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VCU Menorah Review

*For the Enrichment of Jewish Thought*

Winter/Spring 2012 no. 76

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## A Neo-Zionist Vision

### ***The Settlers and the Struggle over the Meaning of Zionism* by Gadi Taub, New Haven: Yale University Press**

A review essay by Philip Hollander

The back flap reference to the author as an assistant professor in Hebrew University's Department of Communication and School of Public Policy proves deceiving, since the seeming objectivity of his title obfuscates his prominent role in the culture wars that have raged in Israel for the last two decades. Best known for his influential work *The Dispirited Rebellion* (1997), Taub has called for a renewed embrace of liberal democratic values in Israel and the emergence of a supportive contemporary literature. While *The Dispirited Rebellion* focused on the threat posed to Israeli society and culture by postmodernism, the present volume concentrates on the challenge presented by Jewish fundamentalism. Taken together these two works advance a conservative neo-Zionist position that looks to maintain Israel's Jewish spirit without sacrificing its free, open, and democratic character.

Published in Hebrew shortly after Israel's unilateral withdrawal from Gaza in summer 2005, the book simplifies a seemingly complex political landscape to get at what Taub views as the heart of the matter. While opponents of disengagement argued that it would tear Israeli Jews apart, evacuation of settlements failed to plunge Israel into civil war. This, Taub argues, was due to the Sharon government's rejection of the previously sacrosanct idea that continued territorial occupation beyond Israel's 1948 borders could effectively guarantee Israel's national security. This security argument had led to the temporary coalescence of two groups sharing radically different views of Zionism, but the decision to withdraw severed this alliance to expose a small minority composing less than two percent of the Israeli population as the primary advocates of territorial occupation. Religious Zionist followers of the charismatic rabbi Tzvi Kook, who composed this minority, placed Jewish settlement of the whole Land of Israel before the State

of Israel's sovereignty, because they viewed it as the prerequisite for divine redemption of the Jewish people. As they demonstrated during the Gaza disengagement, when sovereignty and Jewish settlement came into conflict, they were prepared to act against the state. While Likud party leaders beginning with Menachem Begin had argued for the *right* to settle the whole Land of Israel, this right was considered secondary to state needs and the rule of law, as attested to by the return of the Sinai peninsula to Egypt in accordance with the Camp David agreement. Thus, despite the Likud party's advocacy of settlement, a fundamental difference separates Kook's Religious Zionist followers from supporters of the major secular parties. A desire to elucidate the overlooked ideology of this centrist bloc open to territorial compromise constitutes Taub's primary objective. There is a stated assumption that by making mainstream Israeli Jews aware of what binds them one to another greater social cohesion can be achieved that will increase the possibility for further territorial compromise and eventual achievement of regional peace.

The long-term occupation of Gaza and the West Bank and the denial of citizenship and equal rights to their Palestinian residents have damaged the Zionist heritage and led many, including some Israelis, to equate it with colonization and oppression, and, as a result, Taub feels compelled to elucidate an alternative Zionist vision he sees uniting mainstream Israeli Jews. This vision emphasizes national self-determination instead of land colonization and individual liberty rather than oppression. While academics might find Taub's advance of the state as a guarantor of individual liberty and rhetorical separation of the state-building project from Palestinian Jewish settlement problematic, the neo-Zionist vision he presents proves persuasive and it serves as a strong rebuke to those who would try to delegitimize proponents of territorial compromise by labeling them advocates of Israel's dejudatization.

As Taub correctly reminds readers, the desire for Jewish liberty, rather than the Land of Israel, propelled the Zionist movement forward. In European countries where Jews had been emancipated, as well as in

those where they were still denied civil rights, Jews lacked equal status and freedoms available to non-Jews in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Viewing it as impossible for Jews to overcome this secondary status as individuals, Zionists looked to nationalism as a way to acquire such rights collectively. Multiple locations were considered for the envisioned Zionist state, but, as the Balfour declaration attests, having it “*in though not necessarily all over*” (31) the Land of Israel proved logical to Jews and non-Jews alike. When the Land of Israel was finally selected, “painstaking, sober institution building,” (108) led to the preparation of an almost fully-functional state by the time Israel declared its independence. Once established this state created democratic institutions considered best capable of guaranteeing Jewish liberty without denying that of its national minorities. While not always successful in achieving these aims, Israel’s governing bodies deserve credit for have soberly confronted an often murky and ambiguous reality and sacrificed many cherished beliefs to best realize them.

In addition to taking up settlement as a step towards redemption, Religious Zionists embraced it as an opportunity to recast themselves as heirs to the early Zionist settlers and emerge from Israeli society’s margins. This provided them with esprit de corps and raised their status. Taub does his best to dismiss this genealogy and proposes an alternative basis for status. Instead of the founders’ sober calculation, a misplaced romantic desire motivated Rabbi Kook’s followers and disproves their desired lineage. As Taub notes, settlement stood in opposition to Zionism’s declared aims from the outset and doomed it to ultimate failure, since it demanded either the renunciation of democracy through the denial of basic civil rights to resident Palestinians or the denial of the state’s Jewish character through creation of a Palestinian majority. If Religious Zionists indeed desire to act in the tradition of the early Zionist settlers and achieve an elevated position vis-à-vis their fellow citizens, Taub calls on them to reject their blind attachment to land and embrace civic virtue.

Whether or not one agrees with Taub’s analysis of the Gaza disengagement, his compelling interpretation of events makes him an important

commentator on contemporary Israel worthy of consideration.

*Philip Hollander is a professor in the Center for Jewish Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and a contributing editor.*

## An Idiosyncratic Journey to God

***What is God?* by Jacob Needleman, New York: Tarcher/Penguin**

A review essay by Cliff Edwards

Many have read Needleman's *Lost Christianity*, *The New Religions*, or his volumes on themes in philosophic and religious ethics dealing with money, medicine, and more. In this current work, late in his career, the former director of the Center for the Study of New Religions at Berkeley's Graduate Theological Union tells us the story of his personal spiritual journey.

Of Russian-Jewish heritage, with degrees from Harvard and Princeton in philosophy, Needleman recounts his experiences in atheism, a Kantian epiphany, engagement with Jewish mysticism, Buber studies, Christian Barthian theology, Suzuki Zen, William James' pluralism, gnosticism, and experiments in practical mysticism and conscious "attentiveness."

Needleman's narrative begins with an experience on his front porch with his father, viewing the stars. He remembers his father's words, "That is God." For Needleman, "To think about God is to the human soul what breathing is to the human body,' and that experience with his father at age 9 was "my first conscious experience of this second breathing, the first breathing of the soul.'

