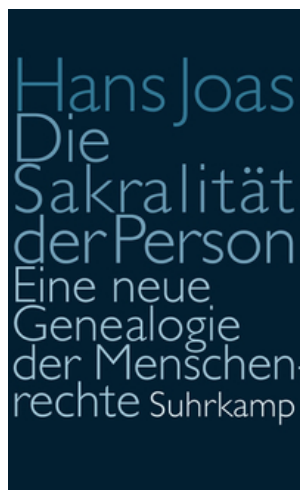


**Hans Joas****The Sacredness of the Person - A New Genealogy of Human Rights**

English edition forthcoming with Georgetown UP

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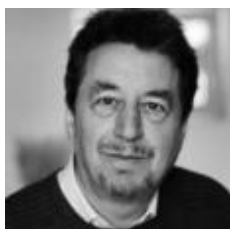
**About**

**A persistent debate over the last few decades has focused on the question: where does the concept of human rights originate? Does it come from our Christian-Jewish roots or is it an invention of the Enlightenment? It is neither one nor the other according to the social theoretician Hans Joas, who narrates quite a different history of human rights in his latest publication.**

In the style of a »historical sociology«, he unearths a surprising perspective: the notion of universal human dignity is the result of a process of sacralization, during which the individual human was regarded as increasingly more sacred. Joas traces this process in exemplary studies, such as the abolition of slavery and the genesis of paradigmatic »Declarations of Human Rights«, analysing them as a complex cultural transformation.

**Human rights, as is illustrated here, are not simply the result of a simple consensus on universal principles: they originate from a long, cultural interdisciplinary discourse on values. Their history consists of many stories: these have been narrated by Hans Joas in a gripping book that reopens the debate on the concept of human rights.**

(German title: Die Sakralität der Person)  
ca. 303 pages  
Clothbound  
2011



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Hans Joas is a sociologist and social philosopher. He is an associative member of the Max Weber Kolleg, a Permanent Fellow of the Freiburg Institute for Advanced Studies (FRIAS), School of History, and Professor for Sociology and member of the Committee on Social Thought at the University of Chicago.

**Awards:**

Prix Paul Ricœur 2017

Bielefelder Wissenschaftspreis 2010

**Praise**

»This important book by Hans Joas presents a valuable and well-balanced account of how the notions of human dignity and human rights were born out of the mutually inspiring combination of secular and religious thought, interpretation, and action.« *SZ*

»A profound book [...] that demonstrates the patience and tenacity needed to develop thoughts and present them not only clearly but elegantly.« Otfried Höffe, *FAZ*

»Despite the occasional use of highly specialised jargon, this book is an intellectual pleasure to read. It is certainly never boring.« *Deutschlandradio*