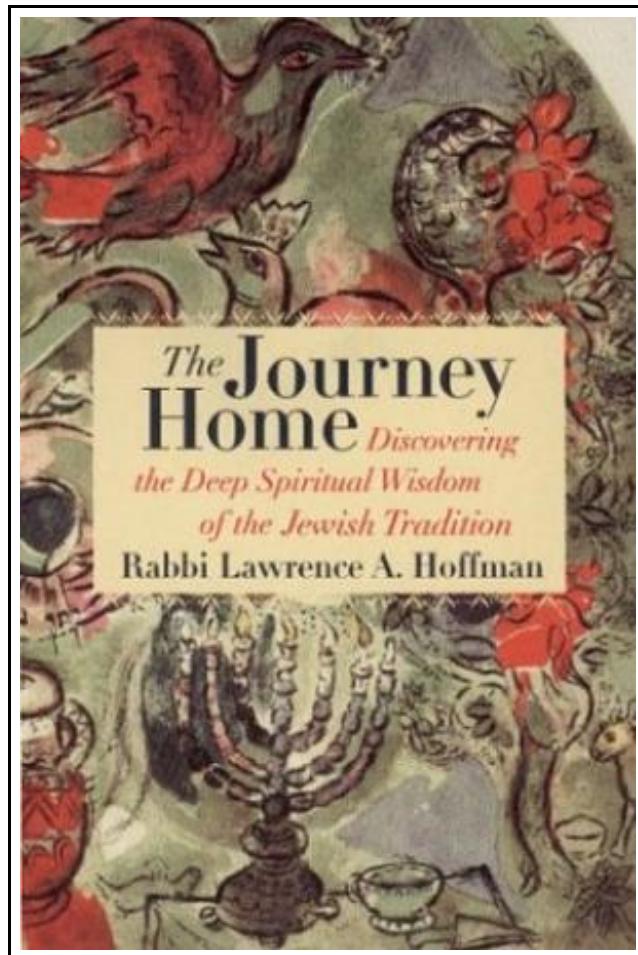


The Journey Home: Discovering the Deep Spiritual Wisdom of the Jewish Tradition



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Reviews

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(Miss Vernie Schimmel)

THE JOURNEY HOME: DISCOVERING THE DEEP SPIRITUAL WISDOM OF THE JEWISH TRADITION

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Beacon Press, Boston, Massachusetts, U.S.A., 2002. Hard Cover. Book Condition: New. Dust Jacket Condition: New. First Edition. 8vo - over 7¾" - 9¾" tall. First edition. Hardcover binding, 240 pp. We can go home again but to a home we never knew we had, says Hoffman, author and professor of liturgy at Hebrew Union College in New York. He defines home as the "deep-down insights of Jewish tradition: its liturgy of blessings; its metaphors that connect life's dots; its thrill of textual discovery; its rootedness in a sacred land; its honest spiritual thinking; and [during times of suffering] its insistence on the simple presence of human meeting." His book explores each of those concepts as a path of Jewish spirituality, which he redefines as "the system of connectedness by which we make sense of our lives." Through seamless excursions into history, law, comparative religion, art, music, literature, psychology, sociology and philosophy, he examines the Jewish way of "mapping reality" to meet our most important challenge: finding shape in our lives. Hoffman's powerful yet simple explanations of Jewish basics are often themselves rooted in metaphor: for example, he compares the stages of life to the books of the Torah (Genesis as childhood, Deuteronomy as old age). Reading the Mishnah (the Jewish legal code) for spirituality, he says, is like "reading the raw data of the Census Bureau for world history." Yet he manages to explain precisely why that, too, represents a spiritual undertaking: to master its incredible detail is to open one's eyes to the presence of God in minutiae. Hoffman's lucid and eloquent interpretations will appeal to Jewish and non-Jewish readers searching to understand Judaism and to "connect the dots" in their own lives. Rabbi Lawrence A. Hoffman is widely recognized as a leader in bringing spiritual innovation into modern Jewish...

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