

Abraham Joshua Heschel: Philosopher Of Wonder

Abraham Joshua Heschel was a prominent Jewish theologian, philosopher, and civil rights activist. Born on January 11, 1907, in Warsaw, Poland, Heschel's profound insights and teachings made him one of the most influential figures of the 20th century. He dedicated his life to exploring the deep mysteries of faith, spirituality, and reverence for life, leaving behind a rich legacy that continues to inspire and enlighten people around the world.

Known for his deep sense of wonder and awe, Heschel believed that the world around us is filled with divine presence and that our purpose is to recognize and appreciate the sacredness in every moment. He emphasized the importance of living in mindful awareness and fostering a personal relationship with the divine, which he often referred to as the "Ultimate Reality."

The Wonder of Existence

Heschel firmly believed that the universe is not a random occurrence, but rather the result of a purposeful creation. He saw beauty, harmony, and meaning in the natural world, and encouraged others to take the time to truly appreciate and marvel at its wonders. For Heschel, wonder was not just a fleeting emotion, but a lifelong disposition towards seeing the extraordinary in the ordinary.

Abraham Joshua Heschel--Philosopher of Wonder: Our Thirty-Year Friendship and Dialogue

by Maurice S. Friedman (Kindle Edition)

★★★★☆ 4 out of 5

Language : English

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Maurice S. Friedman

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Enhanced typesetting : Enabled
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ABRAHAM IDSHUA HESCHEL

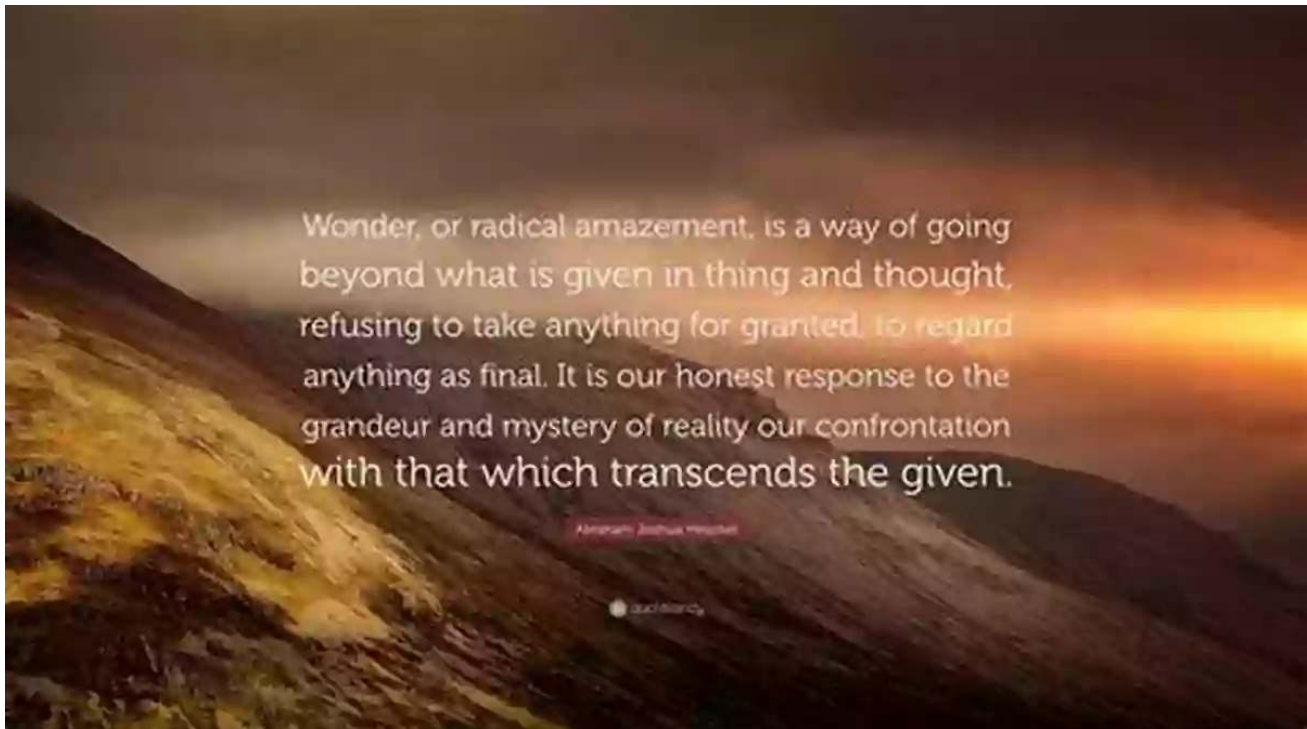


Philosophy of Wonder

OUR THIRTY-YEAR FRIENDSHIP AND DIALOGUE

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Wonder, or radical amazement, is a way of going beyond what is given in thing and thought, refusing to take anything for granted, to regard anything as final. It is our honest response to the grandeur and mystery of reality our confrontation with that which transcends the given.

Abraham Joshua Heschel

quodlibet

Faith and Social Justice

In addition to his theological and philosophical pursuits, Heschel was actively engaged in social justice issues. He believed that true faith compels one to act and fight for justice, equality, and the dignity of all human beings. Heschel marched alongside Martin Luther King Jr. during the civil rights movement,

passionately advocating for the rights of African Americans and highlighting the shared responsibility of humanity to combat injustice.

