



The Essential Zohar: The Source of Kabbalistic Wisdom

By Rav P.S. Berg

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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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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

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

From Publishers Weekly

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.

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Review

"This work is a remarkable achievement. It renders esoteric thought in so lucid a manner as to give the serious reader entry into the depths of human wisdom. It uncovers a range of possibility once thought to be more mythic than real. It offers us once and future knowledge, now more necessary than ever before."

—Jean Houston, author of *A Mythic Life*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

June Whitaker:

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