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MENORAH REVIEW

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For the Enrichment of Jewish Thought

Black-Jewish Relations: Past, Present and Future

Blacks and Jews: Alliances and Arguments
edtied by Paul Berman
New York: Delacorte Press
In the Almost Promised Land: American Jews and Blacks, 1915-1935
by Hasia Diner
Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press
What Went Wrong? The Creation and Collapse of the Black-Jewish Alliance
by Murray Friedman
New York: The Free Press
Jews and Blacks: Let the Healing Begin
by Michael Lerner and Cornel West
New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons
The Black Anti-Semitism Controversy: Protestant Views and Perspectives
by Hubert G. Locke
Selinsgrove: Susquehanna University Press
An Unillustrious Alliance: The African-American and Jewish-American Communities
by William M. Phillips
Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group

A *Review* Essay
by Rafael Medoff

"The remarkable thing" about relations between African-Americans and Jewish-Americans, writes Murray Friedman in *What Went Wrong?*, "is not that the black-Jewish alliance is now in eclipse but that it held together for so long—or indeed that it ever existed." Romanticized versions of the history of black-Jewish relations, focusing on the civil rights movement of the 1950s and early 1960s, ignore the fact that "conflicts such as those recently experienced erupted long before the halcyon days of the 1960s," Friedman emphasizes; "fractious but largely forgotten incidents are no less typical of this long-standing but troubled relationship." Friedman's sober assessment of both the highs and lows of the relationship is a welcome counterpoint to the sometimes overheated rhetoric on both sides of the debate concerning black-Jewish relations.

The crumbling of the black-Jewish civil rights alliance in the 1960s was followed by the emergence of a body of stimulating literature on the subject, some of it scholarly, some not. Many of the early contributions, such as the 1970 Robert Weisbord-Arthur study, *Bittersweet Encounter: The Afro-American and the American Jew*, emphasized what blacks and Jews have in common and brushed over their differences. Black anti-Semitism was explained as a response to the misbehavior of Jewish landlords, Jewish storekeepers in black neighborhoods or Jewish housewives in the treatment of black domestic workers. More Jewish aid to African-American causes and more government aid for programs likely to help disadvantaged African-Americans were recommended to ease inter-ethnic tensions as well as bring about a more just society.

One problem with such simplistic formulae, Friedman argues in *What Went Wrong?*, is that they were short on historical perspective. In his view, divergent interests have sometimes separated blacks and Jews in the past and they will inevitably surface in the future. Friedman does not oppose aiding the disadvantaged; he merely points out, on the basis of the historical record, that black interests and Jewish interests are bound to collide on occasion.

Jewish involvement in African-American affairs began in earnest in the early 1900s, when prominent Jews played key roles in establishing and leading the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and the Urban League. These Jewish activities were motivated partly by altruism, Friedman notes, but "there was also almost certainly an element of self-interest in Jewish support of blacks." After all, "a decline in racial discrimination, many believed, could lead to a society in which anti-Semitism would also be banished." Still, as Friedman emphasizes, "acknowledging a degree of enlightened self-interest" should not mean dismissing the "moral conviction or sincerity of many of these Jews."

This point was first made 20 years ago by Hasia Diner in her penetrating study, *In the Almost Promised Land: American Jews and Blacks, 1915-1935*. The publication of the 1995 paperback edition, with an engaging new introduction by the author, is a fresh reminder of the variety and complexity of interests, motives and goals that characterize all inter-ethnic political alliances. Some of the Jewish attorneys who, on behalf of the NAACP, led the legal assault on discriminatory legislation, did so simply because they believed in the cause. Some of them may have viewed the black civil rights issues as, in Diner's words, "a stalking horse" that would ultimately pave the way for better treatment of Jews. But there were also instances in which the two groups' interests converged, as for example when Jews fought against racially discriminatory laws that could be applied to Jews as well as African-Americans.

"It was in 1935 that the seeds for the disintegration of the black-Jewish alliance were sown," Diner writes. An influential black Muslim preacher, Sufi Abdul Hamid, incited Harlem streetcorner crowds with anti-Jewish rhetoric. A number of African-American intellectuals wrote sympathetically of Hitler's anti-Semitism and black community leaders hesitated to condemn them. Then, on March 19, 1935, Harlem mobs, inflamed by false rumors of the beating of a Puerto Rican youth, singled out Jewish stores in a night-long rampage of looting and vandalism. When black rioting erupted in Detroit in 1943, the attackers again targeted

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Jewish businesses. Such outbursts played their part in temporarily diminishing some of the Jewish community's enthusiasm for African-American causes; but so did American Jewry's growing preoccupation with the Nazi persecutions as well as the general focus on wartime concerns.

After the war, however, American-Jewish involvement in the civil rights struggle resumed and intensified. The late 1940s inaugurated the period characterized by Friedman as "the Jewish phase of the civil rights revolution." In much of the public's mind, racism was associated with the defeated and discredited Nazis. Jewish organizations seized the moment, by actively promoting the virtues of an egalitarian society. They mounted concerted media campaigns advocating tolerance, lobbied for fairness legislation and sponsored impressive sociological studies to document the falsehoods and pernicious impact of racism. By the early 1960s, Jewish legal activists were waging court battles to strike down discriminatory laws, social action-minded rabbis were on the front lines of protest marches and lunch counter sit-downs, and idealistic Jewish students were taking part—and even risking their lives—in Freedom Rides to the deep South.

Yet in the mid-1960s, everything changed. Black militants spouting anti-Jewish and anti-Israel rhetoric were elected to the leadership of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), one of the key civil rights movements. The 1967 Conference for a New Politics, which had sought to build a multi-racial civil rights coalition, was dominated by extremists. An attempt by a black militant school principal in Brooklyn to fire Jewish teachers (the idea was that predominantly black student bodies should be taught by African-Americans rather than by "Middle East murderers of Colored People") set off a teachers' strike and a city-wide confrontation between Jews and blacks in New York in 1968. Disillusioned Jewish activists left the civil rights movement in droves; some shifted their energies to defense of Israel or the struggle for Soviet Jewish emigration. Later came new flashpoints: black accusations that Jews brought about the firing of U.N. ambassador Andrew Young, Jesse Jackson's "Hymietown" slurs, Louis Farrakhan's attacks on Jews and reluctance of many mainstream African-American leaders to condemn him.

So what went wrong? That depends on whom you ask.

For William M. Phillips Jr., author of *An Unillustrious Alliance: The African-American and Jewish-American Communities*, the blame rests squarely on American Jewry's shoulders. Sidestepping the phenomenon of anti-Semitism among the younger generation of black civil rights leaders, Phillips accuses American Jewry of suddenly and selfishly abandoning African-Americans "to make paramount in its concerns the issues of the Holocaust and the survival of the state of Israel." In Phillips' view, the future of black-Jewish relations, and of American society in general, is imperiled by "the Jewish lobby," which, he says, is attempting to "suppress opposition and stifle dissent" and "seriously threatens the constitutional right of free speech."

