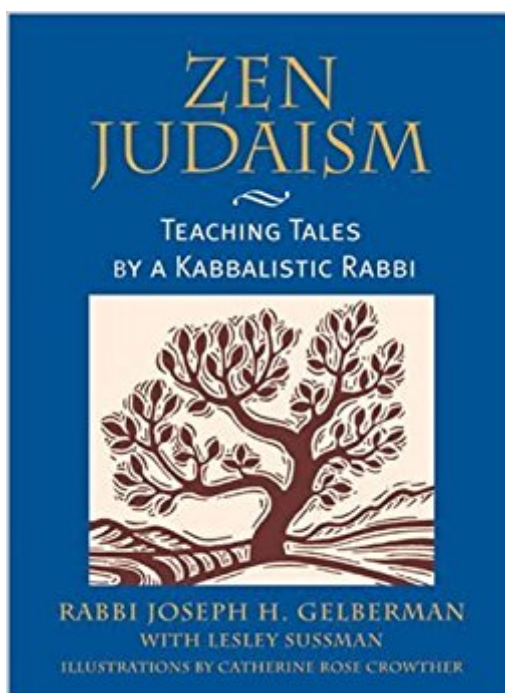


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Zen Judaism: Teaching Tales By A Kabbalistic Rabbi



Synopsis

In the spirit of great storytellers—Krishna, Mohammed, Jesus—Joseph Gelberman weaves tales that instruct and charm in their simplicity and wisdom. The short stories, fables, and anecdotes are drawn from Gelberman's lifelong experiences. The characters—Adam and Eve, a Jewish St. Francis of Assisi, a barefoot Hungarian boy, the Buddha, and others—illustrate moments of truth with uplifting results. Beautifully illustrated by Catherine Rose Crowther.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I was very disappointed the stories are barely that. More like sayings than what I consider stories.

A story for everyday.

This is a book of tales with spiritual meaning that doesn't try to be spiritual and erudite; it simply tells simple stories of simple lives. Some of the tales have Asian roots such as the tale of the Samuria warrior who asks a master about heaven and hell. Some are traditional elaborations on Biblical texts such as the adjective used to describe Moses. Some are humorous expansions of Biblical texts such as why Adam and Eve were not made until the sixth day. Several are stories relating to understanding between Jews, Christians and Muslims. Some are traditional Hasidic tales. Some may even be actual experiences of the author. All the stories are told clearly and directly - nothing to

come between the reader and the story. Each is accompanied by a pen and ink drawing reflecting the simplicity and the message of the story. There are many religious story books available - Anthony de Mello, Mulla Nasrudin, The Conference of the Birds, Tales of Hasidic Masters, exempla, Jataka ... - this stands as one of the best.

Unfortunately, I must report that this book is a disappointment and mostly nonsense. I originally bought this book, based on the reviews, for my son...soon to turn 20. We are a Jewish family and recently observant. Our son, however, is attracted to Eastern Spiritual philosophies and practices so I thought this might provide a bridge to the wealth of Jewish spiritual teaching and what currently interests him. I confess, that I too was attracted to Bhuddism as a young adult and read avidly on the subject but never took it up as a formal practice. I am familiar with the many original Chasidic tales and Talmudic and Midrashic sources for the one page teaching vignettes used by the author to illustrate his spiritual "points". Many of these are mangled, distorted, and inverted..ultimately bearing little of their original and profound meaning. In fact, a few are twisted into outright nonsense....what I would call "feel good" quasi "new age" gobbledygook. Although I am not a trained Zen practitioner, I doubt if there is any worthwhile "Zen" in this book. There is some undoubtedly adulterated Judaism. while the title is catchy I've come to think that maybe it's an oxymoron to mix spiritual teaching metaphors in this way. It only detracts from the beauty of each tradition, which stands in it's own right. Is there a "Zen Christianity" around somewhere? I don't criticize the Rabbi for making a well intentioned attempt at fusing traditions. However, either it can't work...or he needs to rethink it's presentation. IN the meantime, for \$25 you can buy a lot more bang for your buck.

I find Rabbi Gelberman's teachings the most profound & enlightened I have yet to encounter in my entire life. Studying all religions & philosophy there is, I believe that Rabbi Gelberman brings truths to the Spirit of God. He offers a vast wealth of wisdom, knowledge & enlightenment to all religions as a whole. His "inter-faith" perspective, respecting & honoring all beliefs, is & should be an example to all humans. There are truths in "all" doctrines offered in this world today & Rabbi Gelberman has simply incorporated all truths into his teachings..... There are many ancient teachings that are being brought back into our consciousness. He has by far mastered such teachings. Rabbi Gelberman has dedicated his 93 years of life to bring forth understanding & cooperation among world religions & faiths, offering his perspective of divinity to all.

When an 87-year-old Kabbalistic rabbi sits down to spin teaching stories he's learned over his long

years, you'd better sit down and listen. This is a modern-day rabbi who relates to all faiths and does so in a humorous and informative manner. I loved this book -- an I am a Muslim married to a Christian.

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