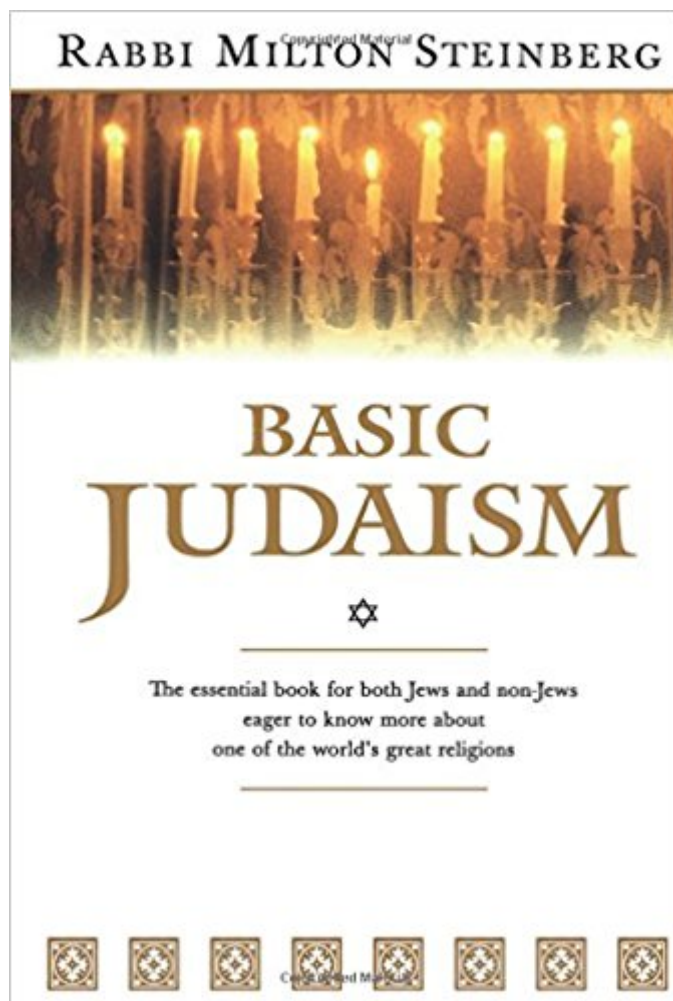


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# Basic Judaism (Harvest Book.)



## Synopsis

Rabbi Steinberg identifies seven strands that weave together to make up Judaism: God, morality, rite and custom, law, sacred literature, institutions, and the people. A classic work directed to both the Jewish and the non-Jewish reader.

## Book Information

Series: Harvest Book.

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Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars 50 customer reviews

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Spirituality > Judaism > Jewish Life #26 in Books > Religion & Spirituality > Judaism > History

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## Customer Reviews

Milton Steinberg was an American rabbi, philosopher, theologian and author.

The short simple title gives a hint that the contents of this book will be just as concise, elegant, and to the point. I have read many books in my journey of discovery into Judaism and this one quickly became a favorite. I am always looking to increase my basic knowledge of Jewish theology, ethics, values, tradition, and history. I stumbled onto a small, used, worn, 172 page paperback copy of this book and was delighted and impressed with how Rabbi Milton Steinberg was able to simply and eloquently cover such a complex subject. I then bought a new copy to give my daughter. It takes someone who has truly mastered the material to give such a lucid and orderly presentation and Rabbi Steinberg's love of Judaism shines through each page.

There are two things one should know about this book. One, (as the author points out) this book "is a book about the Jewish religion - not about Jews or Jewish problems, or Jewish culture, or Zionism, but about those beliefs, ideals, and practices which make up the historic Jewish faith."

Two, it is indeed - very - basic. Perhaps my thirst for detail keeps me from appreciating this short a summary. I found MUCH more information in three hours on the Internet than turns up here.... Perhaps the book suffers because the author is trying to span the breadth of Judaism, from Reform to Orthodox, in one volume.... On a positive note, Rabbi Steinberg does not beat about the bush - to give one example. he straightforwardly describes the differences between (the various forms of) Christianity and Judaism. His views on St. Paul are "challenging". Christians may not like his judgments, but I thought many of them seem quite on-target. On the negative side, do not expect from this volume a listing of the 613 Jewish commandments (though they are mentioned). Do not expect any description of the Jewish lunar calendar, or any listing of the months. Do not expect any description of the Hebrew language. Do not expect any detailed description of the liturgy of the Shabbat service. I could forgive much of this (since the book is only 172 pages long) except for the fact the author is verbose - especially in the first half of the book. (Incidentally, be aware that "Basic Judaism" lacks all of the following: a bibliography, a glossary, any appendices, and an index!) Though I found this a pleasant read, I wouldn't use it as a starting point for any in-depth study of Judaism.

A fabulous book from a brilliant mind.

This wee book is packed full of easy to understand information for anyone interested in learning about Judaism, or for Jewish folks who may be teaching a class on basic Judaism. It reads easily, is divided into logical sections, and is a nice size and price for use in churches, mosques, library groups, anywhere interfaith dialog can be found. The information in it is accurate, free of bias regarding Orthodox, Conservative or Reformed Judaic points of view without ignoring that the differences in the three groups exist. A lot of little books like this which approach broad and deep subjects end up being facile and useless. This one does not.

The only thing to remember is that this book was first published in 1947 one year before Israel became a Country. When Steinberg refers to Palestine, he is referring to the British Mandate of the Land, rather than what has become a political issue in the 21st Century. Other than that the scope of the book is just what I was looking for.

There were many sources available from which to order this used book. I selected the one that rated the condition of their book "Very Good". Needless to say, I was quite surprised when it arrived in two

pieces with the binding split neatly down the middle.. I glued and taped it together as best I could. It's an excellent book- I only wish the vendor's appraisal skills were as good.

This is one of the books I was told to read for my conversion to Judaism. It is very concise and gives the reader the very basics of Judaism. It focuses on what is common among the various streams of Judaism. The language used is a little antiquated, but it is a beautiful read. This book is a good introduction to Judaism and is an excellent starting point if you are a beginner to Judaism.

A good read.

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