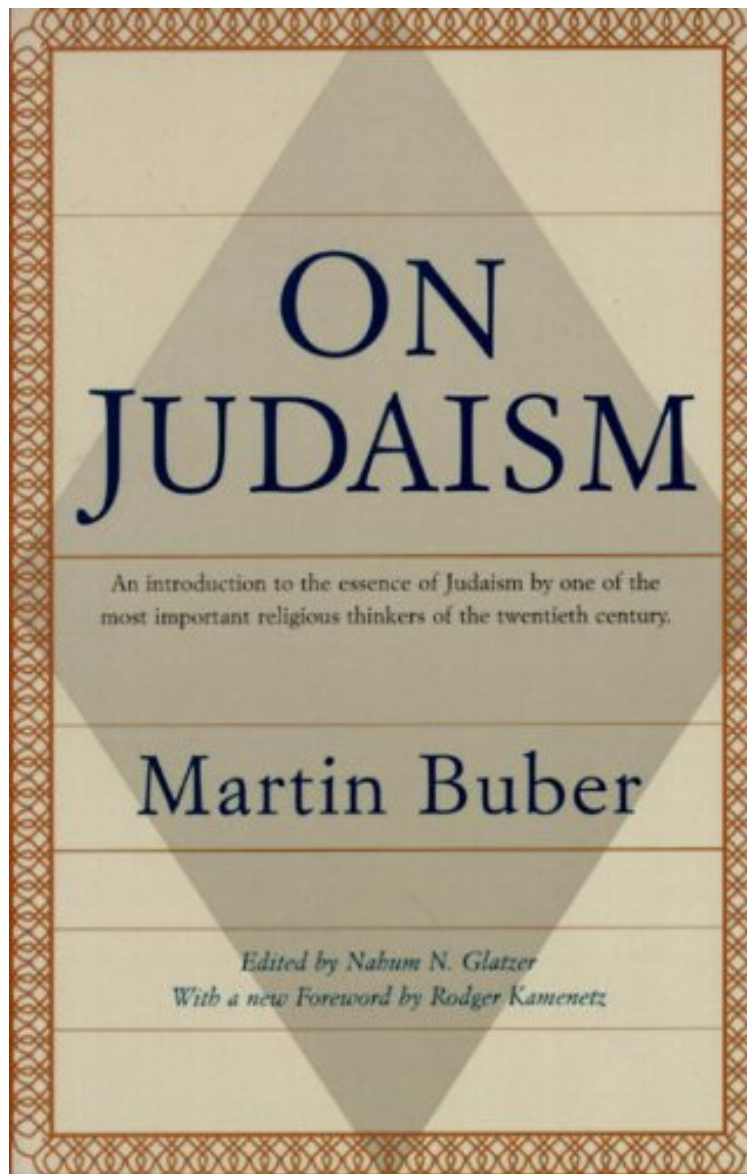


[Download] On Judaism: An Introduction to the Essence of Judaism by One of the Most Important Religious Thinkers of the Twentieth Century

On Judaism: An Introduction to the Essence of Judaism by One of the Most Important Religious Thinkers of the Twentieth Century

Martin Buber

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Edited by Nahum N. Glatzer With a new Foreword by Rodger Kamenetz The question I put before you, as well as before myself, is the question of the meaning of Judaism for the Jews. Why do we call ourselves Jews? I want to speak to you not of an abstraction but of your own life . . . its authenticity and essence. With these words, Martin Buber takes us on a journey into the heart of Judaism's spirit, vision, and relevance to modern life.

.com On Judaism is a collection of lectures by Martin Buber that had a profound influence on European Judaism in the early 20th century. The most interesting parts of this book are the lectures Buber delivered between 1909 and 1918, whose achievement was to convince intellectuals once again to take seriously the mystical elements of Judaism, such as kaballah. Assimilationism, secularism, and materialist skepticism had convinced many European Jews that religious Judaism demanded mindless allegiance to outmoded laws--a situation, as Rodger Kamenetz notes in his introduction to this volume, that bears a striking resemblance to the mindset of many young Jews today. Buber's involvement with Theodore Herzl's Zionist movement (which led to the creation of the state of Israel) gave him credibility with Jewish intellectuals, however. He used this credibility to persuade his listeners that there is an essential difference between rigid, legalistic "religion" and the vital, world-engaging "religiosity" that, he contended, is the prevailing character of Torah. As Kamenetz writes, "Buber's enduring insight is that Judaism is a process, not a conclusion: a religion of presence, and not simply an historical religion." Obviously, much has changed since Buber delivered these early lectures--the two World Wars, the Holocaust, and the rise of Reformed Judaism have forever altered the context in which young Jews define their religious identity. But Buber's driving question--"I must ask myself again and again: Is this particular law addressed to me and rightly so?"--is still the most important one for Jews who seek to understand themselves as people of the book. Martin Buber asked that question with unremitting intensity and intellectual rigor, and On Judaism will help its readers to do so as well. --Michael Joseph Gross To read Martin Buber is to encounter an extraordinary soul and to risk changing your life . . . Unique, exhilarating, profound. David Wolpe, author of Why Be Jewish? When as an adult I first found myself wrestling with God, Torah, and Judaism, someone handed me these essays of Martin Buber. I found them, and subsequently all of Buber's work, speaking deeply and wisely to my life-situation, inviting me into a conversation that has continued through the quarter-century since. To anyone who is newly attracted to, or deeply involved in, Jewish renewal, I recommend them for at least a quarter-century's worth of wonderful exploration. Arthur Waskow, author of Down-to-Earth Judaism How good it is to be reminded of the richness of Martin Buber's early thought, of his passion, of his power as a teacher, even as a prophet. This collection, with Rodger Kamenetz's foreword, will be of great value to all concerned with the revitalization of Judaism today. Jonathan Omer-man, Metivta Institute About the Author Martin Buber (1878-1965), one of the paramount spiritual leaders of the twentieth century, is best known as the author of I and Thou, the basic formulation of his philosophy of dialogue and for his appreciation of Hasidim, which made a deep impact on Christian as well as Jewish thinkers. Born in Vienna, and raised in Lemberg, Buber studied philosophy at the University of Berlin. Fleeing Nazi Germany in 1938, he emigrated to Israel, where he taught social philosophy at the Hebrew University until his retirement in 1951. He lived in Jerusalem until his death in 1965. Also published by Schocken Books, Martin Buber's work include: Israel and the World, The Legend of the Baal-Shem, The Letters Of Martin Buber, On the Bible, On Judaism, On Zion, Tales of the Hasidim, Ten Rungs, and Way of Response.