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# MENORAH

## REVIEW



NUMBER 38 • CENTER FOR JUDAIC STUDIES OF VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY • FALL 1996

### For the Enrichment of Jewish Thought

#### Jews and the New Christian Right

1996 Brown Lecture

*The following article is excerpted from the lecture presented by Dr. Melvin I. Urofsky for the Selma and Jacob Brown Lecture held last March. The annual lecture is sponsored by the Center for Judaic Studies and the Friends of the Library of Virginia Commonwealth University. Dr. Urofsky is professor of history at Virginia Commonwealth University.*

In 1994 the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) of B'nai B'rith published a 193-page study entitled *The Religious Right: The Assault on Tolerance and Pluralism in America*. The study, prepared by David Cantor, was intended to warn the country of the growth, in Cantor's words, of an "exclusionist religious movement" seeking to "unite its version of Christianity with state power." The majority of the report, it should be noted, did not deal with anti-Semitism but with the perceived threat of the Christian Right to traditional political and civil liberties in the United States, especially the First Amendment's ban on establishment of religion.

One might have expected that Pat Robertson and other leaders of the Christian Right would have protested and charged that the ADL report misquoted them and contained numerous factual errors. What one would not have anticipated is that many prominent Jewish conservatives, including Jacob Neusner, Mona Charen, Michael Medved, Midge Decter and Irving Kristol, all came to the defense of the Christian Right.

What is going on here? For those of us who like clean lines and nice little boxes into which we can neatly categorize events, trying to understand the relationship of Jews and the new Christian Right will prove a most frustrating experience. Instead of crisp lines, there will be blurred areas, overlaps and contradictions.

What concerns many Jews, and I should add many Americans of all faiths, is the

exclusionary attitude of so much of the Christian Right. Listen for a moment to some of the voices from that camp.

"We will rule and reign along with our Sovereign, Jesus Christ, and establish a Christian United States."—Pat Robertson, head of the Christian Coalition and CEO of the 700 Club empire.

"I want you to just let a wave of intolerance wash over you. I want you to let a wave of hatred wash over you. Yes, hate is good... Our goal is a Christian nation. We have a Biblical duty, we are called by God, to conquer this country. We don't want equal time. We don't want pluralism."—Randall Terry, founder of Operation Rescue.

"We must fight against those radical minorities who are trying to remove God from our textbooks, Christ from our nation. We must never allow our children to forget that this is a Christian nation. We must take back what is rightfully ours."—Jerry Falwell, founder of the Moral Majority.

Let me make clear that for mainstream Jews, the issue is not anti-Semitism although that is certainly tied in this tangle. Rather, because Jews have so strongly identified with the liberal state, they fear that should the religious agenda of Robertson, Falwell and others be successful, it will mean the end of tolerance for all who do not adhere to the official creed. Although Robertson, Falwell and others now talk about the "Judeo-Christian" heritage, it is a heritage that many Jews would be unable to find in the writings of Isaiah, Micah and the other prophets.

Why, then, do we find so many Jews allying themselves with the Christian Right

or defending it against charges by the ADL, the ACLU and similar groups. The answers vary, depending on what kind of Jew you are. Listen for a moment to the following quote: "The *Torah* tells us that feticide is prohibited... That really is the beginning and end of the subject."

The speaker is Yehuda Levin, an Orthodox rabbi from Brooklyn who is a leader in the anti-abortion crusade. Levin, one of the few rabbis in the anti-abortion movement, was invited to give the invocation at a March for Life rally in Washington where he was astounded to see more than 100,000 men and women show their support for what he terms "the sanctity of life." "It gave me a tremendous jolt," he said, "to see and encounter so many Gentiles with deep moral sensibilities that were akin to mine."

*"That were akin to mine."*

For Yehuda Levin and for thousands of like-minded Jews, this is indeed the case. They oppose many of the things that the Christian Coalition abhors. They detest homosexuality, believing it to be a sin against God. They have strong ideas about family structure and believe women should stay in the home, being good wives and mothers in the patriarchal system. They believe that education must be built around religious values and that tuition tax credits should be available to those who send their children to religious schools. They object to pornography and, while not a major issue, there are some Orthodox who subscribe to the creationist narrative of the origins of humanity. Those Jews who do not share the intensity of their beliefs are dismissed as inauthentic. Those who claim to be Jews, but do not adhere strictly to the *Torah* commandments, are, according to Levin, "practicing a religion which is not Judaism."

How comfortable are Orthodox Jews in their alliance with conservative Christians? For some, there is no discomfort at all. Howard Phillips, an ultra-right Jew, was a co-founder along with Richard Viguerie and Paul Weyrich (both ultra-conservative Catholics) of the Moral Majority, and the three of them recruited Jerry Falwell in the summer of 1981 when they needed an evangelical to organize fundamentalist voters.

Jacob Neusner, who is one of the leading Jewish scholars of our time, publicly

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announced that he had no problem when Governor Kirk Fordice of Mississippi declared that this is a Christian country. Fordice further stated that "the less we emphasize the Christian religion, the further we fall into the abyss of poor character and chaos in the United States," to which Neusner responded, "Amen, brother!"

Neusner further suggested that "when it comes to the kinds of moral values expressed in politics, evangelical Christians have more in common with conservative Jews, conservative Blacks and the so-called 'white ethnic' Roman Catholics than these groups have with the secularists who seem to dominate American public life."

Neusner, Levin and others see many similarities between their religious views and those of the Christian Right. All people are created in God's image and, therefore, all life is sacred. Religion is the source of wisdom and conscience and, thus, necessary to sustain a society. The only good society, therefore, is one in which religious values dominate and, by this interpretation, the First Amendment's Free Exercise Clause is designed to keep government from interfering with people living a religiously valued life. "Nearly the whole message set forth by the Christian Right," according to Neusner, "can find its counterpart, point by point, in Judaism and Islam."

There are many on the Christian side who have welcomed the alliance. Where the evangelicals used to talk of "the Christian tradition," they are now careful to say "Judeo-Christian." Tim LaHaye, one of the leading fundamentalist writers, believes that religious Protestants, Catholics and Jews share basic values and, "if religious Americans work together in the name of our mutually shared moral concerns, we just might succeed in reestablishing the civic moral standards that our forefathers thought were guaranteed by the Constitution." The evangelical activist Franky Schaeffer has called for what he terms "an ecumenism of orthodoxy."

Jewish spokesman for conservative groups are quick to point out that they are not endorsing Christian theology but only their political agenda. A leader of Agudath Israel said, "We can overlook our religious differences because, politically, it makes sense." Rabbi Joshua Haberman admits that he disagrees with some of the New Christian Right agenda as well as the extremism it occasionally displays. "Yet far greater than these differences," he maintains, "is the common moral and spiritual frame of reference I share with Christians, including fundamentalists. The Bible gave our nation its moral vision. And today, America's Bible Belt is our safety belt, the enduring guarantee of our fundamental rights and freedoms."

There are significant theological differences within Catholicism, Protestantism and Judaism, as well as between these groups.

