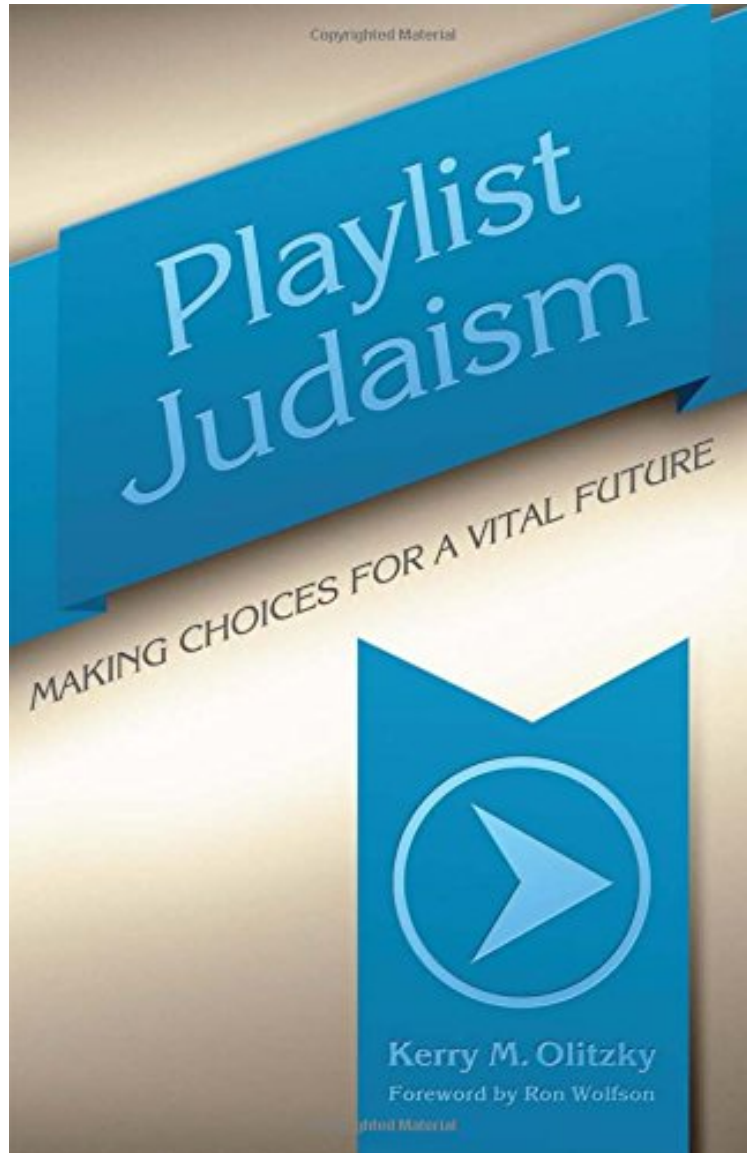


(Download) Playlist Judaism: Making Choices for a Vital Future

## Playlist Judaism: Making Choices for a Vital Future

*Kerry M. Olitzky*

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**Kerry M. Olitzky : Playlist Judaism: Making Choices for a Vital Future** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Playlist Judaism: Making Choices for a Vital Future:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Timely, insightful, practical guidanceBy Gil E. GordonThis is a deceptively thin book. It's packed with solid insights into Jewish communal life today and hints at what's coming tomorrow. A lot of what Rabbi Olitzky writes may not sit well with people who have vested interests in maintaining

the status quo of traditional synagogue life, but that's all the more reason to read and heed its messages.

"Every Jewish institution," writes Kerry Olitzky, "is undergoing significant change and is in danger of becoming irrelevant to the majority of North American Jews. All these institutions will have to reimagine themselves if they are to survive and grow. And the most numerous of these institutes is also the most vulnerable: the synagogue." The synagogue as we know it developed in response to a variety of needs, often in an attempt to create new communities for education and assembly as populations moved from urban centers to the suburbs. These needs have changed, and the synagogue is no longer the center of social and professional life. Change is necessary, but what a synagogue that serves the new needs of American Jewish religious life look like? In *Playlist Judaism*, Kerry Olitzky offers provocative proposals to help synagogues face today's challenges, from turning the synagogue inside out so that it is reaching out to the community around it, to recognizing intermarriage as an opportunity for synagogues, and encouraging synagogues not to forget the Boomers. It is an engaging look at what creative thinking has to offer congregations today. In his foreword, Ron Wolfson says that the book will provide "leadership teams with a plethora of practical proposals to chart an exciting and engaging future for their congregations."

[E]ven though there is little in the book I disagree with (if anything), there is much that is challenging. The book has nine chapters. In fact, the book is pretty short. But I think it is radical. It recognizes what I have been saying that Judaism, particularly what I call American suburban Judaism, is experiencing a seismic shift. This is not your grandparents 1960s suburban synagogue. It can't be. The world is fundamentally different. What isn't clear is what will emerge in its place. (Jewish Outreach Institute) Rabbi Kerry Olitzky is an optimist. While other Jewish communal leaders worry about dwindling rates of affiliation, Olitzky points to the creation of 600 Jewish startups in the past decade. I'm very optimistic about the American Jewish spirit, he says. Olitzky does, however, worry about a dearth of adaptive leadership: leaders who not only recognize that the American Jewish community is in transition and the communal institutions as they exist today—synagogues, JCCs, federations—may not exist tomorrow, but are also willing to reinvent those institutions. That's why Olitzky wrote *Playlist Judaism: Making Choices for a Vital Future*, recently published by the Alban Institute. (Jewish News) A thoughtful examination of the historic, social, cultural, and demographic factors eroding today's synagogues and Jewish institutions, *Playlist Judaism* offers tools and strategies to guide these organizations in reshaping themselves to regain strength and vitality. (Rick Jacobs, President, Union for Reform Judaism) Synagogues are paralyzed when leaders are afraid of change. But what's going on outside of our walls should be prompting serious questions and transformation. Kerry Olitzky has the courage to ask those questions and the vision to shape new pathways for us all. (Elyse D. Frishman, Senior Rabbi, The Barnert Temple; editor of *Mishkan T'filah*) Rabbi Kerry Olitzky's case for 'playlist Judaism' is a wake-up call for reality-based Jewish communal life, sensitive to today's most important cultural currents. (J. Shawn Landres, Co-founder, Jewish Jumpstart; Director of Research, Synagogue 3000 / S3K Synagogue Studies Institute) If you care about engaging Next Gen Jews to Jewish life, make room for *Playlist Judaism* on your shelf. (Sid Schwarz, author of *Jewish Megatrends: Charting the Course of the American Jewish Community*) About the Author Rabbi Kerry M. Olitzky is executive director of the Jewish Outreach Institute. A leader in the development of innovative Jewish education, particularly for adults, he has shaped training programs for clergy of all faiths, especially in the area of pastoral care and counseling in the Jewish community. He has done pioneering work in the area of Jewish Twelve Step spirituality, as well as Jewish Gerontology.