



The History of Human Rights: From Ancient Times to the Globalization Era

Micheline Ishay

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Micheline Ishay recounts the dramatic struggle for human rights across the ages in a book that brilliantly synthesizes historical and intellectual developments from the Mesopotamian Codes of Hammurabi to today's era of globalization. As she chronicles the clash of social movements, ideas, and armies that have played a part in this struggle, Ishay illustrates how the history of human rights has evolved from one era to the next through texts, cultural traditions, and creative expression. Writing with verve and extraordinary range, she develops a framework for understanding contemporary issues from the debate over globalization to the intervention in Kosovo to the climate for human rights after September 11, 2001. The only comprehensive history of human rights available, the book will be essential reading for anyone concerned with humankind's quest for justice and dignity.

Ishay structures her chapters around six core questions that have shaped human rights debate and scholarship: What are the origins of human rights? Why did the European vision of human rights triumph over those of other civilizations? Has socialism made a lasting contribution to the legacy of human rights? Are human rights universal or culturally bound? Must human rights be sacrificed to the demands of national security? Is globalization eroding or advancing human rights? As she explores these questions, Ishay also incorporates notable documents—writings, speeches, and political statements—from activists, writers, and thinkers throughout history.

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