

BASIC JUDAISM READING LIST
Rabbi Billy Dreskin and Cantor Jonathan Gordon
Woodlands Community Temple
Revised, January 18, 2003

(R) Required reading: to be read & discussed with the Rabbi (or reviewed in writing).

(S) Suggested reading: if you are further interested in the topic.

OVERVIEW

- (R) What is a Jew?, Kertzer, revised by Rabbi Lawrence Hoffman.
- (R) To Life! A Celebration of Jewish Being and Thinking, Rabbi Harold Kushner (Little, Brown).
- (R) The Nine Questions People Ask About Judaism, Dennis Prager & Rabbi Joseph Telushkin.
- (S) Jewish Literacy: The Most Important Things to Know About the Jewish Religion, Its People, and Its History, Rabbi Joseph Telushkin.
- (S) Basic Judaism, Rabbi Milton Steinberg.

THEOLOGY

- (R) Who Needs God?, Rabbi Harold Kushner.
- (R) Finding God, Rabbis Rifat Sonsino & Daniel Syme.
- (S) This is My God, Herman Wouk.
- (S) The Healer of Shattered Hearts: A Jewish View of God, Rabbi David Wolpe.
- (S) What Happens After I Die?, Rabbis Rifat Sonsino & Daniel Syme (UAHC).
- (S) Teaching Your Child About God, Rabbi David Wolpe.

BIBLE & OTHER JEWISH TEXTS

- (R) The Torah: A Modern Commentary, Rabbis W. Gunther Plaut & Bernard Bamberger (eds.) (UAHC). [Introductory materials to entire volume & for each section]
- (R) Back to the Sources: Reading the Classic Jewish Texts, Barry Holtz.
- (S) Reading the Book: Making the Bible a Timeless Text, Visotzky.
- (S) Tanakh: A New Translation of the Holy Scriptures (JPS). [Excellent Home Bible]
- (S) Messengers of God: Five Biblical Portraits, Elie Wiesel.

JEWISH PRACTICE

- (R) The Jewish Home Advisor, Rabbi Alfred Kolatch (Jonathan David Publ.).
- (R) The Jewish Home, Rabbi Daniel Syme (UAHC).
- (S) A Guide to Jewish Religious Practice, Rabbi Isaac Klein (JTS). [This provides a detailed, halachic description of Jewish observance through the year]
- (S) Every Person's Guide to Judaism, Einstein & Lydia Kukoff.

- (S) Gates of Mitzvah (CCAR).
- (S) Gates of the Seasons (CCAR).
- (S) Living a Jewish Life: A Guide for Starting, Learning, Celebrating and Parenting, Anita Diamant.
- (S) The How-to Handbook for Jewish Living, Rabbi Kerry Olitzky.

SHABBAT

- (R) Gates of Shabbat: A Guide for Observing Shabbat, Rabbi Mark Dov Shapiro (CCAR).
- (S) The Art of Jewish Living: The Shabbat Seder, Wolfson.
- (S) The Sabbath: Its Meaning for Modern Man, Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel.

HOLIDAYS

- (R) The Jewish Home, Daniel B. Syme (UAHC Press).
- (R) The How To Handbook for Jewish Living, Kerry Olitzky & Ronald Isaacs (KTAV).
- (R) Jewish Literacy, Joseph Telushkin (Morrow).
- (R) The Jewish Way, Rabbi Irving Greenberg (Summit Books)

PRAYER

- (R) When A Jew Prays, Seymour Rossel (Behrman House).
- (R) To Pray as a Jew, Donin.
- (S) The Art of Jewish Prayer, Kirzner.
- (S) Blessed Are You: A Comprehensive Guide to Jewish Prayer, Cohen.

CONVERSION

- (R) Choosing Judaism, Lydia Kukoff.
- (R) Video: "Choosing Judaism."
- (S) Becoming Jewish: A Handbook for Conversion, Isaacs.
- (S) Your People, My People, Romanoff.
- (S) Mommy Never Went to Hebrew School, Portnoy.

JEWISH HISTORY

- (R) History chapters from Jewish Literacy, Rabbi Joseph Telushkin.
- (R) Amazing Adventures of the Jewish People, Max Dimont.
- (R) Jews, God and History, Max Dimont.
- (R) Video: "Heritage," Abba Eban (w/viewer's guide).
- (R) Video: "Fiddler on the Roof."
- (S) Settings of Silver: An Introduction to Judaism, Wyles.

ISRAEL

- (R) The Source, James Michener.
- (R) Video (5 parts): "Israel: A Nation is Born," Abba Eban.
- (R) Video: "Exodus."

- (S) The New Middle East, Shimon Peres.
- (S) Heroes and Hustlers, Hardhats and Holymen: Inside the New Israel, Zev Chafets.
- (S) Covenant People, Covenant Land, Seymour Rossel.

HOLOCAUST

- (R) Night, Elie Wiesel.
- (R) The World Must Know: The History of the Holocaust as Told in the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Dr. Michael Berenbaum.
- (R) Video: "Genocide."
- (R) Why the Jews? The Reason for Antisemitism, Dennis Prager & Rabbi Joseph Telushkin (Simon & Schuster).

- (S) The War Against the Jews, Lucy Dawidowicz.
- (S) The Abandonment of the Jews, Wyman.

REFORM JUDAISM

- (R) Explaining Reform Judaism, Rabbi Eugene Borowitz.

- (S) Reform Judaism Today, Rabbi Eugene Borowitz.

PARENTING

- (R) Raising Jewish Children in a Contemporary World: The Modern Parent's Guide to Creating a Jewish Home, Rabbi Steven Carr Reuben.
- (R) Raising Your Child to be a Mensch, Rabbi Neil Kurshan.

- (S) The Hadassah Magazine Jewish Parenting Book, Bell (ed.).
- (S) When Your Jewish Child Asks Why: Answers for Tough Questions, Rabbi Kerry Olitzky et. al.

CONTEMPORARY ISSUES

- (R) Tough Choices: Jewish Perspectives on Social Justice, Albert Vorspan and Rabbi David Saperstein.

REFORM JEWISH PRAYERBOOKS

- (R) Gates of Prayer. [Shabbat and holidays]
- (R) Gates of Repentance. [High Holy Days]

- (S) Gates of the House. [Home worship]
- (S) Gates of Healing. [Prayers of comfort and hope]
- (S) Gates of Awe. [High Holy Days for young children]
- (S) Gates of Wonder. [Shabbat prayers for young children]

HEBREW

- (S) Reading Hebrew, Castberg & Adler.
- (S) Practice, Drill & Review for Reading, Adler.
- (S) Teach Yourself to Read Hebrew, Simon & Anderson (Book & cassette tapes).
- (S) Nashir B"yachad: Melodies for Shabbat Worship from "Gates of Song" (Cassette).

PERIODICALS

- "Reform Judaism" [Monthly publication of the Reform movement].
- "Moment" [Monthly publication of general Jewish community].

CATALOG MAILING LISTS

Jewish Books: Jonathan David Company
68-22 Eliot Avenue
Middle Village, NY 11379-1194
718-456-8611

Jewish Art: Hamakor Judaica, Inc.
P.O. Box 48836
Niles, IL 60714-0836
1-800-426-2567

Jewish Music: Sounds Write Productions, Inc.
6685 Norman Lane
San Diego, CA 92120
619-697-6120

WHERE TO PURCHASE BOOKS

J. Levine Books (5 West 30, NYC): 212-695-6888
Riverdale Hebrew Bookstore: 3706 Riverdale, Bronx
Jonathan David Publishers - (718) 456-8611 (Great sales!)