

A Year with Mordecai Kaplan

Wisdom on the Weekly Torah Portion

Rabbi Steven Carr Reuben

Foreword by Rabbi David A. Teutsch

“There is no greater sage than Mordecai Kaplan to walk us into an appreciation of how religion can add depth and insight to the experience of modernity, and no rabbi with greater sensitivity to guide us along the way than Steven Carr Reuben. Newcomers to Kaplan and longtime aficionados alike will revel in spending a year with Mordecai Kaplan. Relying on the spirit and smarts of these two rabbis not only enlightens us but elevates us.”—Rabbi Bradley Shavit Artson, dean of the Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies, American Jewish University

“*A Year with Mordecai Kaplan* is inspirational. It reminds me of a less mystical Larry Kushner and a more anecdotal Harold Kushner.”—Rabbi Arnold Rachlis, University Synagogue, Irvine, California

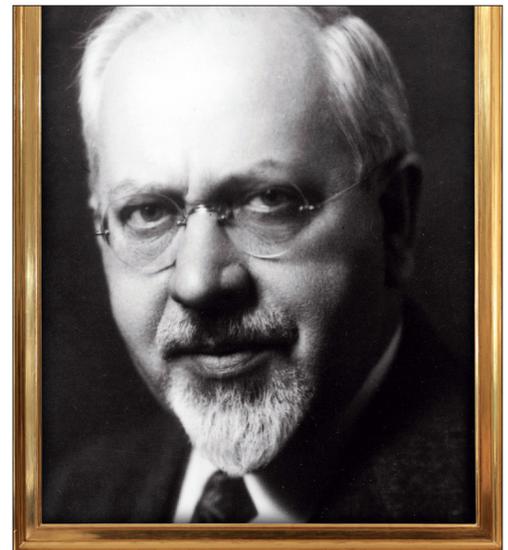
“Rabbi Steven Carr Reuben’s selection of insightful passages from the writings of Mordecai Kaplan and illuminating commentary from Jewish tradition and his own life experiences generate a treasure trove of wisdom to delight the mind and move the heart. *A Year With Mordecai Kaplan* is a spiritual gift!”—Rabbi David Ellenson, chancellor of Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion

You are invited to spend a year with the inspirational words, ideas, and counsel of the great twentieth-century thinker Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan, through his meditations on the fifty-four weekly Torah portions and eleven Jewish holidays.

A pioneer of ideas and action—teaching that “Judaism is a civilization” encompassing Jewish culture, art, and peoplehood; demonstrating how synagogues can be full centers for Jewish living (building one of the first “shuls with a pool”); and creating the first-ever bat mitzvah ceremony (for his daughter Judith)—Kaplan transformed the landscape of American Jewry. Yet much of Kaplan’s rich treasury of ethical and spiritual thought is largely unknown.

Rabbi Steven Carr Reuben, who studied closely with Kaplan, offers unique insight into Kaplan’s teachings about ethical relationships and spiritual fulfillment, including how to embrace godliness in everyday experience, our mandate to become agents of justice in the world, and the human ability to evolve personally and collectively. Quoting from the week’s Torah portion, Reuben presents Torah commentary, a related quotation from Kaplan, a reflective commentary integrating Kaplan’s understanding of the Torah text, and an intimate story about his family or community’s struggles and triumphs—guiding twenty-first-century spiritual seekers of all backgrounds on how to live reflectively and purposefully every day.

Rabbi Steven Carr Reuben is senior rabbi emeritus of Kehillat Israel Reconstructionist Congregation in Pacific Palisades, California, and a past president of the Board of Rabbis of Southern California. He is the author of numerous books, including *Children of Character: Leading Your Children to Ethical Choices in Everyday Life* and *Making Interfaith Marriage Work*.



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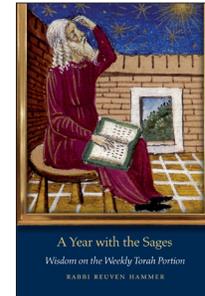
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