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# MENORAH

## REVIEW



NUMBER 34 • CENTER FOR JUDAIC STUDIES OF VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY • SPRING 1995

### *For the Enrichment of Jewish Thought*

#### **A "Between" Between Martin Buber's I and Thou?**

*Immediacy and Its Limits: A  
Study in Martin Buber's Thought*  
by Nathan Rotenstreich  
Philadelphia: Harwood Academic  
Publishers

*A Review Essay*  
by Earle J. Coleman

Nathan Rotenstreich has written a thought-provoking, critical analysis of the nature of Martin Buber's I-Thou relation. Everyday examples abound to demonstrate that the significance of such relationships can hardly be exaggerated. For instance, Buber holds that the doctor is truly a doctor if and only if he or she feels an identity with his or her patient, not the alienation that marks an I-It relationship. Indeed, to be a member of the human family is necessarily to engage in I-Thou meetings, for as philosophers since Aristotle have argued, we are irreducibly social creatures. Buber maintains that even the way to meet God is social (i.e., through entering into relations of reciprocity with other persons). It follows that if an individual cannot discern the divine in a finite Thou, the eternal Thou will forever elude him. Not surprisingly, Buber faulted Søren Kierkegaard, a father of Christian existentialism, because he spoke as if one's meeting with the divine was necessarily a one-on-one encounter rather than a social phenomenon. Of I-Thou meetings with others, Buber said: "That the lines of these relations intersect in the eternal Thou is grounded in the fact that the man who says Thou ultimately means his eternal Thou." Rotenstreich agrees: "The meeting between God and man, it can be said...occurs in the coming together of human beings and not in their lonely or solitary position." Also opposed to the idea that only the solitary individual can enter into essential relation with God, it might be observed that even individuals who practice meditation or silent prayer often like to do so in a community.

Of course, possible counter-examples

(i.e., cases of spiritual experiences involving only God and the isolated individual figure) do spring to mind: the burning bush of Moses; the voice of God as heard by Francis of Assisi and the revelatory dreams of, say, the Native American Black Elk—what could be more private than these? Still, Buber and Rotenstreich are correct in insisting on the social dimension of spiritual cultivation because, unless Moses, Francis and Black Elk had first stood in I-Thou relations with their fellows, they could hardly become participants in an I-Thou encounter with God. But not just any kind of regard for the other will suffice. For example, Rotenstreich explains that Buber relegates empathy to a position significantly below an I-Thou relation because the former is seen to involve a lapse into a kind of estheticism that involves a loss of individuality. In short, the relationship is asymmetrical or one-way, for the empathizer excludes the concreteness of her self from the absorption. Buber sees I-Thou relations with humans and I-Thou relations with the divine as mutually enhancing; for the former are a prerequisite for the latter; in turn, participation in the latter enriches and deepens participation in the former. Concerning which I-Thou relation—that between the I and others or that between the I and the eternal Thou—is primary, Buber's dialogical philosophy must maintain that the two are inseparable.

Not only are I-Thou relations essential for meeting the eternal Thou but they are essential for self-realization. Thus, Socrates' injunction to "know thyself" becomes inseparable from "know the other." While Descartes posited "I think; therefore, I am," Buber substitutes "I relate; therefore, I am." It is not as though one first cultivates an inner nature and then may enter into the company of others; rather, it is precisely by encounter-

ing others that one's own true character arises, matures and flourishes. Thus Buber speaks of even the infant in the crib as occupied in an aesthetic I-Thou encounter with the wallpaper of his room, for the wallpaper bespeaks the Thou of its designer, just as the designer bespeaks the eternal Thou. In fact, unless a person enjoys I-Thou relations, he can know neither his own self nor the eternal God.

Philosophers dispute whether Descartes' pronouncement was an immediate intuition or a logical deduction: Did he know that he existed immediately—as one knows straightaway that A is A—or did he know it only after a series of inferences? In Buber's case, there is no question about his meaning; an I-Thou encounter refers to a direct (i.e., unmediated) meeting. For him, from "the beginning" there is an incipient relation, an unborn Thou that engages the I. No ratiocination precedes and sustains it. Thus, the pre-reflective infant experiences a yearning for relation. We are relational creatures who carry the seed of the other within us; in Buber's words: "the innate Thou is realized in the Thou we encounter." Accordingly, one may challenge Rotenstreich's characterization of the I and Thou: "each of them has an independent or semi-independent status." Instead, Buber's I is fundamentally incomplete without a Thou.

Most basically and persistently, Rotenstreich asks: Is the I-Thou relation, as Buber held, one in which there is an immediate rapport between human beings? Or does this relation require mediation and, in particular, reflection or discursive thought? Affirming Hegel's view that we may not realize the supposedly immediate is mediated, Rotenstreich insists that relations are grounded on distance. But Buber insists that relations are not in ordinary time or space. Distance, whether spatial or psychological, is inapplicable to such meetings. On being asked about his first meeting with T.S. Eliot, Buber replied that when he met someone he was not concerned about opinions but with the person. Buber criticized Socrates for overestimating the import of abstract ideas as opposed to individual, concrete experiences. Similarly, he faulted Hegel for supplanting concreteness with reason and abstractions, thereby leaving no room for trust

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in his system. But Rotenstreich criticizes Buber for not recognizing that to even identify a Thou requires reflection. In other words, Rotenstreich accuses Buber of failing to see that merely to acknowledge the other presupposes intellectual activity. Buber's reply is that discursive thought is not the only kind of awareness; far surpassing it, there is a consciousness that is marked by a transcendent immediacy. In effect, the ordinary rational categories of space and time are superseded by an eternal present; thus, Buber speaks about the "total acceptance of the present." As with aesthetic transport, to have the spiritual, I-Thou encounter requires disengagement from the ordinary notions of time and space; any time and any place will do. There is no special time and place; thus Buber remarks, "I do not find the human being to whom I say You in any Sometime and Somewhere." Any moment will suffice because any moment can become an eternal present in which the categories of past and future do not obtain. Hence, mystics speak of living in the eternal now, of transcending time and space, much as the aesthetic experience may suspend considerations of time and place. Buber asserts the subordination of time and space before the spiritual: "...prayer is not in time but time in prayer, the sacrifice is not in space, but the space in the sacrifice..." The I-Thou bond transcends time and space—and cannot be put in order as can an I-It relation.

Contrary to Rotenstreich's view, Buber's mutuality is a supra-conceptual relation and, as such, is the antithesis of speculative thought with its inevitable objectification of the other. Instead, the I-Thou encounter with nature—Buber writes provocatively of taking up an I-Thou relation with a tree—resembles Edward Abbey's appreciation of the desert in which he eschews the conceptual: "I want to be able to look at and into a Juniper tree, a piece of quartz, a vulture, a spider and see it as it is in itself, devoid of all humanly described qualities, anti-Kantian, even the categories of scientific description." While Immanuel Kant, Rotenstreich's intellectual precursor, thought we could only know the world as filtered (i.e., mediated) by the forms of our own intellectual apparatus, the mystic (and surely Buber had his season of mysticism) holds that the true self, as opposed to the ego, is capable of a direct insight into reality, an apprehension that does not transform that which it receives. By contrast, Rotenstreich declares that "the relationship between a human being and God cannot be experimental." Of course, the mystic purports to know God directly. Rotenstreich further declares that "the very position of the Thou as a non-It...is already a conceptual position by way of comparison or exclusion, explicit or not." But this may beg the question, for from the fact that a position is described conceptually

it does not follow that it must be so established. Intuition may have been at work. After all, Buber is drawn to the risk-taking of intuitive leaps rather than the security of system-building (i.e., the erecting of comprehensive, abstract systems or philosophies). Clear metaphysical differences are apparent in that Buber regards faith as an entrance into reality and Rotenstreich replies, "...we cannot but wonder as to the meaning of that entrance since the human being is already, in reality, in his primary situation and does not have to enter it." Of course, Buber is positing a deeper, intuitive realization in which one's primary situation is itself grounded. When Rotenstreich argues that Buber's distancing of the I from the Thou necessarily entails reflection as opposed to immediacy, his reasoning can be sketchy and unconvincing: "A looker is at a distance and, because of that, he reflects on his position and setting." Surely lookers can become immersed in their object of attention, interfused with it. Buber's looker meets the other and enters into an immediate rapport that is beyond the reach of reflection as such.

