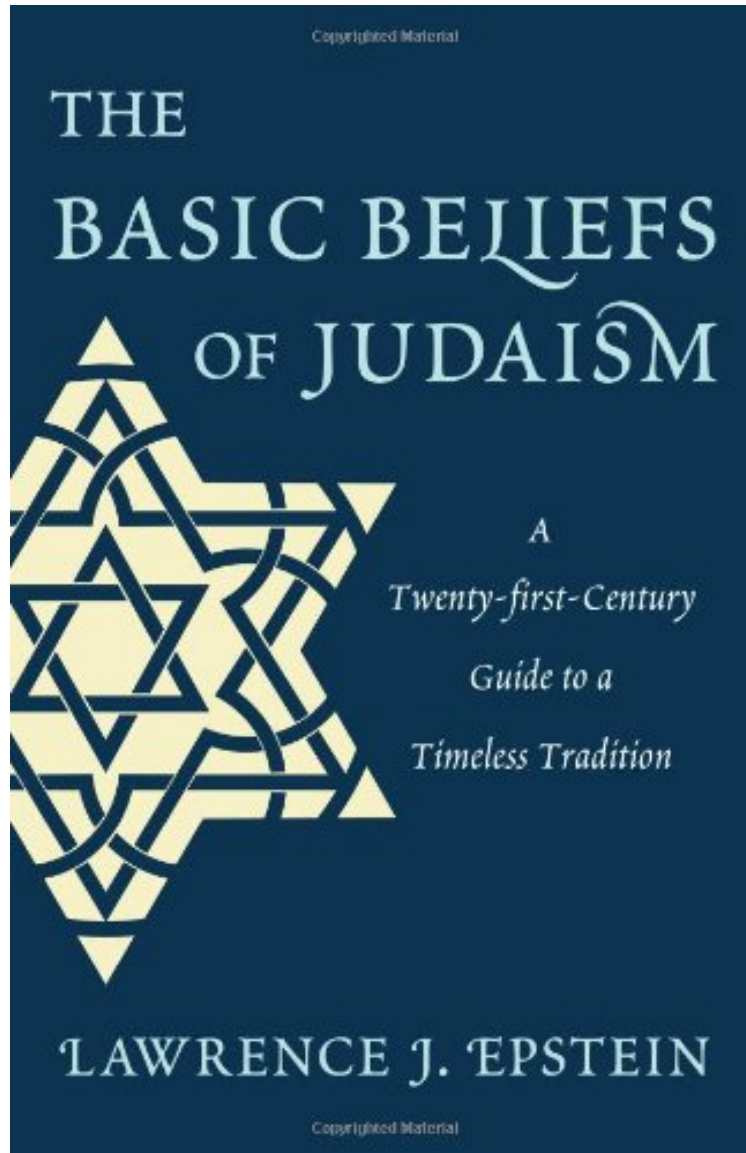


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The Basic Beliefs of Judaism: A Twenty-first-Century Guide to a Timeless Tradition

Lawrence J. Epstein

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Lawrence J. Epstein : The Basic Beliefs of Judaism: A Twenty-first-Century Guide to a Timeless Tradition
before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Basic Beliefs of
Judaism: A Twenty-first-Century Guide to a Timeless Tradition:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Great Author, Great BookBy D. L. RathgebLawrence J. Epstein is a

literary hero of mine. I have read a number of his books, and no matter what the subject, his writing is always clear and precise. This is especially true for this book, which covers a subject so vast and intricate that one might easily get lost trying to comprehend it all. Whether you are well-versed in the subject of Judaism or new to it, you will find this book informative, humorous, insightful, and thought-provoking. I recommend it highly, and I suggest that you read other books by this same author. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A wonderful guide By Rachel E. Though I grew up in a Jewish household (went to Hebrew School, had a bat mitzvah), I--now in my 30s and one of the few Jewish people in my circle of inquisitive friends--found myself increasingly dissatisfied with the answers I would give when people asked questions about my religion. I realized I was giving superficial responses because I simply didn't know enough to respond in more depth. I decided to change that. Cue Dr. Epstein's book. It is a blessing not only for someone like me, but also for those who are asking the questions. A great read overall and one that will stick with me. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Must read By SA_64789 Thorough, engaging, well written. Covers outlooks of most Judaism movements. Written from a general US perspective with other perspectives explained. Good overview and good detail.

