

## BOOK REVIEWS

*Ever Since Sinai*, by JAKOB J. PETUCHOWSKY (New York: Scribe Publications, 1961).

*Reviewed by* SHUBERT SPERO

For the past decade there have been rumblings in the camp of our post-rational Jewish theologians indicating a serious coming-to-grips with the problem of Revelation. There seemed to be a growing awareness of the need to relate one's God concept to the values, ethics and norms of Torah. We heard, "without the seal of Revelation, each Jew would be cast into the desert of human groping," (Arthur Cohen, *Judaism*, July '52) and "a history in which no Revelation is possible . . . remains a weight without meaning" (Emil Fackenheim, *Judaism*, Summer 1954).

It is with a certain sense of expectation, therefore, that one takes up "*Ever Since Sinai — a Modern View of Torah*" by Dr. J. J. Petuchowsky, of the faculty of Hebrew Union College, who has been in the front ranks of those contributing to current theological discus-

sion. One is compelled to report, however, that while it appeared that mountains were in labor, the birth has been a rather small mouse. Dr. Petuchowsky is certainly aware of the problem. He readily admits at the outset that the very concept of ethical monotheism implies "continued and abiding concern" for mankind from which in turn "it follows that there must be some way in which God makes known His will to mankind" (p. 47).

At the end, the author believes he has convincingly shown that "behind the literary history of the Pentateuch, behind the legal codes and narratives, . . . there was the momentum of a Revelation which in a profound sense enables us to this day to offer our praise unto Him Who is the 'Giver of the Torah.'" In short, Petuchowsky offers here a theory of Revelation which should make it possible for modern man to see in Jewish ritual Divine laws. However, it is to

## Book Reviews

be seriously doubted whether between the intent and the conclusion, the author supplies the conceptual apparatus necessary to justify such an assertion. We have here the felt need, the right intention and even the proper terminology, but do we have a theory of Revelation that does the job?

Traditionally, in both Christian and Jewish theology, two distinct elements have always been involved in the concept of Revelation: 1) Revelation as the *self disclosure* of God (*Hitgalut Hashem*); 2) Revelation as the disclosure of *God's will* in terms of norms for human behavior — *Torah Min Hashamayim*. While for quite obvious reasons, Christianity has emphasized the first aspect, it has nevertheless always included elements of the second. (See the Westminster Confession and the Formula of Concord). Conversely, though Judaism with its emphasis upon Law and Halakhah has always considered the second aspect central, it nonetheless recognized the existence of the first, particularly in its understanding of the nature of miracles: "The maidservant saw at the sea more than what was vouchsafed to Ezekiel."

Under the pressures of modernism, Protestant theology proceeded to "refine" its concept of Revelation to mean only the "self-disclosure of God" with implications, however, for ethics and human behavior. This view has been made explicit by William Temple, John Baillee and more recently H. Richard Niebuhr. In the Jewish field, Steinheim began the trend towards

the irrational and the reality of Revelation, and was followed by Rosenzweig and Buber. However, in the case of the latter two, Revelation was limited to the self-disclosure of God: "Man receives not 'a content' but a Presence." Will Herberg followed in their footsteps, and now J. J. Petuchowsky brings the "good news" to the Reform movement, allegedly effecting there "a revolutionary turn in their thinking." While some of the terminology may indeed sound strange in Reform circles, it is doubtful whether this "new theory" will trigger any appreciable increase in Reform observance.

Presumably this view of Revelation has the *hekhsher* of "reason" and is one in which modern man can believe. Let us see why. The fundamental philosophic arguments against the traditional view of Revelation have been: 1) Revelation is either superfluous or incomprehensible. If human reason can attain its truth unaided, then Revelation is superfluous. If, on the other hand, the truths of Revelation are beyond reason, how can we know them altogether? 2) Revelation, involving the incursion of God, the Eternal, into time, poses a paradoxical problem. Either God's eternity or the human character of Moses is destroyed. In a more general vein, Dr. Petuchowsky himself identified as his pet peeve against the orthodox view on Revelation the fact that "it posited the supernatural. It affirmed the miraculous" (*Journal of Religion*, January 1961, p. 30).