The author's experience as a student at Harvard and Yale continued his focus on the question "What is God?" Reading in D.T. Suzuki, Kierkegaard, Heidegger, Kant, and Vedantic sources made clear to him that the question of "God" and the question of the "Self" were intimately related, and that locating an answer would be more a personal event, an awakening, than the learning of a series of ideas.

Needleman's search continued while a professor in California as he prepared a course on "The History of Western Religious Thought." In the God of Judaism he met again "the God of my father's sky," the



universe as “the expression of God.” The Zohar, Maimonides, and Martin Buber spoke to Needleman, particularly through traditional “stories” and reading Bultmann and Karl Barth added an appreciation of Christianity’s radical focus on “inwardness” and human motivation. The classroom itself became important in his development as his struggle to help students understand the religious search opened new doors to his personal understanding. Beyond his own experiments with atheism and agnosticism, Needleman came to experience “the power of the human heart and mind to create and form symbols and meanings,” to view that hidden place where “God” dwells.

Eastern religions and spiritual traditions “rooted in the disciplined work of inner empiricism” further developed Needleman’s sense of “the inner world of the Self” as key to the question of God, a content he found to be “inaccessible to modern science.”

To this rich mix of influences and guides, one must add Needleman’s serious reading of Kant, Hume, Blake, Rousseau, and William James. They too became pointers toward his quest for a route to the “opening of the heart” and the “transformation of the will.”

For Needleman, the challenge of a “militant scientific rationalism” may be welcomed as a purgative force that provides the space and freedom we need for a serious search for Truth and justice in our world, and a cleansing of old illusions from our view of God, providing us with the possibility “for a new seeding.” Through a “nourishing of the search for Truth and will to the Good” in Western philosophy and religion and the “practical mysticism” of Eastern ways, Needleman believes we may well discover a path to conscious attention and the practice of justice and love that are in the hidden realm we may call “God.”

Had I been editing Needleman’s book, I would have advised him to omit the concluding “Coda,” devoted to a series of quotations from the works of G. I. Gurdjieff, the Greek- Armenian mystic and spiritual teacher of “esoteric Christianity” or a “Fourth Way” who appeared in Russia, led disciples to France, and established spiritual groups in

many countries including the United States. Needleman's journey is in itself a rich one in variety and depth of search. The Gurdjieff coda may too easily give readers the impression that they have been tricked into following a narrative intended from the beginning to "evangelize" them and create new Gurdjieffian converts. If that was Needleman's intent, an honest statement of such at the outset would have been advisable.

But my own view is that Needleman's journey in all its variety is the work's chief contribution, and should not be diluted by what might be viewed as a final "pitch" for one rather esoteric system, no matter how interesting the author now finds that path. It is Needleman's honesty and the seriousness of his search that is the work's strength. His own description of the excitement of discovery, whether reading Kant on the steps of a library, or experiencing epiphanies while preparing lecture notes for a world religions course late at night in his favorite armchair, are, I believe, most likely to move and inspire readers. The wonder of discovering God in the deepest recesses of the self-examining itself in an existential solitude and attentiveness is the true heart of Needleman's book.

Such discoveries may have as many idiosyncratic outcomes, guides, and methods, as there are readers. The book suggests such a serious breadth of possibilities and voices on the spiritual search. I hope the monotone of the coda does not spoil that richness.

*Cliff Edwards is a professor of Religious Studies at Virginia Commonwealth University and editorial consultant of Menorah Review.*

## An Open Letter to Tarek Fatah

***The Jew Is Not My Enemy: Unveiling The Myths That Fuel Muslim Anti-Semitism* by Tarek Fatah, Toronto: McClelland & Stewart**

By Richard Sherwin

An Open Letter to the Author

Dear Tarek Fatah,

After writing one long impassioned screed of praise and starting two failed 'academically and intellectually distanced' reviews of your book, and not getting to the point of summarizing for readers after over seven pages each, I decided to follow my daughter's advice and write you an open letter about my reactions, in part because you include so much personal experience in your book, and mention your daughter's visit to Auschwitz prior to yours, in your Epilogue.

Just to get biases out of the background, I am an Orthodox Jew and Israeli raised and educated in the United States, living in Israel since 1964. My field of "quasi-expertise" was a combination of English literatures and their interactions with Christian Hindu and Buddhist cultures and religions.

You will notice, I am sure, nothing here indicates any deep or wide acquaintance with Islam as culture literature or religion, let alone directly with many Muslims. That is not accidental. After my first few years in Israel, I found I handled the pressures of living here more sanely by studying Far Eastern cultures that had and have few issues with Jews or Judaism or Israel past or present. In a way, this was a typical American 'transcendental leap' over immediate realities to a never-never world more as I wished it could be. My experience and knowledge of Western anti-Semitism and Muslim jewhatred overwhelmed me. I needed some mental escape from these realities, especially as I had no intention of leaving Israel and missing the first chance a Jew has

had in 2000 years to live and build a Jewish State in the Land I believe God commanded us to inhabit.

It was your title's indication of your willingness to discuss our cultures religions and countries both personally and intellectually, contemporarily and historically, that made me break a long habit of internal flight. I've avoided the discussions, arguments, and preachments of biased journalists, multicultural fascist academics, wannabe pundits, failed diplomats and out of work secret agents. I feel they flood the media to the detriment of what's left of the poor Brazilian rainforests we need for our survival more than their opinions.

And up front I have to say I wasn't disappointed. You have succeeded beautifully, if for me horrifically, in doing what you said you would do: showing the line of descent of contemporary worldwide Muslim jewhatred from the Quranic passages mostly misread or exaggerated by subsequent eighth century CE biographer of Mohammed (Ibn Ishak) and the 14th century CE (Ibn Kathir) commentator on the Quran who accepted as holy Ibn Ishak's biography (c.750 CE) done over a hundred years after the Prophet died in 632 CE. They produced a sanctification of jewhatred that had political purposes in their day, and served to support the blending of this hatred with the Christian jewhatred brought in by converts and missionaries later, especially in the 19th century Damascus blood libels and charges of cannibalism.

It's ironic to me that these charges actually got developed in Egypt — third century BCE Alexandria — by pagan Egyptians furious at Jews for managing to retain their religion, atheism (i.e., monotheism) and relative independence under both Hellenist and Roman Empires, while Egypt lost its religion and independence to both. This love of Jews carried over as Greek tradition into Christianity along with the Jewish translation of the Torah into Greek which is all most Christians knew of Judaism. Except envy for our independence of religion and politics.