One of the oldest monotheistic religions known to humankind, Judaism has withstood the tests of time. So what exactly are the tenets of this ancient faith that have been passed down over the millennia, and how do they apply to our lives in the 21st century? The Basic Beliefs of Judaism gives an updated overview of the belief system on which the Jewish faith is based. Epstein takes a contemporary point of view, looking at how the basic beliefs of Judaism fit into the lives of modern Jews. He does this with an eye toward helping the reader form his/her own understanding of Judaism. The book touches upon beliefs relating to creation, God, and the cosmos, as well as beliefs relating to day-to-day issues of family relations, social interactions, and ethics. Epstein draws from the Torah, the Talmud, Jewish folklore, and Jewish history to give the reader an understanding of how these beliefs were formed and have continued to evolve.

Epstein, the author of several publications on Jewish life, culls from nearly 3,000 years of Jewish moral, ethical, and philosophical thought to present an overview of fundamentals for an educated, 21st-century audience. In ten chapters, he discusses themes such as the mystery of God, the suffering of the innocent, and ethical foundations for a good life, from a broad array of Jewish perspectives. He states 'there is not one single Jewish belief system to explain. Rather there is a range of such beliefs. Still, there are borderlines that define what makes a belief fall outside Judaism.' This is not a reference book; the author recommends reading the chapters in order 'because the material ... is presented in an intellectually hierarchical fashion, with one section leading to the next.' Because of the vastness of the sources from which he draws, only a select essence can be conveyed. Biblical, Talmudic, and medieval sources are cited, as are Enlightenment, Reform, Conservative, and contemporary Jewish thinkers. The discussions are thoughtful and balanced. Readers from all backgrounds are challenged to engage with the issues further by using chapter exercises and the extensive bibliography. Summing Up: Recommended. Lower-division undergraduates and above; general readers. (CHOICE) There are numerous introductions to Judaism directed toward Jews, and other books that attempt to describe Judaism to non-Jews. Lawrence Epstein, a retired professor of English, has added his efforts to that last shelf. The book is divided into ten chapters, combining summaries of belief, Torah and Talmudic stories, life-cycle events, science and history. Prof. Epstein's earnestness is clear. This is a labor of love for Judaism and Jewish values. (Association of Jewish Libraries) I would recommend Dr. Epstein's book to all. An amazing work and a must-read for anyone who wants to understand Judaism. (Rabbi Celso Cukierkorn, Adat Achim Synagogue) All too often we speak of Judaism with pride without bothering to delve into its treasures or to understand how its beliefs, values and principles can enhance and enrich our daily lives. This masterful work by Lawrence Epstein artfully combines traditional concepts with contemporary knowledge in a way that will help every reader gain a greater understanding of God, Jewish faith, and the Jewish people. It challenges every one of us to review our life's journey in light of its spiritual meaning and purpose. With his stylistic eloquence, insightful observations and obvious scholarship, Epstein graces us with the wonderful opportunity to have a constructive dialogue with our inner selves. (Rabbi Benjamin Blech, Yeshiva University, author of The Complete Idiot's Guide to Understanding Judaism) Lawrence Epstein's The Basic Beliefs of Judaism offers a fine survey of Jewish theology for the reader interested in better understanding Judaism. It explores a wide range of topics from the core beliefs of Judaism to its conception of God, the struggle to understand the meaning of suffering, the basis of ethics and morals, the meaning of love and marriage, doctrines of death and the afterlife, and everything in between. The book includes exercises at the end of each chapter to help readers clarify their own views, and to place them in a contemporary context, making it useful to people practicing Judaism as well as those just beginning to explore it. And in the true spirit of Judaism, Basic Beliefs uses traditional texts and stories to pose the most important questions and offers a variety of contradictory answers, without choosing a single one. (Marla Segol, The Institute of Jewish Thought Culture, University at Buffalo) About the Author Lawrence J. Epstein, Ph.D., has written many books about Jewish life including The Haunted Smile: The Story of Jewish Comedians in America and At the Edge of a Dream about Jewish immigrants on the Lower East Side. He was an

advisor on the Middle East for two members of the United States Congress.