What forges this alliance is that the orthodox in all religions are committed to a moral universe founded on transcendent, immutable and authoritative laws. God has declared His judgment—and for the orthodox it is always His—and in the words of the Bible, they are true and altogether just and forever. There is no place in this worldview for relativism, for differences of shading; it is a world of good and evil, of black and white, and there is no room for wishy-washy shades of gray. There is, indeed, more in common between a fundamentalist Christian and an Orthodox Jew than between them and their more liberal co-religionists.

As for the tendency of some proselytizing Christians to try to convert Jews, conservative Jews assert that they should be ignored and attention paid to Judaism's true friends. And two orthodox rabbis testified at this past fall's Road to Victory gathering of the Christian Coalition that Jews in America have no better friends than the Christian Right!

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Friendship, of a particular kind, is one more thread in this tangle and that is friendship for Israel. The ill-conceived war in Lebanon in the early 1980s led to the disaffection of many mainline liberal churches who saw little difference between what they termed American aggression in Vietnam and Israeli actions in Lebanon and the territories.

Evangelical leaders, however, proved to be among the strongest supporters of the Jewish state and seemed to care little, if at all, about the moral rightness or wrongness of Israeli foreign policy. The reasons, of course, grew out of evangelical theology. Christianity would triumph with the Second Coming of Christ only after the Jews had returned to the land promised them by the God of Abraham. If the Likud and orthodox Israelis talked about about a greater Israel and argued that the Biblical grant included the West Bank (or as they called it, Judea and Samaria), Christian fundamentalists in this country would shout "Amen!"

Some Jews welcomed these signs of friendship. Nathan Perlmuter, then the ADL director, said that the litmus test for "real" anti-Semitism was anti-Zionism and, in the 1980s, the conservative churches appeared to be the only ones to pass that test. Rabbi Daniel Lapin, who regularly speaks at Chris-

tian Coalition meetings, has called its members "gentle people—who have been steadfast friends of Jews and Israel."

As for the eschatological reasons behind this support, many Jews dismiss it as irrelevant. Irving Kristol summarized it neatly when he said: "It is *their* theology, but it is *our* Israel." Menachem Begin agreed, and he and Falwell became close friends.

Let me attempt to bring some of these threads together and reach some tentative conclusions.

The social turmoil of the last three decades has created a new phenomenon in American politics, a well-organized and potent coalition of Christian social and cultural conservatives who have a particular agenda they wish to impose on the nation. They believe the United States can only be saved from anarchy and moral degradation if this agenda is adopted. When they talk of reestablishing a Christian nation, they want a nation committed to what they see as Christian ideals.

Many—in fact, I would say most—Jews oppose the New Christian Right because they fear not only for themselves but for the country. As one Reform rabbi said, "When I hear the words 'Christian America' I see barbed wire."

A Christian nation could mean literally that, one that would allow only Christians and, since there is a caustic debate over the definition of who is a Christian, that would mean the onset of religious wars as terrible as anything seen in Europe following the Reformation. But liberal Jews also fear for the tradition of the United States as a nation devoted to pluralism, to tolerance, to freedom of expression, to diversity of thought and lifestyle—in short, just those characteristics that the rest of the world envies and wants to emulate.

The Orthodox Jewish community has great sympathy with the social and political agenda of the Christian Right. They share a similar worldview and believe that a nation that does not obey God's commandments is doomed. According to Rabbi Lapin, "We Jews must liberate ourselves from misplaced faith in secular liberalism and face the truth: Increased Christian commitment in America is not a threat. It is a blessing."

The Christian Right's battles against abortion, homosexuality and pornography are the battles of Orthodox Jewry as well, and they share the Christian Right's views on education and the role of women. Because evangelical Protestantism is not monolithic, the Jewish Right believes it would be able to live in a hermetically sealed world, safe for secularism—just one more of a number of God-fearing, Bible-observing sects.

A small but growing number of Jewish political and social conservatives agree with the social agenda of the Christian Right. They believe religion should be a central

feature of public discourse, that pornography and homosexuality are wrong, that public education is a failure and that the solutions proposed by the Christian Right make sense not only for Christians but for all Americans.

Finally, a number of Jews who do not agree with the social agenda of the Religious Right are, nonetheless, willing to work with them because of the latter's support of Israel.

We end with a classic question—"Is it good for the Jews?"—to which we might give a classic answer—"I don't know!"

I am an American, a Reform Jew and a college professor, and in each one of those persona I have been taught to question authority, to value the individual above the group even while recognizing the need and the importance of community, to be tolerant of other beliefs, and to recognize that, as Oliver Wendell Holmes put it, "time has upset many fighting faiths."

I also recognize that, in the eyes of many, the American penchant for diversity and individualism has been carried too far and there is some truth to that. We have as a society, on occasion, behaved in a selfish, hedonistic, anarchistic and even a destructive manner. But a religious authoritarianism is not the right alternative. If we, as a society, have gone too far to one extreme, the answer is to find the middle, not to swing to the other extreme.

Jews, it has been said, have "long eyes." They remember and many of the things they remember are not pleasant. In days of established religion, Jews lived on the sufferance of the Christian king and, as soon as trouble arose, it always became more expedient to sacrifice the Jews to mob mentality than to reason with the mob about morality or even economic self-interest. Jews have been a convenient scapegoat throughout history, and the reason for that is because of the long-standing Christian view of the Jews as Christ-killers.

We are told that no one believes that anymore, that the Catholic Church has apologized, that the Christian Coalition believes in a Judeo-Christian heritage, that Jews and Christians both share a common ethical tradition, that liberalism has failed and that Jews ought to embrace their true allies and friends, the conservatives.

But the history of this century would indicate that the genie of anti-Semitism can easily escape, especially when social upheaval occurs. History, both recent and past, also shows how Jews and other minorities suffer when rigid religious fundamentalists gain control of the government. Iran is but the latest in a long line of similar events going back for centuries. One does not have to be a liberal to believe that the liberal state is critical to the maintenance of civil liberties. Irving Kristol may be right that Jews have to look beyond the confines of the Democratic Party but even he recognizes it

is the secular state that has been the bulwark of Jewish freedom.

I am as scared by the fundamentalists of the Jewish Right as of the Christian Right and for the same reason. Both have a worldview that is rigid and intolerant of other views. They believe they know what God wants and anything else is sinful. If one wants a clearer parallel between the agendas of Orthodox Jews and Christians, all one need do is look at their Jewish counterparts in Israel who want to impose religious conformity on the country and make the government adhere to *Torah* rather than secular law. And woe to anyone who does not accept Judaism as they define it.

Tolerance is not a virtue in the eyes of the Ayatollah Khomeini, Randall Terry or Yehuda Levin. Perhaps in the type of Christian nation envisioned by Pat Robertson there would be room for an Orthodox Jewish enclave but I do not believe there would be much room for Jews or Christians who did not adhere to the teachings of these new prophets.

Ironically, the very religious groups that once fought to be free of the domination of an established church in this country now want to establish what would, in effect, be an even more powerful and domineering church, one wedded to and acting through the government. They want, whether they recognize it or not, to destroy the very tolerance and diversity that has allowed them to thrive. That cannot be good for anyone.

