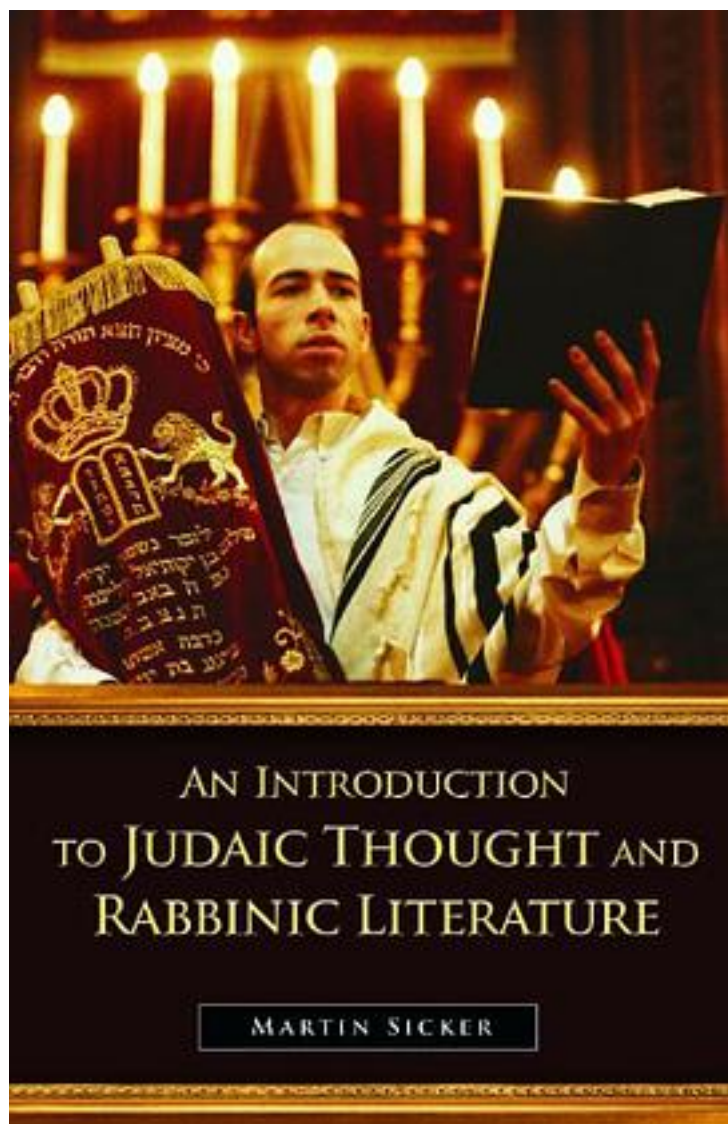


An Introduction to Judaic Thought and Rabbinic Literature



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Many people have heard of the Talmud but have little or no idea what it is, what it contains, and why it was written; moreover, few have ever actually looked into one of its works, and even fewer would make any sense of it if they did. Here, the author provides readers with insight into the nature and history of Judaic thought and its literature through illustrative examples and clear explanations. Rabbinic literature is important, even to those who are not religiously inclined, because it represents the embodiment of the intellectual legacy that has contributed enormously to the survival and continuity of the Jewish people. Through two thousand years of dispersion, rabbinic literature was their primary link to the past and provided hope for the future. It was, in effect, the intellectual homeland of the people scattered throughout the world. This book is written for readers who have a general interest in Judaism, whether Jewish or not. It provides insight into the meaning of terms they may encounter in sermons, lectures, and articles, such as "Torah," "halakhah," "midrash," "Talmud," "Jewish law," all of which are component elements of rabbinic literature, which many people have heard without understanding what is being referenced. The author explains the meaning of these and other terms, the bodies of literature they refer to, and the historical linkage between them in an easy, accessible manner. This book is not only a guide to the literature but also an intellectual history of Judaic thought and culture that should be of interest to anyone even slightly curious about how Judaism managed to survive for millennia without central institutions or clerical hierarchy.

作者介绍:

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