

BOOK REVIEWS

Moses and the Original Torah, by ABBA HILLEL SILVER (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1961).

Reviewed by David S. Shapiro

The title of the volume by Abba Hillel Silver belies the range and scope of his scholarly work. Although the work purports to deal with the nature of the original Torah of Moses as the author envisages it, it is actually a spiritual history of the Jewish people during the first millenium and a half of Israel's existence. Dr. Silver has succeeded in writing a work which is scholarly, well-documented, and eminently readable. *Moses and the Original Torah* also contains passages which are moving and memorable (e.g., pp. 29-30, 37-38, 136-137). Dr. Silver is certainly no dry-as-dust scholar. He moves about freely in the world concerning which he writes so eloquently, and it is evident that the milieu of ancient Israel and its great spiritual personalities are close to his heart. But above all, he is fascinated by the figure of Moses, "the foremost religious genius of all time," the

creator of the Jewish people and the founder of its faith.

Dr. Silver, himself a great leader of world-Jewry, could not but have written a warm-hearted and fervent book about the history of his people and its great spiritual leaders. But Dr. Silver is also one of the leading Reform rabbis of America and, as such, it is to be expected that his perspective on Judaism would come to the fore in this work. While the author has joined forces with the recent, more traditional trend in critical circles and, like Albright and his school, regards Moses and not Amos or the "Second Isaiah" as the unsurpassed genius who created the religion of Israel, he nevertheless remains loyal to the "classical" Reform position, and from its vantage-point attributes to Moses the religious and ethical teachings known as *ethical monotheism*, and ascribes to later teachers those phases of the Mosaic Law which Reform declares as "ritualistic" or "ceremonial." The

author asserts that Moses promulgated a Torah which taught the unity of God and prohibited the making of images. He set up standards of behavior which would guide his people towards an ethical life, both individually and collectively. But this original Torah was in the course of time "overlaid with much heavy embroidery" (p. 6). The detailed legislation dealing with rituals, with civil and criminal law, could not have originated with Moses. Moses rejected sacrifices, sanctuaries (Temples?), and the priesthood. How can the laws of Leviticus be assigned to him? How could he have constructed a Tabernacle in the wilderness? Sacrifices, sanctuaries, and the priesthood, according to Dr. Silver, insinuated themselves into the religion of Israel only as a result of Canaanitic influence. That this appraisal of the "disciplinary commandments" (*mitzvot ha-shimiyot*, of the medievals) is identical with that of the early Christians is pointed out by Silver who is prompted by this fact to comment that "for the people as a whole, the Torah — the whole of it— had become during the Second Commonwealth an essence, a sacred reality in its own right, the supreme factor in the religious life of the people" (p. 180). There is no elaboration on the latter statement.

While Dr. Silver's interpretation of historic events is influenced by his basic religious outlook, his work must be reckoned with as one of serious scholarship. Not every proof that he proffers to buttress his point of view is novel;

some are stock-in-trade arguments, some are flimsy — but he presents his point of view skillfully and with great sincerity. Let us examine some of the grounds for Dr. Silver's thesis.

The author argues very firmly and correctly that great ideas do not necessarily appear late in the development of the human race. Consequently there is no *a priori* necessity to assume that the basic teachings of the Torah of Moses originated in later generations. Nevertheless, Silver refuses to acknowledge Moses as a lawgiver to his people. "The great religious pioneer does not as a rule propose any detailed and specific laws and ordinances. This is the work of disciples, of those who come after him" (p. 2). The example of Zoroaster, Gautama, Lao-Tse, Confucius, Jesus, and Muhammad is cited. These were teachers, religious innovators, but not lawgivers. However, analogies are not always decisive. Even if it is true that these religious pioneers were not lawgivers, it would prove nothing about Moses. Moses labored under circumstances totally different from those faced by the other teachers who lived in societies with long-established systems of jurisprudence which they did little to alter. Moses was the leader of a people that possessed no land of its own and had not elaborated a special juridical structure that it could call its own. Is it not reasonable to suppose that Moses would set before himself this task of giving his people who were about to enter the Promised Land a code

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of laws that would correspond to his ethical ideals, and a mode of religious worship which would reflect the purity of his teachings?