Jewish involvement in African-American affairs began in earnest in the early 1900s, when prominent Jews played key roles in establishing and leading the NAACP and the Urban League.

Professor Hubert Locke, on the other hand, suggests a link between black anti-Semitism and levels of religiosity in the African-American community. In *The Black Anti-Semitism Controversy: Protestant Views and Perspectives*, Professor Locke unveils the results of an opinion survey, conducted by the William O. Douglas Institute, of black church-goers in Seattle, Buffalo and St. Louis. The survey found that those African-Americans who were the most religious were the least anti-Semitic. The study leaves some questions unanswered, however. Only 189 blacks were polled; is that number large enough to constitute a representative sample? Religious African-Americans were found to be far less sympathetic to Israel than religious white Americans studied in other polls; what accounts for the difference? While generally expressing disagreement with the anti-Semitic sentiments cited in the poll's questions, most of the African-American respondents agreed with the notion that Jews are more loyal to Israel than to America; why should that not be considered evidence of anti-Semitism? Hopefully, follow-up studies will shed light on these and related questions.

Another perspective on the subject is provided by the African-American activist and author Cornel West, who acknowledges the existence of black anti-Semitism but, at the same time, minimizes it, hesitates to urge black leaders to condemn it, and criticizes Jewish groups for paying attention to it. West and Tikkun editor, Michael Lerner, are the co-authors of *Jews and Blacks: Let the Healing Begin*, an unusual exploration of Jewish-black relations presented in the form of transcripts of a series of conversations between the two.

For a book that ostensibly aims to promote "healing," *Jews and Blacks* contains a surprising amount of harsh rhetoric, especially from West regarding Jews and Israel. At various points in his "conversation" with Lerner, West asserts that Israel is "barbaric," guilty of "atrocities" and, as a result, "losing its soul." He cynically suggests that Jews who took part in the civil rights struggle were motivated by a desire to "be congratulated, or to keep alive their connection with their heritage or to soothe their agonized conscience." West praises Jesse Jackson despite Jackson's use of anti-Semitic slurs and is only mildly critical of Louis Farrakhan, even going so far as to explain away Farrakhan's characterization of Judaism as a "gutterreligion." According to West, "what he meant is that Judaism has been used to justify forms of domination."

Lerner sometimes disagrees with West but often either lets West's statements pass without comment or even concurs with them. For example, when West criticizes the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) for "focusing" on black anti-Semitism, Lerner agrees that the ADL—and the Simon Wiesenthal Center, he adds—are guilty of "exaggerating" the level of anti-Semitism among African-Americans.

When Lerner asks for an explanation of the sources of black anti-Semitism, West wanders off into a strange theory about the relationship between African-American anti-Semitism and white supremacist theories of "black males' reputed sexual prowess." Lerner, apparently intrigued, urges West to further expound on the "psychoanalysis of black-Jewish relations on the sexual level." West obliges with a short lecture on "the Jewish preoccupation with the id in a variety of forms, one of which is a fascination with black culture and the black body... The Jews need to feel they have a special relationship with the people associated with id." Lerner does not respond.

Jews and Blacks: Let the Healing Begin may not offer much that is likely to promote genuine healing between Jewish-Americans and African-Americans but it does offer some interesting insights into the thinking of two participants in the struggles of the 1960s who still see the world in much the same way as they did 30 years ago.

For a more diverse look at the issues underlying the fraying of black-Jewish relations, one should consider *Blacks and Jews: Alliances and Arguments*, edited by Paul Berman. In these pages, Norman Podhoretz, who began his involvement in the literary quarrels between blacks and Jews as a liberal in the early 1960s, then later became one of America's most prominent neoconservatives, presents his famous 1963 essay, "My Negro Problem—and Ours," together with a contemporary postscript. The equally famous James Baldwin essay, "Negoes Are Anti-Semitic Because They're Anti-White" (1967), is appropriately included as well. So are more recent commentaries by Cynthia Ozick, Henry Louis Gates Jr., Leon Wieseltier and others. Although most of the essays have been published previously, their appearances under one roof gives the reader

a chance to scan the wide variety of views on the topic. Here one can find a good sampling of the passions and politics of the black-Jewish relationship and a taste, perhaps, of what may lie ahead.

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Exploring Exodus: The Common Root for Judaism and Christianity

Exploring Exodus: The Origins of Biblical Israel
by Nahum M. Sarna
New York: Schocken Books

A *Review* Essay
by Frank E. Eakin Jr.

The re-issuing of Nahum Sarna's *Exploring Exodus* in 1996, 10 years after its original publication, follows his more extensive commentary in *The JPS Torah Commentary: Exodus* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1991). Sarna also wrote the Genesis commentary in this same JPS series.

In his preface, Sarna makes clear his intended audience—students, teachers and educated laymen with the "hope that the scholarly reader...will derive some benefit from it" (p. xix). There is a desperate need for this type of volume that takes seriously both findings of modern scholarship and the intelligence of the non-scholar, and Sarna has effectively fulfilled his objective without insulting the intelligence of his readers!

It is inevitable that coverage is highly selective in a book of this length and given his target market. Nonetheless, in his introduction, he covers succinctly, but adequately, historical data (pp. 5-14); concentrates on the dual thematic focus of Biblical religion, namely Creation and the Exodus; and notes seven concrete ways that the Exodus theme is used in the Biblical text "for theological and didactic purposes" (p. 2, but see pp. 2-5). He is particularly helpful to his reader in that he introduces numerous selections from ancient Near Eastern literature, used both to compare and to contrast with the Biblical literature. A recognition of the contextual setting of Biblical literature within the larger chronological and geographical background of the ancient Near East is a crucial step for a meaningful interpretation of the text.

The material reads almost as a historically oriented novel, and Sarna does not concern himself (I would judge unfortunately) with the conclusions of Biblical criticism as regards a source analysis of this material according to the JEDP hypothesis, even when he all but concedes such via his chart of the plagues on page 76. This leads him to interpret the materials in such a fashion as to assume their historicity, a point contested by numerous scholars. Nonetheless, a reader would be adequately prepared with Sarna's introductory materials to continue with the exploration of Exodus by the author.

There are so many places where one might sample the richness of this writing, but Chapter VII ("The Ten Commandments; Moses and Monotheism") is a reasonable place to drop our investigative eye. Sarna does not attempt to address each of the Ten Words; rather, he focuses on those "that are unqualified Israelite innovations...the demand for the exclusive worship of one God, the prohibition on idolatry in all its forms and the institution of the sabbath" (p. 144). On the other hand, he quite helpfully addresses rather thoroughly the concept of covenant, both as this pertains uniquely to Israel and as an ancient Near Eastern phenomenon (pp. 134-144).

