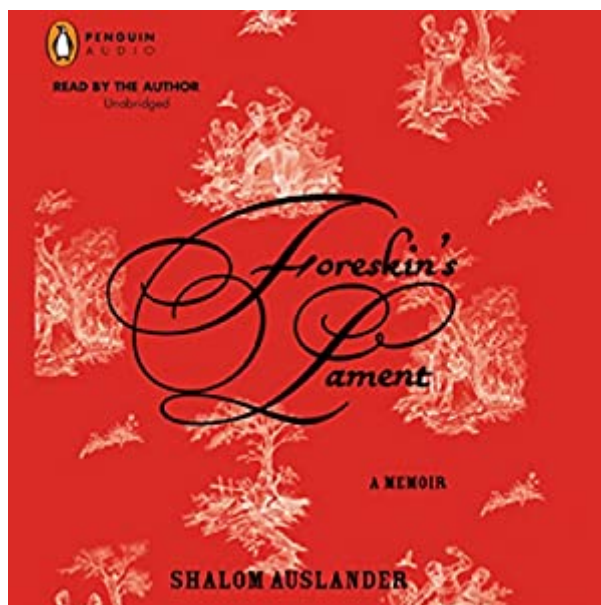


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# Foreskin's Lament: A Memoir



## Synopsis

FROM THE CREATOR OF SHOWTIME'S "HAPPYISH" A New York Times Notable Book, and a  
"chaotic, laugh riot" (San Francisco Chronicle) of a memoir. Shalom Auslander was raised with  
a terrified respect for God. Even as he grew up and was estranged from his community, his religion  
and its traditions, he could not find the path to a life where he didn't struggle daily with the fear of  
God's formidable wrath. Foreskin's Lament reveals Auslander's "painfully, cripplingly,  
incurably, miserably religious" youth in a strict, socially isolated Orthodox Jewish community, and  
recounts his rebellion and efforts to make a new life apart from it. His combination of unrelenting  
humor and anger renders a rich and fascinating portrait of a man grappling with his faith and family.

--This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

## Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

Listening Length: 7 hours and 4 minutes

Program Type: Audiobook

Version: Unabridged

Publisher: Penguin Audio

Audible.com Release Date: October 4, 2007

Whispersync for Voice: Ready

Language: English

ASIN: B000WVWGOU

Best Sellers Rank: #11 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > Religion & Spirituality > Judaism #16  
in Books > Religion & Spirituality > Judaism > Movements > Orthodox #835 in Books > Audible  
Audiobooks > Biographies & Memoirs > Personal Memoirs

## Customer Reviews

If you've lived around or have been exposed to Orthodox Jews (when you live in the NY metro area,  
it's hard not to), this book will relieve that some of their young boys are just like non-Jewish boys of  
that age. The love of girls, cars, porn and weed is universal across socio-economic and religious  
groups. The author's epiphany moment when faced with choosing to circumcise his newborn son  
also transcends religions as many of our generation wrestle with the decision to raise our children in  
the organized religion of our parents. I'm not knocking organized religion, however in some instances  
it comes with a lot of baggage.

I enjoyed reading this book-wasn't sure at first-but felt it was an interesting thought provoking book. I think it would be difficult for those who are not of the Jewish faith or who do not know the more orthodox traditions that some may find difficult to understand. Some of this was definitely fiction, but it is hard to know what what and what wasn't. Some of the explanations the protagonist said he learned from his orthodox education I was very unfamiliar with and found it hard to believe he would actually be taught certain things, but then it could have happened. On the other hand, the theme is about a dysfunctional family and a son who had to deal with this and deal with principles of faith that he did not accept- a very real situation today. This book is worthy of discussion with others. The book was well written but in places a little repetitive and lengthy. I read it on my phone.

"Foreskin" was outstanding. There were days I sat in the garage listening to the CD instead of going in the house. Having had something of a similar upbringing (yeshiva, though nothing like "Black Hat," I certainly identified with Auslander's predicaments, though I can't say I took the same steps to deal with them. "The Blessing Bee" is a classic and his one-on-one battles with God (or G-d) are poignant, agonizing and hilarious, too. The author's narration works, too. First, I thought he was too flat, but his passions and predicaments more than came through. This was a most entertaining and wonderfully nostalgic read. Mike L. Deerfield IL

I have bought and given out 14 copies of this hilarious and deeply moving book. It has all that I seek in a novel. A context that is so different from my life. Honesty in the struggle, honesty about how miserably things can go, how petty and selfish and awful we humans often are. A book that anxiously takes you to the edge of the abyss and (slight spoiler alert) at the end draws back, again with honesty and integrity, and reminds that there are reasons to continue trying. That love triumphs, just not every day.

One of the best books I've read this year, although I kept it upside-down during the whole day and a half it took to read because of the offensive cover design. I didn't want my family to see it, ha. Witty, intelligent writing - reduces complex problems of evil to direct, confrontational, sparring matches with a vindictive, childish, anger-challenged, trickster God. Very Jewish and ultimately a very sad book.

The jacket copy of Shalom Auslander's memoir cautions readers not to eat while reading, lest food be expelled through the nose while laughing hysterically. I did laugh out loud numerous times

(without food), because Auslander is an absolute master of irony. But at its heart this is not a funny book. It is an exceedingly sad tale of the brainwashing effects of fundamentalist dogma (of any religion--Auslander's just happens to have been Ultra-Orthodox Judaism) on the minds of very young children. When I finished the last page, I had a strong desire to drive two hours west of my current home to the small town where I lived until age nine and to kiss the ground in front of the Roman Catholic Church where I had my earliest religious education. Not because pre-Vatican II Catholicism was less dogmatic than Auslander's childhood Judaism, but because there was no Catholic school attached to that church. Make no mistake, Catholic dogma "got me" because I was enrolled in Catholic school in the middle of fourth grade faster than you can say "Jesus Christ" after my family moved to New Jersey. And it took years of being a "lapsed Catholic," several of them spent in Jungian therapy, membership in a Hermetical Magical circle, and a profound conversion to another faith before I rid my brain of childhood sureties. Sureties like: only Catholics go to heaven, eternal damnation awaits those who skip mass on Sunday, leave the "one, true church," etc., etc. But rid my brain I did, thanks to the fact that it didn't get the industrial-strength washing five days a week that Auslander's did when I was five, six, seven and eight. No less a personage than the famous Jesuit, Thomas Aquinas, is quoted as saying, "Give me a child until the age of seven, and I've got him for life." So my "Catholic light" religious training until age nine, plus all my adult deprogramming, enabled me to finally shed belief in the bearded sky-god who keeps human beings in line through fear. Shalom Auslander was not so fortunate. I gave his hard-to-put-down memoir four stars instead of five because there is no arc of growth in his story. No lessons learned; no revelation of a silver lining in his stormy cloud. Well into adulthood, Auslander is as bitter, resentful and filled with rage as he was as a teen at the religion which convinces him still that its god is going to get him for every transgression from its dogma. At this memoir's end, I was convinced that Auslander is going to his grave as bitter, resentful, enraged (and funny) as he is today. Enjoy the laugh-out-loud irony in his sad story. And don't eat while you read.

An enjoyable read. Shows the contrast between the traditional world religions and modern American values - tradition and obligation vs. freedom and self-fulfillment. The absurdity of much of it is laid bare in Auslander's tale. Lots of laugh out loud fun included.

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