



Voices of the Matriarchs: Listening to the Prayers of Early Modern Jewish Women

Chava Weissler

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Most studies of Judaism focus on sources produced by and for learned men - the Hebrew Bible, the Talmud, the Midrash, legal codes, and works of medieval philosophy, mysticism, and Hasidism. All these texts were written in Hebrew - a language seventeenth- through nineteenth-century Jewish women were not given the opportunity to learn. With *Voices of the Matriarchs*, Chava Weissler restores balance to our knowledge of Judaism by providing the first look at non-Hebrew Jewish source materials: the vernacular women's devotional prayers called tkhines. In Weissler's hands, these Yiddish prayers open a window into early modern Ashkenazic women's lives, beliefs, devotion, and relationships with God. In the last section of *Voices of the Matriarchs* Weissler looks at the changes the twentieth century wrought in the practice of writing and reciting tkhines.

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