Sarna associates Moses with monotheism, suggesting both that "the advent of Moses marks a radically new development in the religion of Israel" (p. 149) and that "the conclusion becomes inescapable that we are faced with a revolutionary religious phenomenon, a sudden and new monotheistic creation the like of which had not hitherto existed and the characteristic ingredients of which were not to be found on the contemporary religious scene" (p. 149). Even though I would disagree with this conclusion, personally judging monolatry to describe more accurately Yahwistic expression during the pre-exilic era, nonetheless Sarna argues persuasively his case. I would heartily concur with his evaluation of the Akhenaten phenomenon, where he concludes that "there is no basis for a conclusion that Akhenaten's Atenism was the inspiration for Mosaic monotheism" (p. 157).

As in Chapter VII, so in all of his material, much of Sarna's presentation would find little disagreement from most readers and even where disagreement exists, it rests more on the evaluation of the data and does not indicate a negative reflection on either the content or the quality of Sarna's work. For example, Sarna regularly refers to the pre-Sinaitic Hebrews as Israel and to the pre-David land of Canaan as Palestine, both, in the judgment of most scholars, terms anachronistically used. As indicated earlier, he seems to assume most of the record to be *Historie* (verifiable data), while this reviewer would prefer to acknowledge the material as *Geschichte* (recounting the significance of history).

Sarna gave his book the subtitle "The Origins of Biblical Israel" and this aptly describes the book's focus. It is unfortunate, however, that we do not characteristically see the Book of Exodus as the origins for both Israel and Christianity. It is a sad commentary that so often Christians seem to find it necessary to remythologize texts from Exodus in the process of appropriating those same texts. This is most evident in the Passover narrative (Chapter V), as Christians convene Seder meals but interpret the meal with a clear Christological typology. There is a concerted effort to redefine the symbolism so that the symbolism is uniquely Christian. As Christians, we need to recognize this is simply a modern example of the usurpation motif that has been practiced almost since Christianity's beginning. We are saying by word and deed that Jews do not really understand the full intent of their own ritual and, therefore, we are placing a secondary, or sermonic, interpretation as the primary and intended interpretation. Christians need to recognize that we already have

Sarah At the Tent Post

Baby after baby's died inside me, Lord, I feel I'm a walking tomb
The only thing I've given birth to's these tiny corpses

Doctors are useless
Rabbis not much better: men
But even the wise women don't give me much hope
And now these three jokers come

Bloody right I laughed and lied. I don't owe them the truth
What corpses of love have they littered their lives with

Watching your husband age, sad and faithful and kind in a childless tent
And now they tell him we'll be youth long past a father and mother.
You'd have cried too.

—— *Richard Sherwin*

a ritual of freedom, call it the Eucharist, the Mass or whatever designation; and, therefore, it is not necessary to redefine and appropriate what authentically belongs to a sister tradition. If Christians are to convene a Seder, we should, with Jewish assistance, conduct that meal with the greatest attention to authenticity. If a Christian community wishes to follow the Seder with its own ritual of freedom, that is a much more acceptable option than redefining and rewording, really treating with contempt, a tradition so important to our Jewish brothers and sisters.

The Passover/Seder illustration is but one example, but perhaps the most pointed, of how Christians have sought to confiscate Jewish traditions. Let us recognize that the Book of Exodus does give "The Origins of Biblical Israel" but we should never forget that Jesus of Nazareth was born, lived and died a Jew. Those origins were his origins and they are the origins of all those who call themselves Christians. It is crucially important for us to acknowledge and celebrate our differences, but it is equally important for us to acknowledge and celebrate our points of commonality. Therefore, our title seems appropriate, "Exploring Exodus: The Common Root for Judaism and Christianity."

Frank E. Eakin Jr. is Weinstein-Rosenthal Professor of Jewish and Christian Studies at the University of Richmond, chairman of its Department of Religion and a contributing editor.

On Studying Mishnah

Maimonides' Introduction to His Commentary on the Mishnah
edited and translated by
Fred Rosner
Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson Inc.

A *Review* Essay
by Matthew Schwartz

Maimonides opened the introduction to his great *Commentary on the Mishnah* with a poem expressing the yearning and the lofty inspiration that nourished his own commitment. Study of the Mishnah is a pleasing gift that teaches one the fear of the Lord. "Hearken diligently to me and eat that which is good that your souls may be as a succulent garden." Maimonides sought to feel close to his Creator and to experience as well as enjoy fully the bounties with which He graced His creation. "Let him [the reader] stop here for the feast which I have prepared and partake of the wine which I have poured and join the table which I have arranged. Come eat of my bread and drink the wine which I have mixed. Behold it contains all types of precious fruit..." In studying Torah for its own sake, combined with fulfilling what one studies, Maimonides sought to experience the richness of life most clearly and deeply.

Any scholar who has sought to master even one narrow field of study knows well the incessant laborneeded to make any small addition to knowledge. Imagine then Maimonides. Raised by his father after his mother's death in childbirth, driven from one city to another by anti-Semitic persecution all through his formative years and early adulthood, he still achieved prodigious greatness in virtually every area of study available to a 12th-century Jewish man—the full range of rabbinic studies, medicine, science and philosophy. All this in addition to a busy medical practice and service as physician to the court of Saladin in Cairo. His fame as a medical practitioner is said to have prompted an offer to the personal service of Richard the Lion-Hearted. As a philosopher, Maimonides is cited by the greatest of the medieval Christian scholastics. His works on halacha remain fundamental today for every student of Talmud. How many people can truthfully claim to have received the scholarly attention of great thinkers as diverse as St. Thomas Aquinas and Rabbi Chaim Soloveitchik of Brisk.

Jason Aronson Press has new re-issued Fred Rosner's introduction and translation to *Maimonides' Introduction to His Commentary on the Mishnah.* Dr. Rosner, a distinguished physician and teacher, is a longtime student of Maimonides and a specialist in medical ethics. His work is accurate and business-like. He cites as his methodological guide Maimonides' letter to his friend and translator, R. Samuel Ibn Tibbon, stating that a translator should attempt to translate the meaning of the original work so as to retain the flavor of the original rather than offer an incomprehensible word-by-word rendition. With this small, attractive volume, the English-speaking reader can acquire for himself an excellent introduction to the Mishnah in a few pleasant hours. The effort will repay itself manifold as the Mishnah and Talmud remain the towering expression of Jewish intellect for all students of Judaism. Maimonides' introduction itself is a masterpiece of information, clarity and style.

Maimonides completed his *Commentary on the Mishnah* at the young age of 30 in 1168 after 10 years of work, most of that time spent wandering through North Africa. (Rosner rejects the 1135 date generally accepted for Maimonides' birth.) A further point of interest is that there is extant an almost complete manuscript of the *Commentary* in what apparently is Maimonides' own handwriting.

