

THE PROPHET'S WIFE
NEW NOVEL BY MILTON STEINBERG
TO BE PUBLISHED IN 2010 BY BEHRMAN HOUSE

Manuscript Left Unfinished for Half a Century
Release of Book is Major Literary Event

Steinberg Authored *As a Driven Leaf*
One of the Great Books of the 20th Century

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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December 17, 2009 (New York, NY) – Sixty years after the untimely death of the great American rabbi and writer Milton Steinberg, author of *As a Driven Leaf*, an important second novel by Steinberg will be published posthumously by Behrman House in March 2010.

Discovered deep within the archives of the American Jewish Historical Society, *The Prophet's Wife* delivers the lush narrative and vivid depictions that readers of *As a Driven Leaf* will recognize as the inimitable voice of Milton Steinberg. Set against a backdrop of unrest in ancient Israel, *The Prophet's Wife* is a stirring portrait of the biblical prophet Hosea, his passionate and free-spirited wife Gomer, and a people seduced by the lures of power and idolatry to betray their faith.

Left unfinished by his death at age 46, the 440-page typewritten manuscript of *The Prophet's Wife* sat in the American Jewish Historical Society archives for over forty years before Behrman House located it and began the process of finishing the work. Through trial and tribulation, it was artfully developed into an artistic and intellectual collaboration between Steinberg and a triumvirate of important contemporary writers—Rabbi Harold S. Kushner, Ari L. Goldman and Norma Rosen.

The forthcoming publication of *The Prophet's Wife* represents a great literary event. Even prior to publication, the book has created excitement and attracted critical acclaim in many literary circles.

“A glorious new novel emerges—unfinished, cut off by mortality; nevertheless equally powerful in its living imagery, passion, and humanity,” exults **Cynthia Ozick**, National Book Award finalist and author of *The Shawl* and *Heir to the Glimmering World*.

Rabbi Joseph Telushkin, author of *Jewish Literacy*, and *A Code of Jewish Ethics*, calls *The Prophet's Wife*, “a sixty-year-old posthumous gift from the author of *As a Driven Leaf*, which was perhaps the most important Jewish novel of the twentieth century. Milton Steinberg's insights into the tormented, sexually betrayed, and perennially forgiving Hosea ring true and . . . present a full-bodied portrait of a major figure, who until now, was just a name.”

At a time when works of Biblical fiction have seized the imagination of the reading public, as evidenced by the success of Maggie Anton's *Rashi's Daughters* series, *The Women of Genesis* series by Orson Scott Card, and of course, Anita Diamant's *The Red Tent*, *The Prophet's Wife* elevates the genre to a new level. The novel further illustrates the durability of biblical narrative, demonstrating the relevant and enduring nature of the stories, and the echoes they have even today in our modern lives. The commentaries by Kushner and Rosen and the foreword by Goldman contextualize and complete the work, explaining how it came to be and beginning the exploration of what it means to today's modern reader.

“Steinberg's unfinished story of the prophet Hosea, with the . . . contributions of three brilliant intellectuals, will interest many readers by both its historical content and literary style,” states **Elie Wiesel**, Nobel laureate and author of *Night* and *A Mad Desire to Dance*.

Ordained at the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York, Steinberg was greatly influenced by Mordecai Kaplan, the father of the Reconstructionist movement. Active in communal affairs and an avid Zionist, he served as a congregational rabbi, mostly notably at the Park Avenue Synagogue. In addition to *As a Driven Leaf*, he published three other works—*The Making of the Modern Jew* (1934); *A Partisan Guide to the Jewish Problem* (1945) and *Basic Judaism* (1947). His articles were collected by Arthur A. Cohen and published posthumously as *Anatomy of Faith* (1960).

The significance of the posthumous publication of *The Prophet's Wife* is broad, bridging literary and theological worlds. Rabbi David Wolpe of Sinai Temple in Los Angeles, the author of *Why Faith Matters* and *Floating Takes Faith* calls the discovery of this new work by Steinberg, “a gripping and wondrous event . . . the greatest voice of the American pulpit reaches out to us from the past.”

Behrman House has launched a national and international promotion campaign for *The Prophet's Wife*, which includes public events and programs. In addition,

supplementary materials, including book group questions, are provided at the end of the book. And, in an innovation designed to encourage further exploration of the work and its meaning, Behrman House has launched a website in which readers are encouraged to share their reactions, debate the themes of the book, and even write their own ending. Please visit www.prophetswife.com for further information.

To request a review copy of *The Prophet's Wife* or for further information about this important work, please contact Shira Dicker at shira.dicker@sd-media.com or by phone at 917.403.3989.

ABOUT MILTON STEINBERG

The late **Milton Steinberg** is the author of the literary masterpiece *As a Driven Leaf*, first published in 1939 and still regarded as a major influence on contemporary Jewish life and thought. Steinberg died in 1950 while working on *The Prophet's Wife*, which is now in print for the first time.

ABOUT THE COLLABORATORS

Rabbi Harold S. Kushner is the author of *When Bad Things Happen to Good People*.

Ari L. Goldman is the author of *The Search for God at Harvard* and *Being Jewish*, and the former religion correspondent for the *New York Times*.

Norma Rosen is the author of *Touching Evil* and *Biblical Women Unbound*.

ABOUT BEHRMAN HOUSE

Behrman House is the leading publisher of educational materials for Jewish supplementary schools, and creators of diverse books about Judaism and Jewish life. Founded in 1921, the firm has previously published such classic titles as *My People* by Abba Eban, Israel's first Ambassador to the United Nations, *As a Driven Leaf* by Rabbi Milton Steinberg, the *New American Haggadah* by the founder of the Reconstructionist movement Mordecai Kaplan, and *Hitler's War Against the Jews* by Lucy Dawidowicz. Behrman House is the winner of two Distinguished Achievement Awards from the Association of Educational Publishers (2007).