Dr. Silver maintains that the original Torah of Moses contained nothing in it about sacrifices or regulations concerning worship. This assertion in itself is remarkable. Is it possible that, in presenting his people with a religious ideal that was so different from anything else known in the ancient world, as the author consistently affirms, Moses would not provide for some form of worship of the unseen, imageless God, such as prayer, obeisance, or offerings? A people who are loyal to God are hungry to worship Him. Would not Moses have been derelict in his duties, as the teacher of his people, had he not taught them how to pray and how to worship? It is inconceivable that he told Israel that it does not matter how one worships God. The community he led out of Egypt was after all not a congregation of sophisticated college-graduates. Even these are sometimes not averse to participating in a divine service. Before rejecting the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuchal regulations of divine worship, one would have to explicate what forms of worship Moses did sanction and instruct his people to follow. But Dr. Silver nowhere in his work clarifies what Moses did offer his people as an acceptable mode of worship.

However, our author does present what seems to be more positive

evidence for his contention that Moses was not the author of the sacrificial and Levitical regulations. Thus, he cites the prophetic invectives against the sacrifices. But it has been pointed out time and time again that the prophets were scandalized not by the sacrifices as such but by the base motives and unrepentant hearts behind the offerings. The Torah itself has declared such sacrifices to be unacceptable. (See Samson Raphael Hirsch, *Gesammelte Schriften* II, 235 ff., and his *Pentateuch* [Frankfurt am Main, 1903] to Genesis 4, 3-6 p. 82). More serious is the problem of Amos 5:25 and Jeremiah 7:21 ff. In Amos we read: "Did ye bring unto Me sacrifices and offerings in the wilderness forty years, O house of Israel?" Actually the prophet is only saying that sacrifices were not always offered throughout the entire forty years because, during the greater part of this era, circumstances, such as the lack of animals or the state of uncircumcision of the people, made the offering of sacrifices impossible.* The passage in Jeremiah which asserts that God did not speak to the children of Israel concerning burnt-offerings or sacrifices *on the day He brought them out of the land of Egypt* does not offer conclusive evidence. A close study of the passages in Jeremiah will reveal that by the phrase "the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt" is meant the period from the Exodus to the theophany at Sinai (Cf. Maim., *Guide* III, 32). During this period

* See a discussion of this point in my work *Torat Mosheh Veba-Neviim*, Jerusalem, Mosad Harav Kook, 1961, pp. 30-31.

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received his *devarim* at Mt. Sinai, because they never mention this mountain (except Malachi, p. 13-14). We might also, by the same logic, deny that they knew that the Egyptian king from whose yoke the children of Israel were liberated was called Pharaoh, because they never refer to him. Aaron and Miriam are mentioned only one time in all the prophetic writings (Micah, 6:4). Were the prophets unaware of their existence? On p. 130, the author forgets this theory, and states simply that Moses made the covenant with Israel at Sinai. On p. 87, Dr. Silver states that "in the Deuteronomic Code there are sundry speeches attributed to Moses, a literary device which was common among ancient writers." This reviewer is unaware to what extent this device was used in ancient times. It was practiced by the Greek historians of a much later period and their emulators (such as Josephus). Poets had from ancient times put words into the mouths of their heroes. That such a literary device would have been used in the case of so earnest and inspired a work as Deuteronomy, that a writer would have dared to put his own words into the mouth of the great man of God, is highly incredible.

There are a number of other points which need comment. For example, on p. 156, Silver asserts that Amon carried on his father's tradition for twenty-two years. The biblical text states that Amon reigned only two years (II Kings, 21:3-5). On p. 71 (See also p. IX), it is stated that the Pentateuch and

the historical books of the Bible from Joshua through Kings were recast in such a way as to extol the Davidic dynasty and the central sanctuary in Jerusalem, and they were hostile to the Northern Kingdom. While such an assertion might, correctly or incorrectly, be applied to the historical books, in what way does it apply to the Pentateuch, except for the enigmatic passage in Genesis 49:10? Where is there a glorification in the Pentateuch of the Davidic dynasty or of Jerusalem? The fact that there is no reference in the Pentateuch either to Jerusalem as the place which God has chosen, or to the Davidic dynasty, or to the division of the kingdom is in itself the greatest evidence for the antiquity of the entire Pentateuch.