Let us now view three topics: (1) Maimonides' format in his introduction, (2) his purpose and (3) some of his main ideas. Maimonides was, of course, not the first commentator on the Mishnah. The Talmud itself was compiled in the form of commentary on the Mishnah. R. Hananel, R. Isaac Alfasi, Rashi, the Gaonim and others had written commentaries on the Mishnah as part of their explanations of Talmud. However, Maimonides' work was innovative and unique. His commentary is not an analysis word-by-word or phrase-by-phrase. It consists, instead, of a brief essay on each mishnah. Each essay stands by itself and can be understood without struggling with the Mishnah text. The essays are very clear, displaying Maimonides' mastery, both of the material and of the art of organization and classification. Maimonides realized that the Talmud is difficult to study and he sought not primarily to elaborate but to simplify, clarify and teach.

By writing in Arabic, Maimonides made his book available to the average Jewish reader of the Islamic lands, although it was by the same token made unavailable to Jews living in Christian lands who did not know Arabic. Maimonides probably did not expect Moslems to read his work even though, perhaps, a few scholars did. Maimonides does not express any direct indebtedness to Hellenic or Arabic sources. However, he knew the thought of both worlds and it may have broadened his thinking.

Before publishing the *Commentary*, Maimonides spent years studying and had collected many writings of his father, R. Maimon, and of R. Maimon's famous teacher, R. Joseph Halevi Ibn Megas. "Following this, I saw proper to compose a commentary on the entire Mishnah, for which there is a great need." Maimonides states four aims: (1) to give the gist of the Gemara's explanation of the Mishnah, (2) to present the final legal decisions, (3) to introduce the reader to the study of Talmud and (4) to serve as an easy review for the accomplished scholar.

It is clear too that Maimonides regarded the study of Mishnah as important on its own, even without studying Gemara along with it. He criticizes an interpretation of a mishnah by R. Isaac Alfasi, adding the comment that the rabbi's error was due to his lack of care in the study of Mishnah for itself.

Most of the introduction is devoted to a Constitutional History—an account of the beginning and the historical development of Jewish Law. This account is based solely on internal evidence (i.e., the rabbinic literature itself).

How did the Oral Law begin? Maimonides writes that God gave every commandment along with its explanation to Moses, who taught them to Aaron, to the elders and, finally, to the entire nation of Israel. The commandments were written in the Pentateuch and the explanations were passed along orally from teacher to student through the generations. Additional laws were given by God to Moses orally without reliance on the Written Law. These are

halachot leMoshe miSinai. The rabbis often find some hint of them in the Pentateuch but their true base is in the Oral Tradition alone, and they are authoritative. A third category of laws are those based on analysis of the text of the Scripture.

If the traditions were so well preserved, why then are there disagreements in the Talmud between scholars? Maimonides explains at length. To say that these rabbinic disagreements are based on mistakes in the tradition is "extremely depraved and base and does not conform to basics." People can believe this only because they lack understanding of the words of the Sages. In fact, states Maimonides, controversies arose among scholars like the students of Shammai and Hillel not because the traditions are transmitted incorrectly but because these students' powers of reasoning were not well enough developed to understand the traditions fully. The traditions themselves remain accurate and untrammeled. There are, of course, later disagreements about laws derived from Scripture by the rabbis themselves based on deductive reasoning. Disagreements also arose concerning rabbinic decrees (*s'yag*) for which no basis in Scripture was necessary. Indeed, there were new ideas, as well, but the basic fundamentals of the Law and the tradition of its transmission were never subject to differences of opinion.

Some later rabbinic scholars, Khavot Yair for example, reject Maimonides' view and claim that the rabbis of the Talmud did indeed disagree regarding *halachot leMoshe miSinai*. Rabbi Zvi Hirsch Chajes (*Maamar Torah Shebaal Peh*), on the other hand, agrees fully with Maimonides and argues that some of the debates cited by Khavot Yair occur not because an orally transmitted law is unclear but only because the sages sought hints for their rulings in the Scripture.

The Mishnah, writes Maimonides, was compiled by R. Judah Hanasi, who was highly qualified for that task as he was unsurpassed in righteousness and also supremely knowledgeable, and he knew the Hebrew language better than anyone else. He studied under many teachers to collect all the traditions and opinions from Moses' time until his own. The six sections of the Mishnah and the tractates within each were arranged according to a careful plan. R. Judah began with *Seder Zeraim* because it deals with laws relating to the plants of the earth and plants represent the sustenance of all living creatures. *Seder Moed* (holidays) follows because this is their sequence in the Pentateuch (Exodus 23:10-14) and so on. The individual tractates too follow a well-planned order. R. Judah began with *Berakhot* since one is not permitted to eat until he has recited a blessing over food. *Peah* follows *Berakhot* because it discusses obligations in regard to produce that is still in the ground and so on. Some materials precede others because of logical connections of their top-

BOOK LISTING

Editor's Note: The following is a list of books received from publishers but, as of this printing, have not been reviewed for Menorah Review.

Twenty Israeli Composers: Voices of a Culture. By Robert Fleisher. Detroit: Wayne State University Press.

A Jump For Life: A Survivor's Journal From Nazi-Occupied Poland. By Ruth Altbeker Cyrpys, edited by Elaine Potter. New York: Continuum.

Early Judaism. By Martin S. Jaffee. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Old Wine, New Flasks: Reflections on Science and Jewish Tradition. By Roald Hoffman and Shira Leibowitz Schmidt. New York: W.H. Freeman and Company.

The Diary of Dawid Sierakowiak: Five Notebooks From the Lodz Ghetto. Edited by Alan Adelson. New York: Oxford University Press.

Century of Genocide: Eyewitness Accounts and Critical Views. Edited by Samuel Totten, William S. Parsons and Israel W. Charny. New York: Garland Publishing Inc.

The Order of Terror: The Concentration Camp. By Wolfgang Sofsky. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Did the Children Cry? Hitler's War Against Jewish and Polish Children, 1939-45. By Richard C. Lukas. New York: Hippocrene Books Inc.

The Rescue of Memory. By Cheryl Pearl Sucher. New York: Scribner.

The Singular Beast: Jews, Christians and the Pig. By Claudine Fabre-Vassas. New York: Columbia University Press.

Writing as Resistance: Four Women Confronting the Holocaust. By Rachel Feldhay Brenner. University Park, PA: Penn State University Press.

God of Abraham. By L.E. Goodman. New York: Oxford University Press.

They Did Not Dwell Alone: Jewish Emigration From the Soviet Union, 1967-1990. By Petrus Buwalda. Baltimore, MD: The John Hopkins University Press.

A Phoenix of Fetters: Studies in Nineteenth- and Early Twentieth-Century Hebrew Fiction. By David Patterson. Savage, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc.

Staging the Jew: The Performance of an American Ethnicity, 1860-1920. By Harley Erdman. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Holy Brother: Inspiring Stories and Enchanted Tales About Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach. By Yitta Halberstam Mandelbau. Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson Inc.

The Seductiveness of Jewish Myth: Challenge or Response? Edited by S. Daniel Breslauer. Albany: State University of New York Press.

The History of the Holocaust: A Chronology of Quotations. By Howard J. Langer. Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson Inc.

