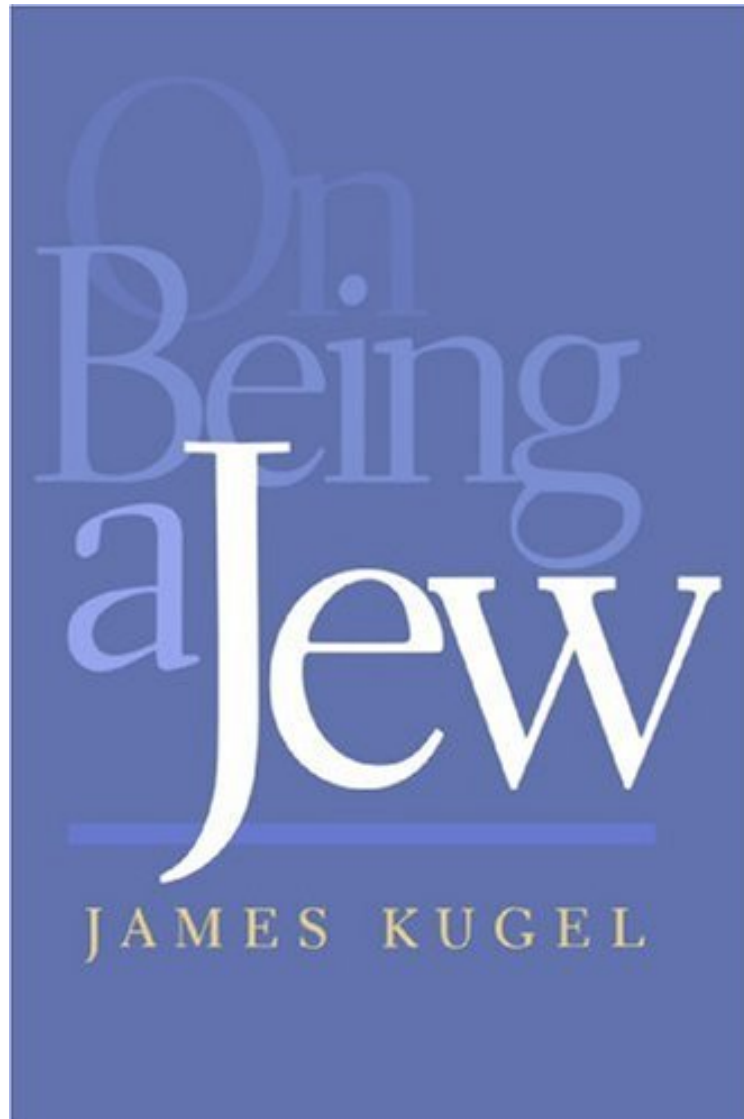


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On Being a Jew

James Kugel

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James Kugel : On Being a Jew before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised On Being a Jew:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Kugel is a treasure for those of us who care ...By susanKugel is a treasure for those of us who care deeply about our response to God. And thanks Mr. Kugel for whatever you have done in your life to be such a help to the rest of us. I'm an 84 yr old (Roman Catholic) Christian.10 of 13 people found the following review helpful. A Most Kosher BookBy Daniel BraunschvigA mamiferous animal is considered Kosher

if it chews the cud, if it has a hoof and if the hoof is cloven. Of the many interpretations or reasons of these rules given through time by the Sages of the Scriptures, there is one which comes to mind when reading James Kugel's book. The hoof is hard. It is cloven to show the uncompromising distinctiveness between right and wrong. That is the law! Chewing the cud is a symbol of mercy, of going over what is presented to find some flaw. That is clemency. Eating only Kosher animals is to keep these two apparently contradictory properties firmly in mind. In "On being a Jew" Kugel shows how the Law and Clemency are intimately interwoven in the fabric of Jewishness. It shines a bright light on our centuries-old traditions and beliefs. A wonderful book for the convinced, the sceptic and the bewildered. 2 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Admirable purpose less than perfect realization By Shalom Freedman James Kugel writes his own up-to-date Kuzari in the form of a dialogue between a young man newly interested in Judaism and a wise old practitioner of the faith. This is not a very harsh dialogue but rather a kind of 'maieutic dialogue' in which the questioner brings out the great knowledge inherent in the older master. In this there comes much explanation and justification of traditional practices. The problem is that this is done in a largely humorless and non-appealing way. The book is admirable in purpose but its less than perfect realization make me wonder who exactly would be convinced by such a work.

Composed as a meandering dialogue between a wily Syrian-Jewish banker and an American graduate student of literature, this engaging book explains all the basic beliefs and practices of Judaism Jewish teachings on intermarriage and conversion, keeping the Sabbath, prayer and Torah, midrash and mitzvot, and God's presence in the world. Although the book has plenty of the "how to" of religious practice, Being a Jew is in the end an eloquent reflection on Judaism's deepest theme: living life as a way of serving God.

"Ideal for students, parents, and rabbis, and those who wish to resolve what it means to be a Jew." (Judaica News) "This book is more than a highly readable presentation of the basics of Judaism. It is a provocative and persuasive argument that the true meaning of being a Jew has been obscured for many Jews today as well as a stirring reflection on some of the deepest themes in Jewish practice and belief." (Jewish Star) "A compelling introduction to being a religious Jew." (Moment) "An honest, provocative and important work." (Jewish Action) "For today's generation, this book is a necessary acquisition." (Jewish Libraries Newsletter) "No apologist, and no fan of what he terms the 'halfway affair' of American Judaism, [Kugel] demonstrates the deepest continuities of Jewish history." (Economist) "I hope that readers will not only savor Jim Kugel's engaging conversation about Judaism, but will participate in it." (Adin Steinsaltz) About the Author James Kugel is the Starr Professor of Hebrew Literature at Harvard University and Professor of Bible at Bar Ilan University, Israel. He is the author of Poetry and Prophecy, Early Biblical Interpretation and The Idea of Biblical Poetry, the last available from Johns Hopkins. His The Bible as It Was, an introduction to the Torah's ancient interpreters, was published in 1997.