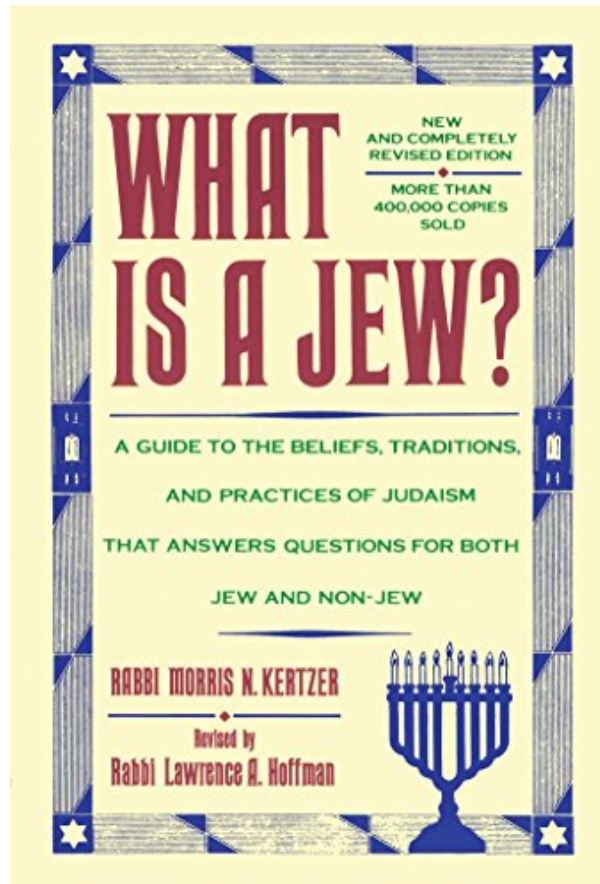
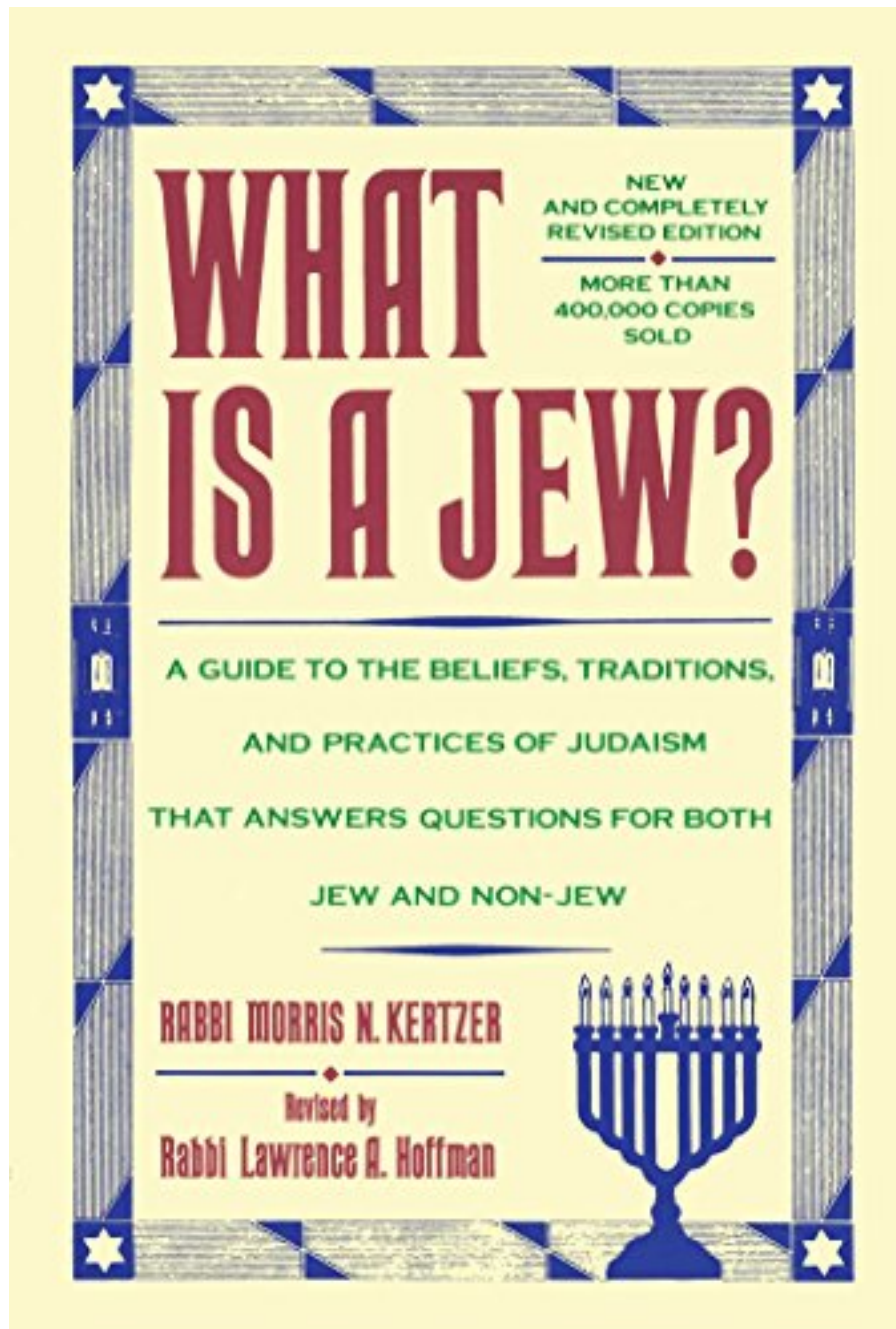