Faith or Fear: How Jews Can Survive in a Christian America. By Elliott Abrams. New York: The Free Press.

Jewish Philosophers and Jewish Philosophy. By Emil L. Fackenheim, edited by Michael L. Morgan. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

The Jewishness of Israelis: Response to the Guttman Report. Edited by Charles S. Liebman and Elihu Katz. Albany: State University of New York Press.

A Blood-Dimmed Tide: Dispatches From the Middle East. By Amos Elon. New York: Columbia University Press.

Forging a Common Future: Catholic, Judaic and Protestant Relations For a New Millennium. By Bruce Chilton, Andrew M. Greeley, William Scott Green and Jacob Neusner. Cleveland, OH: The Pilgrim Press.

ics, others because of their order in the Scripture.

Why is it necessary to record, as the Mishnah does, both sides of a legal dispute even if one opinion is not followed? Because of the need to know opinions that were opposed to the final rulings so that we may avoid advancing the same opinions again. The Mishnah also demonstrates the righteousness of those scholars who yielded when they saw that another argument was stronger.

Although Maimonides was not one who would shrink from expressing the truth as he saw it even when other scholars disagreed, this work is permeated with his expressions of respect for the great teachers. Of R. Joseph Halevi Ibn Megas he wrote, "As God lives, the understanding of the Talmud by that man is astounding to anyone who delves into his statements and the depth of his deliberations to the point that I can say of his line of thought, 'And equivalent to him there was no king before him.'"

Maimonides accepted the attitude of rabbinic thought in believing that scholarship is of paramount importance but that it is worth little unless it leads the scholar to improve his behavior and his emotional well-being. The purpose of all creation is for the existence of man, and the purpose of man's existence and of all his activities is only to insure the attainment of intellect and the proper understanding of fundamental truths (pp. 96-97). The highest of rational concepts is the understanding of the Oneness of the Creator. All knowledge is preparation for understanding this. All this is known not only from Jewish prophets and sages, he says, but even sages of ancient peoples who never saw the prophets nor heard their words were already aware that man is not perfect unless there is contained in him both wisdom and good deeds (pp. 96-99).

A professor of Judaica or of medieval literature in a modern university might well wish to use this work as a classroom text. Yet he would do so probably without Maimonides' blessing. Secular universities did not exist in Maimonides' day but Maimonides stated clearly his agreement with the Talmud's dictum that the study of the Torah is exclusively the inheritance of the Jews and that it is forbidden to teach it to the non-Jew. Nor did Maimonides give a blank check for teaching Talmud to women. Also, the study of Talmud would clearly require commitment to fulfillment of Talmudic teachings both in feeling and in practice. Clearly, the modern secular university does not and cannot make such a demand of its faculty.

(My thanks to Rabbi B. Sendler for several helpful references.)

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Christianity Without Jeers

Christianity Without Anti-Semitism: James Parkes and the Jewish-Christian Encounter
by Robert Andrew Everett
New York: Pergamon Press

A *Review* Essay
by Earle J. Coleman

This book is a revised version of the dissertation that Robert Andrew Everett wrote at Columbia University in 1982. He was inspired by James Parkes, a Christian scholar whose pioneering work in Jewish-Christian relations and the roots of anti-Semitism earned him a doctorate in 1934 at Oxford University. While attending Oxford, Parkes heard instructors assert that with the arrival of Christianity, Judaism no longer served a meaningful purpose in God's scheme. He wrote, "I had been taught that post-Christian Judaism was an arid and meaningless legalism..." Fortunately, his Oxford years also exposed him to English Modernism, a movement that pursued fresh theological ideas, Biblical criticism, criticism of dogma, and the role of evolution and progress to re-interpret the Christian faith in a modern world. In addition, pursuing a theology of politics led Parkes to re-interpret prevailing views about Judaism.

Through his study of Judaism, he saw past the image of the Pharisees as followers of the letter rather than the spirit of the law and noted that they taught Jesus during his youth and adolescence. Everett states that Parkes wanted to get Christians to go beyond the negative picture of the Pharisees in the Gospels to the realization that Jesus himself fell within the scope of the Pharisaic movement. Parkes asked why Christians did not practice the New Testament command to love one's enemies with respect to the Pharisees, the enemies *par excellence* of the early Christians. Everett adds that Jesus lived during a time when Judaism was attaining a spiritual peak, not wallowing in a religious decline.

Parkes characterizes the Gospel of John as one that treats all Jews as unrelenting opponents of Jesus. In time, Parkes became convinced that Judaism was, contrary to Christian teachings, not an incomplete expression of Christianity but an autonomous religion of equal merit. From this observation, he reasoned that Christianity needs a "Theology of Equality" to relate to Judaism. Moreover, any such theology makes conversion unnecessary, not to mention morally dubious.

Addressing the causes of anti-Semitism, Everett calls the charge that the Jews killed Jesus "the taproot for Christian anti-Semitism." Parkes wrote that the Crusaders had appealed to the deicide charge to justify their widespread slaughter of European Jews in 1096. According to anti-Semites, the Jews' alleged murder of Christ entailed that they be scattered to suffer eternally for their sins. Parkes makes the unassailable observation that even if some Jews participated in Jesus' execution, it was morally indefensible to blame all Jews. He rejected the idea that the Gentiles' contempt for the usurer was the basis for their anti-Semitism; instead, he insisted that religion, not economics, was its origin. He observed that the average Sunday school teacher—while not intentionally anti-Semite—continues to discuss the Jews as those who killed Christ and who resisted and persecuted Paul. Medieval artists created a grotesque image of the Jew as a gnarled being, with sharply pointed features, who was quite aesthetically repugnant. This stereotype appeared in sculptures on the exterior and interior of churches and cathedrals as well as in sketches for Bibles and prayerbooks, thereby accommodating illiterate as well as literate bigots. Protestant Reformers were hardly any better than many medieval; Martin Luther, who wrote some of the most offensive anti-Semitic literature that anyone ever published, wanted to burn Talmuds and synagogues as well as expel Jews from Christian nations. Everett argues further for the primacy of the religious causation of anti-Semitism, "The political and economic anti-Semites could never have gained their support from the populace unless there had been this long history of Christian anti-Semitism still operating in Europe that conditioned the people to believe anything they had heard about the 'evil' Jews." Of course, Parkes acknowledges that individual Christians sometimes risked and even sacrificed their own lives to save Jews during the Holocaust, but he faults the churches for not recognizing their sin and for failing to participate in a corporate act of repentance. Since there was not a short treatment of anti-Semitism written in the English language, at the age of 35, Parkes wrote a landmark book, *The Jew and His Neighbor*, in 1930. This was his first book on Jewish-Christian relations and it marked the beginning of an extraordinarily prolific writer, for his related writings culminated in a bibliography of some fifteen pages. Illustrating the range and importance of his work, Parkes' *A History of the Jewish People*, published in 1964, was one of only four such histories written by a Christian in the past 300 years. Most importantly, his writing on the Christian roots of anti-Semitism preceded the Holocaust and forcefully demonstrated the need for Christians to reform their traditional claims concerning Jews. Everett remarks, "Parkes' greatness stems from his uncanny ability to identify the demonic depths of Christian anti-Semitism many years before the events of the Holocaust were to unfold."

