



As A Driven Leaf

By Milton Steinberg, New foreword by Rabbi David Wolpe

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The age of the Talmud is brought to life in a breathtaking saga.

First published in 1939, this masterpiece of modern fiction tells the tale of renegade Talmudic sage Elisha ben Abuyah's struggle to reconcile his faith with the allure of Hellenistic culture. Set in Roman Palestine, *As a Driven Leaf* draws readers into the dramatic era of Rabbinic Judaism. Watch the great Talmudic sages at work in the Sanhedrin, eavesdrop on their arguments about theology and Torah, and agonize with them as they contemplate rebellion against an oppressive Roman rule.

Steinberg's classic novel also transcends its historical setting with its depiction of a timeless, perennial feature of the Jewish experience: the inevitable conflict between the call of tradition and the glamour of the surrounding culture. Beyond its literary achievement, *As a Driven Leaf* is regarded as a major influence on contemporary Jewish life and thought. This new edition includes two forewords: One new, by the renowned American Rabbi, Rabbi David J. Wolpe, the second from author Chaim Potok, originally written in 1996.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

The magnificent work of modern fiction that brings the age of the Talmud to life. The characters include the well-known historical figures: Akiba, Yohanan, Joshua, Eleazar, Beruriah, and Elisha ben Abuyah, whose struggle to live in two worlds destroyed his chance to live in either. Foreword by Chaim Potok

From Publishers Weekly

Guidall gives a spirited, almost theatrical, reading of this minor classic of American Jewish literature, a historical novel about ancient sage-turned-apostate Elisha ben Abuyah in the late first century C.E. At the heart of the tale are questions about faith and the loss of faith and the repression and rebellion of the Jews of Palestine. Elisha is a leading scholar in Palestine, elected to the Sanhedrin, the highest Jewish court in the land. But two tragedies awaken doubt about God in Elisha's mind, and doubt eats away at his faith. Declared a heretic and excommunicated from the Jewish community, he journeys to Antioch in nearby Syria to begin a quest through Greek and Roman culture for some fundamental irrefutable truth. The pace of the narrative picks up as Elisha directly encounters the full force of the ancient Romans' all-consuming culture.

Ultimately, Elisha is forced by the power of Rome to choose between loyalty to his people, who are rebelling against the emperor's domination, and loyalty to his own quest for truth. Guidall, a veteran actor and recorder of audiobooks, reads with an appropriately weighted force. And he convincingly creates voices for a score of characters including the protagonist Elisha; his haughty, social-climbing wife, Deborah; the gentle sage and Elisha's mentor, Rabbi Joshua; and Rufus Tinneius, the tyrannical Roman governor of Palestine. A small booklet of notes accompanying the audiobook provides helpful historical background. (Sept.)

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From Library Journal

As a Driven Leaf at first seems to be a fairly dreary philosophic novel, outlining first-century rabbi Elisha Ben Abuyah's education, views, and eventual crisis of faith. Just as the listener begins to doze, though, the book morphs into a 1950s movie epic (think Charlton Heston), as Elisha leaves Jerusalem and encounters the Roman Empire in all its spectacle, temptation, and cruelty. Though Elisha betrays his people and abandons his faith, he manages to remain a sympathetic and compassionate character. Based on real people and events, Steinberg's 1940 novel successfully combines these two wildly different subjects. The light abridgment keeps the pace brisk. Part of the "Great Jewish Books on Audiotape" series, this is also an impressive production, including a reader's guide and a bravura narration by George Guidall. Libraries serving significant Jewish populations should definitely buy this, and all others should balance its many merits with its relative obscurity. A John Hiatt, Iowa City P.L.

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Minerva Gagliano:

The ability that you get from As A Driven Leaf could be the more deep you excavating the information that hide within the words the more you get thinking about reading it. It doesn't mean that this book is hard to understand but As A Driven Leaf giving you excitement feeling of reading. The author conveys their point in

selected way that can be understood through anyone who read this because the author of this guide is well-known enough. This specific book also makes your own vocabulary increase well. Therefore it is easy to understand then can go with you, both in printed or e-book style are available. We recommend you for having this kind of As A Driven Leaf instantly.

Megan Rivera:

Spent a free time for you to be fun activity to complete! A lot of people spent their free time with their family, or their own friends. Usually they doing activity like watching television, likely to beach, or picnic from the park. They actually doing same thing every week. Do you feel it? Would you like to something different to fill your personal free time/ holiday? Could be reading a book may be option to fill your free of charge time/ holiday. The first thing you ask may be what kinds of book that you should read. If you want to test look for book, may be the publication untitled As A Driven Leaf can be very good book to read. May be it is usually best activity to you.

Jessie Davis:

People live in this new day of lifestyle always attempt to and must have the free time or they will get great deal of stress from both everyday life and work. So , when we ask do people have spare time, we will say absolutely of course. People is human not only a robot. Then we ask again, what kind of activity do you possess when the spare time coming to anyone of course your answer may unlimited right. Then do you try this one, reading ebooks. It can be your alternative with spending your spare time, often the book you have read is actually As A Driven Leaf.

Cynthia Tso:

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