



# The History and Varieties of Jewish Meditation

*Mark Verman*

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## **The History and Varieties of Jewish Meditation** Mark Verman

*The History and Varieties of Jewish Meditation* is a user-friendly guide designed to familiarize the reader with the vast expanse and incredible diversity of traditional Jewish meditation. The material included in this volume is drawn from the great treasure chest of Jewish spiritual heritage, namely, the Hebrew Scriptures. Accordingly, special attention is paid to specific biblical figures and seminal passages, while much of the discussion concentrates on standard kabbalistic and hasidic sources such as the Zohar and the writings of Rabbi Nachman of Bratslav. In *The History and Varieties of Jewish Meditation*, Mark Verman examines a wide variety of meditative practices, spanning many centuries, by translating primary kabbalistic sources and providing the reader with intelligible readings of the different techniques found in the Jewish meditative tradition. As the reader will discover, there is no one dominant form of traditional Jewish meditation. Rather, there are dozens, if not hundreds, of disparate techniques, ranging from visualizations of Divine names to candle gazing and chanting. Verman also offers an historical overview of ancient Jewish meditation, starting with the biblical period and continuing to early rabbinic times. Pertinent later commentaries are also cited to elucidate these sources. This background discussion provides the reader with a basic orientation to the tradition of Jewish meditation. This work seeks to combine the academic virtue of methodical study with the creativity and spontaneity of Divine discovery. Some sections, such as Chapter 1, "The Ancient Roots of Jewish Meditation," are more historical in orientation. Others, like Chapter 6, "Breathing," are more experientially focused. The richness of the Jewish meditative tradition is highly adaptable to promoting widespread spirituality. *The History and Varieties of Jewish Meditation* is a step in helping the reader incorporate the practices of this tradition into his or her own personal spiritual repertoire.

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