a book that gives insights on every page, and a deep practice that can inspire and carry us."

—LAURIE L. PATTON, President, Middlebury College

LEILA GAL BERNER was ordained at the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College and holds a second ordination from Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi. She received her doctorate from UCLA. The Dean of Students of the ALEPH: Alliance for Jewish Renewal, she teaches biblical and medieval history, feminist thought, and *midrash*. Dr. Berner has taught in the Department of Philosophy and Religion at American University and George Washington and Emory universities, and Swarthmore and Reed colleges.

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A Contemplative Path

LEILA GAL BERNER