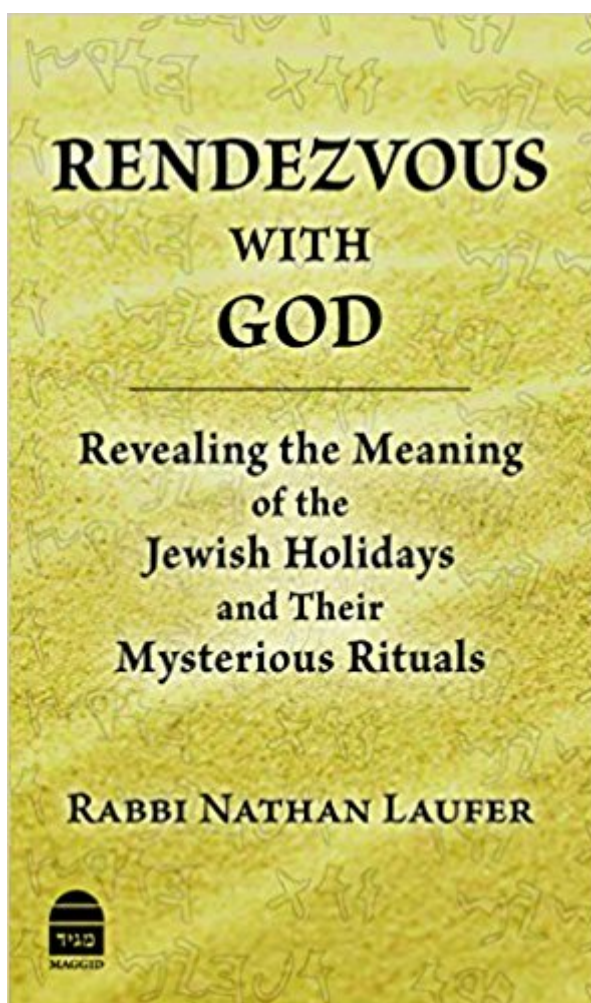


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# Rendezvous With God: Revealing The Meaning Of The Jewish Holiday And Their Mysterious Rituals



## Synopsis

A highly original holiday book, *Rendezvous with God* will make you see the holidays as you have never seen them before. In the words of R. Yitz Greenberg: 'In this wondrous book, Nathan Laufer gives us a stunningly fresh reading of the biblical holidays, illustrating how they celebrate the seven revelations of the Divine Presence during the first year of the marriage of God and Israel. A remarkable tour de force, *Rendezvous with God* weaves together thousands of biblical rituals with later rabbinic ordinances and popular holiday customs into a seamless whole, inseparably uniting Judaism's ethical and ritual dimensions. The book is so rich, it will provide understanding and pleasure to every kind of reader - from the wise, informed expert to the unlearned lay reader.'

## Book Information

Hardcover: 310 pages

Publisher: Maggid (September 12, 2016)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1592644554

ISBN-13: 978-1592644551

Product Dimensions: 5.9 x 1.1 x 8.6 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.2 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 5.0 out of 5 stars 2 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #825,884 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #127 in [Books > Religion & Spirituality > Judaism > Holidays](#)

## Customer Reviews

Rabbi Nathan Laufer is Director of the Advanced Institute for Judaic Studies at the San Diego Jewish Academy and former Director of Israel Programs for the Tikvah Fund. Prior to that, he served as Founding Director of the Partnership for Effective Learning and Innovative Education (PELIE) and as President and CEO of the Wexner Heritage Foundation, where he is now President Emeritus. Rabbi Laufer received his rabbinic ordination from Yeshiva University, his leadership educator certification from Harvard University, and his Juris Doctor from Fordham University. He is the author of *Leading the Passover Journey* and *The Genesis of Leadership*. He lectures in Israel and North America on how to develop meaningful Jewish identities and values-based leadership in the twenty-first century.

*Rendezvous With God* is one of the most edifying, enlightening, and inspirational books on the

Jewish Holidays that I have ever read. I could not recommend this book more highly.

Rabbi Nathan Laufer explains that the idea "at the heart of his book is that for the Jewish people, the Jewish holidays of Passover, Shavuot, Rosh HaShana, Yom Kippur, and Sukkot retell the founding stories of the relationship between God and the Jewish people in their honeymoon year together as a couple." He does this in nine chapters that include four chapters that speak about sacred time, the Shabbat, the hiddenness of God, and the Torah. His goal is to show that these "founding stories" should prompt actions today. He tells us that the Torah "records seven revelation of God's presence to the entire people within" Israel's first year as a nation, and he lists them and examines each of them. He shows with a chart how each revelation is related to a holiday. He describes the practices of the holidays, the Torah readings assigned to the days, the liturgies, and explains why the acts are done and why the readings are read. He explains, for example, the Passover Seder, the meal and readings. He tells us why Moses' name is left out of the readings. He lists fifteen steps to redemption that he sees in the Passover Seder readings. He explains, to cite other examples, that Jews count the days between Passover and Shavuot because Passover recalls the exodus from Egypt but Shavuot commemorates the goal of the exodus, the important part of Judaism, the revelation of the Torah. He describes three elements that marked the Israelite bondage in Egypt: the rigor of their work that seared their souls, that the Israelites had nothing to show from their work, and there was no day of rest, no Shabbat, no holidays. He tells how the days of rest are important to freedom. In short, the rabbi gives his interpretation of the experiences the freed Israelites experienced during their first year of freedom, explains the value of freedom and how it should be observed, and he gives Jews today the possibility of experiencing the many instances of divine redemption which serve to inspire humans to similarly redeem other people who are still enslaved in many ways, endangered, impoverished, undereducated, despondent, and homeless.

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