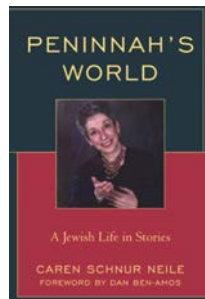


## REVIEWS OF TITLES FOR ADULTS

Neile, Caren Schnur. *Peninnah's World: A Jewish Life in Stories*. Foreword by Dan Ben-Amos. Lanham, MD: Hamilton Books, 2021. 191 pp. \$24.99 (9780761872917) PBK.

During her long and impressive career, Peninnah Schram wore many hats — professor, performer, author, and recording artist. This delightful biography, written by a fellow academic, author, and storyteller, captures the poise and intelligence of a highly talented lady and celebrity. Through a “bio-storying” approach, it recreates idyllic moments, beginning with a childhood in Connecticut where Peninnah learned sterling Jewish values from her observant parents, who also exposed her to the Jewish oral tradition and the power of tales to impart both parochial and universal lessons. Chapters, accompanied by photos and arranged in pivotal eras, cover years in college, where Peninnah majored in speech and drama; a happy marriage and residence in Paris; and her eventual home in New York City. But the focus is storytelling, which Peninnah developed in earnest following a providential chain of events after her husband’s sudden death. Reconnections with former classmates and acquaintances, who had become theatrical instructors, led to her own pursuit of a teaching degree and eventual faculty positions, initially at Iona College, then at Yeshiva University’s Stern College for Women, where for 45 years she inspired hundreds of students (and occasional semesters at YU’s Azieli Graduate School of Jewish Education and Administration). Workshops at other institutions like Manhattan’s 92nd Street Y further showcased her narrative gifts. Also described are encounters with Jewish luminaries, including Nobel Prize winners Elie Wiesel and Isaac Bashevis Singer. Peninnah herself joins the ranks of cultural icons, a catalyst who raised a popular craft to an art form; her life story is sure to enchant audiences.

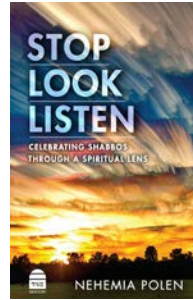
For public and synagogue libraries, and theater and folklore collections.



**Hallie Cantor,**  
*Acquisitions Associate, Yeshiva University, NY*

Polen, Nehemia. *Stop, Look, Listen: Celebrating Shabbos Through a Spiritual Lens*. New Milford, CT: Maggid Books, an imprint of Koren Publishers, 2021. 232 pp. \$29.95 (9781592645701) HC.

In nine chapters, Nehemia Polen, a professor of Jewish Thought at Hebrew College in Newton, MA, guides the reader through the “Seventh Day” in the Jewish Bible and in the writings of the Hasidic masters, describing in detail the practices of the Orthodox Jew and the experience of a full day dedicated to spiritual growth. “Shabbos has its own flow, a sequential arc ... in sync with the



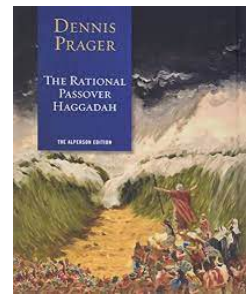
path of the sun – sunset, sunrise, gradual fading of sunlight.” Polen has “adopted the rubrics Stop, Look, Listen for these stages, [remembering] these terms fondly from [his] childhood as essential features of road-safety education ...” Deeply rooted in Jewish texts, Polen makes the case that the reader should participate in a community where the Sabbath is fully celebrated.

This book is recommended to any reader interested in the Sabbath and in the perspective of a firmly Orthodox Judaism lens on the topic.

**Roger S. Kohn,**  
*Silver Spring, MD*

Prager, Dennis. *The Rational Passover Haggadah*. Washington, DC: Regnery Publishing, 2022. 161pp. \$29.99 (9781684512584) HC.

The *Rational Passover Haggadah* is another volume in Dennis Prager’s “rational” explorations of classical Jewish scripture. (*The Rational Bible Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Deuteronomy*). The purpose of the book, according to Prager’s introduction, is to explain the Haggadah text and to make it relevant to today’s Jews and non-Jews.



The book is organized in an easily readable and useful manner. Traditional rituals and their meaning are introduced at the beginning of the book. The steps included in a traditional *Seder* are written in large red print, in Hebrew, English and in translation. The blessings and text in Hebrew are followed by a translation written in italics. Instructions on how to perform the various rituals are printed in a different font.

What makes the *Haggadah* unique is that Prager presents topics for discussion. For example, he suggests that “The Problem of Goodness without Wisdom,” can be discussed when the *Seder* participants read about the four sons. Another interesting suggestion, connected to the song *Dayenu* (The song of Gratitude) is “Gratitude---the Mother of both Goodness and Happiness.” Prager presents his own philosophical explanations and ideas after each discussion suggestion. Six essays from *The Rational Bible* are included at the end of the Haggadah. Fans of Dennis Prager’s radio show and other books will learn how to conduct a traditional *Seder* and be inspired by his philosophy, and beliefs about Judaism.

**Ilka Gordon,**  
*Beachwood, OH*

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