

Developing the Soul

Mussar Study - Part 2



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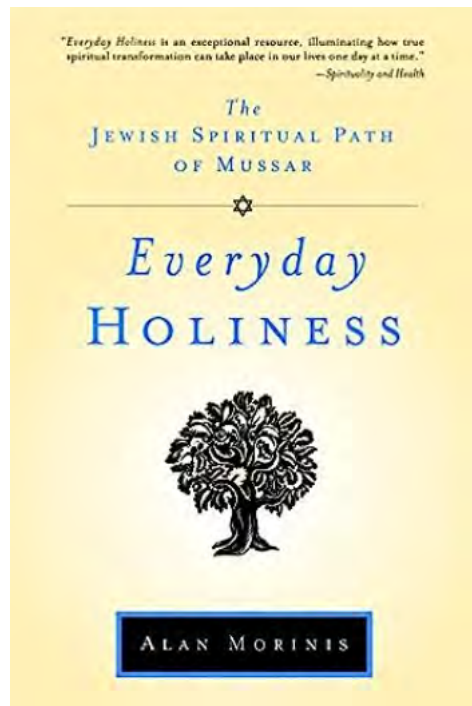
- **Recap Week 1**
- **Derech Eretz**
- **The Foundation**



Recap & Summary

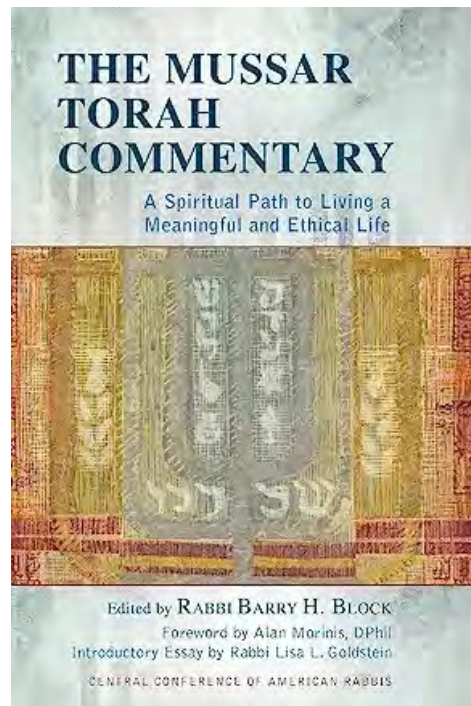
- **Biblical Sources**
- **Mussar History: Rabbi Israel Salanter**
- **The Aftermath of Adam's Sin**
- **Holiness, Purity, Obedience**

Further Study



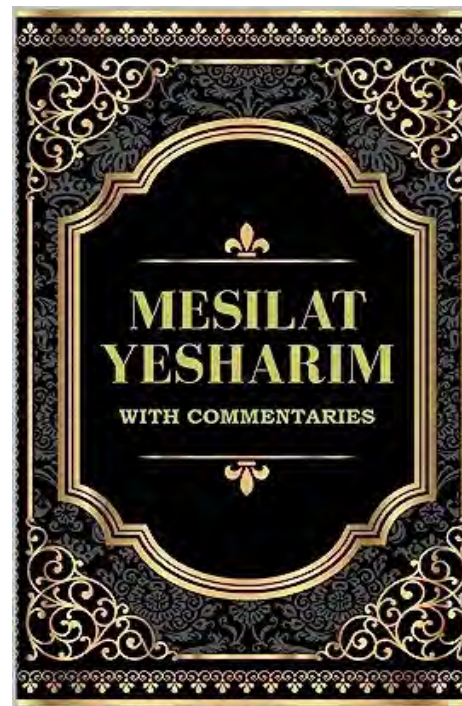
Everyday Holiness

Alan Morinis



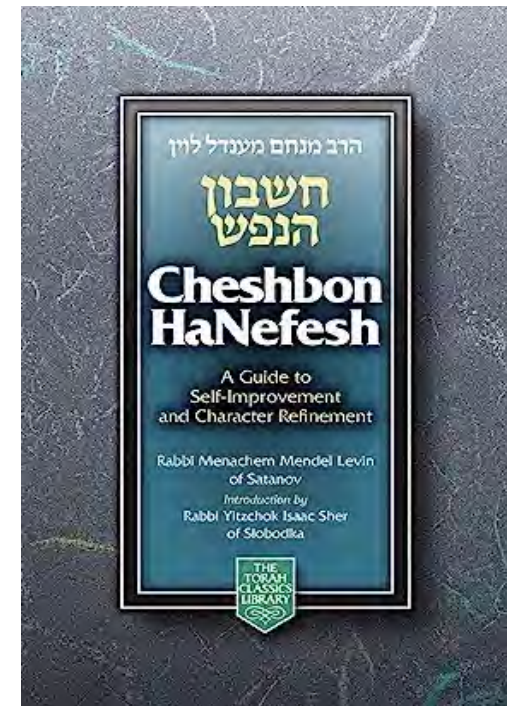
Torah Mussar
Commentary

R. Barry Block



Messilat Yesharim
"The Way of the Just"

Ramchal



Cheshbon HaNefesh

R. Menachem Mendel

DEFINITION

Derech Eretz

“Way of the
land/world”

“Decency”

Derech eretz is an ancient Jewish principle that refers to the decorum, dignified behavior, and gentlemanly conduct that should characterize a Jew at all times.