As Malcolm Diamond has remarked, few Christians are likely to follow Parkes but none should ignore his penetrating analysis of Christian responsibility for anti-Semitism.

Parkes also criticizes Christianity on the grounds that it lacks the communal interest that is so representative of Judaism. Interestingly enough, Muslims sometimes fault Christianity for the same reason. Against any divinity who is "wholly other," Parkes' God is very much a social-political, historical reality. While Karl Barth's Protestant theology enphasized the otherness of God, Parkes addressed the God who participated in the events of everyday life. He exposed false accusations against Jews in Christian historical writings; and—to expose the magnitude of Nazi anti-Semitism—he distributed copies of the German children's books *Bilderbuch*, published by Der Strumer. Such so-called children's literature perpetuated stereotypes of the vilest kind.

Christian critical reactions to Parkes' scholarship varied. One Christian lecturer argued that Parkes' estimate of Judaism must be wrong since, if it possessed value, Christians would need to study it and there was not time in the seminary years to do so! Among Parkes' activities that sometimes alienated him from his fellow Christians was his opposition to missionary activities among Jews. One can hardly expect a missionary religion such as Christianity to approve of Parkes' statement: "We have failed to convert the Jews, and we shall always fail because it is not the will of God that they should become Gentile Christians..." He characterized early missionaries not as "wicked men" but as men who thought they had the "whole truth" and who wanted "to convert those who wholly lack it." Placing Judaism and Christianity on the same footing, he denied that either could or should ever absorb the other, just as Martin Buber maintained that members of an I-Thou relationship should always retain their autonomy and never be appropriated by each other. Affirming pluralism (i.e., the view that no religion—including one's own—has a monopoly on truth) Parkes criticized the idea that if one's own religion is true, then another's faith is necessarily false. Instead, conflicting truth claims among the world's religions might represent different cultural responses to the same absolute reality. Accordingly, there can be more than one valid expression of the religious. Drawing from personal experiences and historical awareness, Parkes argued for Judaism being an equal to Christianity. The famous Protestant theologian Reinhold Niebuhr agreed that the two faiths are very much alike, holding that the Jew can more readily and more prudently find God through his or her own religious heritage rather than risk guilt feelings associated with conversion to another faith. Parkes' pluralism is especially evident when he asks how Christians can make sense of the religious experiences of other people. He categorically rejected the exclusivism of Christianity according to which salvation comes only through Christ. Throughout Parkes' writings, he attacked the idea that Christianity owned all possible religious truth. There is wry humor in his comparison on the Church's claim to absolute and complete truth to a child's declaration of omniscience, for when Christ enjoined adults to become like children again, he was inviting them to be childlike rather than childish.

Parkes would make theology theocentric rather than Christocentric since he believed that a preoccupation with Christ, rather than God, undermines Christian-Jewish relations. Parkes also feared that emphasizing Christ led to a focus on personal salvation instead of altruism. John Hick, Paul Van Buren and A. Roy Eckardt are representative, contemporary Christian thinkers who also have endorsed theocentrism. Parkes favored the theocentric perspective not just because it facilitated interfaith dialogue but because a Christocentric outlook can threaten the status of God the father and the Holy Spirit, diminishing the significance of two persons of the Trinity. Perhaps most significantly, Parkes opposed the Christocentric perspective because it rendered the Church unable to affirm God's presence and activity in other religions. Everett concludes that Parkes' theology of equality can succeed if and only if Christian theology shifts its focus from Christ to God.

It struck Parkes that, as long as Christianity stressed personal salvation, the tradition could offer little guidance in political affairs. He concluded that only through world unity can humans come to see God's revelation in its entirety and that the Christocentric outlook "...has consistently ignored the realities of politics on one side and economics and technology on the other." Parkes readily allows that some Christians concern themselves with social, economic and scientific aspects of life but he denies that there is an adequate theology to guide them. In short, he favors Judaism's interest in how to *live in* the world over what he sees as Christianity's concern for *salvation from* the world.

According to Parkes, the most formidable obstacle to interfaith dialogue is the tendency to regard Judaism as merely a preliminary to Christianity. He argues that this will continue as long as Christians give primacy to doctrine over experience, for to meet the Jew sincerely is to affirm the integrity of his or her experiences. To dismiss the phenomenology and efficacy of, for example, Jewish prayer is to be dismissive of Judaism. Two of Parkes' postulates for the promotion of religious dialogue are: (1) neither party should claim to possess total truth and (2) each side should acknowledge that the other possesses an aspect of the truth. Of couse, some Christians have recognized both, but it is one thing to affirm these postulates and another to honor them. In Vatican II, when discussing other faiths, the Catholic Church declared that it "rejects nothing which is true and holy in these religions." Nevertheless, the Church remains in a privileged position, for it certifies all of its own truths and decides which doctrines of other faiths are true. Clearly, this is not the equal footing of which Parkes speaks. But can anyone who is deeply committed to his or her religion adopt the egalitarian outlook that Parkes recommends? After all, there is a great tension between affirming the equality of religious traditions while seeing one's own faith as special and as uniquely deserving of allegiance. Everett suggests that Parkes was able to reconcile his Christianity with an openness to other faiths because he considered his religious experience to be absolute for him but he could not use it to undermine other human encounters with the divine.

Not surprisingly, some critics of Parkes have asked whether he was a Christian. Since he neglected the resurrection, they concluded that there is little of Christianity left in his account. Other Christians were unhappy with Parkes' interpretation of the doctrine of the Trinity, one in which he wanted to substitute "channels" for "persons" to accommodate the doctrine of Jewish monothesim. Arguing from the view that man's threefold role in the world parallels God's threefold nature, Parkes reasons that the Church overemphasized the second person of the Trinity. Seeing the traditional concept of Hell (i.e., eternal punishment for all who have not been saved) as a major obstacle to Jewish-Christian relations, Parkes asked how one could reconcile the love and compassion of Jesus with the view that anyone not believing in Him as the Messiah would suffer in Hell forever.

In 1973, Parkes' manifold contributions to Jewish-Christian relations were recognized when he received the Nicholas and Hedy Monk Brotherhood Award from the Canadian Council of Christians and Jews. Not only did Parkes work for theological unity but Everett credits him with "the most sustained effort yet made by a non-Jew to defend the creation of the Jewish state." Parkes was so occupied with the status of Jews that he set self-interests aside and declined the opportunity to stand for the post of Chaplain of Oriel College, Oxford. Jews and Christians, who continue the dialogue that Parkes so admirably advanced, will succeed to the extent that they share his sensitivity, integrity and unflinching search for religious truths.

