

Israel – A Spritual Travel Guide by Rabbi Lawrence A. Hoffman.
(2nd Edition Revised and Expanded). Jewish Lights Publishing 2005.

It is a safe and automatic assumption by now that any book bearing the author's name Rabbi Lawrence A. Hoffman will be of a very high calibre indeed. Israel – A Spritual Travel Guide is eloquent testimony to this truth.

Rabbi Hoffman writes for those contemplating visiting Israel for the first time, but his thoughts and suggestions equally apply to those revisiting Israel who may want to take a different, more spiritual approach to that of previous visits. His aim is to make an Israel experience as multi-layered as possible in terms of emotional, intellectual and spiritual experience.

The book is divided into six sections: Eighteen days of spiritual preparation, prayers before leaving, how to prepare while on the way, how to respond to specific places in Israel (copious examples are given), blessings for a wide variety of experiences and occasions while in Israel, and grace before and after meals.

With his customary sensitivity to his readership, Larry Hoffman inspires, encourages and gently educates; he never patronises and certainly never suggests that those who might have contemplated a more mundane approach to Israel are in any way deficient.

I have shared the contents of this book with two congregations in different countries and the response has been the same: huge excitement and a desire to buy the book and use it on a forthcoming visit to Israel. Although you need a large jacket pocket to take the book it is pocket-size, and I strongly urge every visitor to Israel to pack it as an essential part of their luggage, and to use it in advance of departure, to make the Israel experience as deep, fulfilling and influential as it can possibly be.

Rabbi Dr Charles H Middleburgh