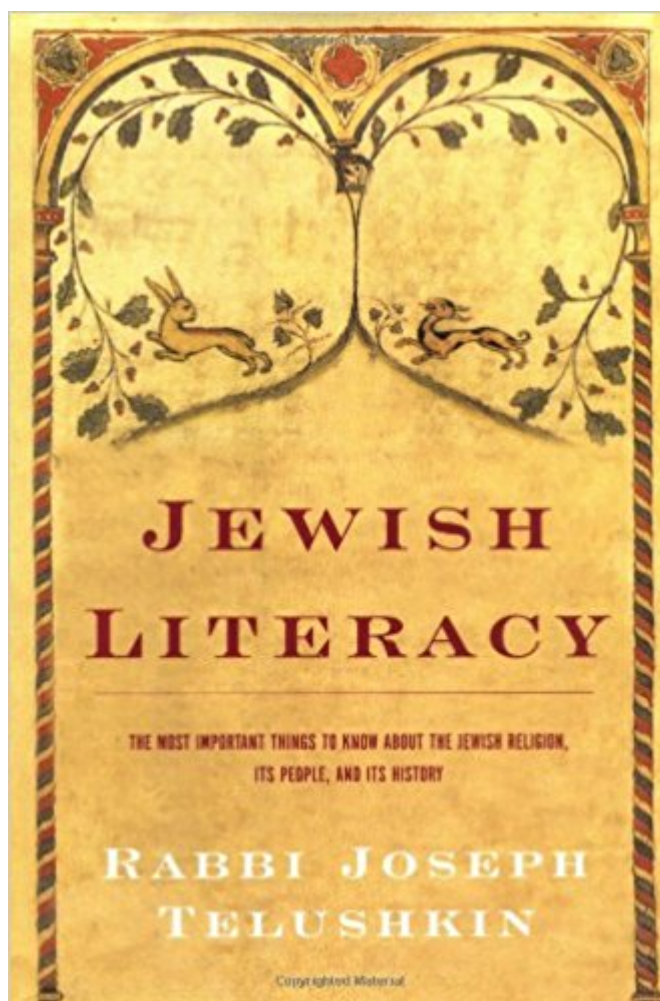


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# Jewish Literacy: The Most Important Things To Know About The Jewish Religion, Its People And Its History



## Synopsis

How much do you know about Judaism? How did the Ten Lost Tribes become lost? Are circumcisions performed on the Sabbath? Which country first granted Jews equal rights? When was polygamy outlawed for Jews? Why does Jewish law compare gossiping to murder? You'll find the answers to these questions -- and much more -- in this insightful and comprehensive guide. Written by esteemed rabbi and bestselling author Joseph Telushkin, *Jewish Literacy* has become one of the most respected and widely used reference books on Jewish life, culture, religion, and tradition. Now revised and updated, this fascinating volume distills a vast body of scholarship into 348 short, readable chapters, making the rich and complex history of Judaism accessible to any reader. Organized by subject, the book's fifteen sections include: History and Contemporary Life From the biblical and Talmudic periods through the Spanish Inquisition to modern times, with special sections on the Holocaust, Israel, and American-Jewish life. Beliefs, Ethics, and Rituals From monotheism to Judaism's views on the afterlife, "chosenness," and human relations with God; ethical concerns ranging from the proper treatment of animals to the real meaning of "an eye for an eye"; along with explanations of the major prayers and synagogue practices. Jewish Holidays and Life Cycle The origins and distinctive customs of each holiday, and the rites sanctifying every major life event from circumcision and baby naming to burial and mourning. Answers to the questions from the front flap: They were dispersed when the Kingdom of Israel was destroyed by the Assyrians in 722 B.C.E. (see Chapter 45). The United States (see Chapter 203). Around 1000 C.E., when it was proscribed by Rabbi Gershom; however, most Sephardic Jews did not accept the ban (see Chapter 95). Because gossip, like murder, can do irrevocable damage (see Chapter 271).