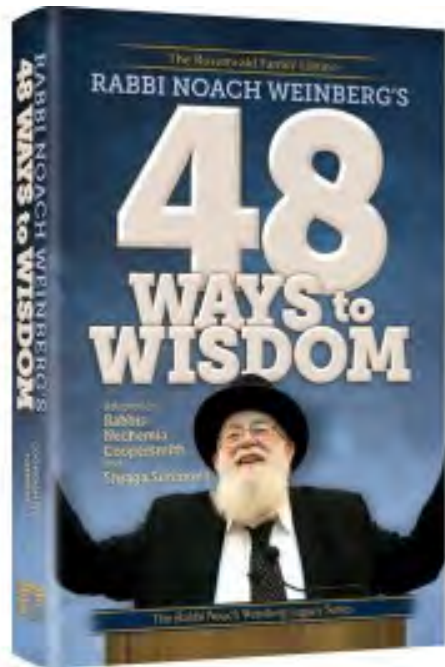
- This is the essential foundation of all we do.
- Not necessarily theological
- Derech Eretz are behaviors that can be learned and taught pretty simply.

What is
Derech Eretz?

Derech Eretz

- “The way of the land”
- Dignified behavior, Manners
- Simply being a good human, a “Mensch”
- Not specifically theological
- Derech Eretz can be taught
- Easier to engage than middot

Sources For Learning



- Pirke Avot
- Talmud, (2) Tractates Derech Eretz Zuta and Rabbah
- Many resources on the topic in Jewish literature

“

Being Jewish is like a second floor of a two-story building. Some people try to build the second floor without building the first.

Rav. Avigdor Miller

“

**Derech Eretz preceded
the [Giving of the] Torah
by 26 generations.**

Leviticus Rabbah 9:3

Among the Patriarchs

- Avraham running to first greet & serve others
- Rivkeh bringing water for strangers, and their camels
- Moses was a humble servant
- Aaron was a peacemaker
- Hashem did not interrupt Moses multiple times

“

R. Elazar b. Azaryah says: If there is no Torah, there is no derech eretz.; if there is no derech eretz, there is no Torah.

Pirke Avot 3:17

Some Examples

- Putting others first, Honoring others (Tzelem Elokim)
- Modesty
- Being Humble
- Being careful with other's time
 - Being late, keeping others waiting
- Speaking too much
- Not Interrupting Others
 - Cutting off someone's speech
 - Answering/checking your Apple watch while in conversation
- Showing respect for elders
- Giving others the benefit of doubt (Dan'l'kaf Zechut)

Judging Others Favorably

“

Just as we love ourselves despite the shortcomings we have, so should we love others despite the shortcomings they have.

The Baal Shem Tov

“

Judge your fellow in the scale of merit and do not turn the scale against him.

Derech Eretz Zuta 3:2

Sensitivity To Others

“

**He should not weep
when among those
who are joyous or be
joyous when among
those who weep...**

DE Zuta 5:5

“

**Be happy with those
who are happy, and
weep with those who
weep.**

Romans 12:15

Sensitivity To Others

“

One should speak the praises of [others] and show concern for their money just as he is concerned with his own money and seeks his own honor.

Mishnah Torah 6:3

“

Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too.

Philippians 2:4

Honoring Others

“

Let the honour of your fellow be as dear to you as your own.

Pirke Avot 2:15

“

Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves.

Philippians 2:3



The characteristics of a wise person are that he is meek, humble, alert, desires to learn, modest, beloved by all, humble to the members of his household and sin-fearing. He judges a man [fairly] according to his deeds, and says ‘I have no desire for all the things of this world because this world is not for me’. He sits and studies, soiling his cloak at the feet of the scholars. In him no one sees any evil. He questions according to the subject-matter and answers to the point.

DE Zuta 1:1



**If others speak evil of you, answer them not;
should it be a serious offense, regard it as slight.**

**If, however, you spoke evil of others, though [the
calumny] be slight, regard it as serious [and do
not rest] until you go and pacify them.**

DE Zuta 1:7

“

Let not your [behaviour during] adolescence be of blemished repute, for this would be derogatory to the Torah; but let it be of unblemished repute, for this would tend to glorify the Torah.

DE Zuta 1:8



Do good deeds for the sake of their Maker and speak of them for their own sake. Make not of them a crown wherewith to adorn yourself, an axe with which to chop or a spade with which to dig. Undertake to study the Torah [even] in straitened circumstances and disregard any insult. A well-ordered moral stock-taking and a virtuous adolescence security and truth.

DE Zuta 2:4



Love and honour the Torah; love righteousness, reproofs and uprightness. Do not run after honour; do not be presumptuous in giving decisions. Realize that from now until tomorrow everything you have, whether it belongs to you or not, is not yours; because what is yours is [in reality] not yours, so how can what is not yours be yours! ...

DE Zuta 2:5



There are seven characteristics in an uncultured man and seven in a wise man. 1) A wise man does not speak before one who is greater than he in wisdom and in number, 2) does not interrupt the words of his fellow, 3) is not quick to answer; 4) he asks in accordance with the subject-matter and answers in accordance with the accepted decision, 5) speaks on the first [point] first and on the last [point] last, 6) concerning what he has not heard he says, 'I have not heard it', and 7) acknowledges the truth. The reverse of these are in an uncultured man.

DE Zuta 7:1

What are some
Modern Examples?

Some Modern Examples

- Letting elders go first
- Holding doors for others
- Not interrupting
- Judging others favorably
- Greeting others
- Keeping your word
- ...

Living Into Derech Eretz

- Study these sections as a community, or family
- Adopt our own ethics and practices that set us apart in a good way
- Hold each other to these when we don't remember them
- Remember these and look for opportunities to practice them