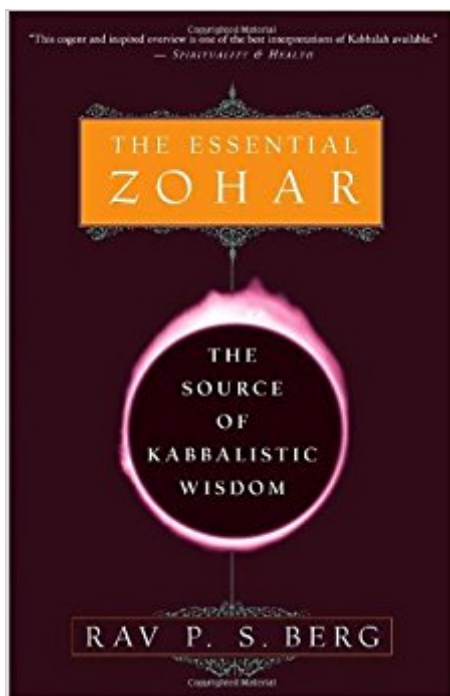


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The Essential Zohar: The Source Of Kabbalistic Wisdom



Synopsis

For thousands of years, no book has been more shrouded in mystery than the Zohar, yet no book offers us greater wisdom. The central text of Kabbalah, the Zohar is a commentary on the Bible's narratives, laws, and genealogies and a map of the spiritual landscape. In The Essential Zohar, the eminent kabbalist Rav P. S. Berg decodes its teachings on evil, redemption, human relationships, wealth and poverty, and other fundamental concerns from a practical, contemporary perspective. The Zohar and Kabbalah have traditionally been known as the world's most esoteric sources of spiritual knowledge, but Rav Berg has dedicated his life to making this concentrated distillation of infinite wisdom available to people of all faiths so that we may use its principles to live each day in harmony with the divine.

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Customer Reviews

Kabbalah, often defined as a Jewish mystical tradition, actually encompasses "the spiritual heritage of all mankind," according to Rav P.S. Berg in The Essential Zohar. Berg, the dean of the Kabbalah Centre (whose members include celebrities such as Madonna and Mick Jagger), has concentrated a core of teachings from the central kabbalistic text, the Zohar, in a single volume that makes kabbalistic wisdom accessible to readers of all religious traditions. The Zohar, which dates back to the second century B.C.E., offers tools for doing the work of kabbalah: "transforming chaos and fragmentation into unity and completion." The Zohar's biblical commentaries and rabbinical stories of apparently "surprise happenings, sudden insights, and full-blown epiphanies" are intended to help

readers open themselves to similar revelations. And Berg explains that all of the Zohar's rarified spiritual stories have potential for practical application, to help readers "replace doubt with certainty and darkness with Light." --Michael Joseph Gross --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Berg, the dean and director of the Kabbalah Centre, writes accessibly about the Zohar, a free-flowing mystical commentary on the Bible, as a way people can tap into cosmic energies that are available for personal and universal salvation. For this to happen, however, the reader must believe that the Bible is a literal history of real personalities and, on the other hand, accept claims that Cham castrated his father, Noah, or that the "biblical golden calf could walk, talk, dance, and even change its shape" midrashic assertions that are not in the Bible. Berg's introduction to the Zohar is often insightful, noting, for example, that awe can be the beginning of wisdom in a world distracted by the "golden calves" of computers and cars. But there are also risks. Although "analyzing" a book on the Zohar is a contradiction in terms, this commentary can be disorganized and illogical. Berg admits that people may be uncomfortable with the notion that we can use "whatever means... necessary to create the spiritual circuitry of our universe," especially if that explains such misdeeds as King David murdering Uriah so he could take Batsheva as his wife. But comforting the reader is not the goal here; Berg succeeds in providing readable access to an esoteric Jewish mystical text. Whether he has also established that "only through Kabbalah will we forever eliminate war, destruction and man's inhumanity to his fellow man" is not so clear. Copyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Looking into The Zohar as the main "go-to" opus of Kabbalah, my first idea was to just buy the entire book. Well...it's actually something like 17 volumes and very expensive! The Essential Zohar was my next stop. I read several sample pages from other "essential" texts that claimed the same thing, but this book delivers. I knew it wasn't going to be an easy read, but this book makes it about as easy and approachable as possible. Highly recommended to just get started. A great overview.

I really like this book. I've been curious about the Jewish mysteries (Zohar and Kabbalah) for a long time. If you are too, I recommend you read this introduction to the Zohar first. Like it says, essential. To me this means basic, start up, practical and useful for day to day living and contemplating. This book is very well written. Then I suggest you read Kabbalah: key to your inner power by Elizabeth

Phophet (I know. Interesting last name.)

This was actually much easier to read and understand than I thought. I am certainly no religious or philosophy scholar but was able to grasp (at least in a basic way) the key concepts behind the practice of Kabbalah. It's a good book for all the "seekers" out there who want to see how Kabbalah fits into other religious practices, and I don't think you have to be Jewish, Christian, or a member of any other faith to understand how the core teachings can be beneficial to you in today's world. Like other books on spirituality, (Christian and Buddhism and Hinduism and "new-age") I have recently read, a couple of main themes emerge. 1. How ego-ism - and our selfish desire to be better than others, have more stuff than others, or just plain put ourselves above our fellow man - is destructive to our souls and to the world. 2. How important it is to love one another and share. I am sure there is much more in the book - and I intend to re-read at a later date - to learn more and reinforce what I learned in the first go around.

Rav Berg's trip into mystical Judaism can be quite illuminating. With the help of the Zohar, he gives insights into Biblical stories that I never fully grasped. One very interesting and perhaps the best written example would be the story of the golden calf on Mount Sinai. The Shechinah is a bright spot as well. Mentions of Her, the female aspect of the divine, are among the most enrapturing. At times reading this was arguably the most sense Judaism has ever made to me. However, that was not always the case. Some issues do come up with a few of the ideas not being as clear as they could be. The most glaring is in regards to the people of the Flood. It quotes the Zohar as saying, basically, that they were destroyed body and soul. Despite the fact that Berg repeatedly states that all souls will ultimately be redeemed. This apparent contradiction doesn't get explained.

Fundamental and essential reading for kabbalists, or anyone wanting to explore the ancient mystery teachings.

Reading the Rav Berg's book made so much sense to me and put all the pieces of the puzzle . Now I know that It's not only about the Bible and religious matters, it's much more than that, it's really all that is around us, It's the "Whys" that I personally had in life. Rav Berg put it all in a language that everybody can understand and you the reader can decide how deep you want to go with it.

Incredible book. I would recommend this to anyone, regardless of religion or philosophical beliefs.

The ancient wisdom encompassed into this interpretation of the Zohar is universal and timeless. A truly insightful read.

Wonderful book. I can't believe I never bumped into this earlier on. Perhaps I wasn't ready?

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