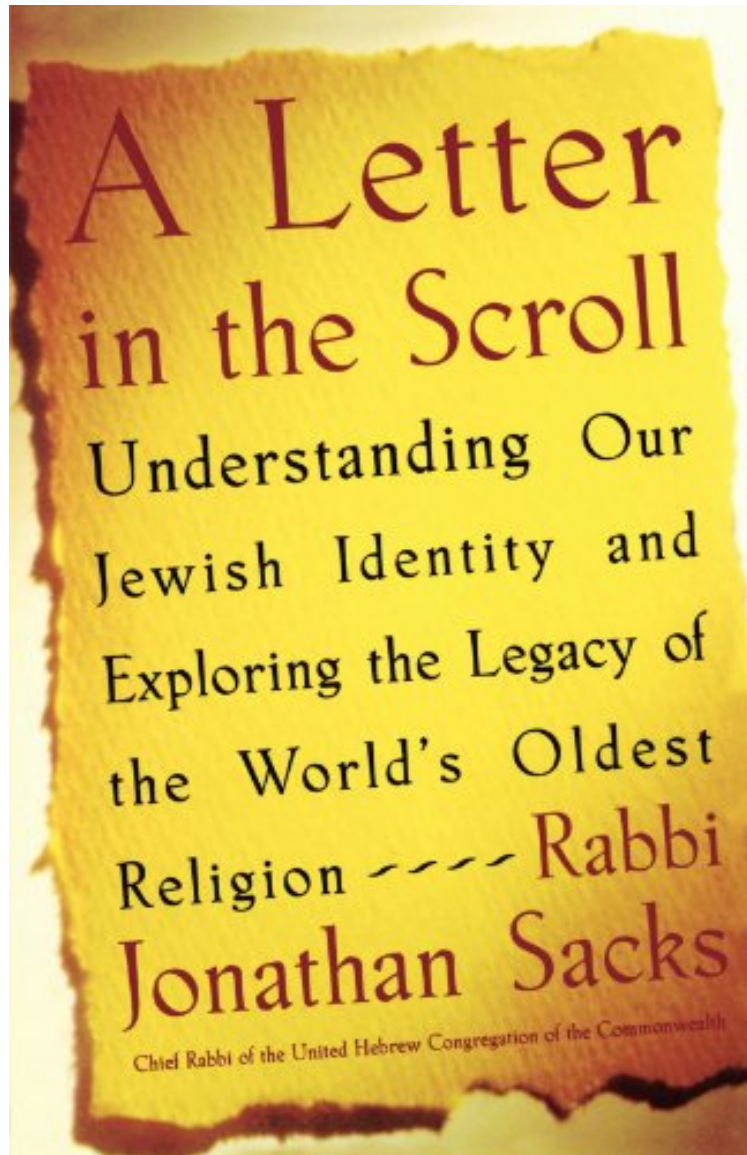


(Ebook free) A Letter in the Scroll: Understanding Our Jewish Identity and Exploring the Legacy of the World's Oldest Religion

A Letter in the Scroll: Understanding Our Jewish Identity and Exploring the Legacy of the World's Oldest Religion

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks

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Rabbi Jonathan Sacks : A Letter in the Scroll: Understanding Our Jewish Identity and Exploring the Legacy of the World's Oldest Religion before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Letter in the Scroll: Understanding Our Jewish Identity and Exploring the Legacy of the World's Oldest Religion:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Incredibly thoughtful, smooth and heartfelt masterpiece
By A Customer
Despite the complex and sophisticated title it was one of the most pleasant, smooth and bright minded work I have ever read in my life. Rabbi Sacks sets the mark of Jewishness and the meaning of our spiritual way so high and so approachable that it might be called one of the best readings for both Jews and non-Jews. Academically based, but with the decent kindness and respect to the reader, it must be definitely recommended for anyone who wants to touch the amazing space of our cultural heritage. It might be advised as both study and self-development material.
2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. I have yet to find a better written or thought out response to "Why be Jewish"
By Aaron Katchen
I work with Jewish students on campus and this is my go to starting point for any student wanting to delve deeper into their Jewish identity (regardless of upbringing). I have yet to find a better written or thought out response to "Why be Jewish?"
0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. I am a Jew. So, what? Go get deeply founded answer, and enjoy reading!
By pacifican
Opened this book by mere chance. Read first couple of pages and immediately decided to obtain my own copy. Book is logical, philosophical, respectful to other religions. I insist now on reading "A Letter in the Scroll" to all members of the family. It's a must read for every Jew, especially those loosing the meaning why be a Jew.

For too long, Jews have defined themselves in light of the bad things that have happened to them. And it is true that, many times in the course of history, they have been nearly decimated: when the First and Second Temples were destroyed, when the Jews were expelled from Spain, when Hitler proposed his Final Solution. Astoundingly, the Jewish people have survived catastrophe after catastrophe and remained a thriving and vibrant community. The question Rabbi Jonathan Sacks asks is, quite simply: How? How, in the face of such adversity, has Judaism remained and flourished, making a mark on human history out of all proportion to its numbers? Written originally as a wedding gift to his son and daughter-in-law, *A Letter in the Scroll* is Rabbi Sacks's personal answer to that question, a testimony to the enduring strength of his religion. Tracing the revolutionary series of philosophical and theological ideas that Judaism created -- from covenant to sabbath to formal education -- and showing us how they remain compellingly relevant in our time, Sacks portrays Jewish identity as an honor as well as a duty. The Ba'al Shem Tov, an eighteenth-century rabbi and founder of the Hasidic movement, famously noted that the Jewish people are like a living Torah scroll, and every individual Jew is a letter within it. If a single letter is damaged or missing or incorrectly drawn, a Torah scroll is considered invalid. So too, in Judaism, each individual is considered a crucial part of the people, without whom the entire religion would suffer. Rabbi Sacks uses this metaphor to make a passionate argument in favor of affiliation and practice in our secular times, and invites us to engage in our dynamic and inclusive tradition. Never has a book more eloquently expressed the joys of being a Jew. This is the story of one man's hope for the future -- a future in which the next generation, his children and ours, will happily embrace the beauty of the world's oldest religion.