Now, while Dr. Petuchowsky's

content-less Revelation entirely escapes the problem of its relation to reason, does it really avoid our second argument? Our author describes Revelation as: "Events occurring in the historical experience of mankind, events which are apprehended by faith as the 'mighty acts' of God and which therefore engender in the mind of man such reflective knowledge of God as it is given him to possess. The events themselves are events which take place in the natural order and in history. It is man's God-given ability to place a certain interpretation on them which is evidence of God's Revelation" (p. 69). Now, while the events are natural, how shall we conceive of "man's God-given ability" to apprehend this event as Revelation of God? If the experience is completely subjective, then we have no Revelation here at all. On the other hand, if the perception is veridical and the individual is really experiencing a self-disclosure of God, then surely we are still enmeshed in the eternal-temporal paradox! If God impinges on the mind of man (be it even by endowing him with a "God-given ability"), then surely we have not graduated from the orthodoxy that "posits the supernatural and affirms the miraculous." Dr. Petuchowsky's colleagues who hold the same general view of Revelation are more candid. Says one, "In Revelation the mind of man is acted upon by a power outside that mind" (Joseph Gumbiner, *Judaism*, Spring 1961). Admits another, "but faith must hold fast to this paradox (eternal

versus temporal) if the particular is to have meaning before God; it may hold fast to it because there is no reason why what is paradoxical to finite reason should be impossible to God." (Emil Fackenheim, *Judaism*, Summer 1954).

Dr. Petuchowsky and those like-minded insist that in Revelation, the self-disclosure of God (via the "God-given ability" of man to so perceive the event) is direct and immediate, while any imperative in terms of laws, rituals or norms for behavior are only the *record* of Revelation, the man-made groping *interpretation* of what he experienced. Logically, however, on the basis of what they have already affirmed, why should it be any less reasonable to accept the notion that man has a "God-given ability" (prophecy) to apprehend certain values and modes of behavior (natural) as Revelation of God's will? Surely, these too can be considered direct rather than derivative! As Maimonides put it quite clearly, "the Lord spoke" is only a metaphor and what is involved is essentially that "a communication from God reached the mind of the prophet" (*Guide* I:41). On the other hand, if what invalidates the "content" is that the message is delivered in human speech and thus becomes derivative, then certainly Dr. Petuchowsky's Revelation involving the human mind is likewise psychic and therefore no less mediated by human mental processes.

As it stands, however, can this theory of Revelation as self-disclosure of God truly justify Dr.

## Book Reviews

Petuchowsky's offering praise to God as "Giver of the Torah"? In what sense is God to be viewed as the "source and inspiration of the Law"? Our author quotes with approval Rosenzweig's assertion that "divine love is the only content of Revelation" (p. 72). From this love of God for us, Dr. Petuchowsky attempts to infer by involved *pilpul* and arbitrary assumptions an obligation to love Him, to love our fellowman and the laws and rituals which can be understood as embodying these principles. Gumbiner attempts to do the same, although not quite with the same subtlety. Dr. Petuchowsky does not account for man's "God-given ability" to view as Revelation other mighty acts such as the destruction of Sodom, the swallowing-up of Korach and the death of the two sons of Aaron. Is love also the content of these Revelations? What Halakhot are we to infer from them?

It is doubtful whether a "Peshet-til" of this sort will be taken seriously. We must agree with Arthur Cohen who wrote in a criticism of Buber, "to derive meaning and relevance from the content-bare presence of God is difficult if not impossible" (*Judaism*, July, 1952). A viable Judaism requires that after the Revelation, the person be impelled to normative conduct; that we hear what God requires of us; that the Bible and the Halakhah are the full expression of what God wants us to know and to fulfill. Indeed, the very heart of biblical Revelation is the concept of covenant and commitment.

Surely, therefore, at the very least, Revelation must, if it is to do justice to the biblical account, include as its direct and immediate character an imperative, a call, an imposition of obligation!

What really keeps Dr. Petuchowsky from adopting the traditional view of Revelation are not so much philosophic arguments as esthetic considerations. The paradox mentioned earlier of superfluity versus incomprehensibility represents in reality a pseudo-problem. As Professor Broad has pointed out, much misconception has resulted from a confusion between reason seen as a faculty of moral cognition and reason as source of the motive for moral action. While the content of Revelation can indeed be rationally known Revelation is still needed to supply a motive — an "ought" — for specific norms which are revealed as *God's demands*.

