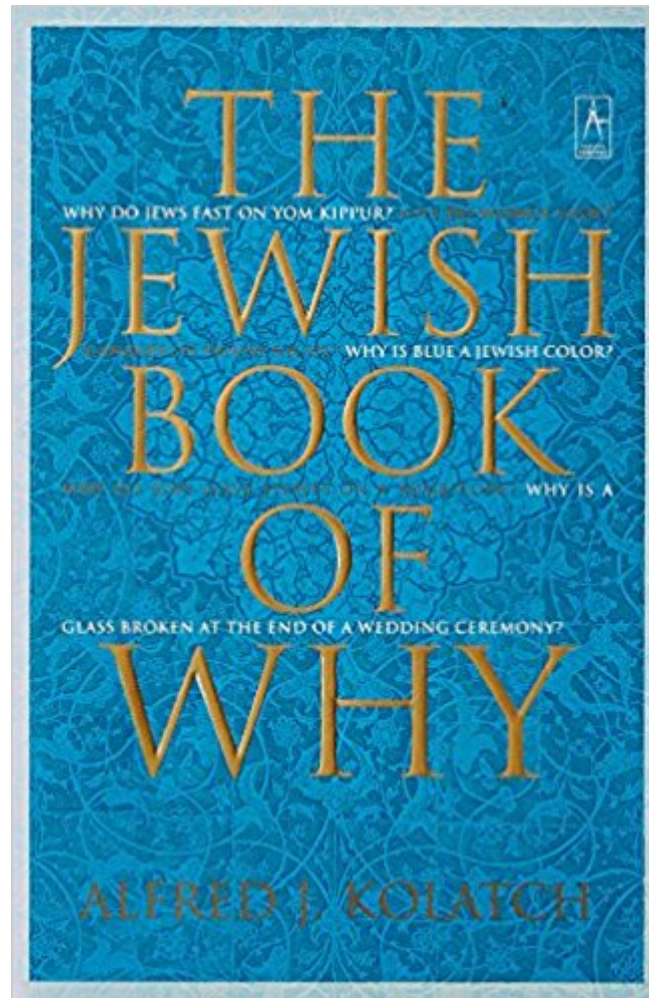




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# The Jewish Book Of Why



## Synopsis

Why do Jews eat gefilte fish? Why is a glass broken at the end of a Jewish wedding ceremony? Why must the chapter of curses in the Torah be read quickly in a low voice? Why are shrimp and lobster not kosher? Why do Jews fast on Yom Kippur? Why are some Matzot square while others are round? If you've ever asked or been asked any of these questions, *The Jewish Book of Why* has all the answers. In this complete, concise, fascinating, and thoroughly informative guide to Jewish life and tradition, Rabbi Alfred J. Kolatch clearly explains both the significance and the origin of nearly every symbol, custom, and practice known to Jewish culture—from Afikomen to Yarmulkes, and from Passover to Purim. Kolatch also dispels many of the prevalent misconceptions and misunderstandings that surround Jewish observance and provides a full and unfettered look at the biblical, historical, and sometimes superstitious reasons and rituals that helped develop Jewish law and custom and make Judaism not just a religion, but a way of life. L'chaim!

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This book is for Jews and Gentiles alike, offering an encyclopedic compendium of concise, cogent explanations of Jewish rituals and practices. Kolatch, a rabbi and author of *Great Jewish* Quotations, treats every facet of Jewish religious observance, including births, weddings and funerals, sabbath and synagogue, holidays from Passover to Purim and the intricacies of the Jewish calendar. He teases apart the variations that distinguish different Jewish communities and denominations, and carefully notes whether a practice derives from the Torah, the Talmudic law or custom. Kolatch's catechistic format fields queries about the grand imponderables ("Why is

marriage such an important institution in Jewish life?") and the most exquisite niceties ("Why do some people remove their tefilin after concluding the Amida, and then immediately put on a second pair for the balance of the service?"). In answering such questions, he sticks to Jewish law and history; on the particularly vexed issue of Kosher dietary rules, he rejects speculation about nutritional or sanitary benefits and insists that their rationale lies in the Divine injunction of "holiness" and the Jews' destiny as a people apart. While there are alternatives to some of the explanations offered here, Kolatch writes in an erudite but straightforward style, providing an intelligent, loving introduction to Jewish tradition and culture. Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Alfred J. Kolatch is a graduate of the Teacher's Institute of Yeshiva University and its College of Liberal Arts and is an ordained rabbi in the Jewish Theological Seminary of America. He is the author of numerous books, including *The Jewish Home Advisor*.

Because, *The "Jewish Book Of Why"* brings good "because" answers to questions about Jewish practice, rituals, and beliefs. It is written for people who have little knowledge in this area as well as for those who have a good background. It has been very useful to me for research and writing I have done on matters involving Jewish subjects.

I'm still reading this book, but I'll admit he's very thorough! Lots of questions answered. And if this doesn't help you, there's a second volume! Good for seekers, beginners, and Jews who just want to know *Why?*

Easy to read, easy to understand answers to complex questions and great book to share. It covers from basic questions on Judaism to the most orthodox hasidic rituals that not even mainstream Jews are sure of why they are done.

all the answers to all of your questions.

While volunteering at my Temple Gift Shop, I started reading the hardcover of this book. I found it fascinating and brought up even more questions than I originally had. This is NOT light reading, but a scholarly resource as to why we Jews do what we do. Fascinating. Something to keep in your library for information and context.

great product great service

Great for learning the Jewish culture. I'm told though by many Jewish folks there are a few other books that answer questions much better. But I really have enjoyed learning about the Jewish beliefs.

I have a grand-niece who is jewish; I recently attended her Bat Mitzvah. The ceremony was beautiful but it left me with many questions about judaism. This book was recommended to me by my niece (the girl's mother). It answers many questions and leads me to want to read more.

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