BOOKS

# Rabbi’s New Book Is a Workout for Your Soul


## By Lisa Sopher

**Reviewing: “The 40 Day Challenge” by Rabbi Mark Wildes. Kodesh Press. 2021. English. Paperback. 186 pages. ISBN-13: 978-1947857674.**

When you go to the grocery store, how often do you see magazines with headlines exhorting you to try a 30-day fitness chal- lenge to help you lose weight? Now im- agine if you saw a publication asking you to try a spiritual challenge. This often-over- looked topic is explored in a new book by Rabbi Mark Wildes, the founder and direc- tor of Manhattan Jewish Experience, an or- ganization that strives to bring young Jews closer to religious observance. Published by Kodesh Press, the rabbi’s book, “The 40 Day Challenge: Daily Jewish Insights to Prepare for the High Holidays,” is one that should not be missed.

Every year, Jews around the world— even those who do not observe many Jewish holidays throughout the year— attend High Holiday services and often come away from the experience feeling that something is missing. As Rabbi Wil- des puts it, they aren’t getting the “high

out of the High Holidays.” A major reason people feel that way, Wildes points out, is because they do not prepare for the ex- perience in any way. Rather, they simply “show up.” When someone has an im- pending interview for a job or wants to propose marriage, he dedicates time for preparation. Wildes suggests we think of the High Holidays in the same way. Not coincidentally, the last month of the Jew- ish calendar, Elul, is meant for just this purpose, with the 40 days culminating on Yom Kippur.

Throughout COVID-19, Rabbi Wildes, like many of us, had to resort to Zoom or Facebook Live to interact with his stu- dents. As part of his class on preparing for the High Holidays, he created a What’sApp group for those who wanted to participate in a 40-day challenge. The challenge was so successful that it was suggested that it be made into a book.

The book’s insights come from classi- cal Jewish sources such as the Talmud and Maimonides, as well as others, like French philosopher Rene Descartes. Wildes also brings color to his lessons through stories about historical figures such as Abraham

Lincoln and—the one I found most inter- esting—Alfred Nobel, who read his own obituary, obviously wrongly printed, and it served as a catalyst for him to do more with his life. “The 40 Day Challen*g*e” in- cludes a chapter for each of the 40 days leading up to Yom Kippur. Topics include strategies to overcoming one’s anger, how to judge others favorably and how to de- velop a deeper sense of gratitude for fel- low human beings and for God. Each chapter ends with a question followed by lines to be filled out, to encourage the reader to self-reflect.

It is noteworthy that Wildes men- tions how NFL quarterback Tom Brady meticulously prepared for the last Super Bowl, to which Wildes compares this 40- day challenge. Other fascinating stories include how Abraham Lincoln wrote let- ters in anger but never sent them, in or- der to let go of his anger. Similarly, Dr. Ben Carson successfully overcame a prob- lem with anger in his youth, later becom- ing a renowned surgeon and running for high political office.

Wildes succeeds in what is not an easy task: writing a book that encourages intro-

spection and self-reflection without the Jewish guilt. More than merely a self-help book, it is a call to action with clear direc- tion: for people to examine their good, bad and ugly actions and see where their hearts are. This past year has caused a lot of soul-searching for many of us who have suffered through the effects of the pan- demic, and this book could not come at a better time.

TORAH & FINANCE

# NFT Torah Now Available for Purchase

s

tax deductible. As of press time, one ETH is valued at over $2,000.

“Why were NFTs created, if not for this

## By Elazar Abrahams

NFTs, or non-fungible to- kens, have exploded into the - nance scene in recent mont s.

fi-

hs.

spearheaded by Rabbi Mor- dechai Lightstone, founder of Tech Tribe; and Jonathan Caras of Lionschain Capital, a cryptocurrency hedge fund, is

purpose?” Lightstone posited to The Jew- ish Link. “The sages teach that every per- son is like a letter in the Torah—a unique and indispensable part of our collective whole. This project uses crypto to show

NFTs function as digital colle t ibles with their data stored on a blockchain, ensuring the as- set is unique. In just the past year, the fad of NFT trad

ct-

n

ing

C

c

cards and artwork has blown up among in- vestors, who are certain these tokens will continue to hold value. Back in March, Christie’s, the famous auction house, sold an NFT art piece for $69 million.

