**GUIDE FOR A SINGLE-SESSION**

**CLASS, DISCUSSION, OR BOOK GROUP**

*Here All Along: Finding Meaning, Spirituality, and a Deeper Connection to Life – in Judaism (After Finally Choosing to Look There)*

by

Sarah Hurwitz

1. Do you identify in any way with Hurwitz’s childhood and early adulthood experiences with Judaism? How is your own journey similar to and different from hers? Does the idea of being an “ethnic,” “cultural,” or “social justice” Jew resonate for you (pages xxvi-xxviii)? Do you think her critique of those approaches is fair?
2. What was your reaction after reading the summary of the Torah on pages 3-5? Did you feel differently by the end of the chapter? How is the Torah’s “in the image” idea (pages 14-17) relevant in your own life, particularly when it comes to how you treat others?
3. When in your own life, if ever, do you feel like you’ve experienced the Divine? Which of the God conceptions – if any – described in this chapter resonate for you (pages 64-74)? Which don’t? What is your own conception of the Divine?
4. What do you think of the idea of an action-based spirituality (pages 88-91)? Does following Jewish law by doing things like helping those in need or refraining from speaking unkindly feel like a “spiritual” experience to you? Why or why not?
5. When you read the section on speech in Chapter 5 (pages 98-102), how did it make you feel? How might the Jewish thinking around gossip, shaming, and “stealing the mind” apply in your own life? How might the Jewish thinking around tzedakah (110-114) and hesed (114-117) apply to your own efforts to assist those who are financially or emotionally in need?
6. Of the spiritual practices listed in Chapter 6 – unscripted personal prayer (pages 132-133), scripted communal prayer (134-142), blessings practice (142-144), meditation (144-147), and study (147-148) – which is most meaningful to you? Which is least meaningful? Which, if any, would you like to try?
7. Which of the six potential benefits of Shabbat listed on pages 162-169 do you most yearn for in your own life? If you have a Shabbat practice, does it help fulfill that yearning? If not, how might you create a Shabbat observance that fulfills that yearning?
8. In Chapter 8, which of the holidays did you most enjoy reading about? Do you have any “banana on the seder plate” ideas for any of the holidays – tweaks, rituals, practices, etc. to help them come alive for modern times?
9. How did you feel after reading about how the deceased are traditionally prepared for burial (pages 209-212)? If you’ve ever experienced the Jewish rituals for supporting mourners (pages 212-222), were they helpful? If you haven’t, do you think they would be helpful for you in a time of grief?
10. If it were up to you to create an Option 3 kind of Judaism, what would it look like?
11. Looking through the Appendix of Resources for Getting Started (pages 259-265), which subjects look most interesting and exciting to you? Which resources would you most like to pursue?