What our non-Orthodox brethren really find repugnant in the traditional view is the notion that "God has handed down *finished* statements," that "God reveals *nice* and *ready-made* theological truths." The religious posture that modern man finds esthetically satisfying is one in which man is groping after a truth that is still developing and in which he has a share.

In point of fact, the traditional view also possesses the same dynamic elements. Torah is not finished. Man is constantly developing the Oral Law and revealing new facets of the Torah which has seventy faces. Moses did not

## TRADITION: *A Journal of Orthodox Thought*

take all of the Torah that was at Sinai. There is still a "hidden" Torah whose wisdom is yet to be revealed. There is also a sense in which a traditional view contains an aspect of "emergent Revelation." Our understanding of many passages and commandments in the Bible are constantly being deepened by historical events. And certainly, the concept of "personal appropriation," of seeing the Torah as having been given "today,"

has been a perennial call of the Rabbis.

In spite of the above reservations, *"Ever Since Sinai"* is still to be considered a step in the right direction. Dr. Petuchowsky is to be applauded for calling from within the Reform movement for "intensive Jewish study" to "try out the commandments" and for our people to transform their Jewish commitment into a program of "observing, doing and performing."

---

*The Failure of the American Rabbi*, by S. MICHAEL GELBER (New York: Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1961).

*Reviewed by*  
Emanuel Feldman

The American rabbi is constantly analyzing his laymen, diagnosing their ills, and prescribing remedies for their well-being. Of late, the tables have been turned. Laymen are now taking a second look at rabbis.

This is not an unhealthy development. For it is not good for any one group to be considered with constant and uncritical awe and adulation. After all, if a renowned hassidic Rebbe could engage a special Jew to give him *mussar*, to rebuke him when necessary, and to remind him of his obligations to God and man, then certainly the American rabbi should welcome any sincere efforts to appraise his role on the American scene and, if necessary, to offer beneficial criticism.

This book is an attempt at such

an appraisal. Somewhat garishly titled, and pompously sub-titled as "a Program for the Revitalization of the Rabbinate in America," this slim book — it is really an elongated essay — purports to be an objective discussion of the American rabbinate in general.

Unfortunately, it misses the mark of objectivity, for the author displays a rather ingenuous, naive — and obvious — prejudice against normative Judaism and Orthodox rabbis. A portent of things to come is found on the jacket itself. Here the blurb contains words of praise from six rabbis: the executive vice-president of the Conservative rabbinical organization; an officer of the same organization; the editor of "Conservative Judaism"; two prominent faculty members of the "Academy for Higher Jewish Learning," an institution whose real character is unclear but which is certainly non-

## Book Reviews

Orthodox; and a prominent Reform rabbi. They call the book "challenging," "perceptive," "thoughtful," "correct," "hard-hitting," "stimulating." The author himself is not a rabbi but the jacket informs us that "he has been a guest lecturer at the 'Academy for Higher Jewish Learning, New York City.'" His other qualifications other than a great "interest in Judaism and its future," includes service with the Joint Distribution Committee and work with the U.J.A. — "in addition to leading an active and successful life in business and finance." Why the jacket contains no comments from an Orthodox rabbi is unknown but it is curious that of the six aforementioned rabbis, the three Conservative men, according to the author, read the manuscript prior to publication and "offered helpful suggestions, constructive criticism, and advice," though we are assured that "they are not in any way responsible for the opinions expressed herein."

This assurance is welcome, for it would be difficult to believe that top Conservative leaders could approve of a point of view which maintains that only the Conservative and Reform movement have a future in America and that Orthodoxy with its "fundamentalist assumptions," is an "anachronism." "Therefore," writes the author, "it is to Conservative and Reform Judaism that one must look for the renewal of a religious commitment on the part of our people." (Therefore, one might add, one does not ask any Orthodox men to write

comments or to "suggest, criticize, or advise.")

