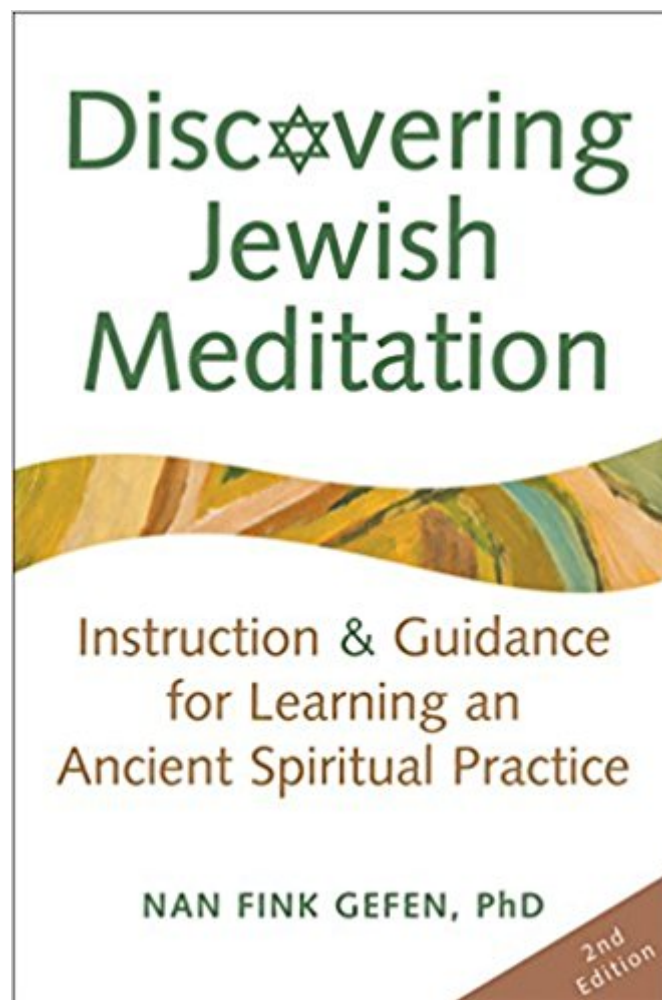




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Discovering Jewish Meditation (2nd Edition): Instruction & Guidance For Learning An Ancient Spiritual Practice



Synopsis

A breakthrough "how to meditate" guide!"Jewish meditation is a practice that can sustain you and deepen your connection to the Divine over the course of your lifetime. Seekers throughout history have practiced it and reaped its rewards, and today many people are making it a significant part of their everyday spiritual practice."—from the IntroductionA supportive and wise guide that is an absolute must for anyone who wants to learn Jewish meditation or improve their practice—now updated and expanded. Nan Fink Gefen teaches you how to meditate on your own, and starts you on the path to a deeper connection with the Divine and to greater insight about your own life. Whatever your level of understanding, she gives you the tools and support you need to discover the transformative power of meditation. This most comprehensive introduction to a time-honored spiritual practice:Answers commonly asked questions about the nature and history of Jewish meditation, and examines how it differs from other meditative practicesShows beginners how to start their practice, including where and how to do itGives step-by-step instructions for meditations that are at the core of Jewish meditative practiceExplains the challenges and rewards of a Jewish meditative practice

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Customer Reviews

Gefen, cofounder of Tikkun magazine and codirector of Chochmat HaLev, a Jewish meditation center in Berkeley, Calif., declares that although we may think that meditation belongs to the Buddhists, it is authentically Jewish. Indeed, Gefen finds references to meditation in Genesis (when Jacob spent time alone before his reconciliation with Esau, for example) and the Psalms. By the

Middle Ages, Jewish meditation had "gone underground," though it was practiced by some Kabbalists and later claimed by the Hasidim. But readers don't need to become black-hatted mystics to take advantage of the tradition: this book encourages Jews of all persuasions to give meditation a shot. Gefen maintains a strict view of what is, and is not, meditation. In prayer, the goal is to communicate directly with God, whereas meditation attempts "to move into a spiritually open state, and then we experience whatever is there. This may include directly sensing God's presence. Or, it may not." Gefen teaches 13 basic meditations, from the Hineni meditation to a thankfulness meditation. This book is a worthwhile addition to the Jewish library, but it will never replace Aryeh Kaplan's *Jewish Meditation: A Practical Guide* (reprinted in 1995) as the essential reading on the subject. (Dec.) Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Jewish meditation entails deep reflection and contemplation of God. A frequently used Hebrew term connoting this is *hitbodedut* (self-isolation). It refers to withdrawal from social interactions and a turning inward. The Hebrew Bible is replete with spiritual directives that form the basis of Jewish meditation. This practical guide introduces the beginner to the meditative process. Part 1 answers questions about meditation and provides background information about the practice, including its history and its relationship to other meditative traditions. Part 2 teaches 13 simple meditations and describes their connection to Judaism and Jewish mysticism. Part 3 discusses the challenges that emerge once a meditative practice has been established and suggests ways to work with them. Some knowledge of Judaism or the Hebrew language would be helpful but isn't essential. George Cohen --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