On p. 122, the author maintains that according to the Book of the Covenant, only excommunication was prescribed for worshipping other gods, while the Deuteronomic Code prescribes the death penalty. However, the term *cherem* used in the Covenant Code (Ex. 22:19) means nothing other than the death penalty as can be ascertained from Lev. 27:29 which refers to such cases as that spoken of in Exodus.

On p. 139, in the formulation of the "Words" from the Holiness Code that might be attributed to Moses, the chapter on the laws of incest (Lev. 18) is omitted. One wonders why.

On p. 16, the author asserts that the *legend* associated with the birth of Moses is not unlike that which is recorded of Sargon I of Akkad and of other national he-

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roes of the past. Without delving too deeply into this problem, this reviewer wishes to point out that the exposure of children in antiquity was a common, everyday occurrence, and the fact that some of the exposed children were rescued and in the course of time achieved positions of importance may not in any way be statistically remarkable.

The implication on p. 41 that according to Jeremiah the sanctuary in Jerusalem was not truly a house of God is highly questionable. This assertion is belied by Jeremiah's reference to the Temple as the house *whereupon God's name is called* (7:11), a phrase which he uses in regard to his own relationship to God (15:17). Shiloh, according to him, was also the place where God caused His name to dwell at first (7:12). On p. 59, the name *Yeshurun* is said to suggest courage and victory. What evidence is there for this interpretation? See Gesenius (E. Robinson tr.), *Lexicon of the OT*, p. 449. If the Samaritans are actually Israelites as suggested on p. 53, why is it that the Samaritans never accepted the Israelite prophets? On p. 178, it is stated that in the Testament of Levi (ch. 3) opposition to the sacrifices is expressed. However, the reference is to bloodless sacrifices made in heaven, as in *Menachot* 110a and *Tossafot*, *ibid.* That the Testament of Levi was not opposed to sacrifices is evident from chapter 9 of that work. Why is Ehud regarded as the first of the Judges (p. 62) and not Othniel? Is it in the interest of the author's

theory about the tribe of Judah? On p. 134 it is stated that the prophets always use the term *Torah*, *the Torah of Moses*, *the Torah of God*. This reviewer knows of only one passage in the prophets (Malachi, end) where the expression the *Torah of Moses* is used. Likewise the statement (*ibid.*) that the author of the Deuteronomic Code *frequently* applies the term "the Torah of Moses" or the "Book of the Torah of Moses" to the whole of the Code which was found in the Temple during the reign of King Josiah is incorrect. Where did Dr. Silver find these these terms in the Book of Deuteronomy, unless he is referring to the Book of Joshua, which he assumes was written by the Deuteronomist, or to the Book of Kings? Why are the prophecies of Isaiah 2 and Micah 4 containing the vision of the "end of days" relegated to the post-exilic period? (p. 170).

Surprising also is Dr. Silver's failure to cite modern Hebrew biblical scholars. The monumental work of Ezekiel Kaufman is ignored, except for one reference to the English digest of his work (p. 72). Only one modern Hebrew book is cited, that of Prof. Mazar (p. 71). There is no allusion to the great books of Prof. U. Cassuto or Dr. Kaminka. In the case of a Hebraic scholar of Dr. Silver's stature this disregard is puzzling.

Dr. Silver has employed great ingenuity and skill to rear a structure of the spiritual history of our people in ancient times. However, his failure to reckon with the tried and tested tradition of our people

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has weakened his edifice, so that, without a strong foundation, it totters dangerously and hopelessly. It is to be sincerely hoped that in his future writings, Dr. Silver will

build upon the bedrock of Jewish tradition, and, with his great ability and learning, will continue to be of service to our people and faith.

The Leo Jung Jubilee Volume, essays in his honor on the occasion of his seventieth birthday, edited by MENACHEM M. KASHER, NORMAN LAMM, LEONARD ROSENFELD (New York: The Jewish Center, 1962).