## A Time To Kill and a Time To Heal

*Jews, Medicine and  
Medieval Society*  
by Joseph Shatzmiller  
Berkeley: University of  
California Press

A Review Essay  
by Peter J. Haas

The period from the 12th through the 14th centuries, roughly the period covered by this book, were significant years for the development of the medical sciences in the West. It must be remembered that the West had, in effect, inherited two relatively distinct medical traditions from the Roman world. One was the philosophical tradition of Hippocrates and, especially, Galen. This tradition tried to describe and evaluate the structure of the human body on the basis of some theory of cosmology or physics. The other was the craft of healing, whether of setting bones and dressing wounds or of using the vast cornucopia of herbs that nature provided. While never entirely isolated from each other, these were distinct tradi-

tions. As the Roman empire collapsed and intellectual life became the possession of the Church, the philosophical tradition of medicine slowly was forgotten while the folk art of medicine continued, of course, to flourish.

What makes the High Middle Ages interesting in this regard is the coincidence of three developments. This first is the rediscovery, through the Arabs in large part, of the Roman intellectual and philosophical tradition of medicine. The second, occurring during these same centuries, was that many monasteries, which had been houses of study and prayer, began active work in the community, work that included care for the injured and sick. Finally, it was in these centuries that the first "secular" institutions of instruction, the early universities, began to take shape outside of the Church. None of these developments took place in isolation of each other and none were without controversy. In fact, a complex interplay of social, political, economic and philosophical factors led to the revival of classical learning and, with it, Roman medicine among Christian lay people and intellectuals, to include both those in the monasteries and those in the new secular universities. It is the context of these deep social changes that the role of Jews and medicine in Medieval society ought to find its place.

Unfortunately, Shatzmiller fails to consider these factors in any depth. Despite his stated interest in understanding "the social and economic conditions that gave birth to such professional opportunity for Jews in a world that tended to exclude them from almost all other professions" (p. x), Shatzmiller gives only the barest description of what he calls the "medicalization of society." What we have instead is a string of accounts about the interaction between Jews and the emerging medical culture of the West. These accounts are drawn from archival sources mostly from Southern France (and largely from the court records of Manosque), with occasional glances at Germany, Spain and Italy. Larger questions about the social and economic developments of Europe at this time, about the development of science in general and medicine in particular, and even about the changing relationship between Christians and Jews (or the Church and the Jews, which is not the same thing) are not addressed.

One result of this neglect is the absence of any framework for evaluating the archival evidence that Shatzmiller is so good at locating and presenting. The book is full of wonderful vignettes of how Jews and others interrelated in the medical context. There is, however, a kind of static, staged quality to these encounters because they occur against a colorless and featureless background that gives us no sense of time or space. The drama of these times is entirely missing.

There is a wonderful story, for example,

of how Rabbi Asher of Toledo had his eyesight partially saved in 1350 by a skilled Jewish oculist after her predecessor, a Christian woman, failed to effect a cure (p. 111). This story is full of suggestive questions. First of all, what was the status of the two women involved? Shatzmiller refers to the successful treatment of the "Jewish physician," but it is not clear that she, or her Christian counterpart, were in fact "university-trained" physicians as opposed to folk-healers. Nor is it clear why Rabbi Asher (or his family) should have turned first to a non-Jewish healer. What might this have told us about Jewish-Christian relations in 14th century Spain as well as about the role that women played in the healing arts? Were certain social prejudices and ideals at play; e.g., did Christians, with their fuller access to monasteries and universities, have a reputation for greater knowledge in medicine? Did women enjoy an advantage in certain areas (i.e., eyes, childbirth) and men in others? Were similar forces and stereotypes at work in other areas of Europe (Shatzmiller suggests at one point that Jews in some regions were presumed to be the better physicians)? It would also be interesting to know more about the nature of Asher's condition and what was known about the eyes, both in folk-medicine and in philosophical medicine at the time. To be sure, much of this information may be beyond recovery. But even this one example gives an idea of the kinds of questions that lurk behind this text and never quite makes it to the surface.

There is another dimension as well. The development of the practice of medicine, and the role of the Jews in it, was not a monolithic event that took place all of a piece and at one time across the continent. The reconfiguration of European society in the late Middle Ages was a highly complex affair in which the Church in its many forms, the diverse universities with their new insights into nature, the emergent urban centers with their new economic organizations and the new secular rulers all struggled to define themselves against one another. This struggle took a variety of forms in different realms and over the centuries as the forces of change ebbed and flowed due to local circumstances and personalities. The Jews, by the very nature of things, were caught up in all this. In other words, there is no simple formula by which the nature of Jew, medicine and medieval society can be neatly related and summed up. What is needed is a mechanism for allowing us to see the intricate interplay of forces that in each case shaped Jewish life in these crucial years. What we have instead are broad generalizations that presume that Jews were everywhere and always discriminated against.

One case in point is Shatzmiller's discussion of remuneration (p. 116f). Here he notes that salaries paid to Jewish physicians seem systematically lower than salaries paid

to non-Jewish physicians. Shatzmiller gives us an impressive array of examples. But was this discrepancy as universal as it is made to sound and, if so, are there reasons beyond the mere Jewishness of the physician that might account for this? Shatzmiller's answer, by default, is that Jews were routinely discriminated against. This, of course, may well be true but the situation in the High Middle Ages was so complex and fluid that I think other factors are worth at least a consideration. The close kind of archival work that Shatzmiller does is just the sort of basic research needed to determine whether the received tradition of Jewish life in the Middle Ages is in fact accurate as is or is in need of fine-tuning and greater nuance.

Joseph Shatzmiller's strength lies in his considerable abilities as an archivist. His book, in its 142 pages of text and nearly 70 pages of notes (many giving the primary sources in their original language, usually Latin), gives us many tantalizing glimpses into the experiences of Jewish medical practitioners in the 13th and 14th centuries. What is now needed is the work of bringing these data to address the larger question of the place of Jews in the West at the dawning of modernity.

*Peter J. Haas is professor of religious studies at Vanderbilt University and a contributing editor.*

## The Wisdom Tradition

*Wisdom Literature and the Structure of Proverbs*  
by T.A. Perry  
The Pennsylvania State University Press

A Review Essay  
by Cliff Edwards

This scholarly work by the Professor of Modern and Classical Languages at the University of Connecticut at Storrs is likely to confuse by its title and challenge by its unusual parameters and technical, structuralist approach. It is not a commentary or an analysis of the canonical book of Proverbs, though its title may lead one to expect just that. It is rather the study of an "intellectual tradition" extending from the Biblical period through medieval Spain to the Renaissance, focusing on the wisdom tradition as "a specific tool to critical thinking and value analysis." Praise of the book by the "dean" of Biblical wisdom studies, James Crenshaw, indicates the work's importance at the frontier of wisdom studies today. Crenshaw remarks: "There is no other study of the structure of proverbs that can match this one in scope or in heuristic utility." For the

specialist in paremiology, this may well be so; for the general reader, it is less likely.

