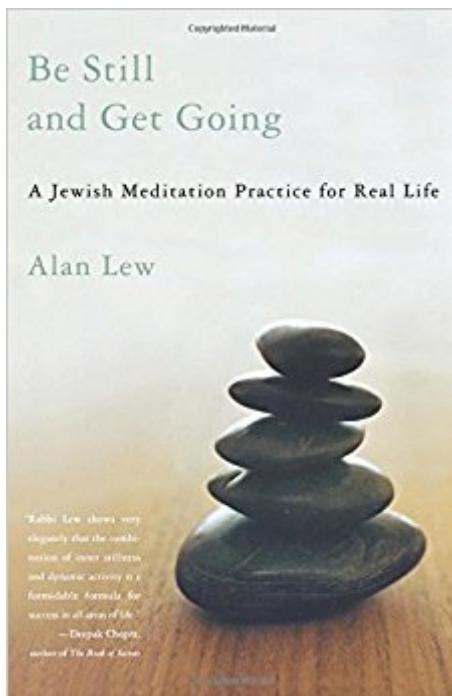


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# Be Still And Get Going: A Jewish Meditation Practice For Real Life



## **Synopsis**

- Written in a warm, accessible, and intimate style, BE STILL AND GET GOING will touch those who are searching for an authentic spiritual practice that speaks to them in their own cultural language.- Lew's first book, "One God Clapping (Jewish Lights Publishing, 2/01), was a "San Francisco Chronicle bestseller and winner of the PEN Josephine Miles Award for Literary Excellence. "Publishers Weekly hailed him as "a perceptive thinker" for his "refreshing and sometimes startling perspective" in his last book, "This Is Real and You Are Completely Unprepared (Little, Brown and Company, 2003).- Lew is one of the most sought-after rabbis on the lecture circuit. He has had national media exposure for his dynamic fusion of Eastern insight and Bible study, having been the subject of stories on ABC News, the "McNeil Lehrer News Hour, and various NPR programs.- In the past five years there have been national conferences on Jewish meditation in San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Miami where Lew has been a featured speaker.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

Once again Rabbi Lew (One God Clapping; This Is Real and You Are Completely Unprepared) beautifully marries the ancient traditions, history and lore of the Torah and Talmud with the serene meditative practices of Zen Buddhism. His singular distinction of founding and leading a meditation center, Makor Or (in San Francisco), the first of its kind connected to a Conservative synagogue, gives him a unique perspective. He says that Jews have had the written treasures, rich discussions and the sacred Sabbath right in front of them for 3,000 years, but have often overlooked them. Using selected Torah passages, Talmudic musings and contemporary stories of friends and

congregants, Lew illustrates the intrinsic spiritual path within Judaism and suggests ways to incorporate that path into an everyday spiritual practice. Like any good teacher unafraid to address big, broad issues—“suffering, fear, conflict”—and agile enough to make sense of the more elusive ones—“listening for and finding God, connecting to and appreciating sacred emptiness”—Lew follows each lesson with a summation of “practice points.” Seekers need not be Jewish to engage the ancient wisdom of these meditations that offer a rich, multileveled path to everyday spirituality. (Sept.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Alan Lew is the rabbi of Congregation Beth Sholom in San Francisco and is at the forefront of the movement to develop new forms of Jewish spiritual expression. His work in the area of using Zen meditation to enhance Jewish spirituality has been highlighted on programs such as ABC News, The MacNeil-Lehrer Report, the PBS news magazine Religion and Ethics Newsweekly, and National Public Radio’s All Things Considered. He also serves as moderator of Mosaic, CBS’s weekly religious talk show. Lew explores meditation in Jewish contexts, and has conducted workshops and retreats on Jewish meditation throughout the United States and Canada.

There is major problem at the heart of this book: the subtitle really does not describe its contents. To be sure, there is something about meditation in here, and of course Lew had vast experience with it, given his founding of a meditation center connected to a synagogue and his years in Buddhist practice. But for the most part, “Jewish meditation practice”, particularly the “practice” part, really recedes into the background and only makes occasional cameo appearances after the first chapter. If you are interested in Jewish meditation, I would strongly recommend Jeff Roth’s *Jewish Meditation Practices for Everyday Life: Awakening Your Heart, Connecting with God*, which was published in March 2009. That said, there is real wisdom in this book. Lew was a fine storyteller, and he brings real insight into his Torah readings. I particularly liked his chapter on “Sacred Emptiness,” where he mentions that the Holy of Holies in ancient Jerusalem Temple was in fact an empty space. Sometimes, it was regarded as the place of God’s actual presence (as the Tent of Meeting was during the wanderings in the wilderness), but for the most part it was empty. And maybe, he suggests, that IS the meaning of God’s presence: the discovery of the emptiness at the heart of life. We can create sacredness in everyday life not by always connecting it to some Grand Telos, but rather by living in the present and appreciating it for what it is. Like the Tabernacle, we create a structure around our lives, but we cannot answer that complete emptiness. The challenge is to live with it and make it meaningful for ourselves. That is why one has to “be still” before one can “get

going." Achieve calmness, and then explore. At least that's the way I read him. Lew was not a great theologian, but he was a good writer, and the book is a nice, gentle introduction to many Jewish themes. It also has some useful spiritual practice points. In that sense, it is useful and worth reading. I recently discovered that Lew died this past January at the all-too-early age of 65. But he left a legacy of an important institution (Makor Or), and his three books, all of which help to communicate a thoughtful, spiritual Judaism. Rest in peace.

Rabbi Lew provides a deep, compelling, heartful vision of Jewish spirituality and practice here. I have bought this book for several friends and teachers. Highly recommended exposition of the "inner meaning" of Jewish thought and practice, esp. for those with an appreciation for Buddhist-based teachings. Yes, it is somewhat mis-titled, as another reviewer noted. It is not focused around seated meditation per se

Loaned to me by a chaplain, who said as soon as he finished it, he wanted to read it again. I felt the same and bought the book for myself and copies for my two adult children. It's a must for an adult Jew seeking his/her place in our variegated community. It's a profound adaptation of Zen discipline to deepen one's understanding of sacred classical Jewish texts.

Run, don't walk to read the amazing Alan Lew. His wisdom reaches into your soul and stays there for you to absorb and claim in your own way.

Just beautiful. Thank you Alan.

Rabbi Lew has written a very readable, engrossing book. A friend of mine has been trying to get me interested in meditation. Rabbi Lew's book certainly has accomplished that. His Jewish orientation is especially good. I now look at meditation far differently. He certainly reached his goal.

This book came highly recommended by a friend. It has helped him and me through difficult times. It is an important book for the important matters of life. It includes significant and useful advice on meditation. I've purchased the book for other family members.

Helped me with my meditation journey.

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