This book was very helpful and informative. The explanations and instructions were straightforward and simple, as well as clearly written. I will refer to it often,

I was a meditation leader on a recent retreat. Most participants were new at Jewish Meditation and also meditation in general. This is a great book to use for this type of group (and alone too!). Our "theme" was "Kabbalah" and these meditations worked very well with "Rabbis" lectures. We all came away feeling wonderful and ready to explore a whole new dimension of our Spirituality

An amazing book. I am using it to teach teenagers to meditate. I finally have my husband meditating too. I teach in a Jewish community school. The book has several points and translations from

Hebrew that I use. I would recommend this book to everyone that wants to meditate, yet wants to stay within the Jewish tradition.

This is a great summary of and introduction to the practice of meditation directed at the Jewish reader!! It points out, in several places, the areas where the Jewish approach to meditation differs from other practices of meditation, which are particularly helpful to someone who is familiar to meditation, but not familiar with how to incorporate meditation into an observant Jewish lifestyle. It is not an exhaustive study of the topic, but it doesn't purport to be such. Very helpful to beginning meditators.

Discovering Jewish Meditation: Instruction and Guidance for Learning an Ancient Spiritual Practice by Nan Fink Gefen Jewish Lights Publishing 175 pages Reading this guide, one has the sense that Gefen stands alongside the novice meditator, encouraging, explaining, clarifying, reassuring. Discovering Jewish Meditation is an accessible, respectful and necessary companion for all those who long to take the first tentative steps into a spiritual meditative life. Gefen's book on Jewish meditation is a primer and an invitation, the text both expansive and specific. Each section gently moves the beginning meditator through all the fears, obstacles, confusion and exhilaration that a new practice inevitably entails. It is written in a plainspoken manner, the author clearly identifying her own history of struggles with the judgement, discipline and discouragement. With each, she offers successful strategies that allow emergence into consistent on-going meditative practice. Each section allows the reader to find her or his own concerns, anticipate those that may emerge and come to more deeply understand the foundations of a rich and complex tradition that is thousands of years old, yet for many end of the century Americans, brand new. The Resource Guide defines the landscape of this growing movement and allows the new practitioner to study further at their own pace. By Sandra Butler, Author of: Conspiracy of Silence; The Trauma of Incest, New Glide Publications 1978 Co-Author of: Cancer in Two Voices, Spinsters Ink, 1991

The author does not seem to have a good grasp of Judaism. She seems to think of Jews as either being Orthodox and observant or simply non observant. She does not seem to understand that the beauty of the religion is in finding what will work for you. She must have discovered her religion late in life because she continually describes how she "discovered" the Shabbot or how she "discovered" Orthodox services. This book is written more for the Jew who has no knowledge of Judaism rather than for those Jews who do. This book has kabbalistic themes running through it. It

would have been more interesting to see how mainstream Judaism handles meditation. The author feels that by using Hebrew words Jews will feel more comfortable meditating. To some extent that may be true but I didn't need to buy the book to find Hebrew words to meditate on. Save your money!

Discovering Jewish Meditation: Instruction & Guidance For Learning An Ancient Spiritual Practice in a "reader friendly" manual on all aspects of meditation within a Judaic context. Author Nan Gefen teaches her readers how to meditate on their own, thereby placing them on the path to a deeper, establishing and maintaining a more intimate connection with the Divine, and garnering insight about their own lives. Ideal for the novice, Discovering Jewish Meditation also has much to recommend it to those already embarked upon a program of meditative practice as a key element of their Jewish tradition, practice, and spirituality.

It's a good book; an easy read. With a bit of background and set-up, Gefen quickly and easily gets the reader into the process. Yet even here - avoiding getting bogged-down in lots of dry, background material - there is a sense that the author had to work very hard to "puff" this to make a 170ish page book, when it would have been just as effective as a tightly-edited 20-page article. The lure and prestige of a book credit is obviously great. Nonetheless, I recommend it as an excellent way to learn and cope with our crazy, imperfect, in-need-of-repair world.

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