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Kertzer, who died in 1984, wrote the first edition of this book in 1953. He revised it three times, most recently in 1978. Now his nephew, also a rabbi and professor at the Hebrew Union College, has revised the book again. Originally intended to "guide non-Jews to a better understanding of their fellow Jewish Americans" as well as to "enable Jews themselves to rediscover forgotten roots of tradition and belief," the book still serves this purpose admirably, addressing all of the traditional questions: What in general do Jews believe? What are Orthodox Jews? What is Torah? Also addressed are newer concerns: What is the Jewish attitude toward feminism? According to Judaism, do animals have rights? Why do Jews persist in remembering the Holocaust? About half the material in this revised edition is new; the entire book is written from a calmly instructional, nonevangelical viewpoint and in an engaging style that will appeal to young people and old, Jews and non-Jews. Highly recommended for all public and school libraries.

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With over 400,000 copies sold, *What Is a Jew?* is the classic guide that answers 100 of the most commonly asked questions about Jewish life and customs.

Completely revised and reorganized, this guide to the traditions, beliefs, and practices of Judaism—for both Jews and non-Jews—tackles a wide range of subjects in a question-and-answer format. Ideal for conversion students, interfaith couples, and congregants seeking answers to essential day-to-day issues.

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Really neat introduction!

By Thomas J. Brucia

Some books on religion give a warm fuzzy feeling - others give a lot of detailed information. This work is definitely in category two! In a question-response format (114 of each), this volume manages to cover almost anything one would want to know about Judaism. Originally written by the late Rabbi Morris N. Kertner, his nephew Rabbi Lawrence A. Hoffman has updated it. ("What Is a Jew" was first published in 1953, and has gone through three revisions, and countless reprints.) A new feature I found very useful in this revised edition is its transliteration of Hebrew words -- abundant in this work -- as they occur, together with their meanings. The 148 Hebrew (and occasionally Yiddish or Aramaic) terms used throughout the text are

brought together in a glossary at the end of the volume, too. ---- Though this book is written from a "middle of the road" Jewish perspective, it carefully points out the differences between the four contemporary major divisions of Judaism (Reform, Conservative, Orthodox, and Reconstructionist schools). "What Is a Jew" also gives fair treatment to the Chasidim (Hassidim), and such historical schools as the Sadducees, Pharisees, Mitnagdim, and others. To give an idea of the range of questions covered in this paperback, here is a brief sample: "Who Were `The Rabbis'?" "What is Halachah?" "Is There a Priesthood in Judaism?" "Do Jews Believe Literally in Satan?" "According to Judaism, Do Animals Have Rights?" "What is the Difference Between A Synagogue, a Shul, and A Temple?" "Why Do Some Jews Keep Only One Day of a Holy Day, While Others Keep Two?" and "What Is the Jewish Attitude Toward Divorce?" "Does Judaism Accept Converts?", and many other equally interesting topics. ---- I believe that whoever masters the contents of this fascinating volume will be well on his/her way to a fascinating voyage of discovery. Any non-Jew (like myself) who has ever been invited to a Bar Mitzvah, and has come out of the synagogue laden with questions, will find his/her journey out of ignorance a pleasant and rewarding one! This is as good a guide as I have been able to find...

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This is not a kindle version of the most recent ...

By Phil B.

This is not a kindle version of the most recent edition, this is a kindle edition of the first edition from 1953.

13 of 13 people found the following review helpful.

Excellent book on Judaism

By A Customer

This is the best book I've found that provides an overview of Judaism. Its intention is to inform and provide understanding without needless bias or judgment. I read Harold Kushner's *To Life!* prior to *What is a Jew?* and was disappointed. His Conservative bias is obvious and gets in the way of his ability to present an overall understanding of Judaism. I don't get that sense at all with *What is a Jew?* Rabbi Kertzer and Rabbi Hoffman willingly present all the ways Judaism has come to be interpreted and practiced. They may analyze and draw conclusions, but it is done to help understanding, not to promote their own opinions or to judge others.

This book is a refreshing approach to a difficult topic, filled with wisdom and insight.

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