Apparently Mr. Gelber has not heard of the Day School movement which was and remains primarily the Orthodox contribution to American Jewish education; apparently he is unaware of the renewed vitality of the Union of Orthodox Congregations, the Rabbinical Council of America, and their on-going and dynamic programs in youth and adult education; apparently he has not heard of the numerous Orthodox journals of thought and opinion — TRADITION is one of many — which are a constant mirror of a dedicated and learned American Orthodox rabbinate and laity; apparently he is unaware of the strong turn to traditional Jewish ways which is only attributable to the tenacity with which Orthodoxy has clung to these traditions despite the vicissitudes of time; and he is certainly not cognizant of the deep impact which is being made by the American yeshivot throughout the country. But if he has forgotten these things, certainly his rabbinic advisors and readers could have reminded him.

Such common prejudices are unfortunately not new, but they are curious in a writer who has the sensitivity to recognize that "an Orthodox service of prayer captures a sense of history and permits the worshipper to identify himself with the classic nobility of Jewish idealism." Orthodoxy's established form of prayer, he goes on to say, captures a mood and supplies an "unmistakable expression of man's

## TRADITION: *A Journal of Orthodox Thought*

yearning for God. When you go into the majority of Conservative synagogues or Reform temples, however, you perceive something quite different. You capture another kind of mood." Their innovations "have actually weakened . . . Jewish worship." These two movements "are fast rendering the majestic service of a patriarchal faith into a state of impotence." How one can look to these groups for "a renewal of religious commitment" is never made clear by the author; nor does he resolve the other side of the contradiction: how is it that the very orthodoxy which he rejects so cavalierly gives him that "unmistakable expression of man's yearning for God"?

However, since he dismisses Orthodox Judaism altogether, a reviewer can only assume that his strictures and criticisms are directed to the non-Orthodox groups in Jewish life. This has to be interpreted, then, as an indictment of them.

It is interesting to note that the very charges which the author makes against the Conservative and Reform movements are in fact the same charges which Orthodoxy makes against them: that the movements are shallow, that they cater to success, that they straddle the theological fence, that they emphasize physical externals and minimize spiritual values, that they have broken with the essence of Jewish tradition, that they permit the membership to lead the rabbinate and not vice versa, that they threaten to undermine American Jewish life.

In reality this book is a well-deserved, if not always well-tempered, indictment of rabbis who have wasted and squandered the sacred opportunities for molding Jewish life which lie unchallenged in their hands in order to find momentary popularity and acclaim by modernizing and diluting Jewish tradition. While the rabbi is not the only force responsible for the chaotic conditions in Jewish life today, he is a powerful one, influential and authoritative in the structure of religious life. But his moral force is diminished by the presence in the pulpit of "rabbis" who are, according to Gelber, nothing more than salesmen with gimmicks and techniques; who are materialists concerned only with fees; who are social climbers who worship the god of success and influence; who are avid seekers of publicity; and whose only concern is popularity. There are, of course, many good and noble men in the rabbinate, and Mr. Gelber lists a number of them — though this reviewer could find no Orthodox rabbis among those mentioned as being good and noble. . .

What are some of the remedies which Gelber prescribes for the revitalization of the rabbinate? Since part of the blame belongs to the theological seminaries, corrections must begin with them. "The theological schools are responsible for much of the dullness which permeates Conservative and Reform Judaism." The author decries the unimaginative attempts to attract talented and outstanding students

## Book Reviews

to the Conservative and Reform rabbinates, and suggests that idealism and Torah be used as a motivational force in recruiting superior men to this calling. Gelber does not realize, however, that the superior young man, sensing as he does the lack of spirituality and nobility in what passes for modern Judaism, is not only not attracted to the rabbinate as a life's mission but is often repelled. The young Jewish intellectual cannot even be attracted to worship and support this kind of Judaism; can he be expected to become a leader in it? Nor can the entire blame be foisted on seminaries and rabbis. The layman himself often has a jaundiced view of the rabbinate and a distorted view of Torah — and the more unlettered the layman, the more jaundice and the more distortion. This is the dilemma: how can talent be attracted to a rabbinate which is less a calling than a profession? And how can it truly become a calling when idealists do not enter it? And how can laymen be made to understand the true function of the rabbi unless the religious standards of the laymen themselves have been elevated by rabbis who are not in a profession but in a calling? Here, as elsewhere, Gelber poses the problems well but his answers are too pat, too glib, too superficial.

