



# The Hebrew Priestess: Ancient and New Visions of Jewish Women's Spiritual Leadership

*Jill Hammer, Taya Shere*

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It has been barely 40 years since rabbinical seminaries began ordaining women as rabbis. But women have played a role in Jewish religious leadership from the days of the Bible and even before. Miriam the Prophetess and Deborah the Judge are just the two most prominent of these women, most of whose names are lost to history. The Hebrew Priestess tells the stories of these women, often reading between the lines of the Bible and Talmud to rediscover the women that rabbinic editors tried to erase. The authors bring a unique vantage point: They are founders of the Kohenet Institute, which trains Jewish women as religious leaders - as Hebrew priestesses. They believe the spiritual gifts of Jewish women cannot be incorporated into Judaism unless women explore the Divine through their own lens. The Kohenet Institute offers an embodied, ecstatic earth-based approach to Jewish spiritual practice and leadership. The Hebrew Priestess weaves together a careful examination of historical antecedents of these new priestesses, along with the personal experiences of women who embarked on this new path of Jewish priestesshood. The Hebrew Priestess delineates 13 models of spiritual leadership - among them prophetess, weaver, drummer, shrinekeeper, midwife, mother, maiden, witch, and fool - and shows how each model was manifest in ancient times, its continuation through Jewish history, and how women in our day are following that path. Finally, it shows how you can incorporate part of that path into your own life. Ambitious, erudite, practical, and deeply personal, the Hebrew Priestess offers a deep connection to Jewish history and to profound holy experiences today. "A very readable and much-needed book!" -Starhawk "An extraordinary and amazing work." -Alicia Ostriker "A book to savor." -Max Dashu "The articulation of my dreams and longings." -Rabbi Shefa Gold "Read this book, but don't stop there-live it as well!" -Rabbi Rami Shapiro

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