Certainly Perry's compact volume (132 pages) is filled with analyses and insights that stimulate thought and may well overturn commonly accepted views of the wisdom tradition and its intent. The proverb and its democratic ideals reflecting collective experience is viewed by Perry as the target rather than the ally of wisdom sayings. The lonesome representing "an intellectually aristocratic movement" holds the world's collective wisdom suspect and utilizes a tactic of "paradoxical opposition." Rightness rather than consensus, faith rather than observed cultural values, mark the ways of wisdom. While folk proverbs presume an authority that is "tyrannically single-voiced," wisdom seeks to undo such totalizing approaches, contesting and debating popular proverbs, alerting the reader to the deceptions of language, and demonstrating the relativity and contextuality of human value judgments.

Wisdom's deep structure involves a binary presentation of valuational topics focusing on contexts and choices that must be discussed and evaluated. Perry discovers in wisdom's workings a logical structure that he calls "quadrupartite," the implying of four propositions through the combination of one valuational topic with a second valuational topic, a structure that seeks to exhaust logical possibilities and demonstrate relativity and contextuality. A reading of Perry's many examples and a viewing of his evaluational grids of pluses and minuses to uncover the deep structure of wisdom sayings is necessary for an appreciation of his method and results. His book abounds with such examples and grids.

In spite of the difficulties an orientation to Perry's project might entail, the questions he raises regarding a too easy confusion of the wisdom tradition with folk proverbs and consensus offers new insights and creative directions for wisdom studies.

*Cliff Edwards is professor of philosophy and religious studies at Virginia Commonwealth University and a contributing editor.*

## AMONG THE SAINTS

Hiding out among the saints,  
my reputation grows for piety  
much undeserved and yet I  
pray more to keep my cover

What do I hide from or for?  
I'm not all that sure though once it  
seemed clear and urgent enough  
to mask myself from myself and you

Now I've forgotten who I was and become  
my own deep cover  
why do I feel forever.  
Tap me and I ring forever.

—Richard Sherwin



## Full Circle

*Karaite Separatism in  
Nineteenth-Century Russia:  
Solomon Joseph Lutsi's  
Epistle of Israel's Deliverance*  
by Philip E. Miller  
Cincinnati: Hebrew Union  
College Press

A Review Essay  
by Leon J. Weinberger

In the above study, Philip Miller has achieved what the physicists call "a singularity." This account of a once flourishing Karaite community in the Crimea, now fallen on hard times, is an eminently readable human interest story told in an academically impeccable manner.

Miller traces the life of the Crimean Karaites from its early beginnings in the 12th and 13th centuries when references to the community are sparse to the modern period for which records are more plentiful. Regrettably, much of the data on the latter period has come to us through Abraham Firkovitch (1786-1874) who was known, on occasion, to play fast and loose with the documents that passed through his hands. A notable example is the latter's Tatar translation of Lutsi's Hebrew *Epistle* in which he deletes details "for no apparent reason," or because he prefers "not to dwell on [Lutsi's] humiliation" at the hands of a Polish innkeeper who shaved off Lutsi's beard (p. 64, n. 6).

With that caveat in place, Miller proceeds to describe the improved lot of the Crimean Karaites in the early 16th century due to the influence of Sinan b. Joseph with the reigning Khan whose sickly daughter he had healed. Sinan b. Joseph, also known as Sinan Chelebi, was the founder of a dynasty that dominated Karaite life for the next three centuries. (The term "Chelebi" from the Turkish is an honorific title and is synonymous with the Hebrew *Hakham*. The 15th-century Rabbanite poet, Elia Ha-Kohen b. Israel Chelebi from Anatolia also merited this title. See L. Zunz, *Literaturgeschichte der syngagalen Poesie*, p. 519.) The close relationship between the Karaite Sinan-Chelebis and the Muslim Giray family, the ruling Crimean Khans, continued through the following centuries and even after Catherine II formally annexed the Crimea in 1783.

Crimean Karaite access to the seats of political power proceeded during the Russian occupation of the peninsula. The considerable influence of the Karaites at the Russian court was seen in their successful protest against the imposition in 1794 of a poll tax—double the rate to be paid by Chris-

tians—on all Jewish subjects. While the Rabbanites were reticent, the Karaites dispatched a delegation consisting of Benjamin Aga, a descendant of the Sinan-Chelebis and Solomon b. Nahamu Babovich (or Bobovitch), a wealthy Karaite and member of a equally prominent family. (A synagogue hymn, *Imtishguwe-lo'ta' asumiswotay* for the lection *Shelah*, from a Karaite liturgical collection from the Crimea [Ms. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, #666] yields a acrostic *A/v/rahamha-Rofe Qar[a]l Boba, Hazaq* [Abraham, the physician, a Karaite, Boba...]. See L.J. Weinberger, *Rabbanite and Karaite Liturgical Poetry in South-Eastern Europe*, pp. 718-9). Their petition to Catherine II resulted in exempting the "Crimean Jewscalled Karaites" from double taxation and, as an added bonus, they were assured their right to permanent possession of their landed property (Miller, p. 14).

The "clout" of the Crimean Karaites was once more displayed in 1827 when the Russian government decreed enforced military service for its Jewish subjects. Again a delegation of Karaite notables, including Simhah Babovich, Solomon b. Nahamu's son, journeyed to St. Petersburg to seek relief from the decree.

A member of this delegation, Joseph Solomon Lutsi, recorded the event in his *Epistle of Israel's Deliverance*. In elegant Hebrew prose, Lutsi rejoices over the news that the petition of the Karaites to be exempted from military service had been granted by Catherine.

Lutsi's narrative is long on details of their journey, including their residence in the prestigious Malaia Morskaiia, located directly behind the Admiralty and adjacent to the Winter Palace (Miller, p. 29). Lutsi also takes pride in the warm reception accorded the delegation by the Russian Minister of Interior Affairs, the Governor of the Crimea and the Governor-General of New Russia, all of whom were in St. Petersburg at that time.

Lutsi's chronicle also notes with satisfaction the promptness of the government's response to their petition: They had arrived in the capitol on November 23 and their request was granted on November 27.

These propitious circumstances were interpreted by the chronicler as evidence of divine guidance. Although the military exemption was granted on a date close to Hanukkah—which the Karaites do not observe because it is not based on a Biblical source—the official Karaite observance of "Israel's deliverance" was celebrated on the Sabbath of the lection *Ki Tissa* (which generally comes after Purim). The delegation's successful mission was observed as a second Purim and it is likely that parts of the *Iggeret* were read in the synagogue at that time.

To the more critical modern reader who seeks a "rational" explanation of the Karaite mission's success, Miller suggests that the

enterprising Babovich may have been in the business of provisioning the Russian military. This would account for his deluxe accommodations behind the Admiralty and his ready access to high government officials.

Supplying the military was of considerable urgency in 1828, given their attack on Turkey in the spring of 1828 (Miller, p. 32). Lutsi was probably aware of Babovich's business dealings with the Russian military, although he does not mention them in his chronicle. To do so might detract from the "divine guidance" theory of the delegation's success.