Reviewed by
Norman M. Bernhard

This Festschrift is a collection of uncommon significance, singularly suited to the distinguished person it honors. The Hebrew section of this volume contains a wealth of material on scriptural and talmudic subjects. Specially noteworthy is Rabbi Y. M. Ginzburg's demonstration of the innate linkage of the Written and the Oral Law. Taking one of the numerous Scriptural passages that defy simple literal interpretation, he shows how the biblical style and expressions can be understood only in the light of the halakhic *Massorah* transmitted by our Sages.

Those concerned with formulating a *modus vivendi* for the modern Torah Jew in the non-Jewish world, will find particularly interesting the piece by Rabbi Dr. Y. Z. Kahana on "Judaism and the Environment." The author indicates that the Halakhah has been very sensitive to the ways of the innumerable cultures in which Jews have found themselves. Reacting to assimilatory pressures, adoption of many local customs has been prohibited as

Chukat ha-Goy (the characteristic way of the Gentile). On the other hand, numerous Jewish practices have been modified or even suspended, either because they might incite suspicion and hostility against the Jews, or because they might elicit scorn on the part of our Gentile neighbors and result in a *Chillul ha-Shem* (desecration of the Name of God).

Too often we hear a charge of cold, unyielding legalism applied against the Halakhah. A long-needed study is Rabbi Dr. I. Jakobovits' article on "Human Pain in the Laws of Israel." The author demonstrates that the entire range of human distress, from physical pain to emotional anxiety and even embarrassment, is very much the concern of the Rabbis as it is of the Torah, "whose ways are ways of pleasantness."

Rabbi Menachem M. Kasher, famed scholar and author, contributes a lengthy dissertation thoroughly covering the subject of *Tscheilet*, the mysterious color specified by the Torah for the *Tzitzit*. He concludes that it is certainly a religious duty for all who are capable to search in the waters of

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Israel for the elusive sea-creature that is its source, and then for scholars to consider re-institution of its use.

The English section, apart from Herman Wouk's moving "Word of Thanks" and the customary biographical and bibliographical material, presents a bountiful crop of significant papers by such authorities as Professors Berkovits, Finkel, Katsh, Kisch, and Rabbi Eli Munk.

The late Dr. Isidore Epstein contributed a fascinating essay on Maimonides' "humanistic" approach to Jewish Law. Quoting numerous examples, he shows that, "in cases for which no provision is made in the Talmud, Maimonides, guided by dictates of reason or by moral principles, would not hesitate to dispute the decision of the Geonim or any other of his predecessors" (p. 72). That such was, indeed, the Rambam's approach to Halakhah is well-established by the author. What is questionable, however, is how distinctively unique this approach was with the Rambam. As the author indicates, Maimonides himself attributed many of his disagreements with his predecessors on such matters to variations and mistakes in the talmudic texts before them, rather than to any differences in philosophical or axiological orientation.

In examining the recently published complete text of Maimonides' Prayer Book, Jacob I. Dienstag assesses the position of this pioneering work in the history of Jewish liturgy. Of particular contemporary interest is the discus-

sion of Maimonides' concern for "the aesthetic behavior of the worshippers in the Synagogue and the decorum during the prayers." He went so far as to have the silent *Amidah* omitted altogether, thereby making it necessary for all to be decorously attentive to the Cantor's recitation aloud, during which learned and unlearned alike would fulfill their obligation. Mr. Dienstag documents Maimonides' oft-quoted aversion to *piyuttim* and their inclusion in the liturgy — although some of Maimonides' own religious poetry has been enshrined in our present prayerbook!

In his stirring prose, A. J. Heschel explores the soul-experience of the prophetic personality. Besides his objective concern with the word and demand he must transmit, the prophet is completely bound up in his encounter with the Divine Being *per se*. The key to a psychological understanding of the prophets, Heschel says, is "religious sympathy," i.e., the prophet's subjective attitude and response to what he apprehends of the *pathos* of God. "The unique feature of religious sympathy is not self-conquest but self-dedication; not the suppression of emotion but its redirection; not silent subordination, but active cooperation with God; not love which aspires to the Being of God in Himself, but harmony of the soul with the concern of God. To be a prophet means to identify one's concern with the concern of God" (p. 106).

It is worth noting that this is the attitude encouraged by Judaism for all, not only its prophets.