I say ironic because the next horrible development of Muslim jewhatred you develop occurs in the works of the Egyptian religious-political

commentator Sayyed Qutub in the 20th century. I thought it neat you pointed out both he and Major Nidal disliked American democracy and failed to find a Muslim bride sufficiently pure for their needs, and preached slaughtering the Western infidels and in Qutub's case, particularly the Jews who represent everything satanic the Christians, the Nazis and the Russians (Czarist and Communist) *Protocols of The Elders of Zion* could cook up. I admit I'd never heard of Qutub. I'd thought the line of descent into jewhatred and anti-Israel holocausting ran more purely from the Mufti of Jerusalem's 1920s pogroms in Palestine, through his work with and for Hitler and the Waffen SS in World War II, to his safe haven in Faruk and Nasser's Egypt (all of which you detail). There was a new translation of the *Protocols* and immigrant Nazi refugees they spread over the Muslim airwaves and later TV — from the 40s onwards — the trash that passes for thought and justification of massacre of Jews.

The Saudi contribution to all this was known but not its depth or extent. At least it was newly presented to me that they spread Qutub's ideas, producing the Al-Qaida the CIA would breed in northern Pakistan, fertilize with petrodollars, and corrupt a relatively non-jewhating population thereby. They got the Russians out of Afghanistan, trained the Al-Qaida who managed the 9/11 attacks (which somehow the Pakistanis and other Muslims are sure the Mossad produced), and now the Americans are trying to halt their ingrate offspring from killing both the USA and Saudi Arabia and of course Egypt.

Your application to Israel events was new to me. I hadn't realized that the 1973 Yom Kippur War (which we Israelis feel we escaped destruction from by the skin of our teeth), President Nixon's aid, and General Sharon's brilliant rebellious tactics, had mobilized OPEC and generated the petrodollars the Saudis would golden handshake the western power brokers with — as well as infiltrate the Muslim diasporas with, so that it's their Wahhabi jihadism that passes for normative Islam today in the mosques, schools, social clubs and other Muslim institutions in Europe and the Americas.

You blend all this and much more information — especially documenting how the medieval commentators misread and the moderns like Qutub simply lie — with your personal experiences in Pakistan before and after the 70s explosion and infection of a relatively tolerant Muslim community into hating Jews they'd met very few of, and since the 70s none at all. And your experiences in Saudi Arabia where apparently even to mention the word Jew is to become a suspect of the State. But jewhatred has proven like cockroaches able to survive over centuries, and probably will outlast humanity's self destruction. So that's not really surprising to me.

I guess what I really appreciated was your refusal to give in to the Gestapo thought police running the Muslim establishments both in Muslim countries and more dishonestly in the diasporas where they pretend to be 'moderates', focusing on the Israel 'occupation' of Palestine lands which oddly enough allows them to ignore their own indifference to the fact so well documented that the Palestinian leadership has been (the Mufti) and still is self serving (the Fatah and the Hamas, the secular dictators and the Islamist fanatics) and has prevented the Palestinian State from existing. They insist on all or nothing, as you point out. And in a series of brilliantly achieved catastrophes have made their people suffer more and more for less and less --1948, 1956, 1967, 1973, 200?. What they've managed is Swiss bank accounts, suicide bombers, missiles on Israel, modern equivalents to the murderers of 1929 and the fedayeen from Gaza in 1964 when I got to Israel. Swiss bank accounts and jewhatred and Palestinians slaughtering and oppressing Palestinians seem to be the parameters of the Palestine problem — none of which either the Muslim community talks or dares talk about. And for that matter neither do their fervid fellow travelers — the left wing multiculturalists constructing Jews as the rejected satan, and the post modern revisionists denying the Holocaust.

The newest information to me — besides the Saudi and general Arab contempt in language and behavior for other Muslims, ethnic and racist prejudice and behavior — was the whole detailed explanation of what you say is probably the central myth on which medieval jewhatred in

Islam is built. Ibn Ishak's ninth century fable about a supposed massacre of the Banu Qurayza Jewish tribe in 630 by Muhammad for the crime of staying neutral in the battle between the Pagan Meccans (who inherited Islam as Caliphs and killed Mohammed's family) and Muslim loyalists entrenched in Medina. It shocked me for much the same reasons you mention, though you have good grounds for being even more angry and bitter at this slander of the Prophet as a mass murderer of innocent men (900 or so) and sale of their women for guns and horses. I thought I knew Jewish history, much of which is, as Graetz pointed out, one of being pogrommed and expelled or massacred after being robbed tortured and converted by our hosts. I'd never heard mention of this particularly disgusting demonstration of dishonorable behavior. And I thought I'd heard them all.

That there is absolutely no evidence of or support in the Quran itself for this massacre so dear apparently to contemporary Muslim clerics and jihadist believers does justify the whole chapter you give to examining its origins. As you point out, if a cartoon of the Prophet can lead to burnings of flags and embassies, why hasn't this slander of the Prophet's honor led to burnings of Syrian and Saudi flags, and embassies, of all those who propagate the lie? Instead, Muslims revel in the tale, have considered it holy, undeniable and justification for killing everyone they can who disagrees with their view of the Quran, let alone all infidels who haven't yet submitted to the new Islamist Caliphate of Al-Qaida — or at least Saudi Arabia — as dhimmis. (I fear you're a bit behind the times, and it's Turkey that will reconquer Islam and re-establish the Caliphate over Syria, Iraq and anyone else it can. Betrayals move fast in the Middle East.)

And I think, bottom line, this is what shocks me most, not the extent and depth of Muslim jewhatred. They've had after all expert instructors — Christian and Nazi — paid with Saudi money, and the Saudis captured Mecca and Medina, so why not the rest of Islam. Rather the apparent absence of popular fury at the way the Prophet has been so publically disgraced, defamed, in the process of being manipulated to support a jewhatred whose other side is blaming the Jews and Israelis

and Israel and the Christian West (i.e. the United States) for every degradation the political leaders of Islamic states have inflicted on their own populations. And the willingness to dance on rooftops at the destruction of the Twin Towers and the Iraqi and Hamas missileing of Israel. And consider themselves good Muslims, pure innocent victims of an evil world. Their jihadism against the west has blinded them to what every religious person in the world knows and has always known, that evil starts at home, and the one to improve is not one's enemy, not one's neighbor, but oneself. To be right before God and man, Allah and the Prophet.

Oh well. I know I've slipped into rant. And preaching. A Yemenite friend of mine said I should have been born a Baptist preacher. I shall avoid this kind of public exposure in the future by not reading such books as yours. To paraphrase and invert your comment, the Jew is not my enemy; nor is the Muslim. I am.

