

Reindeer People – Living with Animals and Spirits in Siberia by Piers Vitebsky.
Harper Collins 2005.

The words 'Siberia' and 'reindeer' are hugely evocative, but when combined assume a power they would not separately possess. In his marvellous book, *Reindeer People*, which is part travelogue, part general and personal history, Piers Vitebsky writes about the Eveny people who live with their reindeer in Siberia, as their ancestors have done for thousands of years.

Inevitably, this ancient culture, dependent on the reindeer, developed rich traditions, not least with regard to the shamans that played such a key role in their popular life until their forcible eradication by the Communist USSR.

Vitebsky has been visiting the Eveny since 1988, both alone and with his family, and over the years has clearly developed an extraordinary level of trust and acceptance from them. *Reindeer People* is rich in incident and individual, triumph and tragedy, and delightful moments of humour. It is also eloquent testimony to the durability and courage of a brave people, living in one of the most demanding places on the planet, battered but unbowed by dictators and the weather.

Whether you are interested in general history, natural history, or just a wonderful human story you will love this book.

Rabbi Dr Charles H Middleburgh