

BOOK REVIEWS

Adam to Daniel — An Illustrated Guide to the Old Testament and its Background, edited by GAALYAHU CORNFELD (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1961).

God's Wilderness — Discoveries in Sinai, by BENNO ROTHENBERG (New York: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1962).

Reviewed by
Chaim Feuerman

Biblical studies, once the province of the specialist, are fast becoming the darling of the masses. Biblical archaeology, in particular, has reached unheard-of heights in popular appeal, and in Israel it is everyone's back-yard hobby. These two books, written by Israelis, are products of this heightened interest in biblical archaeology.

Adam to Daniel is the more popular of the two. Through the use of hundreds of illustrations, many in full color, maps, and the scholarship of many experts in the field of biblical study, this book reveals the cultural idiom of ancient thought and belief, and thus adds new meaning, pertinence, and urgency to the books of the *Ta-*

nakh. It unfolds the biblical narrative chapter by chapter, offering quotation, commentary, illustration and analysis, and drawing upon sociological and cultural background materials now available from extra-biblical sources. It is interesting to note that this investigation confirms the Bible record in general and specific instances, giving the reader a new sense of the historical veracity of the biblical accounts.

It is unfortunate that the editors did not provide us with footnotes and references, for occasionally their statements are matters of conjecture and opinion and more a consensus of what "scholars" say rather than a specific point of view representing a particular school of thought.

God's Wilderness achieves equal physical beauty in its format, but

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in its emphasis on the Sinai desert and its more technical manner, it has added scholarly appeal. The ninety photogravure illustrations strikingly reproduced and discussed in this handsome volume represent original photographs taken by the author himself, revealing the stark splendor of Sinai and the beautiful coast, as well as the life of its inhabitants. In addition to these photographs, *God's Wilder-*

ness contains sixteen illustrative maps and plans, shedding new archaeological light upon the biblical wanderings of the Children of Israel in the Desert of Sinai.

Particularly poignant is the fact that this study took place only during the winter months of 1956-57, when Israel's army had briefly taken over the Sinai peninsula and made it accessible to this intensive research.

Jewish-Gentile Courtships: An Exploratory Study of a Social Process, by JOHN E. MAYER (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1961).

Reviewed by
Nathalie Schacter

Research on intermarriage has usually concentrated on the post-marriage adjustment patterns necessitated by such alliances or upon the demographic and personality characteristics of those who intermarry. John Mayer's study of *Jewish-Gentile Courtships* brings to light preliminary information in a different area. He focuses upon the social process by which the barrier of religious difference is overcome to the extent that people who are unfavorably predisposed toward intermarriage eventually do intermarry.

The exploratory study is the product of interviews with 45 couples, in 33 of which the husband was Jewish and the wife Gentile, and in 12 of which the wife was Jewish and the husband Gentile. Most of the data, however, are based upon interviews with only

29 couples in which either or both partners were originally "reluctant" to enter into marriage with a person of different faith. This group of "reluctants" (as compared to the "amenables" who apparently had no unfavorable predisposition toward intermarriage) was comprised of ten Jewish and nine Gentile women, and seven Jewish and three Gentile men. These figures suggest what previous research has indicated, namely, that women are less favorably predisposed toward intermarriage than are men, and that Jews are less inclined than Gentiles to seek a partner outside their faith.

In his analysis, Mayer divides the courtship process into three phases: the "meeting"; the "interest" or dating stage; the "involvement" stage. He then attempts to analyze those factors which were operating during each phase to propel the couple toward a marriage and to overcome the original-

ly negative attitude toward intermarriage.

His findings indicate that in general the process is initiated in an institutional setting. More "reluctants" met their future mates at school, at work, at social centers, than through friends. The institutional setting helped to promote the relationship into the dating phase by virtue of the fact that it permitted the "reluctant" to become acquainted with the favorable attributes of the partner, thus breaking down the original predisposition.