So I'll end with a brief comment about your chapter on Israel's contributions to antisemitism and the Palestine situation. I appreciate your citing Quranic verses supporting the right of the Jewish state in the land to be founded and exist. Much of your critique of the State's behavior I've read over the years in *Haaretz* — the Israeli remnant of the left wing imitation of *The New York Times*. But I do respect and consider seriously your urging Israel to withdraw unilaterally from the West Bank, if for no other reason than to remove the only situation, at least theoretically, justifying the stand against Israel the world seems to have taken, and the supposed stimulus to Muslim anti-Semitism. I take your opinion seriously even more because you've put your life and reputation on the line for stating your opinions, and because your opinions are not one-sided critiques of Jews and Israel hiding under some guise of moral concern. You criticize the behavior of Palestinians and the other Arab countries as well, and their lack of concern for Muslim genocides of Darfur and Bangladesh. I would add of Armenians as well.



You are by far more of an optimist than I. But then you wouldn't have written such an honest book and so powerful a one, had you not been. Your wife's caution would have stopped you.

It seems to me that Israel will probably withdraw from the West Bank in whole or in part. Our experience with unilateral withdrawals has left us with Hizbullah in Lebanon, and Hamas in Gaza and no improvement, rather a worsening, in the world media's treatment of us, let alone our military situation. So if we withdraw, it'll be without expecting peace, or even much improvement in the media treatment of us. Now or in any foreseeable future. Still, I don't see any diminishing of, or end to Muslim jewhatred, coming from this. And I don't see any relief coming to the Palestinians from their crooked and fanatic leaders, either. The burden of your evidence and argument and personal experiences seems to me to support my pessimism as equally as your optimism, if not more.

I don't think appeals to reason and evidence can outweigh the power of ideologies established over centuries by social religious and mental institutions, without the creation of similar institutions to combat them. It took the Protestant Reformation some five hundred years before their institutions were able to limit the Roman Catholic ideologies. And those years included a hundred years civil war of enormous brutality. It seems to me we are heading towards a contemporary version of this Reformation, Counter Reformation, quasi-secular Enlightenment, and World Colonialism — the terms of which will become clear only as jihadist Islamism clarifies the terms of its war against, and subversion of, Western Christian secular and religious cultures and the republics they stand by. It's not — according to your book — the West that started a crusade against Islam. It is Saudi-wahhabi-jihadist-Islamism that has declared a 'crescade' against what's left of what passed for Christendom.

The Jews and Israel serve the jihadists and their western fellow travelers as a useful diversion, and excuse, to cover up with their common jewhatred the opening bars of subversion, extortion, and destruction

of the republican mode of life. Even though, and perhaps especially since, as you point out, so many jewhating Muslims in Pakistan want passports to the West they intend to enjoy as they destroy its values. The goal: a world Caliphate, which has begun rising in the Middle East by renascent Ottoman Turks and Iranian Shiites. Both of which Stalins want to gobble up their Saudi petrodollar Lenins.

I don't see where there's much chance Islam—the moderate, the tolerant, the 'loving'— will awaken and institutionalize itself against these new Stalins. They've already been brainwashed into a thorough-going jewhatred.

The institutionalizing of the Jew Hatred and the demonizing of Jews from 13th century onwards seems to have provided a firm theological 'platform' for all future Muslim jewhatreds to build on. The Banu Qurayza 'victory' by mass murder ordered by Angel Gabriel and Muhammad may not be at all in the Quran, or even its intention. But it is in Muslim minds hearts and mental structures, worldwide. How uproot it when the Saudi PR men and the Syrian dictators and the Iranian fascist governments can determine what religious truth is for Muslims.

Furthermore, from the 1940s onwards the Egyptian radio media universities and imams have preached Nazi Communist Protocol jewhatred to over three generations of world Muslims. Few if any living Muslims (the great majority of whom are under 40) know — or as you point out even believe — of the pre-1970s Muslim world you mention existed in the Karachi of your youth, where Jews and Muslims lived side by side, even in Peshawar.

The 1970s petrodollars of OPEC and Saudi Arabia simply topped off the gas-tank, as far I can tell. It is ready to explode. So far the explosions have been contained by destroying Iraq and distracting Afghanistan, rightly or wrongly. But however much the Iranian Shiites are considered worse than Jews by Sunnis, and especially Arabs, they are with the Kurds and the Turks the best organized States out to control the Middle Eastern oil and undermine the West.

The Khomeini government and propaganda uses jewhating and Israel bashing so shrewdly to distract the silly westerners from their successful SS politics internally and thrust for domination externally. The Turks have learned their lesson from Teheran, and are making their first moves to guarantee Lebanon's sovereignty as their client state where the West proved unable to do anything but talk. And the Kurds, well so far they're the least Jew haters of the lot. And whatever hope to the East I have lies in the past. Salah al-Din (Saladin) was indeed a Kurd who ruled Egypt, who defeated the anti-Semitic Richard the Lion Hearted in Israel, and whose personal physician was Maimonides.

Let me end this non-review, by saying, that I'm very impressed that it is your book that, to me, represents Canadian freedom of thought and expression. And that your book was published in the land Mr. Harper prime ministers. He is the first Canadian prime minister who stands publically for the remnants of international fair play the UN so long ago abandoned, against the cowardice and hypocrisy of intellectuals and politicians at home and abroad.

And you are so obviously equally brave and intelligent, that I hope the Lord, if not clones more like you, at least replicates you and your courage and perception not only among Muslims, but among Christians as well. You truly deserve the title Hajj Fatah.

It's one of the peculiarities of the history of the Americas that before the United States Civil War broke out, the real "land of the Free and the Home of the Brave," the terminal of the Underground Railroad for many a black fugitive slave was Canada not the USA. May it have the courage and sophistication and honesty so to remain in the coming conflicts. Before institutional Christianities — kingdoms and republics — wash their hands of Israel as Pilate is on record as having done with another maligned Jew.

Again, thanks, and apologies for the length and the lack of academic restraint, and book report format.

Sincerely,  
Richard Sherwin  
Herzliyah, Israel

## Books in Brief: New and Notable

### ***Disenchantment: George Steiner and the Meaning of Western Civilization after Auschwitz* by Catherine D. Chatterley**

Syracuse University Press

George Steiner has enjoyed international acclaim as a distinguished cultural critic for many years. The son of central European Jews, he was born in France, fled from the Nazis to New York in 1940, and became a naturalized U.S. citizen in 1944. Through his many books, voluminous literary criticism, and book review articles published in the *New Yorker*, the *Times Literary Supplement*, and the *Guardian*, Steiner has played a major role in introducing the works of prominent continental writers and thinkers to readers in North America and Great Britain.