Favoring the term "participation" over "intuition," Buber categorically declares the primacy of immediacy: "Only when every means has collapsed does the meeting come about." To the contrary, Rotenstreich submits that no contradiction exists between the I as reflective and the I as realized in the reciprocity of human relations. In fact, he rejects the possibility of relation without the importance of ideas to it; thus, he concludes that reason is a prerequisite for relations. Buber, however, identifies reason not as a basis of relations but as an obstacle to them since reason coincides with the I-It, manipulative orientation of science. As Rotenstreich himself recognizes, "Dialogue is imbued with faith or certainty that requires no demonstration or proof." It is not merely that proof is unnecessary but that proof is impossible; after all, argumentation involves detached reasoning, ratiocination or the removal of an I-It posture.

Rotenstreich questions if relations—whether between humans or between humans and God—can be possessed of immediacy (i.e., devoid of reflection or interpretation: "...a relation is an isolation or separation from reality at large or reality as perceived by the person or persons involved." Therefore, to be in relation to another is to draw distinctions between oneself and the other, to affirm that the two are mutually exclusive entities. But Buber identifies the Thou as the locus of total inclusion. Everything lives in the Thou (i.e., takes on fresh significance in virtue of its light). For example, a lover may find that familiar piece of music suddenly acquires fresh import because it is grounded in the Thou of the beloved. Perhaps, there is a temporal solution to the problem of how I-Thou relations

can escape conceptualization. When two individuals come together, each distinguishes between her respective self and the other, but as they meet, intuition renders all distinctions, bifurcations, dichotomies or divisions as penultimate in face of the intact relation that surfaces. This is just to say that, while distinctions precede the I-Thou encounter and follow during any analyses of it, they need not be constitutive of the relation itself with its characteristic immediacy of union.

While Rotenstreich argues interestingly for his thesis that the I-Thou relation is a mediated one, his case falls short of being compelling. Rather, his scholarly contribution lies in the thoughtful questions he asks and the diverse criticisms he offers. For instance, he wonders how the I-Thou orientation can be both a priori—having a formal status—and endowed with holiness (i.e., concrete and not formal). One reply is that the relation is a priori because it is a condition of full-fledged human experience and, thus, logically presupposed by it. Moreover, it is possessed of a concrete quality for, as has been noted, it is a yearning to relate to specific Thous, beings that manifest personhood and nourish the cultivation of one's own person. Other salient questions include: "Is self-realization a matter of the I realizing that it differs from the Thou and, therefore, is dependent on reflection? Is distancing prior to the I-Thou relation or continuous with it? Is the relation between one's own being and one's relation to the other a basic dichotomy? Is the I or the relation primary? In short, can the I exist autonomously or does it come to be only in relations? Speaking about Israel, Rotenstreich asks how the meeting between particular humans culminates in a nation or people. Rotenstreich also wonders about the possibility of a synthesis between immediacy and distance, both of which figure importantly in Buber's I-Thou relation. Another of Rotenstreich's strengths is his insight into Buber's estimate of other philosophers as when he notes that Buber criticized Henri Bergson, a champion of intuition, because he did not emphasize the status of the Thou without whom intuition is unfocused.

Rotenstreich offers a representatively telling criticism of Buber for attempting to locate reciprocity in Spinoza's philosophy. Clearly, mutuality presupposes otherness (i.e., two discrete substances who interact), but Spinoza has only one substance, namely, God. Again, Buber locates love in reciprocity, but Spinoza's intellectual love of God is necessarily unrequited, for his God is not personal. According to Rotenstreich, "Reciprocity does not go along with self-sufficiency." The former is anthropocentric, the latter theocentric. That God enters into a covenant or an agreement implies some measure of reciprocity. Indeed, it would



seem that God needs humans for how could even the divine be just or merciful if there were not creatures toward whom to be just or merciful? For Buber, it is in this reciprocity that man and God delight; moreover, there need be no conceptual barriers between the I and the Thou, though both are supported by the eternal Thou that is above, below, before, behind and within all.

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## The Philistines: Not So Philistine?

*People of the Sea: The Search for the Philistines*

by Trude Dothan and Moshe Dothan

New York: Macmillan Publishing Company

A Review Essay  
by Jonathan Waybright

Most people have come to know the Philistines as an uncultured group of barbarians who were the main adversaries of the Israelites. This legacy is not only preserved in the Biblical narratives but also in modern English usage. The *Oxford Dictionary of Current English* defines a Philistine as "uncultured, commonplace, prosaic." Webster's *Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary* states that a Philistine is "a crass prosaic often priggish individual guided by material rather than intellectual or artistic values."

This reputation is up for consideration in the work of two Israeli archaeologists, Trude and Moshe Dothan. In their book, *People of the Sea: The Search for the Philistines*, they successfully rehabilitate the reputation of these Biblical "evil-doers." Emphasizing the archaeological record, the Dothans let the actual remains of Philistine culture speak. City planning, architecture, material culture and extensive pottery analysis provide the necessary evidence to re-evaluate the Philistines and their role in history. What emerges is a new picture of Philistines as cultured, city dwellers, perhaps more advanced than the hill-residing Israelites:

"They were accomplished architects and builders; highly artistic pottery makers, textile manufacturers, dyers, metalworkers, silver smelters; and farmers, soldiers and sophisticated urban planners. They played no small part in influencing the culture and political organization of their neighbors." (p. 259)

That the reputation of the Philistines is rescued is but a by-product of a much larger investigation for the Dothans. Historians and archaeologists still are trying to understand the wave of destruction represented in archaeological strata from the end of the Late Bronze Age (1550-1200 B.C.) at sites from Greece to Turkey to Palestine. The period was characterized by political upheaval; the disruption of international trade; large-scale population movements; and the end of several great empires, including the collapse of the Mycenaean empire of the Aegean, Hittite control over Anatolia, and the withdrawal of Egyptian influence and presence from Canaan. It is also from this period that several groups of what are called "Sea Peoples" began migrating around the Mediterranean by land and sea, eventually settling on the coastal plains of the eastern Mediterranean from Turkey to Libya. The Philistines represent the largest of these groups and are the best known because of their role in the Biblical narratives where they are seen harassing the Israelites from a well-organized group of Philistine city-states, the Philistine Pentapolis, which included Ashkelon, Ashdod, Ekron, Gath and Gaza. What was not well understood until the present work is where exactly the Philistines originated, what was the reason for their leaving and what role they played in the turmoil of the Late Bronze Age. For the Dothans, searching for clues to explain the origin of the Philistines and other groups of Sea Peoples is a key to understanding the transition from the Late Bronze Age to the Iron Age.