With all the popularity of NFTs, it was only a matter of time before they en-

a project whereby an NFT To- rah will be available for pur- chase, with the proceeds going towards writing real ifrei Torah. Lubavitch.com

made the announcement of the NFT To- rah in late June.

a

r

sif

The first real sefer Torah will be sent to Arugot Farm, a moshav in central Isra- el. The second completed scroll will be donated to Lightstone’s Tech Tribe, a divi- sion of Chabad Young Professionals that

One of the pieces of digital artwork that come with an NFT parsha purchase.

the unique nature of the letter each person purchases in a real Torah scroll, which re- veals the unique quality of each soul.”

Lightstone is very proud of the dual na- ture of this undertaking, both the digital re- minder of Judaism as well as the real-life good that will come out of it. “We hope to reach everyone! It’s actually a mitzvah for every Jew to write a Torah scroll. Now this is a difficult task for most people. Even pur- chasing a scroll from a scribe is an expensive, and time-consuming, task,” Lightstone said.

tered the Jewish financial sector. NFTorah,

runs programming geared towards Jews in the tech and digital media world. Ulti-

mately, NFTorah’s goal is to write 18 sifrei Torah for communities around the world. Buyers can collect each “parsha” indi- vidually. Each Torah portion is represent- ed by an NFT minted on the Ethereum blockchain, along with a piece of art- work highlighting that chapter’s narrative. The store is only accepting the Ethereum (ETH) cryptocurrency, although interest- ed parties can still make a donation to the project via PayPal, and all purchases are

**M**

**I**

**I**

**E**

**I**

**•**

**Medical Equipment Lending Gemach**

**COMPA SSION. SUPPORT. COMMUNITY.**

**WE PARTNER WITH FAMILIES TO PROVIDE VITAL SERVICES**

**AND FACILITIES TO EASE THEIR BURDEN WHEN FACED WITH ILLNESS.**

**HOSPITALITY APARTMENTS AVAILABLE 7 DAYS/WEEK**

**Available for those who have family members in any Bergen County medical facility**

**OTHHE RR B K U C O L I M B E G E N C O U N T Y SERV I CC EE SS :**

**Medical Equipment Lending Gemach**

* **Meals and Visits for Community Members Facing Medical Crises as well as Homebound Individuals**
* **Rides to and from Local Doctor Appointments**

**FOR RESERVATIONS, MORE INFORMATION, TO DONATE, CALL: 201-579-3066** [**WWW.BIKURCHOLIMBERGENCOUNTY.ORG**](http://WWW.BIKURCHOLIMBERGENCOUNTY.ORG/)

**Mailing Address: Bikur Cholim Bergen County P.O. Box 3083 Teaneck, NJ 07666**

**C**

“The Rebbe launched a special campaign for every Jew—man, woman and child—to purchase a letter in the Torah, thereby tak- ing part in its writing. We’re taking this cam- paign and bringing it into the crypto space.”

Interested buyers can learn more at nfTorah.com

Elazar Abrahams is an intern at The Jewish Link and the incoming student council president of Yeshiva Univer- sity’s men’s campus.

**The Jewish Link extends**

**birchat tanchumin to Dr. Esther Fridman and Steve Dennis on the loss of their beloved mother Peshe Dennis, z"l.**

60 July 15, 2021 • 6 Av, 5781 • Jewish Link EXPANDED Edition 201-371-3212 • [WWW.JEWISHLINK.NEWS](http://WWW.JEWISHLINK.NEWS/)