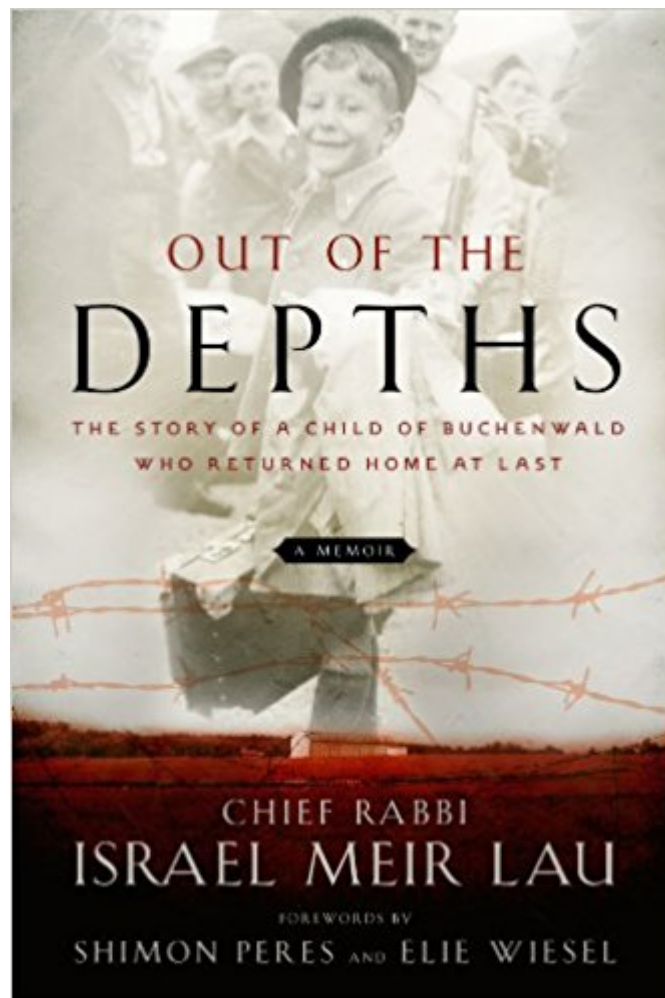


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Out Of The Depths: The Story Of A Child Of Buchenwald Who Returned Home At Last



Synopsis

With a foreword by Nobel Laureate Elie Wiesel!Â Israel Meir Lau, one of the youngest survivors of Buchenwald, was just eight years old when the camp was liberated in 1945. Descended from a 1,000-year unbroken chain of rabbis, he grew up to become Chief Rabbi of Israel--and like many of the great rabbis, Lau is a master storyteller. Out of the Depths is his harrowing, miraculous, and inspiring account of life in one of the Nazis' deadliest concentration camps, and how he managed to survive against all possible odds. Lau, who lost most of his family in the Holocaust, also chronicles his life after the war, including his emigration to Mandate Palestine during a period that coincides with the development of the State of Israel. The story continues up through today, with that once-lost boy of eight now a brilliant, charismatic, and world-revered figure who has visited with Popes John Paul and Benedict; the Dalai Lama, Nelson Mandela, and countless global leaders including Ronald Reagan, Bill and Hillary Clinton, and Tony Blair. Â Â

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Customer Reviews

Rabbi Lau is one of the world's most revered and charismatic Jewish leaders. Lau was born in 1937 in Poland, the son of his town's last Chief Rabbi. He served as the Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi of Israel from 1993 to 2003. Currently, he is Chief Rabbi of Tel Aviv and Chairman of Yad Vashem--Israel's official memorial organization to the Jewish victims of the Holocaust. In 2005, Lau was awarded the Israel Prize (the country's highest honor) for his lifetime achievements and special contribution to society and the State of Israel.

One of the youngest survivors of Buchenwald, Israel Meir Lau, against all odds, survived to live an extraordinary life to become the Chief Rabbi of Israel. As Chief Rabbi, he was respected worldwide and met many influential heads of state and important religious leaders (from the Rebbe Menachem Schneerson to two Popes). He chronicles his life in Buchenwald -- an eight year old child at the time of Liberation, as well as the aftermath of war including his time in a French orphan camp, his emigration to Palestine, his training as a young rabbinical student, and his life as chief Rabbi. What is particularly interesting are his accounts and recognition of all the people he meets along the way who help and influence him. The charismatic personality and spirit of Israel Meir Lau shine through on every page of this book. This is a moving and inspirational memoir that you won't be able to put down.

This is the second book translated into English By Rabbi Israel Meir Lau. Rabbi Lau is an exceptional Rabbi, speaker, and religious leader in search of unity with the divine and with his fellow men. I cannot recommend enough "Practical Judaism" for those who want to learn the basics of our faith. His second book, *Out of the depths*, a reference to psalm 130 *From the depths*, relates the story of his life and is divided in two parts: the knife, the fire, and the wood, a reference to the akedah, and the ram's horn, a reference to the redemption and the coming of Moschiach. The book follows Lulek from his infancy and the time he was pulled out of the darkest moment and place on earth, the death camp of Buchenwald, to his emigration to / and education in Israel as an orphan to build a life of Torah, infused with divine light. Rabbi Lau says: G-d has tried me with suffering but he has not given me over to death. Why G-d chose to spare him (and his brother Naphtali) and not the rest of his family who perished in the holocaust? Rabbi Lau does not have an answer but he teaches us that everything is G-d's will, which we cannot really understand or question. However, the purpose of his book is to show that you can survive the worst ordeals and build on ashes by finding strength in entrusting your spirit into G-d's hands and in keeping the line of communication always open with Him through prayers. This book is in turn inspiring, moving, enthralling. I was saddened by the first part, the struggle to survive (which reminded me of *The night* by Elie Wiesel), but at the same time I felt peace in my heart. Rabbi Lau was not destroyed by his tragic life beginning and personal loss; instead he was grateful for what G-d gave him and came out as a refined man. From this read, one feels compelled to accept every day challenge (not comparable to what Rabbi Lau went through) with a lighter heart and work on oneself to become a better person. Rabbi Lau's determination, focus, and wisdom are admirable. A miraculous recovery and a must read.

This is a poignant and beautifully written memoir by Israel Meir Lau, born into a family with a distinguished rabbinic history reaching back 38 generations. Lau was only 5 years old in 1942 when the Nazis blasted into his town in Poland. His father, the town's rabbi, was selected for public beating and humiliation, in front of his family, before being taken to a death camp and murdered. Astonishingly, little Israel ("Lulek" to his family), despite his small size (even for his age) manages to survive the horrors of Buchenwald, thanks to ongoing life-risking efforts by his much older brother, Naftali. Lau is one of the youngest children to have survived this hell on earth, and just as astonishingly, grows from this harsh orphanhood to become the Chief Rabbi first of Tel Aviv and then of the State of Israel. Arriving in Israel with his brother, who had been charged by their father to do everything he possibly could to safeguard little Lulek and who did so with a degree of self-sacrifice and risk that is hard to fathom, Lulek becomes Israel, living with an aunt and uncle and trying to create the first semblance of a normal life -- as normal as could be given his parents' murders by the Nazis and the ripping apart of his family life. Rabbi Lau clearly inherited his late father's gift for oration, and manages to overcome the emotional trauma to become an invaluable and wise leader of the Jewish people. In the last chapters, it is especially affecting to read about Chief Rabbi Lau's friendships with Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Shimon Peres, as well as world leaders ranging from Fidel Castro, Desmond Tutu, King Hussein of Jordan, and Pope John Paul II, and more. It is a deeply inspiring and moving book.

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