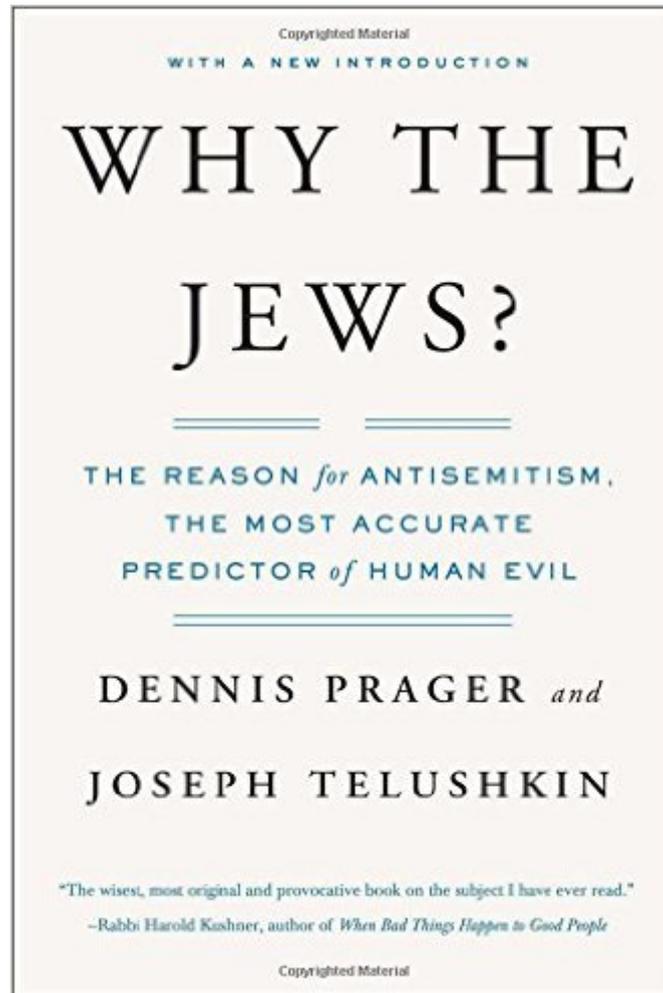


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Why The Jews?: The Reason For Antisemitism



Synopsis

From the bestselling authors of *The Nine Questions People Ask About Judaism*, a compelling discussion of the dangerous rise in antisemitism during the twenty-first century. The very word Jew continues to arouse passions as does no other religious, national, or political name. Why have Jews been the object of the most enduring and universal hatred in history? Why did Hitler consider murdering Jews more important than winning World War II? Why has the United Nations devoted more time to tiny Israel than to any other nation on earth? In this seminal study, Dennis Prager and Joseph Telushkin attempt to uncover and understand the roots of antisemitism—from the ancient world to the Holocaust to the current crisis in the Middle East. *Why the Jews?* offers new insights and unparalleled perspectives on some of the most recent, pressing developments in the contemporary world, including: -The replicating of Nazi antisemitism in the Arab world -The pervasive anti-Zionism/antisemitism on university campuses -The rise of antisemitism in Europe -Why the United States and Israel are linked in the minds of antisemites Clear, persuasive, and thought-provoking, *Why the Jews?* is must reading for anyone who seeks to understand the unique role of the Jews in human history.

Book Information

Paperback: 272 pages

Publisher: Touchstone; unknown edition (August 12, 2003)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0743246209

ISBN-13: 978-0743246200

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 0.7 x 8.4 inches

Shipping Weight: 8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (64 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #73,011 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #52 in [Books > Religion & Spirituality > Judaism > History](#) #62 in [Books > History > World > Religious > Judaism](#) #263 in [Books > History > World > Jewish](#)

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'être* 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. 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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