This kind of superficiality marks his entire approach. For example, he bemoans the lack of enough rabbinical schools in North America. There are, he says, only "two liberal-minded schools," whereas in Babylonia of old, the various

yeshivot acted as a spur to one another. Shades of Hillel and Shammai! Were Sura and Pumpadita "liberal-minded rabbinical schools"? Were Nehardea and Mechozah theological seminaries? They were not, and perhaps this is why Babylonian Jewry flourished and produced an era of unparalleled Torah learning. Has Mr. Gelber never heard of Ner Israel in Baltimore, Torah Vodaath, Chaim Berlin, Tifereth Jerusalem, Chofetz Chaim, Mir, and a host of other yeshivot in New York City — not to mention Yeshiva University — Telz in Cleveland, Hebrew Theological College in Chicago? Does he not know that in these institutions thousands of idealistic young men are constantly studying Torah without any thought of future compensation or reward? Has his committee of readers not informed him of the hundreds of day schools in the United States where Torah is being taught to tens of thousands of youngsters and that these — and not professional rabbis and professional seminaries — are the real hope for the future of Judaism in this country? But Toynbee-like, Gelber has decided that Orthodox Judaism is a fossil and even though the "fossil" grows and expands and bears fruit, Gelber knows that it is not viable.

Despite these serious reservations there is much in this book which is valuable, for the author does present some constructive ideas: the rabbi should have time to study and reflect; members should be required to do *mitzvot* as well as pay dues; daily prayers

## TRADITION: *A Journal of Orthodox Thought*

and Tefillin should be revitalized; Sabbath observance, which means Friday night at home and not at a late service in the synagogue, needs emphasis; late services, he rightfully says, are an "intrusion" on the sanctity of the family's Sabbath at home. He calls for an end to gimmicks to "attract people to worship." He calls for the *bimah* to be restored to its rightful place in the center of the synagogue instead of the front as if it were a stage. And he calls for the increased use of Hebrew in prayer

and increased learning among the laymen.

If this book is indicative of serious lay thinking on the role of Judaism in our times, then it is to be welcomed. It has flaws; it displays a lack of objectivity and understanding vis-a-vis traditional Judaism. But it serves as a necessary goad and as such it has value. However, there is still room for a serious, well thought-out, sober analysis and discussion of the role of the rabbi in this country. Such a book has not yet been written. We await it eagerly.

---

*The Diaries of Theodor Herzl*, Edited, Translated and with an Introduction by MARVIN LOWENTHAL (New York: The Universal Library, Grosset & Dunlap, 1961)

*Reviewed by* Louis Bernstein

During recent years much has been written about every aspect of Herzl's life. The recent Herzl centennial produced new and interesting material shedding additional light on the founder of the Zionist movement. Some of the articles even probed into private aspects of Herzl's life, stretching him out on the psychiatrist's couch, analyzing his school grades, and magnifying his relationships with chance acquaintances.

*The Diaries of Theodor Herzl* reverses this trend and gives us a primary course rather than conjecture or even reliable second-hand information. Marvin Lowenthal is a veteran Zionist writer and his translation of the *Diaries* from the German makes them available to

the English reader for the first time in a complete form. The diaries were originally published in German in 1922-23 and even then were carefully edited because many of the people mentioned therein were still alive and the incidents referred to might have proved embarrassing to them.

Lowenthal presents us with about a third of the original manuscript. By his own admission in the foreword, some of the most fascinating episodes were eliminated because of space limitations. The editor attempts to bridge these gaps by his own comments and preparatory remarks to some of the chapters, but sometimes it is difficult to pick up the strands. At the back of the book Lowenthal includes reliable supplementary material in an alphabetically arranged list of bio-

## Book Reviews

graphical and topical notes.

Reading the *Diaries* broadens one's appreciation of Herzl's stature. One cannot but be impressed by the prophetic accuracy of his statement at the first Zionist Congress that he was preparing the foundations of the Jewish State fifty years hence. Throughout the *Diaries* one has the feeling that even Herzl realized that he was a divine instrument in realizing the aspirations of a people who lived spiritually in a country from which they were physically severed for twenty centuries.