No doubt, this is because Judaism considered all persons to be potential candidates for prophetic communion with the Lord. Heschel himself suggests that the wider scope of this concept offers "a basic understanding of religious existence. Perhaps it is in sympathy that the ultimate meaning, worth, and dignity of religion may be found" (p. 109).

Happily, the author hastens to point out that "sympathy" is not an end in itself, nor do the prophets advocate a religion of mere sentimentality. "Not mere feeling but action will mitigate the world's misery, society's injustice, or the people's alienation from God . . . Prophetic sympathy is no delight; unlike ecstasy, it is not a goal but a sense of challenge, a commitment, a state of tension, consternation, and dismay" (p. 107).

Perhaps the keenest problem facing contemporary Jewry is that of formulating the ideal response to the challenging confrontation between authentic halakhic Judaism and Western culture. A very timely piece, therefore, is Norman Lamm's excellent essay contrasting the two versions of the Judaeo-secular "Synthesis" advocated respectively by Samson Raphael Hirsch and Rav Kook.

Rabbi Lamm summarizes the differences: "Hirsch's Synthesis is one of co-existence, hence essentially static. Kook's is one of interaction, and hence dynamic. Hirsch is an esthete who wants Torah and *Derekh Eretz* to live in a neighborly, courteous, and gentlemanly fashion. Kook is an alchemist

who wants the sacred to transmute the profane and recast it in its own image" (p. 151).

Rabbi Lamm, while giving Hirsch his due as the Father of modern Orthodoxy, clearly feels that American Orthodoxy has progressed beyond the stage where it has to prove itself, and can now move on to the more profound and creative synthesis advocated by Rav Kook. Would that this were so! I fear, though, that most of Rabbi Lamm's colleagues are painfully aware that it is still, as it was in the time of Hirsch, "important to produce a Westernized Orthodox Jew in order to refute the charge that Judaism is a collection of old superstitions" (p. 148).

Professor Samuel K. Mirsky laments the fact that talmudic methodology is a relatively uncultivated field of research. In a lengthy study of just one of the Talmud's many rules of operation, the author highlights the problems and inconsistencies caused by our oversimplifying or taking for granted the principles that guided the *Tannaim* and *Amoraim* in their formulation and discussion of the Mishnah.

In an age fraught with great halakhic controversies, Rabbi Louis Rabinowitz enters "a plea not only for tolerance and understanding . . . but for a return to and a restoration of the essential spirit of difference of interpretation" (p. 193). The author points to the thousands of differences of opinion recorded in the Talmud, and calls our attention to the little noted "time lag" — often a great many years — between the propounding of the

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different views and the final determination of the Halakhah in accordance with one of them. This "time lag," Rabbi Rabinowitz writes, "is of the very essence of the methodology and procedure of the Talmud... (and) continues throughout the ages in the development of Halakhah up to the present day." Therefore, he concludes, "On such questions which are being actively debated today in the various rabbinic journals and responsa... we are still in the period of 'judicial controversy and academic discussion' — but the period of 'results (which are) binding upon Jews who accept the Torah' still belongs to the future" (p. 192).

The author leaves one wondering how to discern when the period of controversy and tolerant discussion is over and the period of results, described by him as a time of cracking down on heterodoxy to establish the Halakhah firmly, begins. Is it not natural for each zealous disputant to feel impatiently that it is in *his* time?

Rabbi Leonard Rosenfeld sets out to demonstrate the relevance of the Sabbath "not only as pragmatically profitable but also as the philosophic exponent of man's quest for freedom" (p. 198). And he succeeds admirably — but not, I fear, in terms comprehensible and convincing to the average alienated American Jew who just doesn't want his style cramped, not even by God Almighty Himself.

Cecil Roth's highly readable article establishes that the Zealots of first-century Palestine "were not basically political terrorists, nor

even political activists, but members of a religious group whose dogma had political implications" (p. 209).

Particularly fascinating is Roth's theory and evidence that the members of the Qumran Sect were not in fact Essenes, but extreme Zealots, who, in keeping with their unique dogma of the sole sovereignty of God over the Jewish People, withdrew into a remote quasi-monastic community in order to avoid all possibility of recognition of Roman and even native authority in daily life.