## Book Information

Hardcover: 784 pages

Publisher: William Morrow; 1 edition (April 26, 1991)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0688085067

ISBN-13: 978-0688085063

Product Dimensions: 2 x 6.8 x 9.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 2.8 pounds

Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars 261 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #83,708 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #32 in Books > Religion &

Spirituality > Judaism > Jewish Life #53 in Books > Religion & Spirituality > Judaism > History

## Customer Reviews

In 1988, Rabbi Joseph Telushkin undertook a mission to heal "Jewish ignorance," an affliction whose symptoms include the ability to name the three components of the Trinity, coupled with an inability to explain mitzvah. Telushkin's contribution to the cure is his wide-ranging, entertaining Jewish Literacy. First published in 1991, Jewish Literacy contains almost 350 entries on subjects ranging from the Ten Commandments to The Protocols of the Elders of Zion. Entries are numbered (for easy, encyclopedia-style reference) and organized topically (to smooth the experience of reading each page straight through). And the revised edition contains several new entries (including articles about the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin and the vice-presidential nomination of Joseph Lieberman) as well as numerous corrections, enlargements, and updates. One might expect Rabbi Telushkin's project of inspiring Jewish literacy to be overly earnest, but the author's understated wit adds considerable levity to most entries. The entry on "Sodom and Gomorrah," for instance, ends this way: "A number of years ago, some Israeli promoters of tourism suggested transforming the modern city of Sodom into a tourist haven with casinos, nightclubs, and even strip shows. The Chief Rabbinate in Israel sharply demurred, warning that there was nothing to prevent God from destroying the city a second time. The plan was dropped." --Michael Joseph Gross

Traditionalist Rabbi Telushkin ( The Nine Questions People Ask About Judaism) presents 364 brief explanations of the most important concepts and topics concerning Judaism, Jews, and their history and culture. Each entry runs from one to three pages in length. Basic religious terms, ethics, historical events, religious texts, Jewish personalities, and more are covered in a lively, popular style. A useful feature is that each entry is followed by a short bibliography of further readings on the subject. Despite the occasional superficiality of its coverage, this book is a useful introductory course for Jewish and non-Jewish "illiterates" from teenagers on up. A useful addition for general Judaica collections.- Robert A. Silver, Shaker Heights P.L., OhioCopyright 1991 Reed Business Information, Inc.

It might seem incongruous for a Christian believer to purchase a hefty book about the Jewish faith, but what better way to familiarize oneself with the religion, history, and traditions of the people from whom Jesus came? A ready reference book to both the Old and New Testaments was my goal, and this work fits the bill wonderfully. This book was recommended by one of my students, who is

Jewish, since it was her way of better understanding her own faith system. It is a fascinating work in historical, cultural, and spiritual contexts.

This is an excellent overview of Judaism... especially for non-Jews, I think. It gives a broad overview, including several aspects of Judaism, but is not so detailed that it taxes the casual reader. I really enjoyed learning more about this ancient religion & Telushkin did a fine job of giving me just enough information. In fact, Telushkin did such a good job on this book that I ordered another of his books concerning archaeology in the Holy Lands. Highly recommend as an introduction for those needing/wanting to learn more about Judaism.

Rabbi Telushkin is a Modern Orthodox rabbi, who did a great job explaining in easy straightforward short text of important historical, theological, philosophical and cultural changes throughout Jewish history that makes Jewish people what they are. From scriptural mythological events, historical events, exiles, persecution, Jewish Enlightenment, denominational split, the Shoah / the Holocaust, to the State of Israel. He does well to not trying to take a side and expresses certain hopes and concerns the community had, and still have. I think it's a good book for all Jews to have, from Humanistic to Reform to Orthodox.

A book contains major Jewish ideas from past to present. Each topic has a few paragraphs to get anyone familiar with the basics of Judaism.

Understanding Jewish beliefs is fundamental not just for Jews but also for all monotheist religions that derived from this body of philosophical knowledge. Ethical monotheism remains particularly relevant in the 21st century and Rabbi Telushkin continues to make major contributions in all his books with his erudition and easily accessible style. A must read. Check also Jewish Wisdom from the same author.

Very impressive explanation about Judaism. Thank you so much.

He write clearly and explains the most obscure bits of judeasim in a manner almost anyone could understand, without feeling like your being talked down to. I am sure there are others who can explain his brilliance more adequately.

I'm a christian man with a Jewish girlfriend and wanted to know as much as possible about the Jewish life. Joseph Telushkin has taken every aspect of the Bible and explains it not just from the Jewish perspective but from the Christian as well. I have found this book to be the most valuable book in my library of religious studies next to the bible.

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