Today many of Herzl's efforts in the area of diplomacy, upon which he based his entire hopes, would provoke mirth and scorn. He was convinced that through contacts with the great powers, he would receive some kind of rights to Palestine. It is ironic to read today of the manipulations in the corrupt Turkish Court during Herzl's sallies to Constantinople. The destiny of Turkey, the Middle East, and perhaps of the world might have been altogether different had there been a single honest official in the Turkish foreign office and court who possessed even a limited sense of historic perspective in order to understand Herzl.

Herzl was afflicted with a burden which handicaps the Jewish community today. He failed dismally in attempting to sell his idea to the wealthy — to Baron de Hirsch, to Baron Rothschild, and to others. Only when he turned to the Jewish masses were his ideas accepted. Some of the most moving excerpts

are his descriptions of his visits to the Russian cities where the Jewish masses welcomed him as *Herzl Hamelekh*.

Herzl was one of the outstanding journalists of his time and his literary skills are apparent on the pages of his diary. Occasionally Herzl was overwhelmed with his own importance because of his acceptance by the world's rulers. He seemed dazzled by the glitter of royalty and wealth. His own regal appearance probably enhanced the Zionist cause in the capitals of Europe. But throughout the *Diaries'* pages it is evident that the sense of responsibility to Jewish destiny, the intense desire to rescue the Jewish oppressed from their persecutors goaded Herzl to superhuman efforts, blasted aside any personal considerations, and eventually caused his death. On May 9, 1901, he wrote, "It will be six years on Pentecost — no, sixty years — since I entered into the Zionist movement."

In the final analysis, Herzl's great success lay in his molding of diverse and undisciplined Jewish elements into a cohesive force united for a single purpose. He was not the originator of Zionism, for Pinsker, the Chovevei Zion, Rabbis Alkalai and Kalischer preceded him. None of the grandiose diplomatic dreams in which he passionately believed ever materialized. The rich Jews shunned him as only a conservative can loathe a radical. But he did create the machinery of the Zionist movement and that movement conceived and gave birth to the State

## TRADITION: *A Journal of Orthodox Thought*

of Israel. For this he carved for himself an eternal niche in the annals of Jewish history where

he is ranked with the immortal heroes of all time.

---

*The Message of Deutero-Isaiah in its Sequential Unfolding*, by JULIAN MORGENSTERN (Cincinnati; Hebrew Union College, 1961).

*Reviewed by*  
Sheldon R. Brunswick

This study of Chapters 40-48 of Isaiah is part of a series of articles contributed regularly by Dr. Morgenstern to the Hebrew Union College Annual.

The author adopts a most radical stance in espousing the multiple authorship thesis.\* In his fanciful construction, chapters 40-48 alone comprise the work of "Deutero-Isaiah," while chapters 49-55 are attributed to a "Trito-Isaiah." Moreover, Chapter 48 allegedly represents the first message of the prophet, while Chapter 40 is supposed to mark the acme of a gradual evolution of thought which was reached, so Dr. Morgenstern claims, when finally, in 539 B.C.E., "Deutero-Isaiah" arrived at the conclusion that "Israel's God is the only one God."

His treatment of the text presupposes the conclusion that early in 485 B.C.E. Judea was overrun, Jerusalem was captured, and the Temple was destroyed (p. 1). Hence many passages usually understood as referring to the catastrophe of 586 B.C.E. (such as Isaiah 63:15 and 64:11) are inter-

preted as referring to the destruction of Jerusalem in 485 B.C.E. "A surprisingly large number of the prophetic utterances of Isaiah 56-66, 34-35, 49-55 deal . . . with the catastrophe of 485 B.C.E." I shall demonstrate that the evidence for a catastrophe in 485 B.C.E. is poor. If this is so, the interpretation given by Dr. Morgenstern to the above passages must be reconsidered.

There are passages in chapters 40-66 which are understood as references to the desolation of Judea in the years between 586 B.C.E. and the rebuilding of the Temple in the days of Haggai. By claiming that the conditions of the Jews in Palestine were favorable, Dr. Morgenstern now has verses which he can interpret as references to 485 B.C.E.