Having escaped the Nazis as a child, Steiner vowed that his work as an intellectual would attempt to understand the tragedy of the Shoah. In *Disenchantment*, Chatterley focuses on Steiner's neglected writings on the Holocaust and anti-Semitism and places this work at the center of her analysis of his criticism. She clearly demonstrates how Steiner's family history and education, as well as the historical and cultural developments that surrounded him, are central to the evolution of his dominant intellectual concerns. It is during the 1950s and 1960s, in relation to unfolding discoveries about the Nazi murder of European Jewry, that Steiner begins to study the effects of the Holocaust on language and culture and then questions the very purpose and meaning of the humanities.

### ***The Beginning of Desire: Reflections on Genesis* by Avivah Gottlieb Zornberg**

New York: Schocken Books

Since its publication in 1995, this book has opened new pathways in the reading of the Bible. Zornberg's innovative use of midrash, litera-

ture, philosophy, and psychoanalysis draws deeply upon the familiar biblical narratives to produce interpretations that are at once startlingly beautiful and completely authentic. Illuminating the tensions that grip human beings as they search for an encounter with God, Zornberg gives us a brilliant analysis of the stories of Adam and Eve: Noah, Abraham and Sarah; Isaac and Rebecca; Jacob, Rachel, and Leah, and Joseph and his brothers.

***The Particulars of Rapture: Reflections on Exodus* by Avivah Gottlieb Zornberg**

New York: Schocken Books

In her commentary on the book of Exodus—the stories of slavery and liberation, the burning bush, the revelation at Sinai, the golden calf, the shattering of the tablets, the building and consecration of the tabernacle—Zornberg weaves a magnificent tapestry of classical biblical, Talmudic, and midrashic interpretations: literary allusions; and insights from the worlds of philosophy and psychology into a narrative that gives us fascinating new perspectives on the biblical themes of exodus and redemption.

***Wandering Soul: The Dybbuk's Creator, S. An-sky* by Gabriella Safran**

Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press

The author argues that it was An-sky's sense of in-betweenness, which haunted him his whole life, that enabled him to compose his most enduring works: his ethnographic documentation of the lives of Russian peasant and rural Jews, and the play *The Dybbuk*, the most famous work in Yiddish theatre, which draws on Jewish beliefs and on feelings of displacement as it evokes the passage of a restless soul that possesses a young woman.

This first biography of An-sky is based on writings and archival records in Yiddish, French, Russian, and Hebrew, many of which became available only after the dissolution of the USSR. The story Safran tells

with the aid of these materials is remarkable: born Shloyme-Zanvl Rappoport in a shtetl in Russia's Pale of Settlement, An-sky grew up speaking Yiddish in the heavily Jewish city of Vitebsk (home, too of fellow border Marc Chagall), lived in St. Petersburg, Paris, and Bern, and worked as a tutor, in a salt mine, and ever as a writer.

In recounting the novelistic life of a man who lived at a time and in a place requiring multiple, shifting, and often conflicting identities, Saffran also tells the story of Europe in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries—and the origin story of a Jewish identity that entwines with, but remains separate, from national identity.

***"I Have Always Loved the Holy Tongue": Isaac Casaubon, The Jews, And A Forgotten Chapter in Renaissance Scholarship* by Tony Grafton and Joanna Weinberg**

Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press

Isaac Casaubon is best remembered today as the subject of Mark Pattison's ur-Victorian biography, or by way of the eponymous pedant in *Middlemarch*. Now, the authors marshal heroic archival research to reveal a sui generis scholar in his time.

They sifted through piles of pre-1600 books, searching for those annotated in Casaubon's crabbed hand. The materials they found, many of which are reproduced here, revealed Casaubon's knowledge of Hebrew to be deeper than scholars had believed. These annotations also placed Casaubon at the center of the most exciting scholarship of his age, including the quest to unveil a number of forged or misdated documents (most notoriously those attributed to Hermes Trismegistus), and the beginning of the scholarly study of late antiquity and of early Christianity.

Painstakingly reconstructing notes that earlier scholars had thought impossible to decipher, the authors show how Casaubon read texts—his goals, his motivations, and his methods. As they recreate Casaubon's scholarly process, the authors also reanimate an epoch when

debates over topics like the chronology of Jesus' crucifixion transfixed scholars across Europe, galvanizing rivalries, friendships, and feuds.

***Places of Time: Jewish Calendar and Culture in Early Modern Europe* by Elisheva Carlebach**

Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press

In 2002, historian Carlebach asked a librarian at the New York Public Library for early modern Jewish calendars. The librarian retrieved from the stacks the hefty tomes Carlebach had anticipated, but also something more intriguing: tiny, colorful calendars, hand-sized, and hand-written. "The artifacts were so small that I nearly overlooked them; designed to be ephemeral, tossed away after a year, they had miraculously survived for several centuries. Since that initial wonderment, I have search for everything related to them"

The fruit of her enchantment with these artifacts, and of her years-long search for more of them, is now this beautiful and illuminated book. She draws on the calendars, many of which are reproduced here in full color, to reconstruct the daily life of Jews in early modern Europe. The calendar dictated holidays and the Sabbath, but often noted as well the feast and market days observed by gentiles, reflecting a minority culture's constant awareness of the majority. She writes that Jews have always lived in multiple time scales, and the calendars reflect the sometimes uneasy balance between separation and integration that marked Jewish life in the Christian world. In her hands, these calendars, ephemeral objects never designed for posterity and so easily lost, become rich portals, capable of transporting the reader to another place and time.

***Daniel Stein, Interpreter* , by Ludmila Ulitskaya**

New York: The Overlook Press

A skillfully crafted literary roman epistolaire, a philosophical tale, a profound historical survey and an entertaining piece of fiction, this novel covers side and geographical areas: Germany, Israel, United



States, Russia — and dramatic historical epochs from the Second World War in Warsaw to modern Israel. It enters into deep historical detail: the tragedy of Holocaust, the rise and fall of Communism and, even more important, it gives a new reading to the role of Christianity.

The book is constructed as a patchwork of private histories recounted through the letters, personal diaries, taped conversations and a liberal supply of official notes, interrogation reports, documents and letters of formal complaints to the authorities. The element that links all of these sources is the story of Daniel Stein, a Polish Jew, who survives the Holocaust by disguising himself as a Gestapo interpreter and translator. This charade allows him not only to save himself, but to help save hundreds of human lives by sharing vital information with those who are in peril. The character of Daniel Stein is based on the life of Oswald Rufeisen, the real Brother Daniel, a Carmelite monk who lived at Stella Maris monastery on Mount Carmel in Haifa and who died in 1998.