His famous quote, "When I marched in Selma, my feet were praying," encapsulates his belief that spirituality and social activism are deeply interconnected. Heschel's commitment to social justice was an essential part of his philosophy, as he believed that faith without action is meaningless.

Time and the Sacred

Another central theme in Heschel's philosophy is the idea of sacred time. He emphasized the importance of observing the Sabbath and setting aside time for rest, contemplation, and spiritual nourishment. For Heschel, the Sabbath was not just a religious concept, but a radical act of resistance against the modern obsession with productivity and materialism.

He believed that by dedicating one day a week to reconnecting with the divine and celebrating the gift of existence, individuals would ultimately find deeper meaning, fulfillment, and inner peace. Heschel's teachings on sacred time continue to inspire people of various faiths to pause, reflect, and appreciate the precious moments of life.

The Legacy of Heschel

Abraham Joshua Heschel passed away on December 23, 1972, but his wisdom and insights have left an indelible mark on countless people. His writings, including influential works such as "The Sabbath," "God in Search of Man," and "Man Is Not Alone," continue to be widely read and cherished.

Heschel's philosophy invites individuals to awaken to the wonders of existence, nurture their spiritual lives, and actively engage in making a positive impact on

the world. His teachings are a reminder that philosophy, faith, and social activism have the power to transform our lives and create a more compassionate and just society.

The Journey Continues

Today, more than ever, the world needs voices like Abraham Joshua Heschel's. In a time marked by division, materialism, and a growing disconnection from the natural world, Heschel's teachings on wonder, faith, and social justice offer a beacon of hope and guidance.

Let us honor the legacy of this extraordinary philosopher of wonder by embracing the call to recognize the sacredness in every moment, to advocate for justice, and to treasure the gift of existence. Together, we can continue Heschel's journey and inspire future generations to strive for a world filled with wonder, compassion, and reverence for life.

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Most studies of Abraham Joshua Heschel approach him as a theologian, whereas this book peers behind the theologian and honors Heschel as the original philosopher that he was. So it unearths Heschel's epistemology, his aesthetic, and his social philosophy, all reinforced by the thirty years of friendship and dialogue that Maurice Friedman shared with him.

This book raises significantly critical questions concerning Heschel's philosophy of Judaism while remaining greatly appreciative of the sweep and command of his philosophy that Friedman believes were not sufficiently worked through.

"In Abraham Joshua Heschel, Maurice Friedman, the disciple and foremost interpreter of Martin Buber, has given us a lucid and deeply personal account of his unique friendship with Abraham Heschel, the most creative Jewish thinker of the twentieth century. Friedman's love for Heschel can be seen throughout the book in spite of the fact that these two philosophers held different views on religion and Judaism. Friedman helps us understand why Heschel is considered by many to be the Jewish saint of his generation."

—Harold Kasimow, Professor Emeritus of Religious Studies, Grinnell College

"Few of us get to experience a meaningful relationship with a great spiritual teacher, such as Friedman did with Heschel. I found this book to provide wonderfully rich insights into Heschel's lived wisdom and moral grandeur. Abraham Joshua Heschel provides an evocative account of the dialogical interactions between these remarkable thinkers."

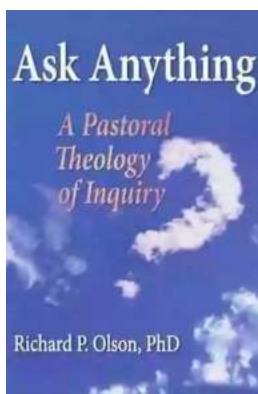
—Kenneth P. Kramer, Professor Emeritus of Comparative Religious Studies, San Jose State University

"Maurice Friedman gives us a beautiful, inspiring portrait of his relationship with my father over the course of many decades. His book is a superb to my father's

life and thought and is filled with love and admiration.”

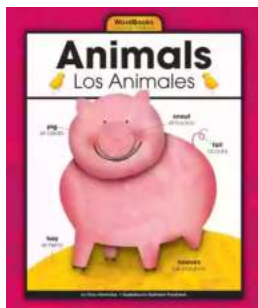
—Susannah Heschel, Professor of Jewish Studies, Dartmouth College

Maurice S. Friedman was Professor Emeritus of Religion, Philosophy, and Comparative Literature at San Diego State University. He is the author or editor of over fifty books, including a translation of Martin Buber’s *Hasidism and Modern Man* (2005) and Abraham Joshua Heschel & Elie Wiesel, *You Are My Witnesses* (1987).



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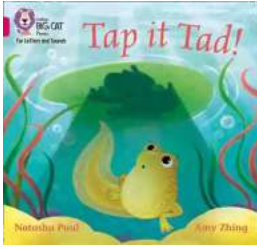
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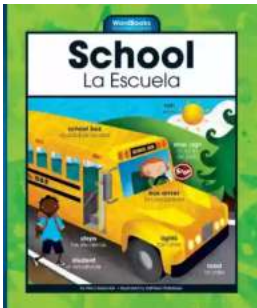
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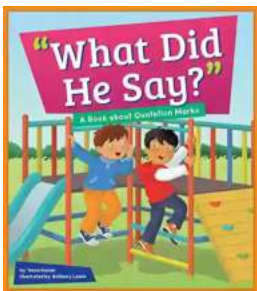
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