

[PDF] Nothing Sacred: The Truth About Judaism

Douglas Rushkoff - pdf download free book



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Author: Douglas Rushkoff
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Description:

Judaism is in danger of compromising the core values which have made this religion so resilient and enduring through the millennia, according to author and NPR commentator Douglas Rushkoff. The strength and longevity of Judaism lies in its original values—iconoclasm, media literacy, its ability to encourage inquiry instead of obedience. But Rushkoff argues that these values have become dangerously compromised to the point where Judaism is now more concerned with adherence to a righteous path and unquestioning assimilation. Unless the Jewish community restores its emphasis

on "inquiry over certainty and fluidity over sanctity," he believes it will be impossible to reach the numerous disaffected Jews who are struggling with the intense and sometimes terrifying challenges of modern life.

As a media watchdog and social commentator, Rushkoff () is especially attuned to the negative affects of globalization and media technologies. One of his main gripes is that Judaism is starting to function more like a global corporation. For instance, instead of challenging the market culture's influence over children, "Jewish outreach groups are hiring trend watchers to help them market Judaism to younger audiences," he writes. The good news, notes Rushkoff, is that Judaism also has a "Renaissance Tradition," in which it has faced similar crises in the past and successfully reorganized itself according to its original tenets. He sees the potential for such a Renaissance now, and even offers ideas on how this could come about. With its inflammatory premise and hard hitting message, this book is destined to stir enormous controversy and, ironically, a good deal of inquiry and debate within the Jewish community. --*Gail Hudson*

From Publishers Weekly A self-styled "media theorist and social commentator," Rushkoff has written and lectured extensively about interactive technology. Here he applies Judaism to his questions about the Internet, since "Judaism is a religion dedicated to media literacy." Although he calls himself a "lapsed Jew," he spent a year studying relevant texts, attending synagogue and talking with rabbis and teachers. His findings are set forth in this book, which is, disappointingly, a repetitious and contentious polemic. Rushkoff believes that Judaism is a do-it-yourself religion based on iconoclasm, abstract monotheism and social justice. He examines and re-examines these ideas, commenting on Jewish history in general and American Jewish history in particular. He insists that Jews have to raise questions about Judaism rather than follow synagogues and Jewish organizations in their preoccupation with issues of assimilation and inter-marriage. In addition to criticizing what he calls "institutional Judaism," Rushkoff rails against Jewish mysticism and efforts to reach out to unaffiliated Jews as vain attempts to rescue Judaism from its "cultural sinkhole." He argues for a "renaissance" that would provide an "ethical, intellectual and spiritual template," creating a "dimensional leap"-vague terms that are all overused in this book. He repeatedly asserts that Jewish holidays and rituals are "borrowed and adapted," and that "in Judaism, nothing is sacred," thus opening the door to education and exploration. To facilitate such endeavors, he concludes with a useful discussion of sources for further research.

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