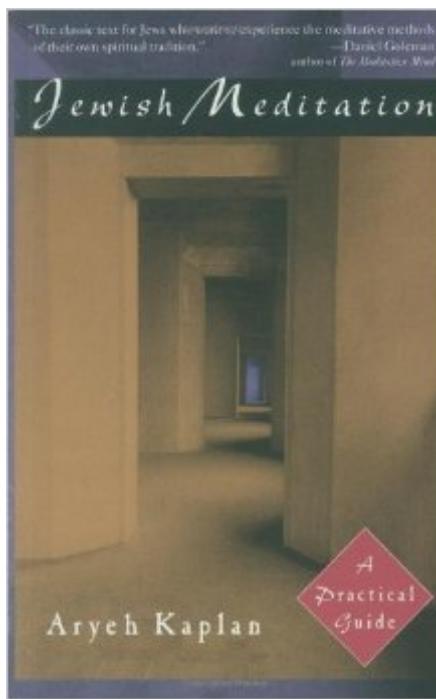


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Jewish Meditation: A Practical Guide



Synopsis

Students of mediation are usually surprised to discover that a Jewish mediation tradition exists and that it was an authentic and integral part of mainstream Judaism until the eighteenth century. A Jewish Meditation is a step-by-step introduction to meditation and the Jewish practice of meditation in particular. This practical guide covers such topics as mantra meditation, contemplation, and visualization within a Jewish context. It shows us how to use meditative techniques to enhance prayer using the traditional liturgy - the Amidah and the Shema. Through simple exercises and clear explanations of theory, Rabbi Kaplan gives us the tools to develop our spiritual potential through an authentically Jewish meditative practice.

Book Information

Paperback: 176 pages

Publisher: Schocken; unknown edition (March 14, 1995)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0805210377

ISBN-13: 978-0805210378

Product Dimensions: 5.2 x 0.5 x 8 inches

Shipping Weight: 2.1 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 stars - See all reviews (74 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

As far as I know, Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan (may he rest in peace) was the first Orthodox rabbi to write about Jewish meditation for the general public. He did so because his own teachers recognized that American Jews in the 60s and 70s were growing up without knowledge of these traditions, and were therefore abandoning Judaism for other religions in order to be "more spiritual." Hence this and other books by Kaplan on Jewish meditation. Kaplan's books are still considered to be among the most authentic on the market, and are kosher even among the Orthodox and Hasidic branches of Judaism. His first book, "Meditation and the Bible," came out in 1978, and explored the various meditation techniques that were hinted at in the Bible and expanded in other Jewish texts. This was followed by "Meditation and Kabbalah" (1982), which explained the techniques in greater detail and provided first-ever English translations of many basic Hebrew texts. Both of these books, however,

were quite academic and not intended to be how-to guides. Hence the third book here, "A Practical Guide" to Jewish meditation, published in 1985. I mention the first two books because, if you read only this one, it may strike you as just another "new age" hodge-podge of ideas. Far from it. Kaplan took his cues from the most Orthodox of the Orthodox, i.e., the traditionalist Jews who had not lost the pre-Holocaust knowledge of these techniques. In his first two books, he clearly lays out the theory, drawing upon centuries-old Hebrew texts and first-hand descriptions by Jewish "saints" of various eras. In "Jewish Meditation," he distills all this down into directions for actual daily practice.

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