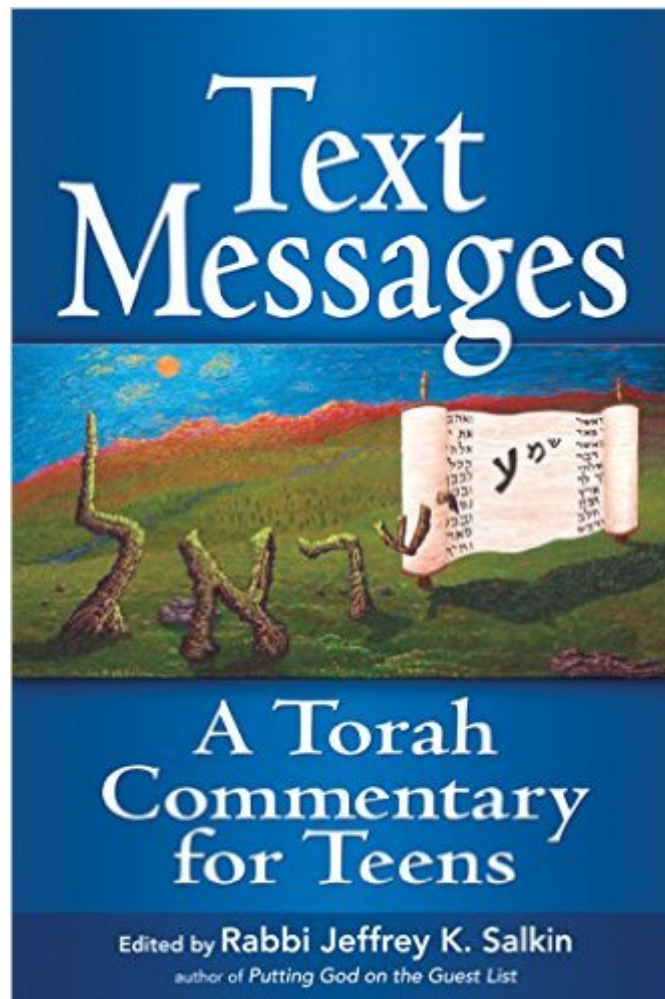


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# Text Messages: A Torah Commentary For Teens



## Synopsis

An indispensable resource for everyone who cares about the Jewish future. "Every passage of Torah has the potential to be someone's personal story and teaching—and that definitely includes you as a teenager. If you read these stories, and if you really let these holy texts into your mind and into your soul, your life will be deeper and richer, and even happier."—from the Introduction

Young people need to be included in the struggle for meaning, for the right questions to ask and the search for useful and relevant answers. This is the book that has been missing from the ever-expanding bookshelf of Torah commentaries—a collection of messages on each Torah portion, specifically for today's teens. It shows them how each Torah portion contains worlds of meaning for them, for what they are going through in their lives, and how they can shape their Jewish identity as they enter adulthood. Addressing the concerns of young adults, it shows how the Torah can help teens deal with issues including:

- Interpersonal relationships
- Social justice
- Sexuality and gender issues
- Personal ethics
- Responsibility to family
- Community and the Jewish people
- Body image
- Tattoos
- Community service
- The meaning of faith
- Authority and rebellion
- The role of ritual
- Personal theology
- Prayer
- Civility
- Living safely
- Dealing with disabilities
- Challenges of eating morally

This groundbreaking spiritual resource is truly transdenominational—including the insights of over 100 Jews who identify as Reform, Conservative, Orthodox, Reconstructionist, Renewal, post-denominational and *œjust Jewish*. They are rabbis, cantors, educators, authors and community leaders. Orthodox, Reconstructionist, Renewal, post-denominational and *œjust Jewish*. They are rabbis, cantors, educators, authors and community leaders.

## Book Information

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> Hebrew Bible (Old Testament)

## Customer Reviews

This book is written for teens and focuses on issues that interest them. The messages are short and to the point, usually no longer than two pages each. They are like the brief text messages that typical youngsters send to each other, such as ICU, meaning I see you. The book contains over a hundred discussions drawn from the more than fifty weekly biblical portions. They were written by over a hundred different professional American Jewish religious and lay leaders, men and women. Each message was read and approved by a teen editorial board consisting of teenagers from all parts of North America. Many messages are based on provocative questions such as why did God ask Cain after he had killed his brother Abel, "Where is your brother Abel?" Didn't God know? The word tzaddik, "righteous person," appears over two hundred times in the Hebrew Bible. Why is only Noah given that title? Can we be righteous? What does it mean? The Bible states that God told Abraham to leave his father's house. Isn't this strange? Is this also a message for us? Esau realized after he saw his brother Jacob steal his blessing from their father Isaac that he is unable to control everything in his life. What does this teach us and what can we do about it? The book discusses many difficult subjects such as telling people that you are gay. The biblical tale of the daughters of Zelophehad's inability to inherit their father's property because they are girls raises the question of fairness and what can or should a person do when he or she thinks that something is unfair? Scripture tells us not to covet. Can we yearn for something that seems to be unattainable? If so, when and how? In short, there are dozens upon dozens of issues raised in these relevant messages that give answers to teens about matters that concern them.

I bought this book for my 11 year old boy/girl twins, and I can't put it down. I look forward to reading it with them and discussing it together. It's an easy read with awesome insights and makes Torah subjects manageable. Absolutely love it, can't say enough about it.

I was a contributor. The short essays were composed by a variety of rabbis and educators. They are concise and may be useful to anyone preparing a short dvar torah. They are especially valuable to bar/bat mitzvah age students preparing for their ceremony and for teens studying weekly Torah portions.

LOVE this book for teens. I have been looking for a Torah Commentary to use with my

middle-schoolers and this will work very nicely b/c it is easy enough to read, can be read in a few minutes, opens up lots of discussion, and is relevant to students' lives today!

In a world where text messages make it easy to interact with others quickly and thoughtlessly, this book gives us a reason to stop and think. Rabbi Salkin said his goal is to enable every Jewish teen (and I would add ADULTS TOO) to find his/her Torah portion. There is truly something for everyone. It's highly accessible in 2-3 page sections, relevant to everyday life, and thought provoking. Text Messages takes Jewish (and universal) values and helps us put them into action. Of note is the variety of authors who contributed to this work; rabbis, teachers, community leaders, philanthropists, etc. all saw the value in this project and came together to produce a book that can change your life. We can all use this inspiration.

Worth buying if only for the title--but what a collection of fine minds wrote the commentary! Wish I had had time to read it cover to cover before I presented it to the bar mitzvah boy!

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