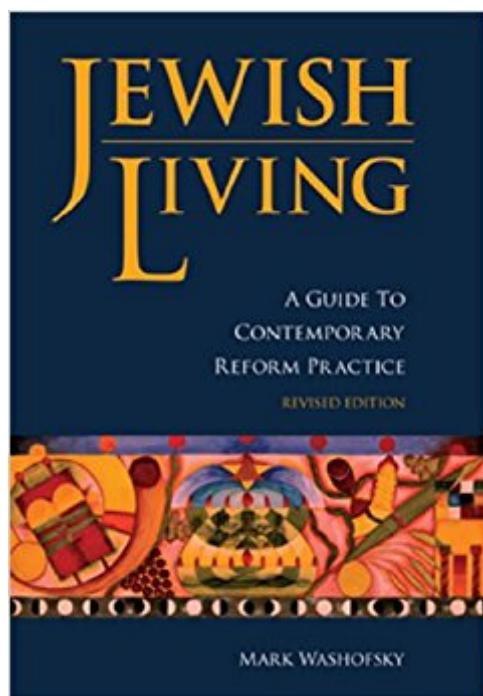


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# Jewish Living: A Guide To Contemporary Reform Practice



## **Synopsis**

This definitive guide for Reform Jewish practice leads the reader to an understanding of the whole of Jewish life -- from blessing to b'nei mitzvah, Havdalah to haftarah, and tikkun olam to Tikkun Leil Shavuot. The revised edition features an index, cross-references to Mishkan T'filah, and new sections exploring the impact of changes in the movement and the world at large over the last decade, including same-sex marriage, conversion, bioethics, and justification of war. Jewish Living is an ideal gift for b'nei mitzvah, confirmation, and graduation, and deserves pride of place on the bookshelf of every Reform Jewish library, classroom, office, and home. Definitive source for Reform Jewish practice Easy- to-use format Excellent resource for study or reference

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

Mark Washofsky is the associate professor of rabbinics at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in Cincinnati, Ohio, and serves as chair of the CCAR Responsa Committee.

Perhaps more than in any other century of Jewish history, the Jewish people of today are heavily divided over matters of faith, religious observance, and the best way to preserve Jewish continuity in an ever changing world. Modern values are contrasted against ancient narratives, and Jews of today are deeply concerned that the Judaism known and practiced for millenia is slowly disappearing for reasons often defined by one's own perspective on the issues. Jews on the right feel that Judaism must become even more strict in its adherence to ancient customs and rabbinic law if Judaism is to survive. Jews on the left say that ancient customs stifle the true worth of Judaism,

which are its moral values, while blind adherence to the ritual customs and ancient laws of Jewish religion turn Jews away from Judaism itself. Many orthodox Jews, in effect, think that Progressive Judaism is kind of an anti-Judaism, and that progressive Jews have no sense or respect for Jewish history or Jewish law whose ultimate end will be the disappearance of authentic Judaism all together. Sadly enough, many progressive Jews also believe that what defines progressive Judaism is a rejection of ancient rabbinic law. Some progressive Jews go even further and believe that the Reform movement was founded on a complete rejection of Jewish law. In other words, Reform Judaism is movement that seeks to erase the importance of historic Jewish law in Jewish practice. However, the true brilliance and worth of this book challenges such ignorant thinking about modern progressive Jewish religion. It sets the record straight for both progressive and traditional leaning Jews that Reform Judaism actively engages the historic Jewish law through the process of reforming Judaism by the process of the law itself. What the liberal or traditional leaning reader might find interesting in this book is just how seriously the leaders of the Reform movement took the traditional religious sources of Judaism in formulating practices for a progressive Jewish religious movement. The early, and contemporary, Reform leaders were careful to consider the impact of their statements regarding Jewish religion on all of Jewish life in America and the world. Although some in the Jewish world believe that Reform leaders changed Jewish law and practice simply as a foil to the blind obedience of what progressives see as an unenlightened orthodoxy, this book shows that the developers of Reform Judaism carefully involved the canon and process of traditional Jewish law in their decision making processes. To progressive Reform Jewish leaders, the traditional laws of Judaism are not dead or irrelevant, but they are extremely important in shaping modern progressive Judaism, and the Reform movement sees these progressives practices as not outside of Jewish law, but as the continuation of Jewish law that began thousands of years ago. This book communicates to its readers that although progressive Reform Judaism may arrive at a drastically different interpretation of Jewish practice from an "orthodox" point of view, Reform and Orthodox Jews commonly share a serious concern to engage the sacred tradition in forming Jewish religious life for the current generation. Again, more right leaning Jews may argue that progressive Reform Jews are coming to "wrong" conclusions from the tradition and the law. However, this book shows that one cannot say progressive Judaism simply disregards the importance of the role traditional Jewish law plays in progressive Jewish life. All in all, this book is an excellent read for anyone with an amateur or intermediate understanding of Jewish religion that still wants to learn more. This book clearly conveys the current practices, and basis therefrom, of Reform Judaism, while paying equal respect to the technical and historical sources of Jewish

religion. I would add that this book contains a remarkable source of information for anyone interested in joining the Jewish people through any of the current movements of Judaism, and this book should be a must-read for everyone discerning whether or not to call progressive, or Reform, Judaism home. The modern Jew, progressive or traditional, will benefit from the information on how and why Reform Judaism takes the positions it does today in regard to Jewish religious practice. This book may not convince any Jew, non-Jew, or soon to be Jew to adopt a Reform/progressive Jewish way of life, but it will undoubtedly add a depth of perspective to any person who seeks to better understand the thought and practice of one of Judaism's most important organized movements in modern times. It will correct some of the misconceptions that many Jews outside of Reform Judaism have, and, sadly enough, even some misconceptions of those inside of it.

Great book, great example and source of Reform Judaism's response to and use of halacha. This book shows just how seriously the Rabbis take Jewish law and tradition. A must for all interested in modern responsa to halacha and for any Reform Jew wanting to delve deeper into their tradition.

Guide to being reform, basically. Explains everything.

Very informative and provides a very easy to follow content. It has a great table of contents that makes searching for your desired subject very simple.

A great great addition to any Reform household. Lots of information. Glad I have it as a reference. A must.

This book provides a lot of information while contrasting and comparing traditional Judaism with Reform practices. It is easy to read and understand as well as interesting.

Excellent book!

book arrived in great condition

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