
In her introduction, Olitzky remarks that "Rituals mark the specific place that religious ideology enters the physical world where people live and work out the reality of their lives." Although her book includes practices that emerge out of synagogue life, many of the rituals also occur in Jewish homes. It presents historical accounts of Jewish rituals, the meaning behind their development, their symbolism, and descriptions of how they are practiced in different Jewish communities. Comparisons are drawn among rituals as they are practiced by Reform, Conservative, Reconstructionist, and Orthodox Jews. The volume brings together a wealth of information about often complex rituals practiced in Jewish communities throughout the US. Readers wanting to learn more about Jewish rituals will like the mixture of historical and practical concerns found in each entry. Entries are in alphabetical order and conclude with references for further research. Whether the English, Hebrew, or Yiddish term is given as the primary reference is determined by common usage. Well organized, easy to use, and highly recommended for academic reference collections as well as public and theological libraries. -- L. Lampert, California Lutheran University