Another factor which permitted the further development of the relationship was that the "reluctant" did not conceive of becoming "serious" with an individual of a different religion. Therefore he permitted the dating relationship to continue in the conviction that nothing would come of it, and in the process not only did the favorable latent characteristics of the partner become more manifest, but both parties, by isolating themselves from other potential partners, became more dependent upon each other.

Mayer found that although most of the "reluctants'" parents were opposed to their children's choice of a mate, this did not prevent the relationship from developing further. The primary reason for the lack of parentful influence was that they were generally unaware of the extent of their children's interest until both parties were already seriously involved. Had they been aware, and voiced their protests during the initial phases be-

fore either partner was committed, it is possible that the relationship might not have developed further. Even when parents vigorously opposed the marriage, the effectiveness of their pressure was reduced by virtue of the fact that the subjects generally viewed their parents' objections as unimportant, undemocratic, exaggerated, or illegitimate. Too, parental objections were ignored by some subjects who said that they had been certain that their parents would "come around" in the end.

Mayer's data revealed that the romances were usually furthered by friends who for the most part favored the relationships. Many of those friends who disapproved of the alliance were reticent on the topic, while those who openly expressed disapproval were generally dropped by the subject.

In sum, then, Mayer found that the courtship process, even with one or both partners originally unfavorably predisposed toward intermarriage, appears to be an almost irreversible one. A complex of institutional, psychological, and social factors, which more than outweigh the relatively ineffective opposition of parents or friends propels the relationship toward an almost inevitable conclusion — marriage.

Even though Mayer's sample is admittedly too small to yield any findings of statistical significance, he has succeeded in raising several questions both of a methodological and a general character. It is possible, for example, that a larger sample might have yielded a proportionally greater number and

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range of influences. It is possible too that a control group of persons who had been engaged to or seriously involved with cross-religionists but who had dissolved the relationships primarily because of their resistance to intermarriage, might have brought into clearer focus those factors which may be responsible for the continuation or termination of the courtship process. (Mayer attempted but was unable to secure such a group.)

Further, Mayer did not try to obtain a representative sample since he was interested in the "kinds of influences that operate to produce such marriages, rather than their *distribution* in a universe of mixed couples." The result is that the influences themselves are divorced from their objects. They appear to operate in a vacuum without regard to age, sex, educational or occupational status, or degree of adherence to or identification with religion on the part of the subject or his parents.

These are but a few of the methodological questions raised by Mayer's study. His tentative conclusions also bring to the fore, however, several questions of a more general nature.

Intermarriage is considered by many persons in general, and by the churches in particular, to represent a grave threat to the values of individual identity and group survival. It is also frowned upon from a practical viewpoint as harmfully affecting the adjustment and the offspring of culturally disparate mates. It is strange that, as the data suggest, these values are being

threatened within the institutional framework of the schools, places of employment, and centers of recreation of our democratic society, in which persons of different faiths have increasing opportunities for contact. These same values are further threatened by the increasing emphasis within our democratic society on complete freedom of choice in the selection of a mate, and the corresponding de-emphasis of religious and ethnic differences as bases for discrimination. Mayer's study is one of many which suggest that there is a marked inconsistency between the widespread attitude against intermarriage on the one hand, and the general democratic spirit which creates an increasing number of social, psychological, and institutional conditions favoring intermarriages on the other.

From the point of view of the traditional Jew, Mayer's study reinforces that which so many rabbis and Jewish parents have long known, namely, that the dating relationship has a strong tendency to lead to a more permanent involvement. The problem remains of where to cut into this process in order to ensure its non-completion; that is, whether to eliminate dating which might lead to "involvement" or to prevent institutional associations in the first place which might entail a "meeting." Since the latter is almost impossible in our present day American society, it would seem that the best course is to advise the Jewish child from the start that dating non-Jews is "treif."

