



# **Around Sarah's Table: Ten Hasidic Women Share Their Stories of Life, Fai**

*Rivka Zakutinsky, Yaffa Leba Gottlieb*

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In the tradition of Amy Tan's *The Joy Luck Club* and *Holy Days* by Lis Harris, Rivka Zakutinsky and Yaffa Leba Gottlieb show the inner workings of a fascinating community of women that few outsiders will enter on their own. With humor and sensitivity, *Around Sarah's Table* focuses on the lives of ten Hasidic women and on the insights each gains from the weekly Torah reading, illustrating the ways in which each woman's life is infused with Judaism.

Brooklyn, 1991: A few Hasidic women begin meeting once a week for lunch and intimate learning with friends. The few soon grow to many, from backgrounds as diverse as those of any other segment of the Jewish population. Gathered together by Sarah mother of thirteen, girls' high school principal, facilitator, connector, and hostess they called themselves the "Women's Tuesday Torah Luncheon and Study Group." From Reva the publisher to Rachel the *mikvah* maven, Klara the lawyer, Levana the *rebbitzin*, and others, the daily joys and sorrows of each allow us to see through the stereotypes to truly connect with the real women who lie behind those images.

With the eyes, ears, and hearts of storytellers, Zakutinsky and Gottlieb generously introduce us to their very personal spiritual realm. Amidst a world filled with spiritual unrest and anxiety, *Around Sarah's Table* offers inspirational Hasidic and biblical interpretation gathered by women, for both women and men to follow. Less concerned with an academic approach to Bible study than with the traditional methods of "learning," the authors never seem to lose sight of how the ancient texts apply to their contemporary lives.

Fast paced but reverent, *Around Sarah's Table* introduces us to the unique experience of living life as a Hasidic woman, and reminds us that beyond all the labels that tend to keep us apart, we are all very much alike.

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