

The Torah Revolution – Fourteen Truths That Changed The World
by Rabbi Reuven Hammer, PhD.
Jewish Lights Publishing, 2011.

Reuven Hammer is a fine scholar and a prolific author; this latest book is a foray into the richness of the Torah, which combined with the author's intellect and quiet passion has produced a book that is informative, educative and inspirational.

Hammer divides The Torah Revolution into three parts: Divinity, Humanity, Society, echoing in some ways in structure an earlier book by Louis Jacobs, z"l, entitled God, Torah, Israel.

The sub-headings (briefly summarised in the Preface) in these sections are - God is Unique, No Divine Power of Evil Exists, Morality is God's Supreme Demand, Worship is for the Benefit of Humans; Human Life is Sacred, All Human Beings are Equal, Men and Women are Equal, Human Beings have Free Will; Human Sovereignty is Limited, The Priesthood is Divorced from Magic, Land and Wealth are to be Distributed Equally, Slavery Must be Mitigated, The Needy must be Cared for, A Day of Rest for All.

Hammer starts each chapter with the 'Revolutionary Truth' on which he is focussing: for example, the chapter entitled Men and Women are Equal has the following sub-headings: The Portrayal of Women in Narrative Texts, Women and Worship, The Legal Rights of Women, The Sotah Law, Marriage and Divorce, Inheritance.

Some of the chapters may be more persuasive than others, depending on one's Jewish affiliation, but The Torah Revolution is nevertheless a book which will remind all Jewish readers of some of the greatest core teachings of Judaism, their origin in the Torah, and their enduring relevance today.

Rabbi Dr Charles H Middleburgh