The first historical reference to the Philistines, outside the Bible, would suggest to scholars that they were the cause of turmoil. Reliefs and accompanying inscriptions found at the Medinet Habu Mortuary Temple of Ramesses III (1190-1165 B.C.) in Thebes, Egypt, depict the Egyptian king's efforts to expel several groups of invading Sea Peoples, including the Philistines, from the Nile Delta at the beginning of the Iron Age (1200-600 B.C.). By mentioning places previously conquered by the Philistines, scholars could trace their point of origin to the Aegean. The outcome of these reliefs would portray the Philistines as invaders from the Aegean who were finally defeated by the Egyptians and then settled on the coast of Canaan.

"...it was believed that the Philistines had arrived in Canaan as hostile invaders, either destroying the Canaanite cities that lay in their path and settling on their ruins or, in some cases, finding employment as mercenaries in Egyptian-controlled garrison towns...it was generally believed that, whatever their specific Aegean origin, the Philistines had indeed brought only ruin and upheaval to Canaan at the end of the Late Bronze Age." (p. 82)

The science of archaeology has demon-

strated that the earliest theories regarding the origin of the Philistines, mostly based on the few available historical sources and literary approaches to the Bible, could not alone solve the mystery. The answers would be found in the stratified layers of ancient city-mounds. Trude and Moshe Dothan have been personally involved with some of the earliest and most important excavations in Palestine to "read the record" the Philistines had left buried in the ancient city-mounds of the Near East.

"Just as the Medinet Habu reliefs and inscriptions offered us information from the Egyptian perspective and the Biblical accounts offered information from the Israelite, the excavated Philistine settlements offered us the unwritten historical records of the Philistines themselves." (p. 88)

*People of the Sea: The Search for the Philistines* represents nearly 40 years of investigation into the Philistines. It not only traces the Dothans' extensive excavation experience at sites like Hazor, Ashdod, Ekron, Akko, Deir el-balah, Tell Mor, Azor and Tell Qasile but also presents a personal overview of some of the earliest excavations completed by many of the greatest archaeologists ever to excavate in the Mediterranean.

In 1948, Trude Dothan was invited to excavate at Tell Qasile under one of the most prominent Israeli archaeologists, Dr. Benjamin Mazar. Evidence would be found, or rather not found, that shed new light on the Philistines as "invaders and destroyers" of Canaanite culture. Whereas at most sites with Philistine occupation, preliminary remains reaffirmed the Philistines as "invaders" hypothesis but at Tell Qasile things were different. "No earlier settlement had preceded the Philistines. The city had actually been founded by them." (p. 82) Moreover, the evidence suggested a peaceful existence at every occupational level. In other words, there was no city to destroy; the Philistines had come as settlers to this site.

"The Philistines at Tell Qasile had chosen to live on a previously unoccupied ridge overlooking a fertile valley. This level produced no signs of weapons or fortifications, only flint sickle blades for harvesting grain, underground silos for storing it and millstones for grinding it into flour." (p. 83)

As to the question of what part of the Aegean was the point of origin for the Philistines, it would take extensive examination of the most telling of all material remains found at Philistine sites—pottery. At an early stage, Trude Dothan saw the importance of a more complete investigation of these ceramic remains. She became "fascinated with the aesthetic qualities of Philistine pottery and hoped to concentrate on the relations between art, archaeology and cultural interconnections." (p. 88) It would be this

work that would be her greatest contribution to the area of Philistine studies.

Excavations at sites with Philistine occupation have uncovered a unique ware very different from the local Israelite and Canaanite forms. The pottery can be grouped into two styles representing two different chronological phases and perhaps, as the Dothans suggest, two groups of Sea Peoples (p. 212). The first style, found in the earliest stratum, was a simple decorated monochrome ware while the second was a highly stylized red and black ware that seemed to be a continuation of the first. The latter form, known as Philistine bichrome ware, featured antithetic spirals, painted checkerboard patterns, birds, fish and other geometric designs. Comparison of both styles of pottery with other cultures revealed that the closest stylistic parallel was the Mycenaean-Greek pottery tradition. That this pottery had not been imported from Mycenaea was shown by modern techniques in clay analysis (p. 168). This pottery had been produced locally from clays in Palestine by potters extremely familiar with the Mycenaean ceramic tradition.

That the Philistines were Greeks is further suggested in the last section of the book where excavational remains from two of the cities of the Philistine Pentapolis, Ashdod and Ekron, are presented. Excavation of Ashdod was completed by Moshe Dothan in 1972 while Trude Dothan and Seymour Gitin, director of the W.F. Albright Institute of Archaeological Research in Jerusalem, co-directed the excavation of Ekron in its 10th season. The evidence from these sites, including figurines—some modeled with animal features while others, such as the figurine "Ashdoda" were styled like human—ceramic *keranoi* (tubular rings with attached animal-shaped spouts), hearth rooms, pottery and a cylindrical cultic stand, all reflect a Mycenaean-Greek style. It would be hard to imagine that whoever produced these material remains were not Mycenaean Greeks.

As a professional staff member of the Harvard Semitic Museum's excavation of Ashkelon, I have been involved and interested in Philistine culture and theory for several years. Not surprisingly, the Ashkelon finds of 1992, found after the publishing of the Dothan book, continue to reaffirm the reassessment of the Philistines and affirm a Mycenaean-Greek origin. This viewpoint is now accepted by most scholars, including the director of the Leon Levy Expedition at Ashkelon, Dr. Lawrence Stager of the Harvard Semitic Museum. It is important to note that the finds at Ashkelon, although speaking highly of Philistine culture, still only represent the end of the Philistine period. As earlier layers are reached, it is our hope that more information concerning the arrival and settlement of the Philistines will be revealed.

The evidence and material cultural remains studied by the Dothans suggest that the Philistines were Mycenaean-Greeks who had migrated, in mass, to the coast of Canaan at the beginning of the Iron Age. Perhaps they were responsible for the destruction of some cities but the emerging consensus is that the Philistines came as a "civilizing force, bringing a high level of culture to Canaan after the destruction of Mycenaean cities at the end of the Late Bronze Age." (p. 55) Nearly 40 years of investigation, culminating in this book, have demonstrated that the Philistines were involved in a greater Aegean and Near Eastern historical context than simply the limited role of a people harassing the Israelites in the Biblical narratives.

To be sure, new information gained from archaeological research creates as many questions as it answers. For example, what happened in the Aegean homeland to produce the migration? How can the pottery differences be reconciled? Do the two types represent two different groups of Sea Peoples as the Dothans suggest or an internal transition from one Philistine style to another as Dr. Lawrence Stager suggests? Answers to these and the many other questions are waiting for archaeologists in the stratified layers of ancient city-mounds. For now, *People of the Sea: The Search for the Philistines* offers a readable overview of the history and theories of the Sea Peoples and, more specifically, the Philistines. In this work, the Dothans have succeeded in illuminating one of the great mysteries of Biblical history and have helped the Philistines "emerge from a web of myth onto the stage of history." (p. 259)

Jonathan Waybright is a staff member of the Leon Levy expedition of Harvard University at Ashkelon.

