

Jewish Mysticism and the Spiritual Life – Classical Texts, Contemporary Reflections, edited by Lawrence Fine, Eitan Fishbane and Or N. Rose.
Jewish Lights Publishing 2011.

Christians and Jews Faith to Faith – Tragic History, Promising Present, Fragile Future by Rabbi James Rudin.
Jewish Lights Publishing 2011.

Jewish Mysticism and the Spiritual Life is a welcome collection of various mystical texts from the Jewish literary tradition, each with an added modern perspective provided by a range of modern scholars and rabbis, including Lawrence Kushner, Daniel Matt, Barry Holz, Michael Fishbane and Zalman Schachter-Shalomi.

The book is divided into six parts: Discovering God in All Reality; Spiritual Growth, Inner Transformation; Embodied Spiritual Practice; Compassion, Loving Others; Prayer, Repentance, Healing; Torah, Halakhah, Mitzvot. Each chapter is annotated and many of them would provide excellent material for study sessions; the structure of Jewish Mysticism and the Spiritual Life has the added benefit of lending itself to being read either from beginning to end, or on an occasional, chapter by chapter basis.

In Christians and Jews Faith to Faith, Rabbi James Rudin, an expert in the field of Jewish-Christian relations, sets out to engage with many of the major issues that inform Jewish-Christian dialogue, as well as those which can be deeply problematic. In fourteen chapters he tackles, inter alia, the character and role of St Paul, the use of correct terminology in dialogue, the issue of Mission and Conversion, Jerusalem and the meaning of modern Israel and the Holocaust. Rudin also provides an excellent 'User's Guide to Jewish-Christian Relations and an equally helpful Discussion Guide with many helpful ideas to maximize dialogue opportunities and avoid pitfalls. Jewish-Christian dialogue still has a long way to go and Rabbi Rudin's new work provides a splendid basis for enhancing and deepening existing or fresh dialogue opportunities.

Rabbi Dr Charles H Middleburgh