Here is the human interest part of the story. Encouraged by their achievements and successful access to high government officials, the Karaites established a Spiritual Consistory in 1837, which was recognized by the government. As a result, they were granted a status that separated them from the Jewish Rabbanites. They had hoped to attain this goal during their mission to St. Petersburg in 1827 but were unsuccessful.

In their coup of 1837 the Karaites achieved official confirmation of a 1795 rescript issued by Catherine the Great that recognized them as a nation, separate and apart from the Rabbanites. This, despite Lutsi's generous references in his *Iggeret* to the Rabbanites as "brethren." It should be added that Lutsi retired as Eupatoria's "sage in residence" (Miller, p. 45) in 1835 and may not have had a part in the radical change of Karaite status that followed two years later.

Thanks to the establishment of a separate Spiritual Consistory that severed their connection with the Rabbanites, the Karaites were spared the horrors that the former endured under the tsars, Hitler and Stalin. These gains, however, were costly. The younger generation of Karaites, now no longer an oppressed minority, opted for assimilation into the greater majority culture. Miller notes (on p. 48) that whereas the official census in 1926 counted 8,324 citizens who registered Karaite as their nationality, in 1979 only 534 did. Miller closes his "Epilogue: From Separate Identity to Assimilation" with a sad irony (p. 49):

There are no schools anywhere in the former Soviet Union where "Kara'im" [a distinctive Turkic dialect] is the language of instruction. There are no books or newspapers published in the language, no "Kara'im" broadcasts and cultural activities such as theater. The religious aspect of Karaite culture, already weakened by intermarriage and assimilation before the Bolshevik revolution, seems later to have fallen victim to extirpation. *Not considered Jews under Soviet law, the Karaites were ineligible for emigration to Israel* (italics mine).

Philip Miller's highly recommended work is divided into an introduction detail-

ing the beginnings of separatism; the missions to St. Petersburg in 1795 and 1827; a study of Solomon and Simhah Babovich, and Joseph Solomon Lutsi; and an epilogue. Part Two presents the Hebrew text of Lutsi's *Iggeret* and Miller's English translation, three appendices, and a bibliography. Regrettably, the volume lacks an index.

*Leon J. Weinberger is university research professor at the University of Alabama and a contributing editor.*

## Teaching Jewish Civics and Culture

*Binah* (2 Volumes)  
edited by Joseph Dan  
Praeger Publishers

A Review Essay  
by Steven F. Windmueller

We are introduced for the first time in this two-volume (loose-leaf) edition to materials that were previously not available in English and presented in a digest format permitting quick and useful access. Joseph Dan, the editor of the series entitled *Binah* (to understand), produced this material on behalf of the International Center for University Teaching of Jewish Civilization (Jerusalem) and the Open University of Israel (Tel Aviv).

Initially, the 20 articles that appear in this collection were published in Hebrew "for scholars, by scholars." Detailed explanations, extensive background notes and numerous references accompany these original materials.

To make this information more accessible and "user-friendly," the editor of the English edition presents these individual items in "an adopted form," adding explanations and, in turn, omitting background references and extensive notes. He further reminds us that each selection was reviewed by either the original author or by scholars in the appropriate field of specialization in those cases where the writer was no longer alive.

The material in these two volumes, as the editor has noted, reflect significant individual examples of the ever expanding literature of Jewish thought and philosophy. Two journals alone in Israel, *Da'at*, produced at Bar Ilan University and the *Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Thought*, a product of the Gershom Scholem Center in Jerusalem, represent only a sampling of the growing body of literature focusing on Jewish studies and, in particular, Jewish thought.

In a number of ways, the most creative areas of contemporary Jewish life are reflected in the academic disciplines that are

producing, in both quality and quantity, vast new materials, in part influenced and encouraged by some of the great thinkers in *Binah*.

The editor (Joseph Dan) reminds his readers that the goal of this undertaking "should serve to indicate the important potential for the teaching of Jewish Civilization on the undergraduate level." In assessing this objective, as against the product made available to us, I would argue that the producers of this material have, only in part, achieved their objectives. My caution, here, would rest on the actual selections, of which only a specific number would appear to offer to the reader significant insights into primary events in Jewish history, key personalities and specific citations of documents central to a period in Jewish history.

The preparation, however, of this type of case-study material serves to assist those of us who believe that among the most effective means of teaching Jewish civics and culture involves the introduction of original documents, the use of case models and the focus on individual "leader types." Joseph Dan has provided certain specific items that do seem to meet my criteria for the teaching of Jewish civics. I would refer, in particular, to Barouh Mevorah's chapter on "Jewish Diplomatic Activities to Prevent Expulsion of the Jews from Bohemia and Moravia in 1744-45," Titzhak Baer and his work on "The Origins of Jewish Communal Organization in the Middle Ages," and Yochanan Lewy's research on "Tacitus on the Jews."

Each of these papers affords the reader certain helpful and historic insights into three distinctively separate periods of Jewish history: the early modern, medieval and Roman era. These specific models permit the student to assess the components of each subject area, namely the primary *institutions*, the central *individuals*, the basic *issues* associated with each study and the core *incidents* that define the case under review. In teaching Jewish civics, these elements define the characteristics and behavior of the historical period and provide the basis for understanding decisions that were rendered as well as the actions undertaken.

The majority of the remaining chapters feature either an emphasis on particular religious literary themes or reference certain Jewish personalities. In the latter category, the reader is treated to a fascinating piece by Warner Zev Harvey on Maimonides and Spinoza dealing with their views on "good and evil." Elizer Schweid's writing on Martin Buber and Joseph Dan's selection on Gershom Scholem are among the better selections in this category.

*Steven F. Windmueller is director of the School of Jewish Communal Service, Hebrew Union College, Los Angeles, and a contributing editor.*

## What Is a Community?

*The Death of an American Jewish Community:  
A Tragedy of Good Intentions*  
by Hillel Levine and Lawrence Harmon  
New York: The Free Press

A Review Essay  
by John V. Moeser

The social mosaic of our cities today is shaped, in large measure, by countless numbers of private decisions about living and working arrangements. We are all aware of the extent to which neighborhoods are defined by income, race and ethnicity, and that people make choices about where they want to live based on these factors as well as others, including housing design, neighborhood layout, lifestyle, schools, proximity to work, access to shopping and cultural amenities, and safety. Much of the physical mobility that for so long has characterized U.S. society can be attributed to decisions made by private individuals as they respond to changes in their social and economic circumstances and as they act on their own system of values and their personal preferences. The fact that racial and social divisions within our metropolitan areas are getting wider and that comparatively few neighborhoods in the United States are genuinely integrated and have remained so over any length of time reveals the extent to which people seek out others like themselves. Indeed, in many of the newer, upscale-suburban subdivisions, complete with walls, gates and guard houses, the emphasis is on exclusion rather than inclusion, personal security rather than social interaction.