In a difficult, but important, article, Rabbi Walter S. Wurzbarger assails the notion that, "claiming sovereignty only in the realm of practice, the Halakhah is . . . content to leave the domain of ideology entirely to the subjective whim and personal preference of the individual . . . the burden of supplying the Jew with a philosophy of life is assigned to the non-halakhic components of Judaism . . . (such) as Aggadah, philosophy, Mussar, or mysticism" (p. 212).

The author shows that "There can be no doubt that the Halakhah sets definite limits to our freedom of thought . . . and . . . commits us to a number of specific metaphysical propositions" (p. 212). Rabbi Wurzbarger then goes on to demonstrate that "there is a class of propositions to be called *meta-halakhic* propositions which contain the ontological and axiological presuppositions of the Halakhah. These meta-halakhic propositions represent the meta-physical and ethical propositions which can be

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extracted from halakhic data and which, unlike general aggadic concepts, form an integral part of the halakhic system" (p. 213). The author refutes the positions of such differing thinkers as A. J. Heschel and Jacob B. Agus, who see the Halakhah as soulless, objective behaviorism, intrinsically and irremediably unconcerned with the personal world of faith, ideas, attitudes and ideological commitments. The paper ends with the suggestion that "the harnessing of the collective resources of halakhic scholars may be the only way in which the ontological and axiological foundations of halakhic Judaism can be made explicit to the modern Jew who is in search for an authentically Jewish ideology" (p. 221).

What student of Halakhah has not felt the frustration of running

up against the self-effacing statement regarding a crucial phase of his subject, "We are not acquainted any more in this matter," or "We are not expert enough to make such distinctions"? With great erudition, H. Z. Zimmels, of Jews' College in London, traces the history and probes the meaning of this self-deprecating theme in rabbinic literature and, surprisingly, in non-Jewish sources as well. One wishes still more treatment had been given to the meaning as well as the psychological and epistemological implications of this attitude.

This is truly a remarkable volume, rich in offerings to suit every interest, although addressed to a wide range of levels of understanding and prior knowledge. It is an extraordinary tribute to an extraordinary man.

B'nai Brith Great Book Series: Vol. III, *Great Jewish Thinkers of the Twentieth Century*, Vol. IV, *Contemporary Jewish Thought, A Reader*, Edited with Introductions by SIMON NOVECK (B'nai B'rith Department of Adult Education, 1963).

Reviewed by
Zalman I. Posner

Two names on the dust jacket of the first volume will catch the eye of the Orthodox reader: Abraham Isaac Kuk (*sic*) and Joseph Soloveitchik. Torah thinkers do have a place in the array of the Great. However, after reading both essays one may be reminded of the dictum that when Israel is deserving, then their work is done by others, and if not, they must

do their own work. The essay on Rabbi Soloveitchik by his pupil portrays him as well as that complex personality can be encompassed in a few pages. The one on the first Chief Rabbi of the Holy Land, sympathetic and respectful as it is, cannot be satisfactory from the viewpoint we may assume he shared. Orthodox writers have to present the lives and works of our *gedolim*; others cannot do it for us. Too, B'nai B'rith, with all due acclaim for these latest volumes in its "Great Books Series," cannot

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present the Torah perspective for us.

Dr. Aharon Lichtenstein pictures his teacher reverently and realistically; this "essentially lonely figure" comes to life. He undertakes the formidable task of explaining a halakhic thinker and halakhic thought to an audience presumably unfamiliar with either. His reference to the "acute dialectic of halakhic logic — so rigorous and yet so subtle; so flexible and still so firm," provides an epigrammatic description for those exposed to Talmud, but will probably be incomprehensible to the uninitiated.

His lengthier treatment of the "Concept of Halakhah" speaks concretely. The abstraction becomes real. His brief examples are illuminating and apt, drawn from familiar daily experience. His remark about the "most legalistic ritualism (being) better than no worship whatever" is a simple and effective rebuke to those who attempt to justify their slackness by denigrating the observant. Three sub-headings of Lichtenstein's are particularly recommended: Role of the Intellect, Implementation of Halakhah, and Halakhah and Jewish Identity.