TRADITION: *A Journal of Orthodox Thought*

Williamsburg — A Jewish Community in Transition, by GEORGE KRANZLER (New York: Philip Feldheim, Inc., 1961)

The Hasidic Community of Williamsburg, by SOLOMON POLL (New York: Free Press, Glencoe, Inc., 1962).

Reviewed by
Zalman I. Posner

There are evocative place-names, names that have become almost common nouns, symbols. While Williamsburg might mean Colonial restoration for the American, it has a strikingly different connotation for the Jew. Williamsburg represents today what Vilna, Warsaw, and Pressburg of yesterday exemplified, and what Jerusalem's Meah Shearim means today. If emigration and superhighways destroy this singular community, as evidence seems to indicate, Jewry and America will be the poorer.

Sociological studies of American Jewish communities tend to leave this reader with a sense of impending doom, of irreversible decline, of attrition of values, of a bland tomorrow in the offing. Acculturation and pluralism in the end seem to add up to assimilation, if not by a literal loss to Jewry via intermarriage (and there is enough of that) and conversion (happily not a grave threat in today's America), then by the adoption of values not identified with Judaism, and the erosion of Jewishness through Jewish illiteracy and indifference. This generation of American Jews is wealthier, better educated (in sec-

ular fields at least), more secure (at least they have reason to be) than their immigrant grandparents and struggling parents. But the importance of Judaism and Jewishness in their individual lives is peripheral, where it was primary — in whatever form it took — a generation or two ago.

These studies of Williamsburg, bizarre as that community may appear to the average American Jew, deserve intensive examination, particularly by those concerned with problems like conformity, moral values, perpetuation of ideals in indifferent surroundings, the inevitability of trends, effective education, and, especially, transmission of religious ways to succeeding generations. American Jewry has no parallel to Williamsburg.

Kranzler takes the community as a whole and studies its development through the waves of immigration that formed its character. Heavy in statistics and charts that are pleasantly lucid to the layman, *Williamsburg — A Jewish Community in Transition* gives the setting for Poll's *The Hasidic Com-*

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munity of Williamsburg, which carries the first work into intimate detail of one colorful segment and period of Williamsburg.

We are accustomed to expecting successive generations to reflect American life and values more thoroughly and naturally. The uniformity of American life leaves little room for individuality; our non-conformists are distressingly routine. Except for a few rather small and physically isolated groups, immigrants lose their uniqueness in a startlingly short time. Even the Jewish identification and practice that promise to survive are largely on terms acceptable and prevalent in the general community. (Religious observance is concentrated in the Synagogue, philanthropy is encouraged, while the beard and *payos* are vaguely un-American.) For once we find a sizeable group defying the inevitable, going counter to all predictions: Williamsburg's Hasidim.

It is easy to identify Williamsburg by its externals: the language, dress, and appearance of its people. But its real meaning is much deeper and invites admiration, perhaps even some envy, if not eagerness, to emulate it. Social standing in America is largely determined by wealth and occupation; standing in Williamsburg is determined by learning and piety. It is (the) one community where money does not determine one's prestige. It is not the *shtreimel* that makes Williamsburg worth studying, but their supreme regard for what we glibly term "spiritual values." What-

ever one's sympathies with the religion or politics of Williamsburg (why didn't either writer give us more on Williamsburg politics?) they seem to have put common moral and religious platitudes into actual practice. While every pulpit denounces "materialism," Williamsburg apparently has displaced it and has substituted some more enduring worths. This facet of Hasidic life should be of interest beyond the frontiers of the Jewish community of America.

All Jews fondly if rather absently describe Judaism as a "way of life, not a religion." Orthodox Jews correctly point out that the *mitzvah*-scheme makes religion permeate every phase of life. At most, though, few communities have succeeded — or attempted — in uniting their economic and religious activities as thoroughly as has Williamsburg, especially with religion dominating the economic sphere. Poll exhaustively and entertainingly describes the livelihoods and business methods of the Hasidim, incidentally explaining unfamiliar aspects of the Kosher food industry and similar activities, constantly emphasizing the pervasive influence of religion. The antithesis to once-a-week-religion has been carried to a remarkable conclusion.