Personal preference alone, however, fails to fully explain why people live where they do. To suggest that individual choice determines the social geography of our metropolitan areas is much too simplistic and overlooks the effect of corporate decisions and government policy on demographic trends. For years, discriminatory practices in the real estate and banking industry affected the racial and social composition of neighborhoods. Until 1948, when they were declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court, restrictive covenants prevented homeowners from selling to certain groups of people, most often African-Americans and Jews. Middle-class, white home seekers were routinely steered to some neighborhoods (usually all-white) and their middle-class, black counterparts were directed to all-black or transitional neighborhoods. Though illegal now, steering continues to occur.

Also for many years, banks wrote-off

whole areas of the city (usually inner-city minority neighborhoods) as poor investment risks through a practice known as "red-lining." The result of these decisions was that the targeted neighborhood, starved for mortgage and housing rehabilitation loans, began to deteriorate—thus, contributing to the self-fulfilling prophecy that the neighborhoods were, in fact, in a state of decline and, therefore, constituted high-risk areas. That practice, too, is now prohibited by law but, like steering, red-lining has not been completely eliminated. Also, recent studies of who gets mortgage loans and who is turned down reveal that African-Americans are much more likely to be denied housing loans than whites of the same income level.

Meanwhile, for three decades Federal Housing Administration (FHA) policy contributed to segregated housing patterns by denying applications from minorities who sought FHA assistance in purchasing homes in all-white neighborhoods. This federal agency operated on the premise that values of surrounding properties would decline if a person of an "inhomogeneous" race or nationality "infiltrated" a neighborhood. As Charles Abrams discussed in his *Forbidden Neighbors: A Study of Prejudice in Housing*, the FHA, during the 1930s and 1940s adopted the pernicious system outlined in real estate texts and included in the curriculum of major real estate programs that rank ordered races and nationalities in terms of their impact on neighborhoods. The English, Germans, Irish and Scandinavians were ranked as the "most desirable" followed, in descending order of "desirability," by North Italians, Bohemians or Czechs, Poles, Lithuanians, Greeks, Russian Jews, South Italians, Negroes, and Mexicans. Today, local zoning policies and subdivision mandates that govern the size of individual lots also affect the distribution of income across the metropolis inasmuch as some areas are reserved essentially for the wealthy and other areas for the poor.

The point is that the spatial allocation of race and social class are consequences of both personal choice and corporate as well as government behavior. The power of the latter to shape a city's social geography and, in so doing, to abrogate citizens' freedom to choose where they want to reside and how they wish to live is the subject of Hillel Levine and Lawrence Harmon's *The Death of an American Jewish Community: A Tragedy of Good Intentions*. The authors' penetrating analysis of race, political power and corporate influence explains how the center of Jewish life in inner-city Boston was essentially destroyed in less than 20 years by a combination of factors, chief among them an agreement made in 1968 by government officials and executives of the 22 leading banks in Boston to restrict the availability of millions of dollars in FHA guaranteed mortgage loans only to those who sought to

purchase housing in a certain section of the city. In a strange twist of red-lining, instead of denying loans to minorities living in city neighborhoods, the bankers and FHA officials determined that only blacks willing to relocate to designated neighborhoods would be eligible to participate in the FHA program sponsored by the Boston Bank Urban Renewal Group (B-BURG). It was not by accident that the section of the city targeted by the policy makers was the inner-city Jewish community.

In an effort to address a serious crisis developing in Boston's black ghetto, not the least of which were the housing pressures created by federally-sponsored urban renewal projects that destroyed thousands of housing units and left displaced residents stranded, the B-BURG executives and local government officials responded with a program that they believed would foster a couple of laudable goals: home ownership and racial integration. They reasoned, however, that the working-class Irish and Italian communities situated near the urban renewal area where blacks were losing their homes would be hostile to the relocation of displaced blacks into their neighborhoods. Since the bankers opposed opening their own suburban neighborhoods to black residents, they concluded that the logical area for the new housing program were the Jewish neighborhoods since that section of the city was no longer profitable for the banks because so many of the elderly homeowners had long ago paid their mortgages in full and because Jews were more tolerant of African-Americans than the Irish and Italians.

The problems that ensued from the implementation of the program were sudden and severe. One unanticipated consequence was that targeting the area for millions of dollars from FHA guaranteed loans and then steering black home seekers to the target area led to wholesale blockbusting whereby unscrupulous real estate brokers preyed on the fears of the older Jewish homeowners and, through the use of scare tactics and intimidation, persuaded them to sell their homes for cash at below market value. Levine and Harmon cite examples of some of the techniques used by the brokers. Unsuspecting homeowners, for instance, would be approached with word that, because blacks were moving into the area, property values were dropping at the rate of \$1,000 per month and that it was best to sell now rather than wait. Parents were approached and told, "You have a 12-year-old daughter. What if she was raped? You'd have a mulatto grandchild" (p. 195).

Brokers sold at inflated prices the same properties they had earlier purchased from Jewish residents at below market value. Mortgage loans were pegged to the sale price and they, in turn, were based on shoddy, on-the-spot "windshield inspections" by FHA functionaries. Faced with a heavy

mortgage payment for property worth less than half the price and faced with housing repairs the inspection report never included, the new homeowner often failed to meet payments and would default. In fact, in the early 1970s, more than 70 percent of B-BURG-assisted home buyers had defaulted on their loans. However, because of the FHA guarantees, the banks prospered since the foreclosures were assigned to Housing and Urban Development (HUD) with the banks profiting from the fees charged for processing the loan applications and, of course, making considerable sums from the FHA insurance.

The impact of the B-BURG Program was dramatic. In the 1950s, more than 90,000 Jews lived within a three-square-mile area of Boston that included the neighborhoods of Roxbury, Dorchester and Mattapan. Today, this same area houses most of Boston's 120,000 African-Americans. In fact, to quote the authors, "In much of the district, more than 50 years of Jewish settlement were overturned during a two-year period from 1968 to 1970." It was that two-year period when the targeted loan program was in operation.

Levine and Harmon's analysis of the home ownership program is instructive for several reasons. First, it demonstrates how good intentions can lead to shameful results. No one argued with the objective of the program but the manner in which the program was executed—by limiting loans only to blacks who agreed to move only to a designated area—was devastating to both the Jewish community and the Jewish-black relationships in Boston.

The historic civil rights alliance between Jews and African-Americans began to crumble as both groups were victimized. Working-class Jews sold their homes under duress and moved away while blacks, who were equally deceived, bought the high-priced properties and defaulted. The program had the effect of extending the boundaries of the black ghetto, and all of the problems many blacks were attempting to escape when they moved into the B-BURG simply reemerged. Though both were subjected to forces beyond their control, blacks and Jews blamed each other for the changing conditions in the neighborhood, with many Jews, terrorized by young black toughs who were beginning to assume control of the streets, venting their anger at all blacks. Many blacks, meanwhile, exploited by Jewish slumlords who charged exorbitant rents for housing that violated building and health codes, directed their hate to the whole of the Jewish community. Racism and anti-Semitism flourished, splitting apart Jews and African-Americans who once had a common cause by appealing for racial and social justice. What makes Levine and Harmon's account so compelling is that their analysis, albeit a case study of one city, provides good



insight into Jewish-black tensions that are mounting nationally and to the antecedents of that tension.