## On Jews and Gentiles in Antiquity

*Jews and Gentiles in the Ancient World: Attitudes and Interactions From Alexander to Justinian*  
by Louis Feldman  
Princeton University Press

A Review Essay  
by Matthew B. Schwartz

The relationship between the Jews and their neighbors has been a matter of interest and importance from early antiquity until today. The Crown Heights riot of 1991, the growth of Neo-Nazism in Germany and of right-wing reactionism in Russia remind us that anti-Semitism is still fresh and threaten-

ing. Louis Feldman's *Jews and Gentiles in the Ancient World* is a major study of Jewish and Gentile interaction in the Hellenistic and Roman eras. Featuring a vast mastery of sources and a systematic interpretation, this book will certainly be a standard in its field.

Masterful Jewish historians are nothing new, especially for the Greco-Roman period. However, there is a subtle, new approach in Feldman's book, which may not at first strike the reader, perhaps because the book has no introduction per se (although there is a very useful summary chapter). Feldman's approach contrasts notably with Professor Saul Lieberman's in his two significant works of a half century ago, *Hellenism in Jewish Palestine* and *Greek in Jewish Palestine*.

Lieberman argued that the influence in Judea of Greek language and culture was greater than historians had believed. The Jewish masses knew some Greek, and synagogue preachers cited Greek translations of the Hebrew Bible in their sermons. Rabbinic scholars elucidated Biblical events in the light of Greek sources and many words and passages in Rabbinic literature can be comprehended correctly only when one knows passages in Greek or Roman works that deal with the same event. "The Jews of Palestine were by no means isolated from the ancient Mediterranean civilized world. They shared many of its beliefs, conceptions and patterns of behavior." Thus, Lieberman leaned toward depicting the Jews as part of Mediterranean life, absorbing and assimilating much of its Hellenizing influence.

For Professor Feldman, however, the theme is quite different—how, in view of the tremendous strength and attractiveness of the various pagan cults, did the Jews manage to avoid assimilation in the Land of Israel and especially in the Diaspora? In fact, the Jews remained self-confident, vigorous and productive even into the 4th and 5th centuries, producing the Talmud and Midrash as well as attracting converts and sympathizers despite the lack of an organized missionary program. Feldman objects to the "lachrymose" conception that sees Jewish history as a narration only of uninterrupted suffering and weakness.

This book is thorough and comprehensive, and Feldman's command of the sources is immense. Many of the sources will be familiar to the knowledgeable reader, but many are not since they were gleaned from a wide range of Jewish, Christian and Greco-Roman writings and inscriptions.

Let us deal with several of the book's main themes. Earlier writers, such as Lieberman, Hengel, Krauss and others, have postulated important interaction between Hellenistic and Jewish worlds, pointing to the almost 3,000 Greek loan words in the Rabbinic literature, to Talmudic statements praising Greek language and to early contacts between Hellenistic and Jewish leaders

in Judea and Alexandria. Feldman, however, argues that the Greek loan words are of mundane matters, never intellectual or philosophical, and that Judean rabbis speak of minor, local philosophers like Romulus and Remus but seem to know nothing of Socrates, Plato or Seneca. Indeed, it is possible that, especially in the early years, Jewish religious thought, as expressed in works like *Kohleth* and *Ben Sira*, was more aware of Persian ideas than Greek, and the Dead Sea documents too knew little of Greek. In general, Judean Jews wrote much in Hebrew and Aramaic but almost nothing in Greek. Indeed, the influence of Hellenism among the non-Jews of the Near East was also no more than superficial. In Alexandria, Jews used the Greek language and were apparently familiar with Greek activities such as sports and theater. At least some Egyptian Jews were not religiously observant and Rabbinic authority was not strong. However, there is little evidence of actual apostasy or intermarriage, and Jews lived together in Jewish quarters and not among Greeks. Also, there is evidence of strong Jewish communities in Asia Minor, especially in the coastal cities, and pagan writers were well aware of the Jewish Sabbath and dietary practices, which they must have seen Jews observing.

Anti-Semitism was a problem in antiquity, and non-Jews criticized Jews for their wealth and business success as well as their poverty, for being misanthropic and intolerant of other religions, for their laziness in not working on the Sabbath and for not eating pork. On the other hand, some writers admired Jews on exactly these points, praising their temperance in eating and drinking, their devotion to justice and to the service of God, and their love of wisdom. Pythagoras, one of the most revered Greek philosophers, was cited as saying the Greeks had borrowed much from the Jews, and Numenius of Apamea (2nd century C.E.) wrote, "What is Plato but Moses speaking Attic Greek?" Moses, in fact, received much attention, usually favorable, from pagan writers like Hecateus, Diodorus and Pompeius Trogus, who praised him as a great lawgiver, although their descriptions seem not to come directly from the Hebrew Bible or other Jewish books but from secondary sources.

Relations with the Roman government were generally friendly, other than during the period of the Great Revolt and the Bar Kochba War. Jews held public office under the Ptolemies in Egypt and later in the Roman Empire. The Emperor Elagabalus (218-222) is said to have had himself circumcised and to have abstained from pork. Alexander Severus (222-235) kept a bust of Abraham in his private chapel. Another story claims that a certain Calixtus, later to become Pope, was exiled to Sardinia for breaking into a synagogue in Rome and disrupting a Sabbath service. Even after the triumph of

Christianity, the Roman government tried to avoid alienating the Jews, who constituted an important and loyal part of the populace during a time when the Empire was facing barbarian invasions from without and corruption and decay from within.

The world population of Jews rose from about 150,000 at the end of the First Temple period to about 8 million in Roman times, and some of their increase was attributed to conversion. Judaism apparently was able to compete with the eastern mystery cults in gaining converts during a time of religious uncertainty in the early Roman Empire. Even in the 4th and 5th centuries, conversion seems to have continued despite the opposition of both the government and the Church. Christian spokesmen, such as John Chrysostom, expressed constant concern about the attraction of Judaism to non-Jews.

Did Jews participate actively in missionary work like some modern Christian denominations? Feldman cites a number of sources that suggest that converts were welcomed and, perhaps, even actively sought although there is no clear evidence of organized missionary activity. This is notable in light of Rabbi Alexander Schindler's recent urging of Jewish missionizing.

A number of sources mention the God-fearers, or *sebomenoi*, who were people interested in Judaism but were not actually Jewish. Inscriptions found in 1987 in Aphrodisia, Asia Minor, seem to indicate that these God-fearers may have constituted a group of their own who accepted some Jewish practices and interacted closely with Jews, but they were not formally converted. The *sebomenoi* held important positions in Aphrodisia, where 54 were listed as having sat on the city council. Other cities of Asia Minor likely housed similar groups.

Jews and Gentiles in the Ancient World is a serious scholarly book that concentrates on dealing carefully with a vast array of primary source materials. Feldman wisely avoids didactic suggestions as to how any of this might apply to modern Judaism. Yet, his picture of a vigorous, successful Judaism in antiquity stands strangely in contrast to the trend of assimilating and Americanizing that the German-Jewish immigrants to the United States developed in the mid-19th century and that they passed to the Eastern European Jews of the great immigration wave. Feldman notes that the Diaspora Jews of antiquity were more deeply Hellenized than those in the Land of Israel, but they lost relatively few adherents, whether because of Jewish economic and social advantages or because anti-Semitism strengthened their stubbornness. Jews tended to continue maintaining a consciousness of being Jewish and an identification with the Jewish community (p. 445).

