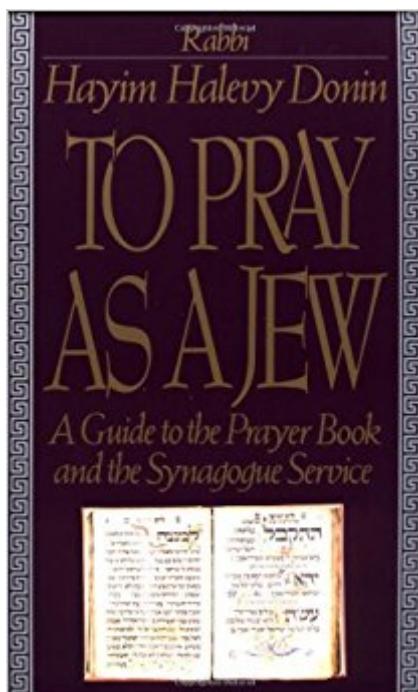


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To Pray As A Jew: A Guide To The Prayer Book And The Synagogue Service



Synopsis

Rabbi Donin offers a detailed guide to Jewish prayer which takes the reader through the entire prescribed course of Jewish liturgy, offering historical background, religious teaching, and practical instruction for each element of the service. Why do Jews pray? What is the role of prayer in their lives as moral and ethical beings? From the simplest details of how to comport oneself on entering a synagogue to the most profound and moving comments on the prayers themselves, Rabbi Donin guides the reader through the entire prescribed course of Jewish liturgy, passage by passage, ritual by ritual, in this handsome and indispensable guide to Jewish prayer, unexcelled for beginners as well as the religiously observant.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Even for observant and committed Jews, the liturgy of the daily and Shabbat prayer service can be daunting. For the less educated Jew, merely entering a Synagogue can be most intimidating. Numerous books have been written in an effort to help the Jewish layman understand the prayer service and feel comfortable in Synagogue. In my opinion, this one is the best. Rabbi Donin divides the service into its component parts and explains both the origin and meaning of each. For example, we learn how the Amidah came to be a substitute for the daily sacrifices of the Temple period and therefore, how its structure parallels the various types of sacrifice. But he does more than explain the background and meaning of the prayers. He shows how Jewish prayer, like all of Jewish practice, is a system with rules. For example when the reader or Chazzan chants a blessing (or "bracha"), a response of "amen" by a congregant will impart the saying of the bracha to the congregant. Whether or not one feels bound by the halacha (Jewish law), I think it is very interesting

to see how every aspect of the prayer service has a correct way. For the beginner who is unfamiliar with the rituals and practices of the synagogue service, such as when to stand, the rules pertaining to tallit and tefillin, and what to do when given honors or an aliyah, this book explains it. A Jew, completely lost at Shul will feel comfortable after reading this book. Of course it is written from a traditional Orthodox perspective. It describes what happens in a traditional service. But aside from its emphasis on gender separation, a feature of Orthodox Judaism, the Conservative Jew will recognize his or her own service as being largely identical.

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