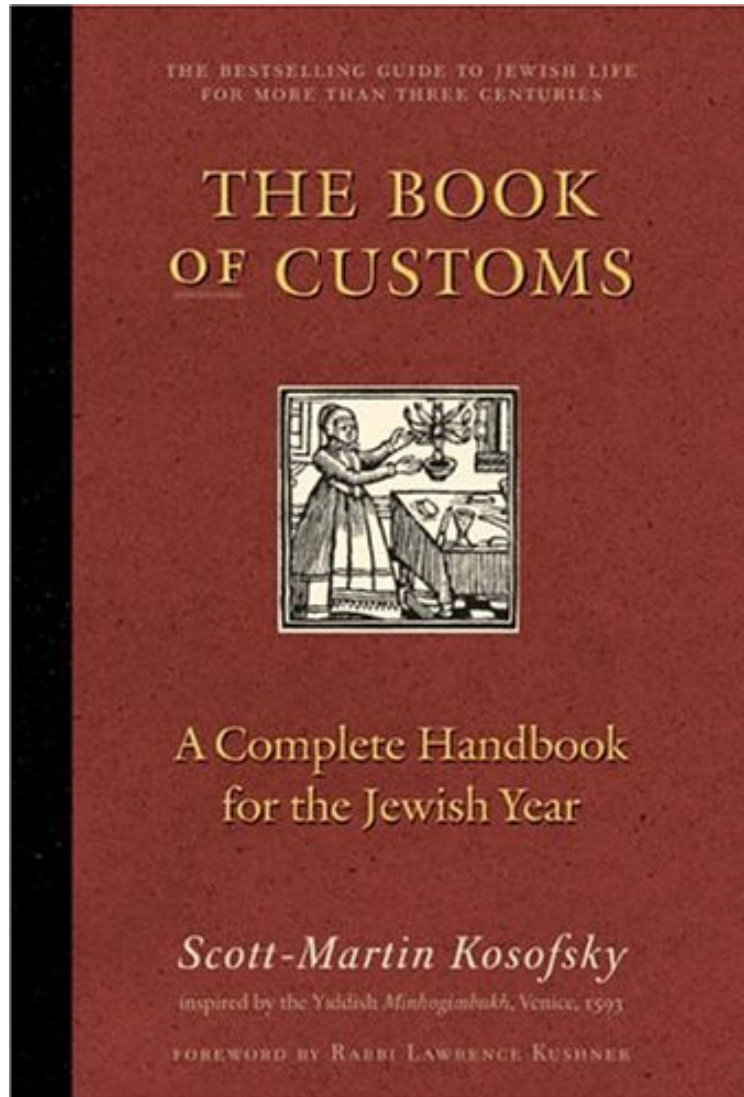


(Read free) The Book of Customs: A Complete Handbook for the Jewish Year

The Book of Customs: A Complete Handbook for the Jewish Year

Scott-Martin Kosofsky
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Scott-Martin Kosofsky : The Book of Customs: A Complete Handbook for the Jewish Year before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Book of Customs: A Complete Handbook for the Jewish Year:

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charming. Highly recommend it.

Fifteen years ago while researching Jewish imagery, award-winning book designer Scott-Martin Kosofsky happened upon a 1645 edition of the Minhogimbukh -- the "Customs Book" -- a beautifully designed and illustrated guide to the Jewish year written in Yiddish, the people's vernacular. Captivated, he investigated further and learned that from 1590 to 1890, this cross between a prayer book and a farmer's almanac was immensely popular in households all across Europe. Published in dozens of editions and revised over the centuries in Venice, Prague, Amsterdam, and throughout Germany before moving eastward in the nineteenth century to Poland and Russia, these books detail the evolution of Jewish custom over three hundred years. But by the 1890s, as Jewish practice became polarized between the secularist and traditionalist views, the Minhogimbukh disappeared. There are no works quite like the historical customs books available today#151;none so thorough and concise, intuitive in organization, and beautiful. Inspired by the originals, Kosofsky set out to make his own, adapting the books for modern use, adding historical perspective and contemporary application. The result is the reappearance of the Minhogimbukh after more than a hundred-year absence, and the first complete showing of all the original woodcuts -- a visual vocabulary of Jewish life -- since the 1760s. Faithfully based on the earlier editions, *The Book of Customs* is an updated guide to the rituals, liturgies, and texts of the entire Jewish year -- from the days of the week and the Sabbath to all the months with their festivals, as well as the major life-cycle events of wedding, birth, bar and bat mitzvah, and death. With the revival of this lost cultural legacy, *The Book of Customs* can once again become every family's guide to Jewish tradition and practice.

From Publishers Weekly
In Europe from the 16th to the 19th centuries, popular "books of customs" brought Judaism down to the level of "Every Jew." These books dealt with holidays, life-cycle rituals, weekly Sabbaths and daily prayers. Written in Yiddish, they were illustrated with woodcuts that showed how to observe the rituals and liturgies that composed day-to-day Judaism. Kosofsky, who stumbled upon one of these books while an undergraduate at Harvard, adapts several such guides for modern usage here, including all of the original woodcuts. (He also reproduces the title page from a 1593 edition that promises to teach readers "how to live like a good person" and boasts its superiority to all previous versions.) Kosofsky's book is interesting both as a history lesson¹² of the woodcuts depict monthly farming activities, for example, showing how agricultural Jewish life was a few centuries ago and a spiritual guide for modern readers. As Kosofsky demonstrates, a "book of customs" does as good a job today of "helping its readers feel comfortable and competent in the Jewish world" as it did hundreds of years ago. Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.
From Booklist
Beginning in the late fourteenth century, *The Book of Customs*, a compact guide to the Jewish year, was published in Yiddish, the Jews' vernacular at that time in Europe. For nearly four centuries, elaborate editions were created, and it was among the most popular Jewish books in the European Diaspora until it disappeared by the end of the nineteenth century. Using the 1593 Venice edition as a model, Kosofsky added a number of discursive elements, including introductions to the book's major divisions and concepts, descriptions of all of the prayers and many of the Bible readings, a general chapter on Jewish law and custom, and one on Jewish prayer to explain how the daily prayer rituals are performed. Also added are chapters on customs and holidays that weren't mentioned, or didn't exist, in 1593, such as bar mitzvahs and the Holocaust Remembrance Day. This first English translation, as important as it is delightful, includes reproductions of many of the original woodcut illustrations that are housed in the libraries at Oxford and Harvard universities. George Cohen
Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved
Scott-Martin Kosofsky's brilliant work vividly brings back to life a lost genre of Jewish literature. (Michael Feldberg, Executive Director, American Jewish Historical Society)
An easy yet intelligent guide that will enable a Jewish family to introduce beautiful and meaningful customs into their life. (Rabbi Reuven Hammer, author of *Entering Jewish Prayer*)
This updated, annotated, wonderfully illustrated book of customs is rich with information and insights. (Jonathan Rosen, author of *The Talmud and the Internet*)
The Book of Customs serves as an essential handbook to Jewish practice. Accessible, well-researched, practical--and elegantly designed. (Dr. Ellen Frankel, author of *The Five Books of Miriam* and *The Encyclopedia of Jewish Symbols*)