***Angels at the Table: A Practical Guide to Celebrating Shabbat***  
**by Yvette Alt Miller**

New York: Continuum International Publishing Group

This is a clear, practice guide to Shabbat. Interweaving practical advice, information, anecdote, liturgical text and history, the book provides a perfect entrée for anyone who has ever wanted to tap into the Shabbat experience. In clear, straightforward language, it explains the myriad rituals, customs, prayers and rules of a traditional Jewish Shabbat and includes the common songs, prayers, and recipes. Whatever the level of knowledge or religious observance, the book will answer questions and become a trusted resource in observing Shabbat and in understanding how it has sustained the Jewish people through the ages.

***Open Minded Torah: Of Irony, Fundamentalism and Love***  
**by William Kolbrener**

New York: Continuum International Publishing Group

Kolbrener offers a voice advocating renewed Jewish commitment and openness for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In his essays, he provides power, and often surprising, insights into how open mindedness allows for authentic Jewish engagement in an age otherwise defined by fundamentalism or unbelief. Through a personal synthesis of Western and Jewish learning, popular culture and philosophy, Kolbrener offers a compelling new vision where being open minded allows for a non-dogmatic and committed Judaism. Informed by considerable erudition, his essays are critical for those wanting to pursue a non-coercive, tolerant and creative Jewish life.

***Rabbi Outcast: Elmer Berger and American Jewish Anti-Zionism***  
**by Jack Ross**

Washington, D.C.: Potomac Books

Anti-Zionism in America has a long history. Elmer Berger was undoubtedly the best known Jewish anti-Zionist during most of his lifetime, particularly during World War II through the 1967 Six-Day War and its aftermath. A Reform rabbi, Berger served throughout that period as the executive director of the American Council for Judaism, an anti-Zionist organization founded by leading Reform rabbis.

Jack Ross places liberal Jewish anti-Zionism (as opposed to that of Orthodox or revolutionary socialist Jews) in historical perspective. That brand of anti-Zionism was virtually embodied by Rabbi Berger and his predecessors in the Reform rabbinate. Berger advocated forcefully for his position, much to the chagrin of his Zionist detractors. The growing renaissance of liberal Jewish anti-Zionism, combined with the forgotten work of Rabbi Berger and the American Council for Judaism, makes a compelling case for revisiting his work in this full-length, definitive biography.

***After Weegee: Essays on Contemporary American Photographers***  
**by Daniel Morris**

Syracuse University Press

Examining a range of styles from the gritty vernacular sensibility of Weegee (Arthur Felig) to the glitzy theatricality of Annie Leibovitz, Morris takes a thoughtful look at ten American photographers, exploring the artists' often ambivalent relationships to their Jewish backgrounds. Going against the grain of most criticism on the subject, Morris argues that it is difficult to label Jewish American photographers as unequivocal "outsiders" or "insiders" with respect to mainstream American culture. He shows it is equally difficult to assign a characteristic style to such a varied group whose backgrounds range from self-taught photographers to those trained in art school. In eclectic ways, however, the contemporary photographers highlighted in this book carry on the social justice and documentary tradition associated with Sid Grossman, Aaron Siskind, and the primarily Jewish Photo League of the 1930s by chronicling the downside of the Reagan revolution of the 1980s.

Rather than record movements or trends in current Jewish American photography, Morris focuses in-depth on the work of Bruce Davidson, Jim Goldberg, Mel Rosenthal, Diane Arbus, Lee Friedlander, Allen Ginsberg, Annie Leibovitz, Tyagan Miller, Aaron Siskind, and Marc Asnin. These photographers share a tendency toward socially informed expression and an interest in self-expression via the operations of photography, inevitably shaped by histories of socially conscious or documentary imaging.

***Becoming Jewish: The Challenges, Rewards, and Paths to Conversion* by Steven Carr Reuben and Jennifer S. Hanin**

Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

The authors' main objective in writing this book was to look at every facet of what it is like to convert to Judaism. Hanin herself converted from Catholicism to Judaism and Reuben was the rabbi at the synagogue she first visited. Another goal was to give some clarification on certain Jewish customs and rituals such as gestures, practices, expressions and the language itself. The book includes stories from other

people who have converted to Judaism along with Reuben's advice as well as a glossary of key Jewish terms to help with a transition to Judaism.

***The Jewish Origins of Cultural Pluralism: The Menorah Association and American Diversity* by Daniel Greene**

Bloomington: Indiana University Press

Daniel Greene traces the emergence of the idea of cultural pluralism to the lived experience of a group of Jewish college students and public intellectuals, including the philosopher Horace M. Kallen. These young Jews faced particular challenges as they sought to integrate themselves into the American academy and literary world of the early 20th century. At Harvard University, they founded an influential student organization known as the Menorah Association in 1906 and later the *Menorah Journal*, which became a leading voice of Jewish public opinion in the 1920s. In response to the idea that the American melting pot would erase all cultural differences, the Menorah Association advocated a pluralist America that would accommodate a thriving Jewish culture while bringing Jewishness into mainstream American life.

***Einstein before Israel* by Ze'ev Rosenkranz**

Princeton University Press

Rosenkranz sheds new light on Einstein's encounters with prominent Zionist leaders and reveals exactly what Einstein did and didn't like about Zionist beliefs, objectives, and methods. He looks at the personal, cultural, and political factors that led Einstein to support certain goals of Jewish nationalism; his role in the birth of the Hebrew University; his impressions of the emerging Jewish settlements in Palestine; and his reaction to mounting violence in the Arab-Jewish conflict. The author explores a host of fascinating questions, such as whether Zionists sought to silence Einstein's criticism of their movement, whether Einstein was the real manipulator, and whether this Zionist icon was indeed a committed believer in Zionism or an iconoclast beholden to

no one.

***Millions of Jews to Rescue* by Samuel Merlin, edited and annotated by Rafael Medoff**

Washington, D.C.: The David S. Wyman Institute for Holocaust Studies.

The Roosevelt administration tried to deport them. The FBI spied on them. The British wanted to arrest them. But none of that could stop the Bergson Group from forging ahead with its campaign for rescue of Jews from the Holocaust in 1943-1944. Their rallies, lobbying in Washington, and hundreds of newspaper advertisements shook the American public and forced the Allies to face the Nazi genocide. In these pages, the late Samuel Merlin, one of the group's leaders, tells the remarkable story of a handful of activists — Jews and Christians — who helped change history.

