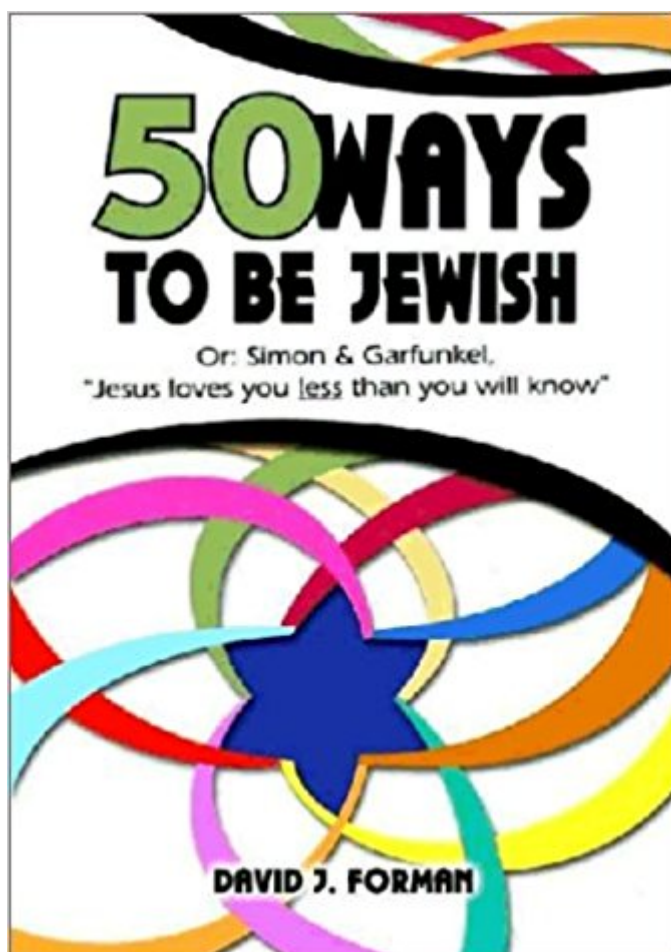


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50 Ways To Be Jewish: Or, Simon & Garfunkel, Jesus Loves You Less Than You Will Know



Synopsis

50 Ways to be Jewish demonstrates how Judaism is more than a series of prayers and customs. How it can seep into every aspect of life and provide a richness and intensity in the most unlikely ways - in reading a book, seeing a movie, buying a car or casting a vote. Engaging, witty and warm, this book is much more than a guidebook. Acclaimed Rabbi and author David J. Forman prescribes concrete and simple measures to fill life with Jewish meaning . Yet at the same time he showcases the magnificent reach of Jewish culture and heritage packing each page with insights and wisdom from both ancient and modern sources.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

David Forman is a child of the Sixties who has refused to give up his idealism and his insistence that our world can be made better through our collective efforts. He is a "sweet survivor." Bravo for 50 Ways to be Jewish. -- Peter Yarrow (Peter, Paul & Mary) One need be neither a Jew nor a member of the Simon and Garfunkel generation to endorse wholeheartedly Rabbi Forman's thesis - that at its best, religion envelops the entire world. -- Professor Huston Smith (Author of "The World's Religions") Rabbi Forman demonstrates how Judaism is more than series of prayers and customs: it can seep into every aspect of life -- Rabby Earl A. Grollman

Rabbi David Forman is the former director of educational programs in Israel of the Union for Reform Judaism; author of best selling books: 50 Ways to be Jewish (2002, Gefen); Jewish Schizophrenia

in the Land of Israel (2000, Gefen) and Israel on Broadway, America: Off-Broadway Jews in the New Millennium (1998, Gefen).

This book has an admirable intention. It aims to bring young Jews who know little about the tradition back to connection with Jewish life and culture. David Forman attempts to do this by integrating stories of his own experience and perceptions, including especially those of popular music and culture to Jewish principles. The problem is not so much with the principles as with his own account of his own experience. It is not done, I am afraid in a very convincing way. The book has a good idea, but its execution leaves much to be desired.

The president of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (Reform Judaism), Rabbi Eric Yoffe, issued a statement that every Jew should read at least three Jewish books a year. This may seem arduous to some, but as an educator, I feel compelled to suggest that if you can only read one book, I highly recommend "Fifty Ways to be Jewish" by Rabbi David Forman. Parents often discuss with me the gaps between what our youth are learning and how they can live and react with Judaism in mind. This book closes that gap. Rabbi Forman shows the reader that Judaism can and should be woven into every aspect of one's life. What makes this book so readable, especially for those of us who grew up in the Sixties, is the author's constant reference to the popular music and culture of that time. Rabbi Forman's insights into our total being; from the cars we choose to our leisure time and our pets, speaks to our very essence as members of society. Want to know how to talk about films, our bodies, sexuality, our kids, schooling and profession? Rabbi Forman's insights will not only set the thought process in motion, he will keep you entertained. Rabbi Forman is the Director of Education Programs in Israel for the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. He is also the activist founder of Israel Rabbis for Human Rights. He knows how to speak to North American Jews. His book is a must for all parents who are raising kids to be Jewish in our North American culture.

I was attracted to this book primarily because of its subtitle: "Simon & Garfunkel: Jesus loves you less than you will know." I suspected that I would find an original approach to Jewish life. I was not disappointed. Fifty Ways to be Jewish was both serious and entertaining, informative and creative, absorbing and innovative. Rabbi Forman finds a way to touch upon all aspects of one's personal and communal life. I learned so much about Judaism, recognizing for the first time that Judaism can speak to me in the most intimate way; helping me to deal with a variety of issues in my life. Since reading his book, I have found a small group of Jews to pray with, who, like me, are not inspired by

conventional synagogue life. I had never heard of the concept of "havurot," small learning and praying groups, until I read about such a thing in this book. Forman awakened in me thoughts about the people I voted for, the car I drive - even who are the friends I have chosen. He does this all in a Jewish context, and his approach is so common sensical that it is difficult to resist his pulling one into a Jewish life-style. His more serious chapters on Jewish culture, theology, history, Israel and the Holocaust are sensitive and compelling. Yet, even the seeming lighter subjects, such as using the Internet, choosing a name, wearing clothes, eating, are all laced with pearls of Jewish wisdom. I recommend this book to anyone who not only wants to learn about Judaism, but also to those who want to know how, in Forman's words: "To Jew it" - that is, to become a more knowledgeable and committed Jew.

This book was an easy read. I was able to concentrate on any chapter that I chose, as each one focuses on a particular aspect of living a Jewish life. The background, the suggestions, the humor made the book not only enjoyable reading, but truly informative. This is a great book to serve as an introduction to Jewish life.

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