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## A Mosaic of War Philosophies

*War in the Hebrew Bible:  
A Study in the Ethics of Violence*  
by Susan Niditch  
New York: Oxford University Press

A Review Essay  
by Walter Chalkley

War plays a vivid and important role in the Hebrew Scriptures. Some of the most compelling and recognizable stories concern particular battles, war heroes and critical moments within a campaign. The conquering of the Promised Land, the walls of Jericho, David and Goliath, and Joshua making the sun stand still in the sky are all stories that give us some insight into the varied perceptions of war held by the Scriptural writers.

The tales usually are meant to inspire in some way. They either show the results of faith in God or serve to give warning of the results of certain types of behavior. However, the stories may be derived from very different rituals and traditions. While some of the stories show mercy and honor in the course of the battle, others, indeed the most memorable passages, show instances of mass destruction and the killing of the loser's populace down to the last man, woman, child and, sometimes, even livestock.

In Susan Niditch's book, *War in the Hebrew Bible*, the author attempts to put into perspective the different wartime traditions within the Hebrew Scriptures. As the author herself states:

"This ongoing identification between contemporary situations and the warring scenes in the Hebrew Bible is a burden the tradition must guiltily bear. The particular violence of the Hebrew Scriptures has inspired violence, has served as a model of and a model for persecution, subjugation and extermination for millennia beyond its own reality."

She not only attempts to place the philosophies of war found in the Hebrew Scriptures into the proper relation to current users but also attempts to place them in proper relation to each other. She points out that there are several war philosophies present within the Scriptures in question, some closely derivative, some almost diametrically opposed. The differences in philosophy are more often borne out in the telling of the tale than in its subject. That is, the writer's own personal interpretation of the events of a legendary battle reflects not only the writer's philosophy but the ideas prevalent at the time of its initial recording.



To support her thesis, the author very effectively uses the methods of literary criticism and illustrates the subtle differences in the telling of the same war tales in different places within the Scriptures. A slight change here, an omission there leaves the basis of the story virtually unchanged, yet drastically alters the story's feel and its ultimate meaning. Therefore, the Biblical writers pass on not only the "seed" of the story but also something that is at least as important. They pass on clues that help flesh out the history of an idea over time and the ability of the people of one era to rationalize the actions of those of another.

Dr. Niditch's examination begins with the in-depth analysis of the ban and its two different uses within the war texts of the Hebrew Scriptures (indeed, a full third of the book deals with this subject). The ban, the systematic killing of all men, women, children and even livestock, seems to be the most troubling of the Biblical war philosophies covered by the author. Also, it seems to be the most popular. The citing of Biblical instances of total annihilation coupled with divine support or approval has been used by everyone from Cotton Mather to Bernard of Clairvaux to agitate and inspire the populace during times of war or social conflict.

While extremely effective in a military sense, it does not seem to correspond with other beliefs found within the Scriptures, sometimes within the same passage. How does the all-encompassing and quite violent ban fit in with the life-affirming rules found elsewhere? In her study, the author attempts to show the relation of not only the two ban philosophies but also of the place these and other war traditions held in early Hebrew society as a whole.

The initial manifestation of the ban that is examined is that of the ban as God's portion. That is, the lives of the conquered populace are God's "spoils" from the battle and, therefore, they are dispatched in His honor. The author believes that the ban grows from the blood sacrifice tradition and is meant to thank Yahweh for His favors in battle.

This philosophy grants to those slain a certain dignity and value as one does not sacrifice the worst item or the weakest livestock to God; one sacrifices the best and the most important. Therefore, the sacrifice under the ban is acknowledging the victim's worth. In this way, the Biblical writers were able to justify such mass killing with an ideology that affirmed the importance of human life.

The second interpretation of the ban arose, according to the author, as later writers were uncomfortable with the idea of a God that would demand such mass killing as a sacrifice. The details of the ban were almost identical: the loser's populace, every man, woman and child, was killed. The ideology behind the killing was altered, how-

ever, and the ban was reinterpreted as God's justice and punishment for sin. Those killed under this interpretation of the ban deserved their fate through their transgressions.

The other war philosophies discussed in the book are handled in a concise and thorough manner that makes for some interesting reading. From this point, the author compares each new ideology with the previously covered ban traditions, something that the reader, after spending so much time learning about the ban, does as well. With the ban traditions established as the most familiar war philosophy in the Hebrew Scriptures, the remaining ideologies are better viewed when placed against it.

For instance, an ideology found in Numbers 31, which the author defines as the priestly ideology, so called because of the number of rituals administered by the priests both before and after the battle, is easily compared to the ban tradition. The events recorded there are so similar to the ban text that it is often seen as just that. However, there are important differences that show a world view quite apart from that of the traditional ban stories.

The passage deals with God's command to Moses to "avenge the Israelites upon the Midianites." When the battle is won, Moses puts everyone under the ban except the virgin girls. The author believes it is this exception that separates this text from the traditional ban text. This view of sexually active women as temptresses who lead men of Israel into sin and idolatry and, therefore, are worthy of their fate while virgin women are no threat and treated as war spoils is a vastly different world vision than the ban tradition relates.

Another of the "lesser" war traditions discussed is that which the author calls the bardic tradition. This is a new tradition entirely, different in almost all respects from the ban texts. This ideology is derived from an oral and courtly story-telling tradition concerning the exploits of "mighty men" who engage in a highly codified battle undertaken as sport among warriors of equal ability. The stories originally served to glorify a young nation state, its king and the heroes of its prior generations.

There is a most chivalric aspect to the proceedings. Instances of the tradition usually begin with a "taunt," a challenge of sorts that results in a meeting of the warriors, followed by the "duel." In almost all cases, the rewards for challenging a taunt and besting the taunter is glory, fame and, perhaps, some material reward. By far the best known example of this tradition is that of David and Goliath. David is taunted by Goliath, he goes forth to meet the challenge, wins and is forever remembered as a hero.

The next ideology discussed is the exact opposite of the bardic tradition. The author calls it the ideology of tricksterism. The solutions are pragmatic and realistic ways of

eliminating the roots of the problems that could lead to war. The chapter details four similar stories, one from Genesis and three from Judges, dealing with victory through various methods of deception.

Unlike the bardic tales, there is no ritual and no honor. Unlike the ban texts, there is no holy cause. The rape of Dinah, the story of Jael, Samson and the Timnites, and the story of Ehud and Eglon are the four examples given in this tradition. All of these stories depict the "hero" as the underdog and the party disposed through deceit as the "established power." The killing commonly eliminates what could eventually be a major problem while it is still a minor one.

The similarities in these stories do not stop at their method of dispatch. Within each of the tales are elements of extreme violence (usually impalement) and overt sexuality (usually implied gender reversal). These basic aspects serve to bring them to a human level; that is, one that is much more of the flesh than of the spirit. There is little holy here; it is more realistic in its portrayal of a violent, bloody death through deception than the previous "glorious" battle scenes discussed earlier.

The final ideology Dr. Niditch covers is one that she calls the ideology of expediency. This philosophy basically states that while it is best not to engage in war, if it must be done, do whatever is necessary to win as decisively and quickly as possible. If innocents must be killed or a campaign of terror must be waged, so be it. This, coupled with the idea of the necessity of a just cause for the war, is an ideology adopted by those powerful enough to use professional force to impose their will on those perceived as the enemy. The best example of this ideology is Jephthah's battle with the Ammonites as described in Judges 11.

