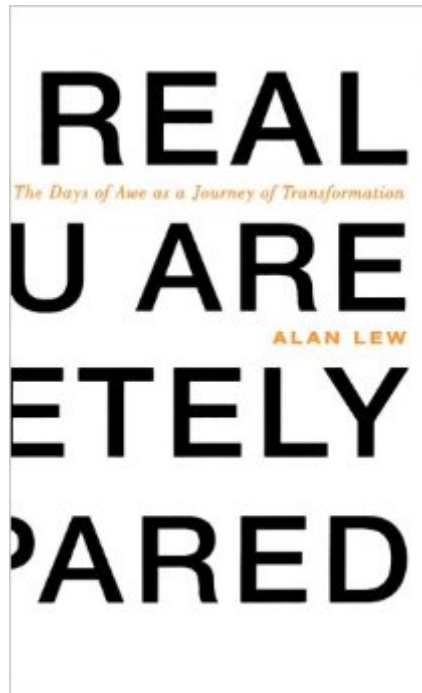


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# This Is Real And You Are Completely Unprepared: The Days Of Awe As A Journey Of Transformation



## Synopsis

There are moments in life when one is caught utterly unprepared. Drawing on both his rabbinical training and his scholarship in Buddhism, Lew leads readers on a journey from confusion to clarity, from doubt to belief, as he opens a path to self-discovery that is accessible to readers of all faiths.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This is a wonderful book, the kind I have been looking for. It is an easy read and yet has a lot of deep concepts that makes one think. This combination is rare. This books takes the reader on journey through the High Holy Days in ways that anyone can relate to and helps the reader get prepared for the Holidays themselves. I have not been able to get through any one chapter in one reading. As I read each section I get lost in contemplation and in thinking about the content. This is a must have for every Jewish library including both the novice and yeshivah educated and all in between.

Rabbi Alan Lew, z"l was a pulpit rabbi (conservative) and a long time practitioner of mediation. For a decade before he became a rabbi, he practiced Zen type mediation. His other two works, One God Clapping, and Be Still and Get Going, reflect this ongoing commitment to being halakically Jewish and also practicing mediation techniques that are inspired by Buddhist tradition. This work, This is Real and You Are Completely Unprepared is his most Jewish in the sense that he takes the specific content, practices, ideas and liturgy of the time period from Tisha b'Av and Sukkoth and provides a conceptual framework that allows for growth and depth to the High Holiday experience. The book is informed by his eastern religious background, but not dominated by it. When Rabbi Lew expresses

that this world is but a fleeting thing, a narrow bridge with darkness on either side, he simply expresses very well-known rabbinical dicta about existence. Our existence IS fleeting. Our time is short. Rabbi Lew reminds us that waking up to the reality of our transitory nature can make us see reality and ourselves for what it/we truly are; it can help us to see what is important in this little crack of light between the two zones of darkness that is our life. Sadly, Rabbi Lew passed away in 2009. Reading this book with that in mind places the work in an almost prophetic light; several times Rabbi Lew expresses how close he feels to death based on his experience as a pulpit rabbi. He realized, watching so many people die, that death awaits us at anytime. Sadly, he was right. But he left us some deeply intelligent and humane works as a legacy.

This is a powerful book about opening your heart. Rabbi Lew combines Eastern philosophy with Jewish wisdom so that the reader enjoys the best of both worlds. The basic approach is that the Jewish High Holy Days provide us with an annual opportunity to acknowledge the dark shadows in our soul, accept our inevitable flaws, failings and transgressions, and emerge from the process fresh, whole and reinvigorated. Rabbi Lew writes beautifully and the message hits home. Highly recommended.

This is an invaluable book for preparation for the High Holidays; I think non-Jews would also benefit from Rabbi Lew's ideas. We go through life trying to shield ourselves from the inevitabilities of disappointment, death, and decay, at the same time insulating ourselves from joy and from the needs of others. Rabbi Lew focuses on the time from Tisha B'Av, the fast day commemorating the destruction of the Second Temple and other tragedies, to Sukkot, the harvest holiday where we acknowledge our vulnerabilities and celebrate joyfully in roofless shacks, having examined our lives, admitted our brokenness, forgiven slights against us and also forgiving ourselves. With additional Buddhist perspective that never falls into Buddhism Lite, this is a profound book that should be read over and over again.

I purchased this book about three, maybe four years ago. I begin reading the book at Tisha B'Av every year and find it compelling and most helpful. The book speaks to me at my level of comprehension - simple and straight forward. It is not boring, it is a very easy read and I usually complete reading the book in about two weeks. I love the way it opens doors to understanding Teshuvah and the Days of Awe. The title is so appropriate because, really, how many of us are ever completely prepared for anything that comes our way in life. During the last twelve months, I have

been yelling at God and losing faith in Him. My Mother, who lived with me for the last year of her life, was very ill and suffering so much that she just wanted to die. How unfair of God to put her through this. How unfair for anyone to have to suffer. I just lost it. This book, which I am reading right now, is beginning to help be to regain my faith and return to God. I have gifted this book to four people, three of whom are Rabbis. They, in turn, have loaned the book to others they feel will benefit from the book. I highly recommend it.

This is a must read for High Holiday preparations. No one writes as movingly on the topic as Alan Lew. I did a lot of research looking into several alternatives and all were bland compared to Lew's book.

in the beginning, some of the information was interesting and thought provoking..but became so much about his own experiences and the writing became "unfocused". Not sure what Mr. Lew was wring about...The book lost it's focus and meaning.Put the book down. Tried to read again after a couple of hours..s=ame feeling. Would NOT recommend.

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