



# The Names of God: Poetic Readings in Biblical Beginnings

*Herbert Chanan Brichto*

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## **The Names of God: Poetic Readings in Biblical Beginnings** Herbert Chanan Brichto

This is the sequel to the author's iconoclastic *Toward a Grammar of Biblical Poetics* (Oxford, 1992), in which Brichto argues for the aesthetic wholeness of the Hebrew Bible, and the consistency of Scripture's preachment on God, nature, and the human condition--in direct opposition to current source criticism, which maintains that inconsistencies within the text support an atomistic reading of multiple authors.

In *The Names of God*, Brichto brings us his "poetic" reading of Scripture to the Book of Genesis. Using contemporary methods and insights of literary criticism, he examines one of the great inconsistencies within Genesis that have led to the supposition of multiple authors--the assortment of terms or names for the Deity, among them Yahweh and Elohim--and attempts to show the appropriateness of certain of these names to the stories in which they appear. He also looks at a variety of other data within Genesis such as genealogies, eponyms, and chronologies, and shows that their poetical function--their variety, ingenuity, and imaginative whimsy--is vital to the structure of the text as a whole. In finding a unity in this diversity of materials, Brichto makes a strong case for the text as the artistic achievement of a single author.

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