This mosaic of war philosophies, some quite different from others, yet existing side by side, points to a long and quite complex history of the issue. As the author notes:

"There is more than one variety of ban ideology, and various war ideologies co-exist during any one period in the history of Israel. The priestly ideology of war has much in common with the ideology of the ban as God's justice while the violent pragmatism of the ideology of expediency is reflected also in the ideology of tricksterism. Those whose courts produced the ennobling bardic tradition may well have practiced the brutal ideology of expediency."

What the author attempts to clarify, and succeeds to do, in my opinion, is the way in which Hebrews, in particular, but humans, in general, deal with the death of a great number of people during war. As a rule, the death of a vast number of people, either by our own hands or by the hands of our ancestors, has an affect on our perception of our-

selves. It is something that is seen, in most cases, as wrong and, as such, it must be justified or rationalized so that we are able to deal with whatever guilt may be involved.

The attitudes uncovered in this book show the attempts of the Hebrew Scripture writers to do just that. More, they show how the Scripture writers reflected the society around them and, at the same time, molded the self-perception of the society. This valuable resource allowed the reader then and allows the modern reader to better relate to his cultural foundations and their continuing influence.

Dr. Niditch allows the reader to discover these ideas while guiding him or her through the various texts and pointing out the subtleties. Her frequent noting of Biblical citations of events allows one to follow along with the investigation of the ideologies smoothly. Stopping at each citation to read the corresponding Scriptural passage is time-consuming but, like her book, quite illuminating.

*Walter Chalkley directs an immigrant referral service in Washington, D.C.*

### REDEMPTION—PESACH, 1985

Lord without our matzoh brei  
Israeli chocolates Pesedich pop  
would we so readily abstain  
from seven days of bagels and lox?

Without our drugs, vitamins, orthopedic shoes,  
electric coffee makers  
could we still survive 40 years in the desert?  
Are we made of the same stuff as our fore-  
bears or even those who only 40 years ago died  
with the prophets' words still warm on their lips?

Or are we now too soft, too chosen—what does  
the ancient watchword mean to a media Jew—  
for what Kabbalistic code or secret mantró could  
deprogram the fear of nuclear destruction—  
Does it help to merely recite like robots  
"Thou shalt love" and "The Lord is One"—

Do these words wipe out visions of  
overturned schoolbuses, hijacked planes?

In the marketplace of souls, how could we be  
anything but small change if our reason to live  
is only to play the Sweepstakes for a  
Nassau cruise or any escape from our K-Mart  
tyranny of TV soaps, shrinks and booze—

Lord, undo the shackles of boredom  
snatch our complacency, burn our fetishes  
and toughen us with the passion of praise  
so that in the final version of the revised  
Haggadah, the story will be told  
not of a comic book Elijah or Superman Moses  
but our own struggle with ourselves to start over.

And in the list of weaknesses to overcome,  
make longevity for its own sake a curse.

—Carol Adler

## BOOK BRIEFINGS

*Editor's Note: Inclusion of a book in "Briefings" does not preclude its being reviewed in a future issue of Menorah Review.*

**Anti-Semitism: The Longest Hatred.** By Robert S. Wistrich. New York: Pantheon Books. Paranoia, fantasy and political cynicism throughout history have worked to turn Jews into demons in the public mind and played a major role in bringing on the Holocaust. Yet, barely 50 years later, anti-Semitism is still front-page news. Why? Wistrich takes a sweeping look at the phenomenon of anti-Semitism from the beginning of its appearance to the present. Walter Laquer calls this book "the most comprehensive, succinct and well-written one-volume treatment of the subject now available." From Haman to Hitler, Wistrich examines whether there was anything different or new to the endless accusations these men waged against the Jews and whether the time in history may have laid particularly fertile ground for these seeds of hate to grow. Informed by a profound knowledge of history, the author charts the course of anti-Semitism, focusing on the frightening re-emergence of anti-Semitism in the wake of the collapse of Communism. He also gives the reader a country-by-country analysis, showing the resurgence of anti-Semitism throughout the world.

**The Meaning of Jewish Existence: Theological Essays 1930-1939.** By Alexander Altman, edited by Alfred L. Ivry. Hanover, NH: University Press of New England. Hitler's early campaign against German Jews was not only a matter of political and economic boycott but also one of excluding them from a culture they had long embraced. In response, the Jewish community mounted a "spiritual resistance" by organizing an elaborate network of educational and cultural activities that affirmed the intellectual and religious heritage of Judaism. Altman played a central role in this effort by articulating anew for his generation the inner spiritual world of traditional Judaism as grounded in the Halachah, which he held to be the wellspring of authentic Jewish spirituality. In essays published in the 1930s, he initiated a renewal of Jewish religious thought that addressed modern Jews from the depths of Israel's ancient traditions and deepened their understanding of Jewish existence and its values. These essays are of value as primary documents from a dark period and also for their intrinsic worth as important scholarship by a great thinker.

**Habad: The Hasidism of R. Shneur Zalman of Lyady.** By Roman A. Foxbrunner. Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press. Hasidism evokes heated controversy among scholars trying to analyze the movement and its significance. Foxbrunner makes great strides in increasing understanding of this major force in Jewish life through a careful, thorough examination of the work of Shneur Zalman of Lyady. Zalman assimilated the teachings of the Besht as well as the Maggid and saw himself as the third of a single line of Hasidic masters. His Hasidism is profound and paradoxical. Foxbrunner uses all the extant teachings of Zalman and his masters to examine the characteristic features of Habad: service motivated by contemplative love and fear of God, self-nullification, and joy in God's intellectually apprehended nearness.

**Idolatry.** By Moshe Halbertal and Avishai Margalit. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. The Biblical injunction, "You shall have no other gods before Me," marks one of the most decisive shifts in Western culture: away from polytheism and toward monotheism. Despite the implications of such a turn, the role of idolatry in giving it direction and impetus is little understood. This book examines the meaning and nature of idolatry—and, in doing so, reveals much about the monotheistic tradition that defines itself against this "sin." This brilliant account of a subject central to our culture also has much to say about metaphor, myth and the application of philosophical analysis to religious concepts and sensibilities. Its insights into pluralism and intolerance, into the logic and illogic of the arguments religions aim at each other make *Idolatry* timely and valuable in a time of religious indifference.

**Tradition and Crisis: Jewish Society at the End of the Middle Ages.** By Jacob Katz, translated by Bernard Dov Cooperman. New York: University Press. This is the first complete English version of the Hebrew original initially published in 1957. This book has stood the test of time, and this new rendering increases its usability as an introduction to a crucial era in Jewish history. It focuses on the 16th through 18th centuries, a period considered part of the modern era in general European history but the end of the Middle Ages in the context of Jewish history. The book describes a stage in the development of the Jewish people in which cracks began to appear in the unifying conceptualization that had informed Judaism almost from the start. The entire Jewish past is implicit in this translation from "tradition" to "crisis," and the tension between these two forces continues to be a major problem in our own day. Katz's classic work helps us to understand contemporary problems in the Jewish community and provides rich background to the issues we face today.



