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The Heart of the Matter: Studies in Jewish Mysticism and Theology. A JPS Scholar of Distinction Book. Arthur Green. JPS (www.jps.org). Hardcover. 366 Pages. \$45. ISBN: 978-0-8276-1213.

Judaism, like all the great religions, has a strand within it that sees inward devotion, the opening of the human heart to God's presence, to be the purpose of its entire edifice of praxis, liturgy, and way of life. This voice is not always easy to hear in a tradition where so much attention is devoted to the how rather than the why of religious living. The devotional claim, certainly a key part of Judaism's biblical heritage, has reasserted itself in the teachings of individual mystics and in the emergence of religious movements over the long course of Jewish history. This volume represents Arthur Green's own quest for such a Judaism—as a rabbi, as a scholar, and as a contemporary seeker.

This collection of essays brings together Green's scholarly writings, centered on the history of early Hasidism, and his highly personal approach to a rebirth of Jewish spirituality in our own day. In choosing to present them in this way he asserts a claim that they are all of a piece. They represent one man's attempt to wade through history and text, language and symbol, and an array of voices both past and present while always focusing on the essential questions: "What does it mean to be a religious human being, and what does Judaism teach us about how to be one?" This, the author considers to be the heart of the matter.

Prof. David Ellenson, Chancellor of HUC-JIR, writes about the book: "Rabbi Green has been the foremost scholar of Hasidism in the world and one of the great leaders of spiritual renewal in Jewish life for more than four decades. In *The Heart of the Matter* he displays the brilliance and dazzling breadth of his scholarship and lays bare the depths of his heart and soul as they have animated him throughout his lifetime. Both his exceptional knowledge and his fiery passions as revealed in these essays provide great scholarly and personal insights for the reader. This is a book to savor!"

Arthur Green is Irving Brudnick Professor of Jewish Philosophy and Religion and rector of the Rabbinical School at Hebrew College. Recognized as one of the world's preeminent authorities on Jewish thought and spirituality, he is also a prolific author. His most recent books are *Radical Judaism*; *Speaking Torah: Spiritual Teachings from around the Maggid's Table*; and *Judaism's Ten Best Ideas: A Brief Guide for Seekers*.

Dov Peretz Elkins

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