***A Prophetic Peace: Judaism, Religion, and Politics* by Alick Isaacs**

Bloomington: Indiana University Press

Challenging deeply held convictions about Judaism, Zionism, war, and peace, Isaac's combat experience in the second Lebanon war provoked him to search for a way of reconciling the belligerence of religion with its messages of peace. In his insightful readings of the texts of biblical prophecy and rabbinic law, Isaacs draws on the writings of Ludwig Wittgenstein, Jacques Derrida, Abraham Joshua Heschel, and Martin Buber, among others, to propose an ambitious vision of religiously inspired peace. Rejecting the notion of Jewish theology as partial to war and vengeance, this eloquent and moving work points to the ways in which Judaism can be a path to peace. This book describes an educational project called Talking Peace whose aim is to bring individuals of different views together to share varying understandings of peace.

***Sharon: The Life of a Leader* by Gilad Sharon**

New York: Harper

Exhaustively researched, *Sharon* draws on meticulously kept records. The result is a rare, intimate and compelling look at the man and his evolution into one of the world's most powerful and polarizing figures. At the same time, the book offers an unparalleled view of global politics in action and reveals the prime minister's private discussions with major heads of state. It is a sweeping, illuminating portrait of a legendary statesman.

***The Chosen People: A Study of Jewish Intelligence and Achievement* by Richard Lynn**

Augusta, Ga.: Washington Summit Publishers

With this book, Richard Lynn undertakes a systematic inquiry into the general intelligence of Jews worldwide. Calling upon history as well as the latest advances in genetic analysis and evolutionary theory, Lynn demonstrates that in the past 250 years, high IQ has been the foundation of Jewish influence, success, and power. This study is integrated with concise narratives of the Jewish experience in various countries and regions, as well as a discussion of the cultural and genetic divisions within the Jewish *ethnos*.

***What the Bible Really Says: The Essential Guide to Biblical Literacy* by T.J. Wray**

Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

Opening with a 60-second Bible quiz to test a reader's knowledge, the author provides essential background information to arm readers with the tools necessary to read and interpret passages on their own. With these tools in hand, Wray helps readers explore what the Bible says about key issues today, including suffering heaven and hell, gender and sexuality, and the environment. The book is an indispensable guide for individuals and groups interested in gaining a fuller understanding of the Bible and the lessons it imparts.

***Jerusalem: The Biography* by Simon Sebag Montefiore**

New York: Alfred A. Knopf

In a gripping narrative, Montefiore reveals the ever-changing city of Jerusalem in its many incarnations, bringing every epoch and character blazingly to life. Jerusalem's biography is told through the wars, love affairs and revelations of the men and women — kings, empresses, prophets, poets, saints, conquerors and whores — who created, destroyed, chronicled and believed in Jerusalem. Drawing on new archives, current scholarship, his own family papers and a lifetime's study, the author illuminates the essence of sanctity and mysticism, identity and empire in a unique chronicle of the city that many believe will be the setting for the Apocalypse. This is how Jerusalem became Jerusalem, the only city that exists twice—in heaven and on earth.

## Changing the Course of a River

***Norman Podhoretz: A Biography* by Thomas L. Jeffers, New York: Cambridge University**

A review essay by Steven Windmueller

Thomas L. Jeffers has done a masterful job in capturing the intensity and impact of the life and mindset of Norman Podhoretz. In one of the most carefully documented biographies that this reviewer has been privileged to read, the author uncovers the elements that helped to shape Podhoretz's thinking. We are introduced to the key players that were and remain a part of Norman's distinguished career, along with the central ideas and events that would shape his political thinking.

Podhoretz would come to his conservative positions during the Vietnam era, as he increasingly became disillusioned with the Democratic Party, and more directly, the New Left. He felt this fringe of American society had rejected "the middle class way of life." For him the melting pot theory simply was not the appropriate framework, "what was needed was a new metaphor for America." Similarly, for Podhoretz and his cohort, the anti-Israel polemics of the New Left represented another reason to separate himself from his former fellow travelers.

As editor of *Commentary* for 35 years (1960-1995), Podhoretz would represent an instrumental figure in the shaping of neo-conservative thought, as the pages of his literary magazine reflect his political agenda and perspectives. One of the signers of the "Statement of Principles" produced by The Project for the New American Century, Podhoretz joined with William Kristol, Robert Kagan, and others in drafting a protocol defending the proposition that "American leadership is both good for America and good for the world".

Two themes seem consistently interwoven within the pages of this book, Podhoretz's attachment to America and his life-long commitment to Judaism. He frames the first principle around the idea that America must be seen "the last best hope of mankind," and the second, that



Judaism represents for him "an absolutely firm loyalty." As Jeffers concludes, "For Podhoretz, surely, Judaism helped to determine his way of looking at the world."

In some measure, we are introduced to two different personalities. With family, Jeffers suggests that Podhoretz is "utterly tender with family and friends and gentlemanly with casually met strangers." Yet, the more public persona, especially through his encounters with his enemies, has been described as "aggressive, difficult, sometimes solipsistic..."

Through his articles and editorials within *Commentary* and his books, Norman articulated strong and defined views on American foreign policy and civic affairs. Ready to critique presidents, statesmen, and fellow writers, Podhoretz would even launch his criticism toward Ronald Reagan for failing early within his Presidency to recognize the Soviet threat. Having access both through the power of the pen and through personal connections to the political and intellectual elites within this nation, he had occasion to convey his views to such luminaries as Presidents Reagan and George W. Bush.

Two decades later, Podhoretz would write that "there is no doubt that Saddam already possesses large stores of chemical and biological weapons, and may... be on the precipice of nuclear power.'... Some urge that we... concentrate on easier targets first. Others contend that the longer we wait, the more dangerous Saddam will grow. Yet whether or not Iraq becomes the second front in the war against terrorism, one thing is certain: there can be no victory in this war if it ends with Saddam Hussein still in power." As early as 2007, Podhoretz wrote that the United States should attack Iranian nuclear facilities, arguing that "Iraq, Afghanistan and Iran are merely different fronts of the same long war."

Among his various books, *My Negro Problem and Ours* (1964); *Making It* (1967); *World War IV: The Long Struggle Against Islamofascism* (2007) and *Why are Jews Liberals?* (2009), these four would appear to

be particularly significant in defining his ideology.

The last of these writings, his work on Jewish liberalism, allowed him to restate his core political message. "...During the many centuries when the Left seemed their only ally against persecution from the Right, of course Jews were liberals. But why do they—and others—remain committed to liberalism in an era when both their best interests and the interests of America and the West generally are under attack from the international Left?"

