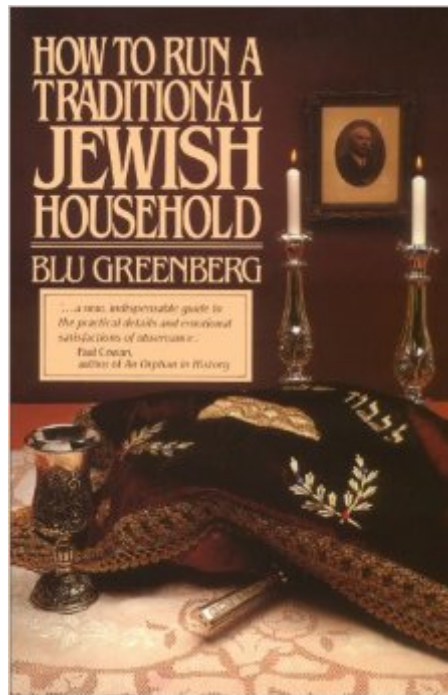


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How To Run A Traditional Jewish Household



Synopsis

Through a mixture of the contemporary and the traditional, this book makes for a fascinating, personal insight into Judaism. Tens of thousands of copies have found their way into homes and libraries. A very popular selection for prize and presentations. This is the standard work on Judaism and how to live it.

Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 starsÂ Â See all reviewsÂ (47 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

I was raised in a completely non-observant household; we were "Christmas Tree" Jews. I never set foot inside a synagogue until my late 40s. I stumbled onto this book at the beginning of my search for information and my place in the greater Jewish community, and found it fascinating. I have no intention of becoming Orthodox, and have found my own home in the Jewish Renewal movement, but turn to this book often for information. I especially appreciated the explanations of some of the rituals and traditions that don't "make sense" and was touched by the author's frank acknowledgement of her struggles and disagreements with some aspects of her practice - and her commitment to the preservation of those same traditions. In fact, I have come to believe that the greatest value of this book is just that - she clearly struggles with some aspects of her faith but is absolutely committed to its complete preservation - she doesn't pick and choose at the cafeteria of observance. Here is commitment writ large! I didn't agree with everything she said - her statement that the women at the beach in the modest swimsuits are probably observant Jews struck me as a tad smug, since most faiths value modesty and the orthodox of all religions practice it. But overall, I found the book invaluable as I began my process of sorting out the holidays and practices. The

practice I have found for myself is much more personal and spiritually oriented, I believe, but it's important, and valuable, to know about the roots of that practice. So I recommend this book - I even gave a copy to my mother for Christmas!

Growing up in a Classical Reform home, where observance was minimal, Conservative practice considered dated and pointless, and Orthodoxy completely alien, I would never have expected to read this book, much less love it. But Blu Greenberg's writing describes modern Orthodox practice with such warmth and charm that we have actually taken on new observances after reading it. Furthermore, even practices we are unlikely to adopt have become understandable and something to appreciate. Highly recommended!

I am a Jew by Choice (who chose Reform) who wants to learn more about the other Jewish movements. This book was recommended to me by a female friend at my Reform temple, and I was not disappointed. Blu Greenberg is open and honest about raising an Orthodox family in modern society. She is not the perfect Orthodox wife, nor does she pretend to be. Her book is part autobiography, part instruction. I found it very helpful as I move toward keeping a kosher home (yes, some Reform Jews do that!) and as I move toward closer observance of Shabbat. I read through the book and now refer to specific chapters when needed. She explains a ritual, followed by the appropriate prayer in Hebrew, transliteration, and English. If you want to see how the other half lives, here is your chance. I heartily recommend it.

Blu Greenberg is the kind of Jewish mama I wish I'd had. She's knowledgeable about Jewish observance but sensitive to controversial issues and careful to address the concerns of those who weren't raised in a traditional Jewish home. This is the same Blu Greenberg who was open-minded enough to accompany a delegation of Jews to visit with the Dalai Lama in India, and at the same time was careful to remain kosher on the trip! "How To Run A Traditional Jewish Household" takes you step-by-step through the intricacies of daily Jewish living. Have a question about Shabbat observance? Blu Greenberg has the answer. "Islands in time do not appear on their own," she points out, and so we are provided with detailed instructions covering everything from pre-Shabbat preparations, prayers and blessings, to setting up a blech to keep food warm. Many books give a general overview of Shabbat observance; with this book in hand, though, one could begin on Thursday night with preparations and make it through Saturday night in finest of observant style. The same thorough but chatty tone also refreshes Mrs. Greenberg's discussion of the laws and

practicalities of Kashrut, Family Purity, and the keeping of all the festivals. She discusses the Jewish views of abortion, birth control, and divorce, and explains the traditional ways of dealing with birth and death and common life events in between. For all her undeniable 'frumness', Mrs. Greenberg admits to struggling with some of the issues she discusses. She admits to "occasional grumblings" over the laws of Niddah, and has managed to gracefully be both Orthodox and feminist. Here is a woman who has clearly wrestled with some aspects of her faith. God-wrestling is a time-honored tradition for Jews, and its affect on Blu Greenberg has been positive. "How To Run A Traditional Jewish Household" is instructional, loving, and thought-provoking.

After reading this book in its entirety once, I find myself going back to it over and over again. Rebbetzin Greenberg does a terrific job of logging her life and opinions on living as an Orthodox Jew in 1980s America (yes, it is a tad dated). She gives thorough coverage to her experiences with her family through Shabbat, in traveling, in home logistics (like education, family activities) as well as all the holidays. Throughout she seems to have a great deal of candor. But be a little careful with actually applying some of her approaches to doing things. The Greenbergs themselves are Modern Orthodox but some of the notions presented have not been officially "ok'ed" by even MO Rabbis. For example, when discussing clothes that observant Jewish women wear, she stated that "They wear miniskirts; just not the shortest miniskirts." This goes against the laws of tznius (modesty) in all (even Modern) Orthodox communities. I see this book as a well written personal account of an Orthodox Jewish woman who is sharing her knowledge and insight with those who may not be familiar with the life of Orthodox Jews. Just don't assume that this book should stand as a halachic guide on living as an Orthodox Jew.

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