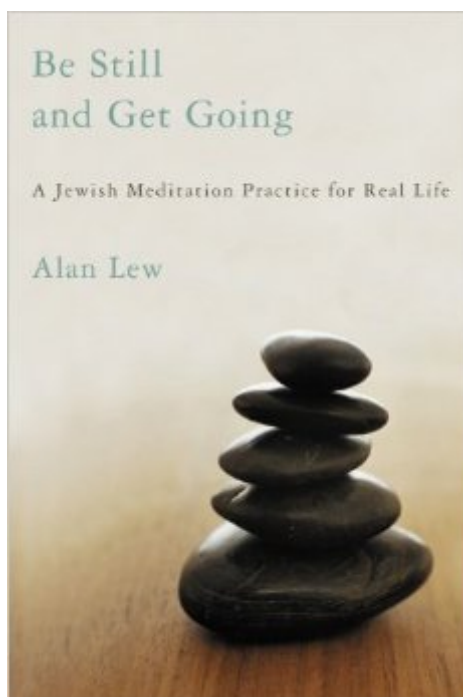


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# Be Still And Get Going: A Jewish Meditation Practice For Real Life



## 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

Houston Smith and Philip Novak describe Siddharta Gautama, the first Buddha, in their book about Buddhism. "Perhaps the most striking thing about him was his combination of a cool head and a warm heart, a combination that shielded him from sentimentality on one hand, and indifference , on the other... Every problem that came in his way, was subjected to cool, dispassionate analysis. He was a master of dialogue and dialectic, and calmly confident. The remarkable fact was the way this objective critical component of his character was balanced by a ... tenderness so strong, as to have had his message to be subtitled "a religion of infinite compassion." "Alan Lew fits exactly the same

description, He prefers to meditate daily - in lotus position -, with a Pentateuch in front of him, and each word of the Torah gains new meanings. When Jacob returns to Esau from exile in Haran, he sends a message "im Lavan garti". ( I have sojourned with Lavan). The word "garti" intrigued him. He looked up all the commentators, including the greatest Jewish classical commentator, Rashi, who lived in twelfth century in France . Rashi "pointed out that the word, "tariag" is an inversion of the letters of "garti:". (Gemaria is the medieval and later Kabbalistic permutation of letters to discover new meanings) . "Tariag" stands for the number 613, There are 613 divine commandments inspired from the Torah. Rashi implied that Jacob, although he lived with the "evil" Laban, he retained his piety and respected the Torah's commandments. There is problem, writes Lew: the Torah was given to the people some four hundred years after Jacob's death, The 613 commandments would not exist until one thousand years later.

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.

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