Levine and Harmon's study is instructive for another reason. It probes the class conflict within the Jewish community. Years before the drawing of the B-BURG line and just after World War II, middle- and upper-class Jews had begun moving to the suburbs. These relocations were aided and abetted by decisions of Jewish leaders to move neighborhood anchors such as Hebrew College and Mishkan Tefila (the oldest conservative synagogue in Massachusetts) to new sites beyond the city. The transplantation of Jewish families and institutions in the suburbs led to growing spatial separation between the Jewish upper classes and the Jewish poor. The latter, Levine and Harmon argue, were essentially abandoned and had to bear the brunt of the B-BURG-induced changes that transformed the neighborhood with no assistance from suburban Jews.

The Jewish Defense League (JDL), whose Boston chapter took root in the B-BURG zone in an effort to organize Jewish resistance to the demands of black militants and the terror waged by disaffected black youth, was contemptuous of the silk-stocking Jews living in the suburbs for ignoring black anti-Semitism and essentially turning

their backs on the poorer members of their own community. While the tactics of the JDL were condemned by leaders of mainline Jewish organizations, the Jewish elite remained passive for much too long and failed to address, until it was too late, the problems occurring in inner-city Boston. The authors provide ample evidence that implicates suburban Jewry in the tragedy that befell

#### FROM ISRAEL WITH LOVE

Were we to walk down Hagar Road again  
in the sun, the wind off the bay  
in our faces, talking while up above  
the sparrows, terns and hawks  
were hunting their necessities, and  
under foot the colonies of squirrels  
fed and bred, and all around the bikes  
and busses wove among the students,  
live and dead.

Gildas, the world would be sabbatical  
again a moment framed eternally  
and I'd be smelling as I do the plums  
and you'd be tasting as you do the wheat  
and both of us be watching blossoms  
come to Aaron's staff  
among the cherry tree.

—Richard Sherwin

Roxbury, Dorchester and Mattapan. The essence of what was happening in Boston, and across the country, was captured in a 1968 speech at Boston University by Anthony Lucas, the Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist who later wrote a probing account of the struggle over school desegregation in Boston, *Common Ground: A Turbulent Decade in the Lives of Three American Families*. Quoted by Levine and Harmon, Lucas observed, "The centripetal pull of shared ethnicity may be less powerful than the centrifugal force of social class. Class is America's dirty little secret, pervasive and persistent yet rarely confronted in public policy or judicial intervention" (p. 259).

*The Death of an American Jewish Community* is a powerful account of one neighborhood's struggle and the role that public policy as well as corporate power played in the problems that gave rise to the struggle. In a larger sense, however, it is an account of race and class conflict in the United States and the competing notions of what constitutes community as American society becomes increasingly more diverse and contentious.

*John V. Moeser is professor of urban studies and planning at Virginia Commonwealth University.*



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# BOOK BRIEFINGS

A Supplement to *Menorah Review*

Fall 1996

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

**International Perspectives on Church and State.** Edited by Menachem Mor. Omaha, Nebraska: Creighton University Press. The chapters in this book consist of two major parts. The first section is devoted to a variety of questions concerned with church and state as well as the free exercise of religion in the United States. The second part considers international aspects of religious toleration, especially areas in which the state and religion both claim jurisdiction, such as educational policies. Particular attention is given to the Jewish perspective on church-state issues.

**Raising Up a Faithful Priest: Community and Priesthood in Biblical Theology.** By Richard D. Nelson. Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press. This thought-provoking study reviews priesthood from a theological perspective and explores the theological value and significance of priests in the Hebrew Bible and in the New Testament. Nelson reviews Biblical concepts of priesthood and provides guidance as well as data for exegetes and systematic theologians as they resolve the implications of the Bible's view of priesthood.

**Prophecy and the Biblical Prophets.** By John F.A. Sawyer (rev. ed.). New York: Oxford University Press. Sawyer first studies the phenomenon of prophecy in a wide context, the prophetic literature represented in the Bible and the message of the prophets. Then, he surveys all the prophets, from Moses to Huldah, and the prophetic books, from Isaiah to Malachi. A final chapter continues the story of biblical prophecy into the early church and considers Jewish, Christian and Muslim interpretation as well as the matter of fulfillment of prophecy. It also contains a new section on feminist interpretation. The book is an excellent guide to current discussion of Biblical prophecy.

**On Modern Jewish Politics.** By Ezra Mendelsohn. New York: Oxford University Press. In this book, Mendelsohn presents a concise guide to the complexities on modern diaspora Jewish politics. He divides the various Jewish political parties and organizations into a number of schools or "camps," provides a geography of Jewish politics and analyzes the results of the competition among the different camps for hegemony in the Jewish world. He pays particular attention to the United States and Poland, homes to the two dominant Jewish communities in the inter-war period. The book also discusses the sources of appeal for such forces as nationalism and the left, and compares Jewish politics with that of other minorities in Europe and America. Mendelsohn provides a new perspective on a remarkable period in Jewish history.

**Judaism Faces the Twentieth Century: A Biography of Mordecai Kaplan.** By Mel Scult. Detroit: Wayne State University Press. This is the first critical examination of the early life of Mordecai Kaplan—the sources of his inspiration, the evolution of his thought as a religious ideologue and his inner struggles. Based on a mass of unpublished letters, sermons and a 27-page volume journal, this richly textured biography reappraises Kaplan's significance and

offers an original and intimate look at the man, his mind and his work.

**A Guest in the House of Israel: Post-Holocaust Church Theology.** By Clark M. Williamson. Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press. In this thought-provoking book, Williamson challenges his readers to become aware of the inherited ideology of anti-Judaism that has distorted Christian teaching, even on such key matters as Jesus, the Scriptures, the church and God. He bases his study on a wide range of confessional literature from Roman Catholic to Protestant doctrines. He demonstrates that both the people of Israel and the church stand in relation to God only by the grace of God and suggests a radical, constructive alternative to the "teaching of contempt."

**The Death and Resurrection of the Beloved Son: The Transformation of Child Sacrifice in Judaism and Christianity.** By Jon D. Levenson. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. The near-sacrifice and miraculous restoration of a beloved son is a central, but largely, overlooked theme in both Judaism and Christianity, celebrated in Biblical texts on Isaac, Ishmael, Jacob, Joseph and Jesus. In this highly original book, Levenson explores how this notion of child sacrifice constitutes an overlooked bond between two religions. Analyzing texts from the ancient Near East, the Hebrew Bible, the New Testament and rabbinic literature, Levenson shows how tales of the son handed over to death by his loving father in the Hebrew Bible influenced the church's identification of Jesus as a sacrificial victim. His book offers novel interpretations of several areas crucial to Biblical studies.