On an array of domestic issues, Podhoretz entered the fray offering commentaries on radical feminism, homosexuality and gay rights, and pornography. He addressed these subjects from a perspective that America's cultural elites were seeking, in his view, to impose their will on the polity by establishing behaviors and norms that were often not embraced or supported by this nation's citizens.

In more recent times, Norman has remained active and engaged within the national political debate. In a recent *Wall Street Journal* editorial titled "In Defense of Sarah Palin," Podhoretz wrote, "I hereby declare that I would rather be ruled by the Tea Party than by the Democratic Party, and I would rather have Sarah Palin sitting in the Oval Office than Barack Obama." In 2004, President George W. Bush awarded him the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

In paying tribute to Podhoretz on the occasion of his retirement from *Commentary*, a number of writers and politicians offered their specific insights. Ruth Wisse suggested the following: "He had made himself an aggressive 'watchman' precisely because, collectively, Jews have so great a 'stake in the fantasies of tolerance' that they 'have a hard time facing political reality.'" Benjamin Netanyahu offered a tribute: "Changing the course of a mighty river used to be considered a mythological feat, yet this is precisely what you have done in your long and remarkable career as the guiding intellectual light of American conservatism."

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## Leaves without Trees

A poem by Yehuda Amichai

Leaves without trees

Must wander.

Blood without a body

Will not return to the basic elements,

It will dry on every road.

And all words must be weaned

From the mouths

To find new ones.

The earth must be cured

Of history

And the stones need to sleep

Even that one

That which killed Goliath must sleep, dark.

But I

Like a garage

Turned into a synagogue,

And again abandoned.

And I

Like the surveyors

Must drive sharpened hopes

With black and white sticks

Far into the desolate plain

Before me.

## Moreshet: From the Classics – The Ethical Will of Eleazar of Mayence

Germany, about 1357

These are the things which my sons and daughters shall do at my request. They shall go to the house of prayer morning and evening, and shall pay special regard to the Tefillah [the "Eighteen Benedictions"] and the Shema [Deuteronomy 6:4]. So soon as the service is over, they shall occupy themselves a little with the Torah [the Pentateuch], the Psalms, or with works of charity. Their business must be conducted honestly, in their dealings both with Jew and Gentile. They must be gentle in their manners and prompt to accede to every honorable request. They must not talk more than is necessary; by this will they be saved from slander, falsehood, and frivolity. They shall give an exact tithe [one tenth] of all their possessions: they shall never turn away a poor man empty-handed, but must give him what they can, be it much or little. If he begs to be lodged overnight, and they do not know him, let them provide him with the wherewithal to pay an innkeeper. Thus they will satisfy the needs of the poor in every possible way...

If they can by any means achieve it, my sons and daughters should live in communities, and not isolated from other Jews, so that their sons and daughters may learn the ways of Judaism. Even if compelled to solicit from others the money to pay a teacher, they must not let the young of both sexes go without instruction in the Torah. Marry your children, O my sons and daughters, as soon as their age is ripe, to members of respectable families. [Boys of thirteen and girls of twelve were considered ready for marriage.] Let no child of mine hunt after money by making a low match for that object; but if the family is undistinguished only on the mother's side, it does not matter, for all Israel [i.e. Jews] counts descent from the father's side.

I earnestly beg my children to be tolerant and humble to all, as I was throughout my life. Should cause for dissension present itself, be slow to accept the quarrel; seek peace and pursue it with all the vigor at

your command. Even if you suffer loss thereby, forbear and forgive, for God has many ways of feeding and sustaining His creatures. To the slanderer do not retaliate with counterattack; and though it be proper to rebut false accusations, yet is it most desirable to set an example of reticence. You yourselves must avoid uttering any slander, for so will you win affection. In trade be true, never grasping at what belongs to another. For by avoiding these wrongs—scandal, falsehood, money-grubbing—men will surely find tranquility and affection. And against all evils, silence is the best safeguard.

Be very particular to keep your houses clean and tidy. [These ideas are interesting coming from a man who lived through the Black Death of 1349.] I was always scrupulous on this point, for every injurious condition and sickness and poverty is to be found in foul dwellings. Be careful over the benedictions; accept no divine gift without paying back the Giver's part; and His part is man's grateful acknowledgment. [Pay God for His blessings by blessing Him.]

On holidays and festivals and Sabbaths seek to make happy the poor, the unfortunate, widows and orphans, who should always be guests at your tables; their joyous entertainment is a religious duty. Let me repeat my warning against gossip and scandal. And as you speak no scandal, so listen to none; for if there were no receivers there would be no bearers of slanderous tales; therefore the reception and credit of slander is as serious an offense as the originating of it. The less you say, the less cause you give for animosity, [as it says in Proverbs 10.19] "in the multitude of words there lies transgression."

I beg of you, my sons and daughters, my wife, and the entire congregation, that no funeral oration be spoken in my honor. Do carry my body on a bier, but in a coach. Wash me clean, comb my hair, and trim my nails, as I did in my lifetime, so that I may go clean to my eternal rest, as I went clean to synagogue every Sabbath day. If the ordinary officials dislike the duty, let adequate payment be made to some poor man who shall render this service carefully and not perfunctorily. [The dead were washed by the Hevra Kaddishah, "Holy Brotherhood."]

At a distance of thirty cubits from the grave, they shall set my coffin on the ground, and drag me to the grave by a rope attached to the coffin. [This is a symbolic punishment to atone for sins committed during lifetime, and, probably to anticipate the punishment of hell, *hibbut ha-kever*.] Every four cubits they shall stand and wait awhile, doing this in all seven times, so that I may find atonement for my sins. Put me in the ground at the right hand of my father, and if the space be a little narrow I am sure that he loves me well enough to make room for me by his side. If this be altogether impossible put me on his left, or near my grandmother, Yura. Should this also be impractical, let me be buried by the side of my daughter.

## Zachor: John Locke's *Letter Concerning Toleration*

...if we may openly speak the truth, and as becomes one man to another, neither Pagan nor Mahometan, nor Jew, ought to be excluded from the civil rights of the commonwealth because of his religion. The Gospel commands no such thing. The Church which "judgeth not those that are without" wants it not. And the commonwealth, which embraces indifferently all men that are honest, peaceable, and industrious, requires it not. Shall we suffer a Pagan to deal and trade with us, and shall we not suffer him to pray unto and worship God? If we allow the Jews to have private houses and dwellings amongst us, why should we not allow them to have synagogues? Is their doctrine more false, their worship more abominable, or is the civil peace more endangered by their meeting in public than in their private houses? But if these things may be granted to Jews and Pagans, surely the condition of any Christians ought not to be worse than theirs in a Christian commonwealth.