**Gray Dawn: The Jews of Eastern Europe in the Post-Communist Era.** By Charles Hoffman. New York: HarperCollins. For Eastern European Jews who survived the Final Solution, the defeat of Hitler afforded only temporary respite. Traumatized by the Holocaust, they soon found themselves living under repressive Communist governments. With the crumbling of Communism, it is possible, for the first time, to assess the recent historical experience and diverse prospects of the Jewish communities in Poland, East Germany, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria and Romania. Hoffman undertakes this task with a sure grasp of the painful ironies of postwar Jewish history in Eastern Europe. He identifies general trends while skillfully tracing the unique shape they take in each of the countries he considers. His discerning portrait of the Jewish communities in these countries dispels the idea that they are a "vanishing remnant."

**Understanding the Old Testament (4th edition).** By Bernhard Anderson. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall. Completely revised and rewritten, this new edition takes full advantage of the latest archaeological findings and changes in Biblical interpretation. The author interweaves historical, literary and theological elements of the Hebrew Bible in an inclusive presentation that appeals to all readers, regardless of their social or religious position. The book helps the reader appreciate the historical, literary and religious dimensions of the Scriptures that have had, and continue to have, a profound influence on Western civilization.

**Eros and the Jews: From Biblical Israel to Contemporary America.** By David Biale. New York: Basic Books. In a myth-shattering journey through the sexual culture of the Jews, Biale demonstrates that Jewish tradition from the Bible and the Talmud through modern America is a story of persistent conflict between asceticism and

gratification, between procreation and pleasure. With broad historical strokes, the book pursues the tension between procreation and sexual desire in a culture that required that everyone marry. The author shows that from the period of the Talmud onwards, Jewish culture continually struggled with sexual abstinence, trying to find ways to incorporate the virtues of celibacy within a theology of procreation. The contemporary dilemmas of Jewish desire, from intermarriage to the meaning of erotic pleasure, have their analogues in the past.

**The Jews in Palestine in the Eighteenth Century.** By Jacob Barnai. Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press. Despite financial and physical hardships, the Jewish settlements of Jerusalem, Hebron, Tiberias and Safed gained a foothold in Palestine—the Yishuv—in the 18th century. The continuous immigrations of Jews to Palestine contributed to population stability in this region; these immigrations over difficult routes and through hostile countries often were interrupted by wars. Because there were few means of independent support, many immigrants to Palestine—mainly Torah scholars and devout Jews—depended a great deal on the financial support of the Diaspora.

Their success was, in large part, owing to the efforts of the Istanbul Committee of Officials for Palestine who, after 1726, oversaw the collection of support money for the Yishuv, managed the Palestine community's budget, established regulations for governing the communities and settled disputes between Jews and the Gentiles. The importance of the Yishuv in the spiritual life of the Diaspora alone could not ensure the continuation of the Jewish settlement in Palestine, and the contribution of the Istanbul officials was crucial. This book is a major contribution to our understanding of these issues during the Ottoman period.



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# BOOK BRIEFINGS

A Supplement to Menorah Review

Spring 1995

**Editor's Note:** Inclusion of a book in "Briefings" does not preclude its being reviewed in a future issue of Menorah Review.

**Yeshayahu Leibowitz: *Judaism, Human Values and the Jewish State*.** Edited by Eliezer Goldman. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. Since the early 1940s, Leibowitz has been one of the most incisive and controversial critics of Israeli culture and politics. In these hard-hitting essays, he considers the essence and character of historical Judaism; the problems of contemporary Judaism and Jewishness; the relationship of Judaism to Christianity; the questions of statehood, religion and politics in Israel; and the role of women. Together these essays constitute a comprehensive critique of Israeli society as well as politics and a probing diagnosis of the malaise that afflicts contemporary Jewish culture. His understanding of Jewish philosophy is acute, and he brings it to bear on current issues. This translation brings a much-needed, lucid perspective on the present and future state of Jewish culture.

***Six Days in June: How Israel Won the 1967 Arab-Israeli War*.** By Eric Hammel. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. A distinguished military historian becomes the first chronicler of the 1967 Six Day War to unite the story of development of Israel's bold brand of military training and planning with a detailed narrative account of her breathtaking victories in Sinai, Jerusalem, the West Bank and the Golan Heights. Hammel decisively disproves the myth that Israel's stunning 1967 victory was a "miracle" or "fluke." He explains how, by necessity and in secret, a tiny Third-World nation developed a First-World military force that has become the envy of all the world's nations. His book seamlessly meshes classic military history with the human drama of Israel's "finest hour."

***Redemption and Utopia: Jewish Libertarian Thought in Central Europe*.** By Michael Lowy. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press. Toward the end of the 19th century, a generation of Jewish intellectuals appeared in Central Europe whose work marked modern culture. Drawing on German Romanticism and Jewish Messianism traditions, their thought was organized around the kabbalistic idea of Tikkun—redemption. Lowy uses the concept of "elective affinity" to explain the surprising community of spirit that existed between redemptive messianic religious thought and the wide variety of radical secular utopian beliefs held by this group of intellectuals. He outlines the circumstances that produced this unusual combination of religious and non-religious thought, illuminating the common assumptions that united such seemingly disparate figures as Buber, Kafka, Walter Benjamin and George Lukacs.

***What is the Use of Jewish History?*** By Lucy S. Dawidowicz. New York: Schocken Books. What is the use of Jewish history? Of history in general, for that matter? When one of the best-known Jewish historians asks this question at the end of a long career, we can be sure of an answer that is profound, passionate and personal. This posthumous collection of Dawidowicz's essays presents her published articles on contemporary uses and misuses of the Holocaust as well as material relating to her last work-in-progress, a major history of American Jews. A testament to the historian's craft by one of its great practitioners, it will inspire all those who see in the writing of history a primary vehicle for the preservation of culture.

***The Broken Staff: Judaism Through Christian Eyes*.** By Frank E. Manuel. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. In this masterful history, Manuel ranges over the centuries, from antiquity to recent times, analyzing the diverse responses of European Christendom—Catholic, Protestant and free-thinking—to the culture and religious thought of the Judaism that survived, even thrived, in its midst. It is a history of marked contrasts. Though prolific in the outpouring of diatribes, European writers never agreed about Jewish thought and religion. Manuel shows us the "rediscovery" of historical Judaism by Renaissance humanists alongside the vicious attacks mounted by Reformation leaders. He surveys the Christian Hebraists in the period that followed, and he discusses the many ends—missionary, political, eschatological, Judeophobic—to which Christian thinkers turned their learning. This rich and penetrating account substantiates the author's view that there never has been what is now blithely called a "Judeo-Christian tradition." This book will be of interest to readers intrigued by the history of ideas, as well as to students of Judaica and Christian thought.

***People of the Body: Jews and Judaism From an Embodied Perspective*.** Edited by Howard Eilberg-Schwartz. Albany: State University of New York Press. By shifting attention from the image of Jews as a textual community to the ways Jews understand and manage their bodies—for example, to their concerns with reproduction and sexuality, menstruation and childbirth—this volume contributes to a revisioning of what Jews and Judaism are and have been. The project of remembering the Jewish body has both historical and constructive motivations. As a constructive project, this book describes, renews and participates in the complex and ongoing modern discussion about the nature of Jewish bodies and the place of bodies in Judaism.