Earle J. Coleman is professor of philosophy at Virginia Commonwealth University and a contributing editor. His book, Creativity and Spirituality: Bonds Between Art and Religion, *will be published by State University of New York Press in April 1998.*

BOOK BRIEFINGS

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

Teaching Jewish Civilization: A Global Approach to Higher Education. *Edited by Moshe Davis. New York University Press.* This volume "provides an excellent introduction to the evolution, trends and challenges confronting the teaching of Jewish students globally. The contributors represent many of the pioneers and leaders in such fields as Hebrew language and literature, Jewish philosophy, Jewish history, and Jewish political studies." —Jane S. Gerber

Worship of the Heart: A Study of Maimonides' Philosophy of Religion. *By Ehud Benor. Albany: State University of New York Press.* Benor's study offers a systematic Aristotelian account of Maimonides' philosophy of religion that reconciles the ideals of rabbinic Judaism with the sensibilities of a medieval Jewish philosopher, coherently unifies his work, and shows where Maimondes' uncompromising radicalism presents challenging insights into the history and philosophy of religion. The author argues that Maimonides integrates fundamental elements of the conceptions of dialogue and contemplation with his own insights to forge a mediating idea of prayer—a conception as constitutive of a world view.

Rena's Promise: A Story of Sisters in Auschwitz. *By Rena Kornreich Gelissen. Boston: Beacon Press.* This is an extraordinary memoir of a young woman from Poland who survived the Nazi death camps for more than three years. Rena tells her story of life in the camps with relentless sobriety, offering an intimate and detailed look at the lives of women who suffered during the Holocaust, and delivering a poignant testimony to the complex workings of our humanity when confronted with so much that is inhuman.

The Jewish American Family Album. *By Dorothy and Thomas Hoobler. New York: Oxford University Press.* This husband and wife team have created a scrapbook of Jewish American history, telling the multi-cultured and often heroic stories of Jewish American immigrants, through their own words and pictures, from their arrival in this country to the present day. Hundreds of interviews and personal memories of immigrants and their descendants make history as immediate and exciting as stories told generation after generation in any family. The Hooblers show in vivid fashion a people who have brought humor, spirit and perseverance to the American homeland.

Crisis and Reaction: The Hero in Jewish History. *Edited by Mehachem Mor. Omaha, NE: Creighton University Press.* This book consists of papers delivered at the Sixth Annual Klutznick Symposium. The contents focus on and explore the dialectic between the heroic individual and his/her time. The papers address how these crises, and the reactions to them, affected Judaism throught the ages, and consider the evolution of Judaism with regard to the ancient and modern paradigm of "the Hero."

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BOOK BRIEFINGS

A Supplement to Menorah Review

Winter 1998

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

Civil-Military Relations in Israel. *By Yehuda Ben-Meir. New York: Columbia University Press.* Ben-Meir examines how Israel has gone against all odds to maintain effective civil-military relations in the past and what future dangers may threaten them. The author based this book on in-depth personal interviews with all the key players including all but one living former prime minister, all but one living defense minister, chiefs-of-staff, heads of the intelligence services, senior military officers and civil servants. With scores of historical examples from inside sources, this book presents a behind-the-scenes picture of the intimate relationship between Israel's civilian and military leaders, and confronts the possibility of crisis with effective strategies for reform.

Paths of Emancipation: Jews, States and Citizenship. *Edited by Pierre Birnbaum and Ira Katznelson. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.* Eight leading historians analyze the course of emancipation in Holland, Germany, France, England, the United States, Italy, Turkey and Russia. The goals are to produce a systematic study of the highly diverse paths of emancipation and to explore their different impacts on Jewish identity, dispositions and patterns of collective action. Jewish emancipation concerned itself primarily with issues of state and citizenship. The authors look at the judicial system, business, academic and professional careers, and the entry of Jews into military and political life.

Gersonides on Providence, Covenant and the Chosen People. *By Robert Eisen. Albany: State University of New York Press.* Gersonides was one of the intellectual giants of the medieval Jewish world, a thinker of remarkable diversity and ingenuity. In the light of Gersonides' thought on providential suffering and on inherited providence, this book analyzes his position on one of the cardinal principles of Judaism: the concept of the Chosen People. Eisen's study is an original and pioneering work.

Correlations in Rosenzweig and Levinas. *By Robert Gibbs. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.* Gibbs radically revises standard interpretations of the two key figures of modern Jewish philosophy. Rosenzweig and Levinas thought in relation to different philosophical schools and wrote in disparate styles. Their personal relations to Judaism and Christianity were markedly dissimilar. To Gibbs, however, the two thinkers possess basic affinities with each other. This book offers important insights into how philosohy is continually being altered by its encounter with other traditions.

On the Edge of Destruction: Jews of Poland Between the Two World Wars. *By Celia S. Heller. Detroit: Wayne State University Press.* The Holocaust virtually destroyed the Jews of Poland, once a community of more than 3 million, constituting 10 percent of the population and the oldest continuous Jewish community in a European country. Heller looks at the rich and complex nature of that community and the tremendous pressures under which it lived before the tragic end. She successfully bridges the gap between the sentimentalized past and the actual experience of Polish Jewish life.

The American Synagogue: A Sanctuary Transformed. *Edited by Jack Wertheimer. Hanover, NH and London: Brandeis University Press.* When first published, this book quickly established itself as the standard work on the subject. The strength of the book lies in its combination of broad overviews of denominational differentiation that took place, case studies drawing from many geographical regions and an emphasis on themes ranging from effects of immigration on synagogue life to changing roles of women. The book has become an important comparative resource for students of American religious life, particularly in its examination of how religious communities change over time.

Under the Blazing Light. *By Amos Oz. Port Chester, NY: Cambridge University Press.* This collection brings together a number of political, personal and literary pieces by Israel's most celebrated modern novelist. Oz's perceptive commentary on Israel's political and cultural situation seems more relevant than ever in the light of current developments in the Middle East. New and old readers of Oz will recognize the many qualities that have generated international acclaim.

The Jews of Germany: From the 'Judeo-German Symbiosis' to the Memory of Auchwitz. *By Enzo Traverso. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press.* Traverso argues that the attainments of Jews in the German-speaking world were due to the Jews aspiring to be German, with little help from and often against the open hostility of Germans. As the Holocaust proved in murder and theft, German Jews could never be German enough. The author demolishes the sugary myth of symbiosis as well as reasserts the responsibility of history to recover memory, even if bitter and full of pain.

Securing the Covenant: United States-Israel Relations After the Cold War. *By Bernard Reich. Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group.* Reich's study re-examines the relationship between Israel and the United States now that the Cold War and the Persian Gulf War have ended. He explains the need for the United States to continue to play a central role in the Arab-Israeli peace process. The text includes an evaluation of the role of domestic politics in the formulation of foreign policy and points to future policy options.

