



Jewish Wisdom: Ethical, Spiritual, and Historical Lessons from the Great Works and Thinkers

By Joseph Telushkin

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What are the nine biblical challenges a good person must meet? What do the great Jewish writings of the last 3,500 years tell us about these and all other vital questions about our lives? Rabbi Joseph Telushkin has devoted his life to the search for answers within the teachings of Judaism. In *Jewish Wisdom*, Rabbi Telushkin, the author of the highly acclaimed *Jewish Literacy*, weaves together a tapestry of stories from the Bible and Talmud, and the insights of Jewish commentators and writers from Maimonides, Rashi, and Hillel to Einstein, Isaac Bashevis Singer, and Elie Wiesel. A richer source of crucial life lessons would be hard to imagine. Accompanying this extraordinary compilation is Telushkin's compelling commentary, which reveals how these texts continue to instruct and challenge Jews and all people concerned with leading ethical lives today. As he discusses these texts, Rabbi Telushkin addresses issues of fundamental interest to modern readers: how to live with honesty and integrity in an often dishonest world; how to care for the sick and dying; how to teach children to respect both themselves and others; how to understand and confront such great tragedies as antisemitism and the Holocaust; what God wants from humankind. Within *Jewish Wisdom*'s ninety chapters the reader will find extended sections illuminating Jewish perspectives on sex, romance, and marriage, what kind of belief in God a Jew can have after the Holocaust, how to use language ethically, the conflicting views of the Bible and Talmud on the death penalty, and much, much more. *Jewish Wisdom* adds a new dimension to the many widely read contemporary books that retell the stories and reveal the essence of classic religious and secular literature. Possibly the most far-ranging volume of stories and quotations from Jewish texts, *Jewish Wisdom* will itself become a classic, a book that not only has the capacity to transform how you view the world, but one that well might change how you choose to live your life.

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Editorial ReviewFrom Library Journal

Rabbi Telushkin provides a lively companion volume to his popular Jewish Literacy (Morrow, 1991) in this collection of hundreds of influential quotations taken from the Jewish religious and secular canon dating from the Talmud to Isaac Singer and Amos Oz. Organized by theme—from prayer and the essence of Judaism to wealth, old age, and suffering—and accompanied by Telushkin's clear and insightful comments, the mostly brief quotations give an excellent overview of the ideas and texts "that have shaped Judaism's and the Jewish people's responses to the key issues in their lives and in their history." While Joseph Baron's Treasury of Jewish Quotations (Jason Aaronson, 1985), with its vast collection of 18,000 quotations, remains a better reference resource, this book makes a valuable and informative browsing item for both adults and young adults. Highly recommended.

Marcia Welsh, Guilford Free Lib., Ct.

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Organized by subject, this is a collection of teachings and quotations from the Talmud, the Bible, rabbinical commentaries, and ancient and modern religious and secular writings. Writers include Elie Wiesel, Isaac Bashevis Singer, Hebrew poet Hayim Bialik, Cynthia Ozick, Emile Zola, Albert Einstein, Bruno Bettelheim, Gertrude Stein, Irving Howe, and Maimonides. In commentary that explains why these teachings remain meaningful to Jews today, Rabbi Telushkin addresses such issues as relationships between people; individuals and their quest for meaning; what God wants from us; the modern Jewish experience; and Jewish values as they confront the Holocaust, Zionism, and Israel. Telushkin's commentaries are especially helpful because of the myriad quotations from the Talmud. There are also anti-Semitic quotations from Pharaoh and Haman (the first two recorded anti-Semites), from Voltaire, Hitler, T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, H. L. Mencken, Gen. Ulysses Grant, Henry Ford, Charles Lindberg, and Louis Farrakhan, to name a few. But there is much wisdom here. Jews—and even non-Jews—will find the book a treasure. *George Cohen* From Kirkus Reviews Rabbi Telushkin (Jewish Humor, 1992, etc.) takes full advantage of Judaism's culture of commentary in this grab bag of quotations from Genesis and the Talmud to Samuel Goldwyn ("Anyone who goes to a psychiatrist ought to have his head examined"). The passages are numerous and short, and Telushkin's comments on them are offered in an affably instructive tone. Fragments from religious texts and secular writings share these pages, mostly in a spirit of good-natured contentiousness. The first parts of the book are categorized along religious lines of Talmudic reasoning and moral philosophy (e.g., "Truth, Lies, and Permissible Lies"), while the later parts address the more plainly historical issues of anti-Semitism, the Holocaust, and Zionism. Telushkin isn't making any sustained or sophisticated argument here about the nature of Jewish wisdom. He's just alluding to sources and passages and conversing about them. (Jewish Book Club dual main selection) -- *Copyright ©1994, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.* Users ReviewFrom reader reviews:

Ryan Daggett: The book Jewish Wisdom: Ethical, Spiritual, and Historical Lessons from the Great Works and Thinkers can give more knowledge and also the precise product information about everything you want. Why then must we leave a very important thing like a book Jewish Wisdom: Ethical, Spiritual, and Historical Lessons from the Great Works and Thinkers? A number of you have a different opinion about e-book. But one aim that book can give many data for us. It is absolutely right. Right now, try to closer along with your book. Knowledge or info that you take for that, you may give for each other; it is possible to share all of these. Book Jewish Wisdom: Ethical, Spiritual, and Historical Lessons from the Great Works and Thinkers has simple shape nevertheless, you know: it has great and big function for you. You can appear the enormous world by wide open and read a e-book. So it is very wonderful.

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