Lichtenstein provides material for scholar and layman, explaining R. Soloveitchik's philosophy of Halakhah, and demonstrating its relevance in the life of the Jew. While the subjects of the other essays are represented in the companion Reader volume, unhappily R. Soloveitchik is not. Let us hope, if futilely, that we may soon be

privileged to have his vitally needed teachings available to a broader audience than his lecture room provides. Until then, we are grateful to Dr. Lichtenstein for his lucid contribution to the scanty literature on Halakhah in English.

Chief Rabbi Kook emerges from Dr. Jacob B. Agus' essay as an inspiring figure, a man of mind and heart, of religious passion and sympathetic awareness of worldly problems. But, not sharing R. Kook's attitudes to Halakhah, Agus found it impossible to present his views without subjective intrusions.

Sometimes a word, but a crucial one, betrays Agus' stand. He states that in a decision, R. Kook "suspended" the law of the Sabbatical year. A trifle like "suspended" may be the key to the Conservative view of Torah law, but may Dr. Agus attribute his views to R. Kook?

Elsewhere we are told that R. Kook "extended the meaning of holiness beyond the borders of dogma and ritual. No longer determined exclusively by the words of the Torah . . ." Does Agus mean that R. Kook's conception of holiness is attainable outside the framework of Torah and *mitzvot*? Are the "words of the Torah" somehow less vital to R. Kook? Is this the *Rav Roshi* speaking or a Conservative spokesman? The revealing choice of words in this context, "dogma and ritual," is disparaging to the concept of *emunot* and *mitzvot*.

Agus deduces from R. Kook's works that "the Messiah is no longer a person but a symbol of

the horizon of perfection." When he earlier paraphrases R. Kook and says that "every effort for the improvement of society is worship in action," we have little quarrel. But eliminating *Mashiach* on the basis of this view is unwarranted and objectionable. Is this another instance of ascribing his personal beliefs to R. Kook?

Another instance of alien views, at least implicit, interwoven in the Rav's, is a translation open to question. "Faith is exemplified by the tractate (*sic*) *Zeraim* (Plants) — man proves his faith in eternal life by planting." Is not the intention of the original quotation (Yerushalmi, cited in *Tosafot, Shabbat* 31a) that the farmer believes in God (Who lives eternally, or is the Life of all creations — *chai ha-olamim*) rather than in some undefined "eternal life"? Again we wonder about the fidelity to the Rav's intention.

But, one might argue, these are abstractions innocent of implication, though this reviewer feels they are profoundly important. However, Agus does become specific, citing a "liberal" (an attractive word, not declass   like "dogma and ritual") decision of R. Kook regarding football on Shabbat. The Rav's son, Rabbi Zvi Yehudah Kook, in response to a query by our colleague, Rabbi Philip Zimmerman, indignantly denied any such decision by his father, and sent a copy of a letter by the Rav categorically and vehemently prohibiting that activity.

The second volume of selected writings could well have offered

the closing paragraph of that letter:

But in truth, the superficiality of those who learned a little, and the illiteracy and ignorance of the masses are the causes of the stumbling-blocks in all aspects of our lives. To attain some improvement we must increase Torah study among all levels. Then they will be able to distinguish between the prohibited and permitted in general, and not be like the blind, constantly stumbling. Pupils not fully qualified must develop traits of ethics and respect, not to spring forward to issue halakhic decisions without taking counsel with their seniors . . .

The Editor's Introduction to the section "Recent Trends in American Jewish Theology," in common with the introductions to the other sections, is comprehensive and erudite. While it touches only highlights, it does so competently. Swift and flowing, it provides an enlightening insight into contemporary writing by Jews on theology. We may presume that the term "theology" in the title refers to religious thought in general, not limited to the technical definition of the term.

The areas of religious thought explored and developed by most of the Jewish thinkers (a term constantly repeated throughout the books; they are almost a new class: thinkers) here presented, are prescribed or pioneered by Christian theologians. They lay down the ground-rules, as it were, and Jewish thinkers work within the limits

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and terminology which others find of concern. What we have in a sense is the Jewish counterpart to the Protestant theologian. Considerable intellectual energy and ability is expended in these fields, not in itself objectionable, but *karmi sheli*, the unique and identifiable world of Jewish thought, is scarcely mentioned.