***The Human Race*.** By Robert Antelme, translated by Jeffrey Haight and Annie Mahler. Marlboro, VT: The Marlboro Press. As a young man, Robert Antelme joined a Resistance group formed by friends. Arrested by the Gestapo and deported in 1944, Antelme was rescued, thanks in part to Francois Mitterand who, visiting the liberated Dachau in his capacity of French Secretary of State for Refugees, Prisoners and Deported Persons, recognized Antelme, then on the verge of succumbing. He returned to Paris in a state of physical ruin, having lost the desire to live and with feelings of guilt for having survived at all. If he did manage to pull through, it was chiefly for the sake of pursuing what was then his single aim: to try to put into words the "experience" he had just undergone. *L'espece humaine*, originally published in 1947, now presented in English for the first time, is a book unlike any other. Maurice Blanchot has spoken of it as "the simplest, the purest and the nearest to that absolute, the human race, of which it serves for us as a reminder."

***If I Am Not For Myself: The Liberal Betrayal of the Jews*.** By Ruth R. Wisse. New York: The Free Press. Jews have been driving force behind liberal politics. Recent evidence suggests that their commitment has not waned, but the liberal commitment to the Jews is not

*continued, next page*

nearly so strong. Liberals have been slow to defend Jewish rights and have preferred to hold the Jews responsible for the persistence of their enemies. The explanation, says Wisse, is the survival and success of anti-Semitism. Unwilling to suspend their optimistic view of man as a benevolent and rational being to combat a mortal enemy, most liberals conclude that Jews themselves must be responsible for the continuing wars against them. Wisse shows how and why anti-Semitism became the 20th century's most successful ideology and reveals what people in liberal democracies would have to do to prevent it from once again achieving its goal.

***Jewish Civilization: The Jewish Historical Experience in a Comparative Perspective.*** By S.N. Eisenstadt. Albany: State University of New York Press. This volume explains why the best way to understand the Jewish historical experience is to look at Jewish people, not just as a religious or ethnic group or a nation or "people" but as bearers of civilization. This approach helps to explain the greatest riddle of Jewish civilization—namely, its continuity despite destruction, exile and loss of political independence. The major question the author poses is to what extent the characteristics of the Jewish experience are distinctive, in comparison to other ethnic and religious minorities incorporated into modern nation-states, or other revolutionary ideological settler societies. He demonstrates through his case studies the continuous creativity of Jewish civilization.

***Understanding the Dead Sea Scrolls.*** Edited by Hershel Shanks. New York: Random House. This book traces the scrolls' often Byzantine path from their initial chance discovery in 1947 by Bedouin shepherds to their status as what Bible scholar Harry Thomas Frank calls "the most sensational archaeological discovery of the century." Cloak-and-dagger antiquities trading, conspiracy theories and front-page battles for access to the scrolls' secrets all contribute to the intrigue. This collection addresses the primary question raised by the scrolls: What do they tell us about early Christianity and developing Rabbinic Judaism? Was Jesus an Essene? Did John the Baptist live with the Qumran community that wrote the scrolls? Is the Temple Scroll the 1st sixth book of the Torah? Is the Copper Scroll a map to hidden temple treasures? What do the nearly 200 Biblical scrolls tell us about the development of the Hebrew Bible?

***Love, Marriage and Family in Jewish Law and Tradition.*** By Michael Kaufman. Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson Inc. The comprehensive exploration of love, marriage and human sexuality as viewed by Jewish tradition is more than an introduction to its subject. It is also a detailed study designed to present the richness and profundity of Jewish wisdom regarding human relationships. The author examines the ideas of Judaism as well as the down-to-earth teachings of Jewish practice. Some books representing a religious view are true to the letter of the law; others are true to the spirit of the law. Kaufman does not ignore one at the expense of the other. He is deliberate in his effort to represent both the spirit and the letter. He demonstrates that within Jewish tradition, Jewish law is none other than a concretization of the abstract ideas and ideals found at the core of Jewish faith.

***Does God Belong in the Bedroom?*** By Michael Gold. Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society. This book examines Jewish sexual ethics for today. We live in an age of sexual confusion when the traditional guidelines, evolved in simpler times, no longer answer all our modern questions. Does Judaism offer appropriate guidelines to the intimacy of the bedroom? Can we bridge the gap between tradition and the dilemmas of our time? Gold turns to the Torah, the wisdom of the Rabbis in the Talmud, Midrash and other classic Jewish sources. He explores the vast reservoir of Rabbinic

sources on sexuality, ranging from extreme asceticism to a frank celebration of love and sexuality. Some of the issues he considers are marital, non-marital and extramarital sex; pornography; rape and incest; masturbation; homosexuality; birth control; abortion; new reproductive techniques; and sex education. He applies Jewish responses to the post-pill, AIDS-conscious world Jews live in today. This book is a frank, honest approach to sexual ethics.

***Fighting Back: A Memoir of Jewish Resistance in World War II.*** By Harold Werner. New York: Columbia University Press. This is the extraordinary memoir of a survivor who was a leader of a large and successful Jewish resistance movement in Poland during World War II, ultimately controlling large stretches of countryside. Aggressively conducting military operations against the German army in occupied Poland, the unit of young Jews (men and women) received air drops from the Russians, wiped out local garrisons, blew up German trains and even shot down German planes. The book is a rare combination of military victory and humanitarian efforts in successful large-scale Jewish resistance against the Nazis. Werner's compelling work is a moving portrayal of the difficulties faced by Eastern European Jews trying to fight the Nazi campaign of annihilation and the overwhelming anti-Semitism they faced in their own country before, during and after the war.

***The Great Chasidic Masters.*** By Abraham Yaakov Finkel. Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson Inc. This volume offers selections from the writings of the towering giants of Chasidism. The original works of these masters are not readily available and have never been rendered into English. Finkel provides us with a doorway to a world that is for many either closed or difficult to enter. A clearer insight into the mindset of the chasid and a deeper appreciation of the sublime greatness of the chasidic masters emerge from this unique encounter with the words of Torah.

***From Prejudice to Persecution: A History of Austrian Anti-Semitism.*** By Bruce F. Pauley. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press. Pauley provides a general history of Austrian anti-Semitism and the Jewish response to it from the Middle Ages to the present, concentrating on the period between the start of World War I and the annexation of Austria by Germany in 1938. He explains why anti-Semitism was stronger in Austria than anywhere else in Central or Western Europe, and why Austrian Jews were so vulnerable politically, economically and socially on the eve of the Holocaust. Pauley demonstrates that anti-Semitism affected every aspect of Austrian life and was by no means limited to the Austrian Nazi Party or proponents of the Anschluss of 1938. All the country's major political parties were anti-Semitic, as were many private and professional organizations.

***Ellis Island to Ebbets Field: Sports and the American Jewish Experience.*** By Peter Levine. New York: Oxford University Press. Levine explores the importance of sports in transforming Jewish immigrants into American Jews. Drawing on interviews, he recounts stories of many who became Jewish heroes and symbols of the difficult struggle for American success. Their experiences illuminate a time when Jewish males dominated sports such as boxing and basketball, helping to smash stereotypes about Jewish weakness while instilling American Jews with a fierce pride in their strength and ability in the face of Nazi aggression, domestic anti-Semitism and economic depression. This book reveals a community where sports served as a middle ground between generations of people who were actively determining for themselves what it meant to be American Jews. Recreating that world through marvelous stories, anecdotes and personalities, Levine enhances our understanding of the Jewish-American experience as well as the struggles of other American minority groups.