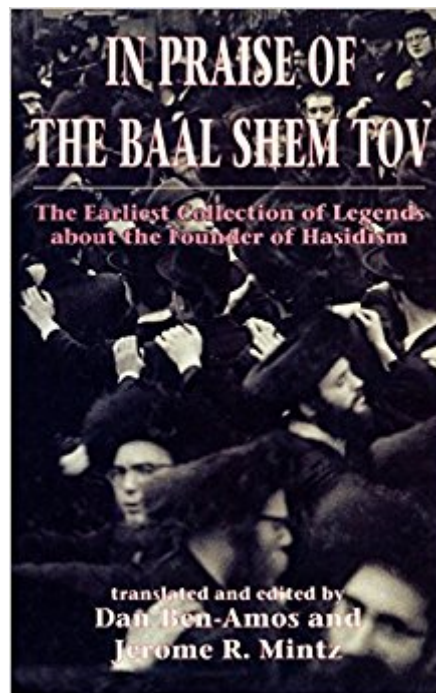


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In Praise Of Baal Shem Tov (Shivhei Ha-Besht: The Earliest Collection Of Legends About The Founder Of Hasidism)



Synopsis

In Praise of the Baal Shem Tov is the first complete English translation of the tales surrounding the Besht, a rabbi and kabbalistic practitioner whose teachings bolstered the growing Hasidic movement in the eighteenth century. An important source on the life, philosophy, and mystical works of the Besht, In Praise of the Baal Shem Tov also reveals the daily life and concerns of eastern European Hasidic Jews in the late 1700s. Though portions of the book have been in print since its original publication in 1814, this edition avoids the common practice of reshaping Hasidic tales according to contemporary expectations. With this commitment to accuracy and authenticity, In Praise of the Baal Shem Tov offers readers an unsullied look at the Besht through the eyes of his contemporaries.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The book contains many important and holy stories concerning the BESHT, the founder of Chassidus. Unfortunately, the translators aren't Chassids or even observant. In their attempts at a "scholarly" translation I'm afraid much of the spirituality in the tales is lost. Certainly the language is often cumbersome and the names of places and transliterations follow an odd form. Some of the footnotes are useful in identifying who the tale is speaking of for audiences that are novices, others where a topic is explained in a "scholarly" way are terrible. Still it is one of the only places to get English translations of some of these tales and so it is a good book for English speakers interested in gaining an insight into Chassidim, especially of the early days. They do get the right idea in that

one of the best ways to get a "feel" for Chassidus and Chassidim is through Chassidic stories. Still, I think one can gain a better insight through reading some of the following books (either instead of, or in addition to "In Praise of..."):- "Rebbes and Chassidim: What They Said-What They Meant" (I absolutely love this book, it is a small book that can easily be carried with short one or two page entries that can be easily digested on first glance yet contain much wisdom- one could finish the entire book in an hour or two on the first read or each entry could be meditated upon and studied for hours.) "Not Just Stories: The Chassidic Spirit Through Its Classic Stories" "Generation to Generation: Personal Recollections of a Chassidic Legacy" "Visions of the Fathers: Pirkei Avos with an Insightful and Inspiring Commentary by Rabbi Abraham J. Twerski, M.D.

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