Reading these pages makes one wonder whether these theologians are not, for all their worth, an isolated group, writing for colleagues. The layman not committed to Torah may be interested in their work insofar as they may rationalize and justify his conduct and ideals, and if they don't, he will continue unperturbed. This is not the inevitable gap between philosopher and the masses, but a barrier of indifference and irrelevance. More precisely: the contemporary Jewish theologian (Kaplan, for example) prides himself on keeping his theology abreast of scientific advances. Religion is made a handmaiden of science — submissive, pliant. Has this "scientific" approach had any appreciable impact on the scientific community, say, so that physicists may describe themselves as committed and inspired Conservative or Reform Jews, convinced that this is the way for them, intellectually satisfying, indeed imperative? They might "belong," because of family obligations, but is their personal involvement more than peripheral? If theological thinking is not reflected in this group, where does it have an effect outside the professional circles? In turn how

has the Torah community performed?

The editor notes "the emergence of a new type of Orthodox Rabbi, conversant with the culture of our day." The true revolution in the Torah community is perhaps not symbolized as much by the Talmud-steeped Rabbi conversant with the secular culture, as by the scientist (the idol and symbol of the 20th century) conversant with Talmud and observant of *mitzvot*. Here we have an impressive example of effective communication between the "thinker" and the layman.

Creative religious thinkers do not necessarily "create" religious ideas, or invent novel ceremonials, or write revolutionary books. But they must "create" religious people. The startling success of men like Rabbi Aaron Kotler (not mentioned in the volume) in the field of intensive Talmud scholarship, of the Chafetz Chaim (no less an enduring figure than many subjects of the book) in the field of personal morality, and the Lubavitcher Rebbes in resuscitating an almost moribund American Jewish community — these represent Jewish religious creativeness. Nor may their work be cavalierly dismissed as "pragmatic" success, or as lacking intellectual magnitude. They may not speak of God as though they held his coat-tails, but their religious perceptions and intellectual stature is of the highest order. This new universe of Jewish learning is virtually ignored in these volumes.

Orthodox scholars and institutions may view these books as a challenge to organize and articulate

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in English the incalculable wealth of Torah development, and to explore more deeply the areas almost untouched by the Orthodox, such

as biography and history. There is no reason why others should enjoy a monopoly.

Man's Best Hope, by ROLAND B. GITTELSOHN (New York: Random House, 1961).

Reviewed by
Leonard B. Gewirtz

In the history of Western thought two systems prevailed: Dualism and Monism. Metaphysical dualism says that the nature of the universe is dualistic: substance and essence, matter and form, body and mind. Metaphysical dualism is hospitable to a transcendental conception of God, who created a universe *ex nihilo*. Metaphysical dualism is therefore hospitable to a theonomous ethical system, and is agreeable to the theological doctrine of revelation. This metaphysics also explains psychology in dualistic terms, body and mind, and is hospitable to the doctrine of immortality.

Metaphysical monism says that the nature of the universe is monistic, matter-form continuum, or body-mind continuum. Although this seems to be a materialistic philosophy, and many dualists consider monism as a veiled form of materialism, metaphysical monism does try to reckon with and explain such manifestations as mind, spirituality, freedom, creativity, soul, etc. Metaphysical monism may be hospitable to an immanent conception of God, an autonomous conception of ethics, a monistic

psychology with a rejection of a belief in a "life-after-death," and a "theology" resting on revelation as historic process and not as event.

Process Philosophy, a contemporary school of thought, whose outstanding proponent is A. N. Whitehead, expounds monism. It rejects materialism as an oversimplified explanation of reality, and to accommodate the activities of freedom, will, creativity, intelligence, and other emergent forces regnant in nature, it suggests that reality is a vast, complex *Process*. Religious naturalism is a sub-division within the broad system of process-philosophy.

Dr. Roland B. Gittelsohn writes as a naturalist who tries to find a locus for God, Soul, prayer, ethics, and immortality in a monistic universe. These traditionally transcendental concepts coming from the Bible and its tradition, that have been interpreted in a dualistic fashion, are re-interpreted in a monistic manner, and they are divested of any other-worldly significance. Summing-up his chapter on God, he writes, "My God is not a Person. He is not supernatural. He is not a Cosmic Magician," (p. 119). Consistent with process philosophy, the author defines, "God is the Energy which has so created and