Dr. Morgenstern has misunderstood the socio-economic conditions of the Jews at the time that Haggai appeared on the scene (HUCA vol. 27, p. 104 and JBL vol. 81, p. 25). Far from being "prosperous," they had probably suffered from the invasion of Egypt by Cambyses in 525 B.C.E., which brought Persian armies into Palestine. The Book of Haggai shows

\* Jewish tradition ascribes the entire book to the prophet Isaiah.—*Ed.*

## Book Reviews

harvests to have been bad, food and drink scarce, and money of little value. All the people's energy went to supply their physical needs. His book is based upon a series of misconstrued interpretations and fallacious history.

The supposed enemies of Judea included, in 485 B.C.E., Moab and Ammon (HUCA, vol. 27, pp. 107-108). In 586 B.C.E. they were the "loyal friends and allies of Judah" (*Ibid.*, pp. 110, 144, 177).

While the sources are few, it is clear that these nations were far from being "loyal friends and allies of Judah." From II Kings 24:2 it is certain that as vassals of Babylon they attacked Judah ca. 602 B.C.E. From II Kings 24:10-11 we suspect that they participated in the attack of 597 B.C.E. (cf. Van Zyl, *The Moabites*, p. 155). It is true that Ammon, Edom and Moab later instigated Zedekiah to revolt against Babylon. But apparently they then left Zedekiah in the lurch. Lam. 1:2 may well refer to their treachery. Certainly Lam. 1:10 shows them to have been enemies. All that one can derive from Jeremiah 40:11 is that the fugitives from Jerusalem sought refuge in Ammon and Moab. This passage does not show them to have been allies of Judah. Instead, they mocked and scorned the fugitives. Moab earned the condemnation of Jeremiah in Ch. 48 of his book. Its destruction came in 582 B.C.E. as described by Josephus (*Ant. Jud.* X, 9,7). There are no references to the "Moabite nation or state after the first two decades

of the 6th century B.C.E." (Van Zyl, *op. cit.*, p. 158). In 485 B.C.E. Moab as a nation did not exist and hence could not have participated in an attack upon Jerusalem as alleged by Dr. Morgenstern!

In a recent article (*Vetus Testamentum*, vol. XI, p. 426), Dr. Morgenstern admits to the close affinity of ideas between chapters 40-48 and 49-55. But in this book he sees no relationship between these sections. It is unfortunate that he refuses to grant chapters 49-55 a place within the "Deutero-Isaianic" corpus. He cannot accept that these were later orations of the same prophet. If Isaiah 42:16 is regarded as having been spoken by "Deutero-Isaiah" (p. 118), as is Isaiah 41:17-20 (p. 149), then Isaiah 49:9-11 and 55:12 are also part of the same corpus. All these passages are similar in message and in style. They speak of delivery from the Exile in miraculous fashion whereby God will make the "wilderness a pool of water." Unfortunately, our author has started with a preconceived notion of what he thinks the prophet said. He calls it "the message . . . in its sequential unfolding." Hence, that which fits the pattern is authentic "Deutero-Isaiah"; the extraneous is rejected. But it is quite possible for a prophet to deal with more than one theme in the course of his ministry.

Those familiar with Dr. Morgenstern's other writings are aware that underlying his Biblical exegesis is a Reform theological orientation. In contradistinction to the

nationalistic First Commonwealth period the Second Commonwealth period emerges as a universalistic one. The purpose of the newly emerged universalistic Judaism is to be a "light unto the nations." This telescoped view of the history of ancient Israel neglects the universalism present in the preachings of the prophets prior to Isaiah and plays down the nationalism of the Second Commonwealth. It lends itself well as a basis for the classical Reform position which opposed contemporary Zionism and saw in the destruction of the Second Temple the golden opportunity to spread Judaism to the nations. We cannot accept this

narrow picture of Israel's history; we cannot accept the doctored interpretations of Isaiah's message (cf. Chaim Tchernowitz, *Travail of Redemption*, N. Y., 1949, pp. 111-33).

"Deutero-Isaiah" is pictured as having first arrived at "the concept of one world-God" (p. 30). "Absolute universalism has been uttered hitherto by no prophet or religious pioneer" (p. 48). While it is agreed that "Deutero-Isaiah" gave a very explicit formulation of this doctrine, it was present prior to him in the thinking of ancient Israel (e.g., Genesis 18:18, Amos 9:7, I Kings 8:41-43).