**Paradigm Shift: From the Jewish Renewal Teachings of Reb Zalman Schachter-Shalomi.** Edited by Ellen Singer. Northvale, N.J.: Jason Aronson Inc. Schachter-Shalomi is often considered the "grandfather of the Haverah movement" and the most influential advocate of the rapidly growing Jewish Renewal movement. The "paradigm shift" asks that we recognize that there are newly emerging ways of looking at reality. Reb Zalman teaches that we must let go of the old paradigms rather than cling to obsolete ways of thinking. He offers what he calls the "journey of my own recontextualization of Judaism as helped by Jewish mysticism." He gives a unique blend of Jewish mystical ideas as they encounter the forces of sensibilities of today.

**To Tell At Last: Survival Under False Identity, 1941-45.** By Blanca Rosenberg. Champaign: University of Illinois Press. Keeping a promise made to her brother before he died at the hands of Nazis, Blanca Rosenberg has written an enormously intriguing account of the struggles that she and her friend, Maria, faced daily in their Holocaust odyssey. It is a story about the courage and initiative required to survive. With death and destruction all around them, these two women surrendered their identities but not their lives. The author depicts Nazi brutality and carnage in chilling detail.

**Facing the Abusing God: A Theology of Protest.** By David R. Blumenthal. Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press. In this powerful book Blumenthal maintains that having faith in a post-Holocaust world means admitting that while God is often loving, He is also capable of acts so unjust they can only be described as abusive. Grounding his argument in the Scriptures and in the experience of Holocaust survivors as well as survivors of child abuse, he grapples with how to face a God who works "wondrously through us" and who has worked "aw(e)fully against us." Delving into Jewish literary and theological traditions, the author articulates a theology of protest that accepts God as God is yet defends the innocence of those who are victimized.

**Karaite Separatism in Nineteenth-Century Russia.** By Philip E. Miller. Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press. This study surveys the history of Russian Karaites. Focusing on events that led to the creation of the Karaite Religious Consistory in 1837, Miller shows how the Karaites successfully dissociated themselves from the Rabbanite Russian Jews. This separatism "resulted in a schism within Judaism unprecedented since the rise of Christianity." It shielded the Karaites from the fate suffered by the Rabbanites under the tsars, under Hitler and under Stalin, but it ultimately led to their nearly complete assimilation and disappearance as a people. The central character in the study is Simchah Babovich, a Crimean Karaite whose wealth and prominence enabled him to curry favor with the imperial Russian government. In 1827, he traveled to St. Petersburg to petition the tsar for exemption from military conscription legislation. The account was recorded by Joseph Solomon ben Moses Lutski. His account is reprinted in this book.

**The Fatal Embrace: Jews and the State.** By Benjamin Ginsberg. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. In this provocative book, Ginsberg examines the cycle of Jewish success and anti-Semitic attack throughout the history of the diaspora with a concentrated focus on the "specific case" of America. His book identifies the political dynamics that, historically, have set the stage for the persecution of Jews. Ambitious rulers have found in the Jews a source of talent not tied to the status quo; Jews have played major roles in building states. In this embrace of the state, Jews have risen to positions of wealth and power. But the influence has proved to be temporary. The embrace of the state has often proved to be fatal. Because this embrace have been problematic, Ginsberg is cautious about the future.

**Process Theology: A Basic Introduction.** By C. Robert Mesle. St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press. Writing with insight and remarkable clarity, Mesle introduces his readers to a way of thinking about God and our world that explores profound questions while never losing sight of sheer common sense. The result is a basic primer in the fundamentals of process theology for which many have long been waiting. From chapter nine: "Process theology is for those who have given up belief in a picture of God whose only virtue is unused power or power used selectively for a lucky few. Instead, process theology calls us to accept a world in which we must bear responsibility...God's primary avenue to liberation is through responsive human hearts."

**Eisenhower and Israel: U.S.-Israeli Relations, 1953-1960.** By Isaac Alteras. Gainesville: The University Press of Florida. This first detailed analysis of early U.S.-Israeli relations draws on recently declassified documents from both countries, most notably David Ben Gurion's diaries and correspondence and the Israeli State Archives. Alteras explores relations between the United States and Israel during the Eisenhower administration in the context of U.S. interests in the Arab Middle East and devotes considerable attention to the impact of American Jewry on Eisenhower and Dulles' policies toward Israel. In this examination, Alteras breathes life into the

political figures whose motivations and decisions helped shape the two countries' attitudes toward each other today.

**The Lonely Days Were Sundays: Reflections of a Jewish Southerner.** By Eli N. Evans. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi. Evans has accomplished what is rare in the world of ideas. He has created and articulated a unique perspective—that of the Jewish South—and has become its most eloquent voice. As this collection testifies, he is at home in many worlds. This volume of essays, which concerns itself with the meaning of southern, American and Jewish history, is anchored in the pivotal themes of the last century, ranging from the abolition of slavery to the tragedy of the Holocaust, from the agony of the Civil War to the creation of the State of Israel. Evans combines his region and his Jewish heritage into a complex and subtle mixture of insights. He intertwines autobiography with observation that informs as it inspires.

**The Revenge of God; The Resurgence of Islam, Christianity and Judaism in the Modern World.** By Gilles Kepel. University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press. In this translation of the best-selling book, *La Revanche De Dieu*, Kepel offers a compelling account of the resurgence of religious belief in the modern world. He examines religious revivalism in Islam, Christianity and Judaism, arguing that the simultaneity of these revivals is not coincidental but reflects widespread and profound disquiet with modernity. He further argues that this revivalism has major implications for the future of civil society. The author presents a convincing framework for understanding religion and religiosity in the late 20th century.

**Palestinians, Refugees and the Middle East Peace Process.** By Don Peretz. Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press. The refugee issue cuts across the entire spectrum of problems in the Middle East. Who are the refugees, and what are their hopes and aspirations? In this clearly written volume Peretz examines the current conditions and future prospects of the Palestinian refugees and the members of the Palestinian diaspora to provide answers to these questions. He explores a variety of proposed solutions including repatriation, compensation and resettlement.

**The Image of Bar Kokhba in Traditional Jewish Literature: False Messiah and National Hero.** By Richard G. Marks. University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press. Bar Kokhba led the Jewish rebellion against Rome in A.D. 132-135, which resulted in massive destruction and dislocation of the Jewish populace of Judea. This book is a history of the perceptions that later Jewish writers, living in the fourth through 17th centuries, formed of this legendary hero-villain whose actions, in their eyes, had caused enormous suffering and disappointed messianic hopes. Marks examines each writer's account. He builds a history of images and looks at larger patterns, such as the desecralizing of traditional imagery. His findings raise timely political questions about Bar Kokhba's image among Jews today.

**Truth and Lamentation: Stories and Poems on the Holocaust.** Edited by Milton Teichman and Sharon Leder. Chicago: University of Illinois Press. The stories and poems written during and after the Holocaust reveal the human faces hidden behind the all-too-familiar statistics of the event. International in scope, this volume brings together 20 short stories and 90 poems commenting on the essentially incomprehensible nature of the Holocaust. The editors have drawn from a remarkably varied range of writers, representing nine languages and including both Jews and Gentiles. The contributors include the well known and the as yet known. A critical introduction places the selections within two broad categories of literary response to the Holocaust: truth-telling and lamentation. The first reflects the desire of writers to transmit multiple truths; the second expresses sorrow and loss.