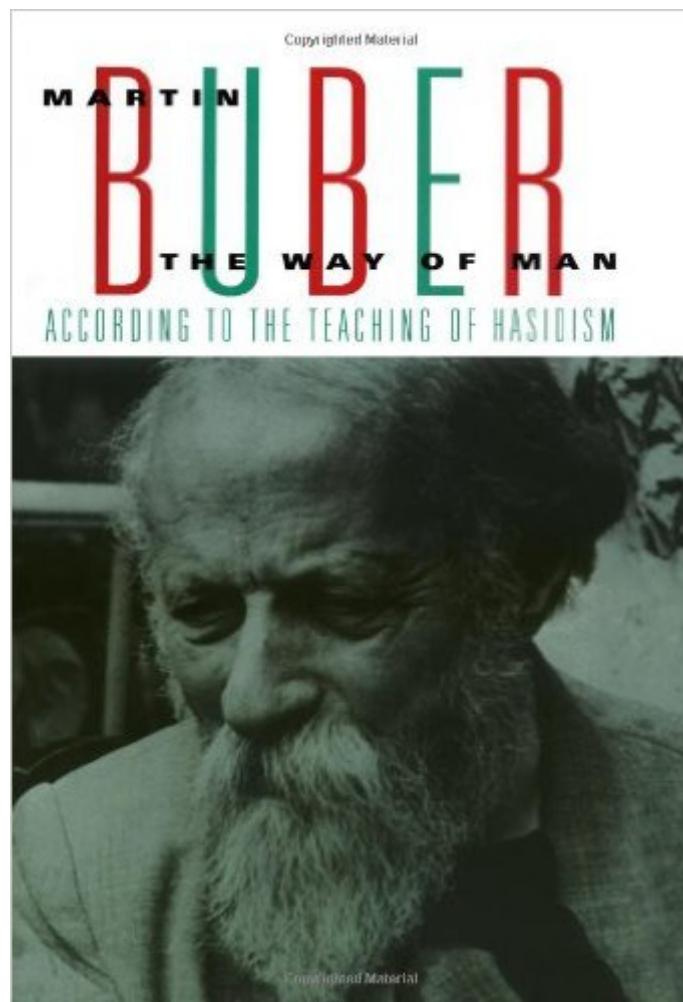


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The Way Of Man: According To The Teaching Of Hasidism



Synopsis

Martin Buber was one of the most significant religious thinkers of the twentieth century. In this short and remarkable book he presents the essential teachings of Hasidism, the mystical Jewish movement which swept through Eastern Europe in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Told through stories of imagination and spirit, together with Buber's own unique insights, *The Way of Man* offers us a way of understanding ourselves and our place in a spiritual world. 'There is something', he suggests, 'that can only be found in one place. It is a great treasure, which may be called the fulfilment of existence. The place where this treasure can be found is the place on which one stands.' Challenging us to recognize our own potential and to reach our true goal, *The Way of Man* is a life-enhancing book.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This book is comprised of several short essays that are each about ten pages or so in length. It is difficult to explain exactly what the book talks about. But it basically is a series of discussions about what our lives mean in relation to G-d. Why we are here on this planet, how you can think of your life and the lives of others, and lessons from other great Jewish thinkers about these same topics. I read this book, which is tiny and small, maybe 80 or so pages, and it changed my life. It opened for me a new way to explore my Jewish identity that was discrete from the mechanics of the religious observances. I am now very interested in Jewish philosophy and epistemology and want to read further. I would highly, highly recommend this book to anyone, Jewish or not.

41 pages of wisdom from the standpoint of Hasidism (from "hasidut": allegiance, piety)--but Hasidism seen through the heart of Martin Buber. This too-brief book really asks only one question: why are we here? Buber responds with thoughts, anecdotes, and reflections, all of it extraordinarily condensed and yet marvelously lucid. Here are two quotations: "Our treasure is hidden beneath the hearth of our own home." "Man was created for the purpose of unifying the two worlds. He contributes towards this unity by holy living, in relationship to the world in which he has been set, at the place on which he stands."

Martin Buber has a way of speaking to my heart. He speaks as a human who has always struggled with the cynicism and skeptical spirituality of our age. Yet he has retained a strong faith in God, and a strong faith in God's real presence in our struggling human everyday life. We may not always feel His presence...but in Buber's words we hear another's testimony that God is with us even when He seems absent. In these short parables, Buber introduces us to other humans...ordinary men...who likewise have struggled to walk with God. Their walk is grounded in the existential. But unlike other ways such as Zen, their walk gradually reveals the real presence of God who has been walking with us since day one. It is as if in our faithful walk God gradually becomes truly felt as walking beside us...and in our hearts.

...Martin Buber encompasses the whole world in the span of 50 pages. He relates new interpretations of a handful of old myths and stories, making each one reflect the individual's personal journey towards enlightenment. Poignant and marvellously efficient and concise in his style and vocabulary, Buber has created a book which is accessible to small children, but which will resonate with anyone even slightly interested in spirituality. It can be read in an hour, and is a book to which I return again and again for guidance and inspiration. Truly, a miracle of a book.

I teach a graduate counseling course on Martin Buber's anthropology and philosophy of dialogue as it illuminates the art and science of pastoral counseling. A rabbi at a workshop I did for military chaplains told me about it. It is a gem - one of the top ten books I have ever read. It is without question my favorite book of Buber's oeuvre. All of 41 pages, it sets forth in very simple and poignant way, the essence of the I-Thou encounter rooted in the personal dialogue between God and humanity. If you want to read the Bible in order to realize that God is not an idea or a belief but One who is wholly "Other" yet approaching you directly, intimately and accompanying you every minute of life, read this book. If you want to enter the "way" that leads to becoming fully human and living with

others in real community, read this book. In our age of information acquisition and craving for new experiences to break through the numbing of our hearts, and the sleep of our conscience, what Buber speaks about in the "Way of Man" is truly an invitation to the "road less travelled."

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