---

*Judaism and Islam*, by ERWIN I. J. ROSENTHAL (London: Thomas Yoseloff, 1961)

*Reviewed by* Chaim Feuerman

Written for the Popular Jewish Library series of the World Jewish Congress, this book is not a scholarly work for the specialist. Rather, it is intended for a general reading public interested in knowing something about the relationship between Judaism and medieval Islam as well as the implications of this inter-relationship for present-day Israel-Arab co-existence.

The book is divided into two parts, each one developing a major aspect of the author's two-fold thesis: first, the "major contributions of Judaism to the birth and development of Islam," and, sec-

ond, the extent to which "Islam has stimulated and guided Jewish thinkers and teachers in the field of religious sciences" — biblical exegesis, *Halakhah*, philosophy, theology, Hebrew lexicography and poetry.

To support the thesis that Judaism received much from Islam in return for having provided her with basic theological ideas, the author adduces what he deems classical instances of similar impact of other cultures and civilizations upon "the *corpus* of halakhic literature." He cites the Greek and Latin words found in the Mishnah and the Talmud. "The many *Lo-azim* or French loanwords in Ra-

## Book Reviews

shi's classical commentary on the Talmud," he adds, "testify equally vividly to the Jewish indebtedness to its environment even at a time so unpropitious and dangerous as the Crusades."

In considering the Jewish use of Greek, Latin, and French loan-words as instances of foreign "impact" upon the "corpus of halakhic literature" and as indications of Jewish "indebtedness" to other cultures, Mr. Rosenthal makes one serious and basic error common to many of the "modern," "scientific," and "objective" writers on Jewish classical themes. He mistakes insignificant and superficial similarities of *form* for meaningful affinities in *essence* between aspects of Jewish and other cultures. He, like many contemporary intellectuals, has lost his sensitivity for the uniqueness of the Jew. He has forgotten that, in days gone by, when Jews were occasionally coaxed into making a comparison between the sacred (indigenously Jewish) and the profane (indigenously non-Jewish) they would hasten to add the phrase, "*lehavdil*," not as a mere exercise in piety but rather as a truly scientific refinement of the comparison made, indicating that although the external *forms* may appear similar and lend themselves to superficial comparison, the *essence* is basically unique and beyond compare.

To take some of the author's more serious cases in point, let us examine his declaration that one "has only to remember . . . even a few institutions such as Hillel's *Prosbul* and the *Afikoman* of the

*Seder* to be aware of such living contact." The author sees in *Prosbul* and *Afikoman* the Jews' "indebtedness" to the foreign culture with which they come to grips. That "living contact" existed can hardly be questioned. But that significant cultural "impact" took place is a contention open to much more serious analysis. Firstly, scholars, both of the classical and of the contemporary "*Jüdische Wissenschaft*" schools, are in widely divergent disagreement over the precise nature and derivation of *Prosbul* and *Afikoman*, both as cultural institutions and as objects of philological investigation. Secondly, at best, the institution of *Afikoman* can patently be of no more than superficial significance. And the case is similar with regard to *Prosbul*, for we know that no people other than the Jews has ever proposed to observe an institution such as *Shemittah*. Hence, *Prosbul* must of necessity be in essence peculiar to Judaism alone.

Indeed, by the author's own assertion, after much discussion of the Muslim "impact" (through the *Fatwa* and *Fiqh*) upon the Geonic responsa and upon the Rambam's *Mishneh Torah*, the author himself reveals the secret of the ultimate meaninglessness of the second major aspect of his thesis: "In conclusion," he writes, "it can be said that Maimonides' Code shows the impact of Islam in its form, but the substance is Jewish." Readers can see that this same statement holds true for the author's treatment of medieval He-

## TRADITION: *A Journal of Orthodox Thought*

brew poetry, lexicography, theology, and exegesis.

To sum up, then, *Judaism and Islam* gives the interested lay reader a well-informed though sketchy notion of the basic theological ideas which Islam has taken from Judaism, but misleads the reader

into thinking that contributions of similar proportions, significance, and depth were made by Islam to Judaism. The book thereby helps further dull the contemporary Jewish intellectual's sensitivity for the *havdalah bein Yisrael la-amim*.