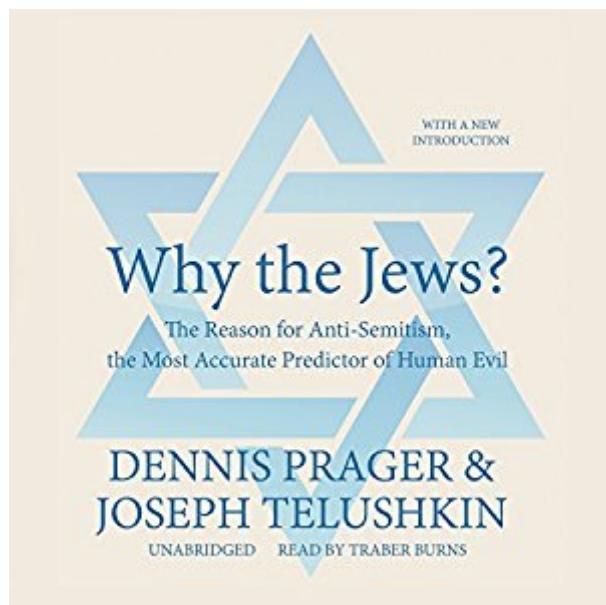


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Why The Jews?: The Reason For Anti-Semitism, The Most Accurate Predictor Of Human Evil



Synopsis

In this seminal work that has spent more than 30 years in print, Dennis Prager and Joseph Telushkin explain the reasons behind anti-Semitism, the world's preoccupation with the Jews and Israel, and why now more than ever the world needs to confront anti-Jewish sentiment. Why have Jews been the object of the most enduring and universal hatred in history? Why is the Jewish state the most hated country in the world today? Drawing on extensive historical research, Dennis Prager and Joseph Telushkin reveal how Judaism's distinctive conceptions of God, law, and peoplehood have rendered the Jews and the Jewish state outsiders and labeled them as threatening. But as Prager and Telushkin are quick to point out, anti-Semitism is not just another ethnic or racial prejudice and is not caused, as so many people falsely believe, by Jewish economic success or the need for scapegoats. Rather, anti-Semitism today, as in the past, is a reaction to Judaism and its distinctive values. Prager and Telushkin examine in detail how anti-Semitism is a unique hatred - no other prejudice has been as universal, deep, or permanent - and how the concept of the "chosen people" spawned that hatred. They also explore the role of non-Jewish Jews, such as Karl Marx and Noam Chomsky, in provoking anti-Jewish animosity. In *Why the Jews?*, Prager and Telushkin identify the seven major forms of anti-Semitism - pagan, Christian, Muslim, enlightenment, leftist, Nazi, and anti-Zionist - and explain why it is impossible in today's world to be an anti-Zionist without being an anti-Semite. With an eye on the larger picture, Prager and Telushkin express why anti-Semitism threatens more than just Jews and what kind of changes are necessary to achieve a world without hatred.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

In the last six years in particular, since Arafat launched a war of terror against Israel's people, I have often wondered what the reasons are for the intense hatred and violent rage, especially by Moslems and the Left, of Israel and her people. The country where I live, is periodically rocked by nationwide paroxysms of vicious rage and murderous hate of the tiny nation of Israel, encouraged by the ruling party and its allies, civil society, universities and the media. This is the world's latest incantation of Jew-hatred, the world's longest and most intense hatred, as Dennis Prager explains in this fascinating and illuminating work. Prager begins by outlining some of the violent attacks on Jews and Israel in Europe and elsewhere, which has become the disease permeating the world as we begin the 21st century. Prager mentions the United Nations-sponsored World Conference on Racism, in Durban, South Africa in August 2001, which, while failing to mention human rights abuses and genocide in China, Rwanda or anyplace in the Arab world, turned into a violent fest of hate and rage against Israel. While anti-Semitism was traditionally associated with rightwing populists, vicious anti-Israelism is becoming the culture and *raison d etre* of 'progressive' intellectual communities. Prager illustrates that:^{*} Thousands of academics around the world, have called for an end to support for Israeli researchers, though not an end to support for researchers from any other nation.^{*} Israeli scholars in Spring 2003 were forced off the board of an international literary journal.

Prager and Telushkin offer a useful historical survey of anti-Semitism and skillfully refute the most common explanations for "the oldest hatred." Where I disagree with them is in their own theory of anti-Semitism's origins. Simply put, the authors assume that, regardless of historical period, geographic location, or ideology, the typical anti-Semitic individual or organization follows the same essential syllogism:¹ 1. Judaism originated the concept of ethical monotheism, that is, the belief in a supreme God who is just and good and demands the same from human beings. 2. I/We are opposed to (or are unable/too lazy to live according to) ethical monotheism. 3. Therefore, we must hate Jews, the original advocates of ethical monotheism. Very neat. However, as reviewer Ben notes below, it's doubtful that the average "Joe Sixpack" anti-Semite goes through anything remotely resembling that thought process. Nearly all Jew-haters hate Jews simply because they were taught to do so, by people who were in turn taught to hate Jews, and so forth. Furthermore, Judaism, with the minor exception of some Jews in the Hellenistic age, has never been a proselytizing religion. True, there is the rabbinic concept of the universal "Noahide" moral laws binding upon all human beings. However, there is scant instance of Jews **actively** urging their non-Jewish neighbours to observe even these laws, let alone all of Judaism. So how would your average non-Jew even know

what Judaism stood for? Furthermore, the authors' prescription for ending anti-Semitism, promoting Judaism's ethical monotheism even more strongly, is a praiseworthy goal but contradicts their own thesis.

In the introduction, the authors point out the rising tide of antisemitism in European society and media by citing specific examples, the warning of Lawrence Summers about the eruption of the plague on campus, the 2001 UN conference on racism in Durban where Israel was demonized, the hatred emanating from the Arab and Muslim worlds, from Muslims in Europe and from the political Left around the globe. The aim of this book is to confirm the age-old Jewish understanding of the condition, which the authors consider to be a response to Judaism. The intention is to refute attempts to deny the particularly Jewish reasons for the hatred and its contemporary manifestation of anti-Zionism. Part One: The Explanation, demonstrates the uniqueness of antisemitism as the hatred of Judaism and ethical monotheism, considers other theories like the Chosen People concept, the higher quality of Jewish life, plus other theories and the frightening phenomenon of the hatred of Judaism by non-Jewish Jews like Marx, Trotsky, Rosa Luxemburg, Abbie Hoffman, Norman Finkelstein and Noam Chomsky. The Historical Evidence is assessed in Part Two, from the Hellenic and Roman eras through the Christian, Islamic and Secular (Enlightenment) varieties, Leftist, Nazi and Anti-Zionist Antisemitism. For

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