.com
A Letter in the Scroll, by Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, the Chief Rabbi of Britain, was inspired by a project he assigned to several university students. He suggested that they write to some of the most accomplished Jewish men and women in the world and ask what being Jewish meant to them. They sent out 200 letters and received six, mostly tepid, responses. Sacks considered these responses to be evidence of "confusion and demoralization at the heart of contemporary Jewish identity." He then decided to address the question himself, and *A Letter in the Scroll* is his answer. The book is a personal theology of Judaism, and it is a challenge to new generations of Jews to define the nature of their place in the story of Israel. Sacks's central theme is that "Judaism is not a theory, a system, a set of speculative propositions, an 'ism.' It is a call, and it bears our name." Sacks makes this argument in many ways, with reference to theology, philosophy, ancient history, and his personal experience. Most impressive, however, is his concise, direct, and wise use of Scripture: "The most eloquent words God spoke to Abraham, Jacob, Moses, and the prophets was to call their name," he writes. "Their reply was simply Hineni, 'Here I am.' That is the call Jewish history makes to us: to continue the story and to write our letter in the scroll." --Michael Joseph Gross
From Booklist
Sacks, Chief Rabbi of Britain, writes eloquently about Judaism in a highly personal essay that was originally presented as a wedding gift to his children. His words speak directly to all Jews about what it means to be Jewish, why it is important to maintain a Jewish identity, and the value of the Jewish way of life. Raising themes such as the relationship between God and man, the idea of covenantal morality, and the problem of ambivalence and assimilation, Sacks formulates his thesis: that over the millennia, Jews have come to define themselves by their disasters, expulsions, persecutions, and holocausts, not their survival and strength. In a clear, steady style that can also soar, Sacks explains why this disaster-driven thinking denies the beauty and strength of Judaism. Important ideas explained in a highly accessible manner.
Ilene Cooper
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Dr. Norman Lamm, President
Yeshiva University
Of the many books that introduce the reader to Judaism, "*A Letter in the Scroll*" is by far the best. Without resorting to technical religious and philosophical jargon, Rabbi Sacks takes us on a fascinating cultural and religious journey that is as engaging as it is informative. All in all, this is a splendid volume by an eminent author -- a felicitous combination that will attract the already informed as well as the merely curious. Buy it and give it as a gift -- but first,

make sure to read it from cover to cover. Michael Novak, George Frederick Jewett Chair in Religion and Public Policy, American Enterprise Institute Of all the questions of life, the two most penetrating are: "Who am I? Who are we?" Rabbi Sacks answers beautifully. On matters of faith he is one of my favorite writers. Dr. Norman Lamm, President Yeshiva University Of the many books that introduce the reader to Judaism, "A Letter in the Scroll" is by far the best. Without resorting to technical religious and philosophical jargon, Rabbi Sacks takes us on a fascinating cultural and religious journey that is as engaging as it is informative. All in all, this is a splendid volume by an eminent author -- a felicitous combination that will attract the already informed as well as the merely curious. Buy it and give it as a gift -- but first, make sure to read it from cover to cover. Paul Johnson, author of "A History of the Jews and A History of the American People" This short and scholarly book is an excellent survey of the moral strengths of Judaism and the ways in which its precepts can improve human conduct and add to our wisdom. Gertrude Himmelfarb, author of "One Nation, Two Cultures" It is not often that a serious theologian and philosopher addresses the fundamental, personal questions that confront every thoughtful Jew: "Who am I?" and "Why should I remain a Jew?" Rabbi Sacks has done this in terms that are accessible to the layman and at the same time draw upon a rich store of knowledge and a profound sense of human nature. Intended as a wedding present to his son and daughter-in-law, this book speaks to the old as well as the young, to those of unquestioned faith as well as those torn by the conflicting impulses of modernity. Wendy Shalit, author of "A Return to Modesty: Discovering the Lost Virtue" Just as slavery in Egypt helped us appreciate freedom, perhaps our current cultural morass will lead us to a Jewish reawakening. Certainly a new generation of young Jews, disappointed with the legacy of the 1960s, is looking for ways to recover its Jewish heritage. Rabbi Sacks helps us in our search, rescuing the ideas of freedom, tolerance, and diversity from their modern perversions and exhuming their original Jewish meaning. "A Letter in the Scroll" does not merely tell us why we should keep kosher and observe Shabbat -- it reminds us of who we are and poignantly shows us who we can be. Rabbi Joseph Telushkin, author of "The Book of Jewish Values: A Day-by-Day Guide to Ethical Living" [In] a work both powerfully intellectual and passionately personal, Rabbi Jonathan Sacks makes a profound case for Judaism's enduring significance -- both for the world and for every reader.