
JOURNEY TO OPEN ORTHODOXY

Avraham “Avi” Weiss

Foreword by Jeffrey S. Gurock

KTAV Publishing

URIM PUBLICATIONS

Jerusalem • New York

CONTENTS

Foreword by Jeffrey S. Gurock	13
Introduction	19
I. Principles of Open Orthodoxy	
1. From Modern Orthodoxy to Open Orthodoxy	31
2. Defining Open Orthodoxy	51
3. Halakha as a Pathway to Kedusha	55
4. Mesorah: Bridging Past and Future	62
5. Decentralizing Rabbinic Authority	67
6. The Laity's Role in Orthodoxy	71
7. Standing Up for Inclusive Orthodoxy	75
8. Our American Jewish Community in 50 Years	80
II. Inclusivity	
9. Nation Is Family	87
10. Lessons Learned from Community as Family	112
11. Creating Spaces for those with Disabilities	117
12. Creating Intergenerational Communities	130
13. Welcoming LGBT+ Jews	135
14. Alternatives to <i>Kiruv</i>	138
15. Rethinking Hebrew Schools	150
16. Interdenominational Relations	166
17. Bringing Judaism to the Streets	171
18. Our Universal Responsibilities	176
III. Spirituality	
19. Defining Spirituality	183
20. " <i>Kedushafying</i> " Ritual	191

21. The Inner Message of Shabbat	195
22. Bringing Spirituality into Lifecycle Events	204
23. Here Comes the Sun: Celebrating the Miracle of Constancy	211
24. The Magic of Storytelling	214
25. Song is the Gateway to the Soul	234
26. Open Chassidus	239

IV. Gender

27. Reflections on the Blessing “Who Has Not Made Me a Woman”	247
28. The Sefer Torah	261
29. The Reading of the Megillah	279
30. Ordaining Women	310
31. Communal Autonomy and Women in Spiritual Leadership	319
32. Protecting the Modern Day Agunah	325

V. Faith

33. Charting a Path Through the Darkness	337
34. Can We Hold God Accountable?	343
35. Finding God in the Hidden of the Hiddenness	348
36. Is There a Pathway to Belief for the Doubter?	353
37. Killing in the Name of God	357
38. Confronting End of Life Issues	362
39. On the Loss of Our Infant Son	371

VI. Leadership

40. To Be a Good Leader, One Needs a Couple of Loves	377
41. Seven Stages of Leadership and Change	381
42. Rabbis as Leaders	389
43. Fallibility, Potential and Humility: Leadership Lessons of King David and Abigail	393
44. Elijah: The Soft, Strong Voice	419

VII. Conversion

45. Reining in Israel’s Rabbinate	441
46. Conversion Deal Hurts Converts, Rabbis	445

47. Voiding the Rulings of Local Orthodox Rabbis	449
48. Delegitimizing Orthodox Rabbis	453
49. Stop Judging Converts After the Fact: Stop Invalidating Conversions	456
50. The Case Against Centralizing Rabbinic Authority on Conversions	461

VIII. Mission

51. The Covenantal Mission of Judaism	469
52. Distinguishing Between Functional and Mission-Centered Synagogues	474

Spiritual Activism

53. Thirteen Principles of Spiritual Activism	489
54. Soviet Jewry and Public Protest	493
55. The Forgotten Victims of Argentina	497
56. Paris, We Stand with You	502
57. Demanding Justice for Yankel and Other Victims of the Crown Heights Riots	506
58. Pollard and the Auschwitz Convent: Responding to Harsh Critics	513
59. 9/11: Reflections of a Clergy First Responder	517

Shoah

60. Without Ritual, the Shoah Will Be Forgotten	523
61. Dangers of Financial Restitution	527
62. The Belzec Trench	531
63. Auschwitz: No Place for a Catholic Church	537
64. Presidential Holocaust Gaffes	541
65. My Father's Shoah Stories	544

Israel

66. Why Israel Matters	551
67. Jerusalem: The Heart and Soul of Israel	555
68. Religious Zionism and Religious Zionist Fanaticism	560
69. A Political Critic Mourns Rabin	567
70. Across Dividing Lines: Offering Comfort After the Desecration of a Mosque	570

71. Celebrating Gilad Shalit's Release with Mixed Emotions	573
72. Israel During Operation Protective Edge	577
73. The Holiness of IDF Soldiers	587
Appendix	593
Index	595
About the Author	613