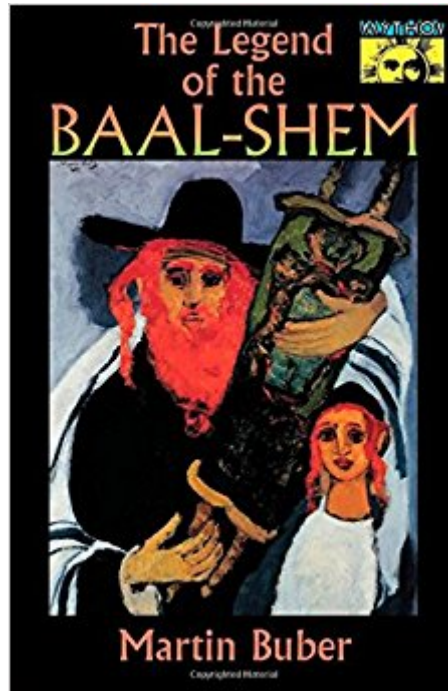




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The Legend Of The Baal-Shem



Synopsis

The Jewish philosopher Martin Buber spoke directly to the most profound human concerns in all his works, including his discussions of Hasidism, a mystical-religious movement founded in Eastern Europe by Israel ben Eliezer, called the Baal-Shem (the Master of God's Name). Living in the first part of the eighteenth century in Podolia and Wolhynia, the Baal-Shem braved scorn and rejection from the rabbinical establishment and attracted followers from among the common people, the poor, and the mystically inclined. Here Buber offers a sensitive and intuitive account of Hasidism, followed by twenty stories about the life of the Baal-Shem. This book is the earliest and one of the most delightful of Buber's seven volumes on Hasidism and can be read not only as a collection of myth but as a key to understanding the central theme of Buber's thought: the I-Thou, or dialogical, relationship. "All positive religion rests on an enormous simplification of the manifold and wildly engulfing forces that invade us: it is the subduing of the fullness of existence. All myth, in contrast, is the expression of the fullness of existence, its image, its sign; it drinks incessantly from the gushing fountains of life."--Martin Buber, from the introduction

Book Information

Series: Mythos: The Princeton/Bollingen Series in World Mythology

Paperback: 224 pages

Publisher: Princeton University Press; Reprint edition (April 17, 1995)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0691043892

ISBN-13: 978-0691043890

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 0.6 x 8.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 12.5 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 stars 11 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #903,701 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #95 in Books > Religion & Spirituality > Judaism > Hasidism #651 in Books > Religion & Spirituality > Judaism > Jewish Life #79050 in Books > Biographies & Memoirs

Customer Reviews

"The Legend of the Baal-Shem is not only a compilation of stories about the founder of modern Hasidism, but also acts as a key to help demystify the deep mystical tradition of Judaism. For those who like stories that reflect a piece of recent history, this is a good collection."--The Inner Directions Journal

Text: English (translation) Original Language: German

This classic by Martin Buber is really timeless. You can feel the inspiration tales of the Baal-Shem must have given future writers like; Shalom Aleichem, Singer, Potek and Buber himself. The tales are a little difficult to get your head around at first if you (like me) are not part of this world, but as I read on, the tales began to unfold like pieces to a puzzle. This book will be one I will want to read several times and later pick it up again some day like a favorite movie.

Only read a little bit so far. Buber is one of the quintessential thinkers of the 20th Century. Thanks for making this available.

Wonderful, inspiring stories.

Great book

Excellent copy and fast shipping-thank you

I was expecting anecdotes about the Baal-Shem that would illustrate his life and teachings. This book has only fantastical stories that give one little idea of what the Besht taught. I got Buxbaum's book and it had exactly what I was looking for.

Weird, unbelievable, fairy tales.

Martin Buber (1878 - 1965) was a German Jewish philosopher-theologian and one of the most original and influential thinkers of the 20th Century. In this work, he does not set forth his own theology so much as trace one of its roots. "The [Hasidic] legend is the myth of I and Thou [the title of Buber's most famous work], of the caller and the called, the finite which enters into the infinite and the infinite which has need of the finite." (13) Buber provides a brief introduction and an essay on the spiritual life of the Hasidim (both written in somewhat difficult, mystical language), but the bulk of this book is Buber's retelling of 20 stories from the life of the Ba'al Shem Tov. The stories are beautiful, told in simple and direct language, and convey the lessons that the Ba'al Shem taught (or was taught -- the Ba'al Shem occasionally errs himself and has to be guided back to the correct

path). The lessons are about living with dedication, uniting with God in joy, overcoming the evil impulse, and finding the holy in everything around us. Greet the day which enchains thee . . . art thou not already freed? These stories are for everyone who is interested in the mystical experience. You will need to have some basic background in Kabbala to understand some aspects of some of the stories (the chapter on Kabbala in Barry Holtz' "Back to the Sources" is probably enough), and you may want to review the Glossary before starting on the stories if you are not familiar with basic Jewish religious terms. Highly recommended.

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