Manna and Mystery: A Jungian Approach to Hebrew Myth and Legend. *By Bettina L. Knapp. Wilmette, IL: Chron Publications.* Knapp opens modern consciousness to ancient insight, wisdom and Western Biblical tradition with her incisive analysis of six Jewish legends and tales. Her essays reflect on themes that are most instructive for the soul: mystical love, endurance, thirst for learning and persecution.

Wrestling With the Angel: Jewish Insights on Death and Mourning. *By Jack Riemer. New York: Schocken Books.* Riemer gives us a new collection that explores how Jewish insights on death can teach the living and comfort the bereaved. In the first part, a broad spectrum of writers reflect on the Jewish mourning practices that helped them express their own grief. In the second part, probing

questions are explored in light of what Judaism teaches: Do we have the right to hasten dying? How do we cope with the loss of children? What do Jews believe about the afterlife? This book provides both guidance and solace.

Studies in the Bible and Jewish Thought. *By Moshe Greenberg. New York: The Jewish Publication Society.* Greenberg's viewpoint has been shaped by the study of the ancient Near Eastern context of Biblical Israel and the history of Biblical interpretation from its earliest translations until today. He regards the text with admiration for its enduring power. He assumes the task of identifying and explaining the impact that Hebrew scriptures have had on humanity in general and on Judaism in particular. These essays, composed during a period of some 45 years, are presented essentially in their original form, many with newly added notes by the author. Some of the essays have never been published before.

Utopia in Zion: The Israeli Experience With Worker Cooperatives. *By Raymond Russell. Albany: State University of New York Press.* This book provides a fresh, objective analysis of contemporary urban worker cooperatives, focusing on processes affecting their formation and dissolution, their use of non-member labor, and the evolution of their democratic decision-making practices over time. Russell examines these cooperatives for the light they can shed on worker ownerships and cooperatives in general and on Israeli society in particular. He finds that both their formation and later development have been strongly influenced by the uniquely utopian social and economic conditions that prevailed in Jewish Palestine during the first half of the 20th century.

Aquinas and the Jews. *By John Y.B. Hood. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.* Aquinas served for 700 years as the major conduit of traditional Christian teachings about Jews. Hood contends that Aquinas' writings remain resistant to or skeptical of anti-Jewish trends in 13th-century theology. Aquinas sets out simply to clarify and systematize received theological and canonistic teachings on the Jews. When he encounters contradictions in received views, he attempts to explain how it is possible for Jews to be both chosen and rejected, ignorant and malicious Christ-killers, damned and destined for salvation. This book provides those interested in medieval history, theology and Jewish studies with a context for understanding the complexities and contradictions of the Church's doctrine on Jews.

Russia's First Modern Jews: The Jews of Shklov. *By David E. Fishman. New York: New York University Press.* The three intellectual currents in East European Jewry—Hasidism, Mitnagdism and Haskalah—all converged on Eastern Belorussia where they clashed and competed. In the course of a generation, the community of Shklov—the most prominent of the towns in the area—witnessed an explosion of intellectual and cultural activity, a major transformation of local Jewish culture and thought. Fishman focuses on the social and intellectual odysseys of merchants, maskilim and rabbis, and their varied attempts to combine Judaism and European culture. He chronicles the remarkable story of these first modern Jews of Russia in his significant contribution.

Gender and Assimilation in Modern Jewish History: The Roles and Representation of Women. *By Paula E. Hyman. Seattle: University of Washington Press.* Hyman broadens and revises earlier analyses of Jewish assimilation, which depicts "the Jews" as though they were all men, by focusing on women and on the domestic as well as the public realms. Surveying Jewish accommodations to new conditions in Europe and the United States in the years between 1850 and 1950, she retrieves the experience of women as reflected in their writings and finds that Jewish women's pattern of assimilation differed from men's and that an examination of those differences exposes the tensions inherent in the project of Jewish assimilation.

The Aftermath: Living With the Holocaust. *By Aaron Hass. New York: Cambridge University Press.* Hass offers a perspective on how one who has lived with terror for years is able to avoid paralysis and move forward. This is a book about the resilience of human beings. Survivors provide observations of how, after being reduced to nothing during the formative years of adolescence and young adulthood, men and women can revive a self-respect that had been under constant seige. This may be not only the first but also the final occasion we will have to hear them describe their inner lives.

Israel: The First Decade of Independence. *Edited by S. Ilan Troen and Noah Lucas. Albany: State University of New York Press. Israel* presents a panoramic display of fresh interpretations and new research findings related to Israel's first decade of existence. Those years of rapid change are widely regarded as a formative period in the development of the state and society. Thirty-two authoritative essays offer new understandings from diverse perspectives. The result is a wide-ranging reconsideration of post-independence Israel that will serve as a benchmark for future study and research.

Art From the Ashes: A Holocaust Anthology. *Edited by Lawrence L. Langer. New York: Oxford University Press.* This volume presents the most far-reaching collection of art, drama, poetry and prose about the Holocaust to date. In addition to literary selections, the book features a visual essay in the form of reproductions of 20 works of art created in the Terezin concentration camp that, as Langer notes, "further enrich and complicate our confrontation with the physical, moral, psychology and emotional disruptions with which the Holocaust challenges us." Making a central contribution to courses in Holocaust literature and history, *Art From the Ashes* begins to open its mysteries, with outstanding selections collected by one of the finest commentators on the era.

What Do Jews Believe? The Spiritual Foundations of Judaism. *By David S. Ariel. New York: Schocken Books.* In this provocative study, Ariel explores the diverse and colorful views of Jewish thinkers on the profound issues of God, human destiny, good and evil, chosenness, Torah, and messianism, to name a few. Despite a diversity of views, he finds an over-arching structure in the "sacred myths" that Jews of every orientation return to as their core beliefs. This spirited, clarifying discussion guides us toward a definition of the beliefs that shape Jewish identity, providing the rationale and stimulus for a reconnection to the spiritual tradition of Judaism.

In My Father's Study. *By Ben Orlove. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press.* In 1921, Solomon Orlove, a Russian Jew born in 1904, emigrated to the United States and transformed himself into Robert Orlove. More than 60 years later his son, Ben, walked through the doorway of the deceased Robert's study and began to explore more than half a century of his father's experiences. His wry, sensitive combination of biography, memoir and autobiography taps a remarkably rich vein of individual experiences in our diverse society. He excavates his father's lifetime accumulation of diaries, letters, clippings, photographs and artworks to create a convincing, deeply satisfying portrait that links both father and son.

Roots of Wisdom: The Oldest Proverbs of Israel and Other Peoples. *By Claus Westerman. Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press.* Westerman argues that Israel's early wisdom literature grew from an oral tradition that reflected an agrarian setting. Dealing primarily with Proverbs 10-31, he shows how the wisdom literature evolved into a form of poetry that had greater universal appeal as the people of Israel became more urbanized. A distinctive feature is his use of other wisdom sayings, particularly those from ancient Africa, to illustrate the logical progression of wisdom poetry from simply observational to being more universal in character.