Living in a time of license, when external controls are weakening and the concerned are groping for solutions to problems like immorality, rising divorce rates, delinquency, and other social ills that are beginning to penetrate the Jewish community, we might

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give attention to Williamsburg's virtually untarnished record. The common reaction to the word *Williamsburg* is that it is "extreme." Their moral code is no doubt strait-laced compared to the general American and/or Jewish pattern, but certain insights might be gained. It is even possible that certain accepted American patterns are not the epitome of wisdom and goodness, and may be altered to the benefit of those affected. While Williamsburg's scorn for television and movies will not rapidly be adopted everywhere, and teen-agers will not clamor for Williamsburg's dating code, there is reason to suspect that more parental control — *and example* — and less untrammelled freedom might be in order. We might wonder whether the TV broadcasters' interests are paramount, and whether whatever is, is good.

One problem facing both writers, and possibly an insoluble one, is describing abstractions in quantitative and familiar terms, unwilling material inadequately forced into an unfitting mold. For example, Kranzler struggles to explain the *rebbe*, but the reader still does not know what makes a *rebbe* a *rebbe*. Poll valiantly attempts to describe religious status as depending on "intensity and frequency of ritual observance" — inappropriate terms that leave the impres-

sion of a prayer-wheel or an adding-machine religion, automatons going through the motions. Perhaps religious fervor defies articulation. In any event, the problem is not new, but a cheerful admission that our vocabulary does not yet boast of expressions to convey these concepts would be welcome. Statistics unfortunately do not yet clarify all issues.

In addition, Poll fails to tell us what Hasidism is, how the Hungarian group he describes compares to other Hasidim, and more important, how these Hasidim fit into the general pattern of Orthodox Jewry. At times he attributes to the Hasidim practices that are biblical in origin and universal (among the Orthodox) in practice, and quite irrelevant to Hasidism as such. Examples are the *Shatnes* laboratory, the Shabbat clock, the portable *Succah*. Are these truly the invention of the Hasidim? Clarifying the ideological context would enrich our appreciation of this doughty group. Perhaps this might be grist for another study.

Kranzler and Poll have made urgently needed contributions to our understanding of the American scene. The tenacity of the Jewish spirit — and the true freedom of religion of America — come to life in these valuable works.

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Jewish Life In Austria in the Fifteenth Century, As Reflected in the Legal Writings of Rabbi Israel Isserlein and His Contemporaries, by SHLOMO EIDELBERG (Philadelphia: Dropsie College, 1962).

Reviewed by
F. M. Heichelheim

This is the enlarged Dropsie College doctoral dissertation of the present chairman of the Department of Jewish Studies at Stern College of Yeshiva University. We find here a useful survey of Rabbi Isserlein's life and work. There follow valuable and well selected source materials from the writings of Isserlein and his contemporaries. This evidence informs us about Austrian Jewry of the age in dealings with the state, Church, and neighbors. We hear about the structure and the functions of Austrian and German Jewish communities in the 15th century C.E., as well as moral conditions, cultural life and customs, Jewish occupations, and Jewish domestic life. A bibliography and three indices (about geographic matters, contemporary personalities, and various general topics) conclude the book which is made rather attractive by well-selected illustrations.

This is not a monograph which outlines far-reaching historic changes in the Jewish fate or religious standards. Usually the author stresses what has remained essentially identical in Orthodox Judaism up to the present time. That the 15th century still belonged to the Middle Ages, at least in Austria and Germany, makes this

way of selecting source evidence quite appropriate. Renaissance conditions in fact begin even in Italy during the later 15th century only.

This Jewish way of life differs, of course, from our own because of the radical changes in the legal position of medieval and modern Jewries and Jewish individuals. But otherwise we are continuously reminded of conditions in modern Jewish society. The Jewish religious community organization of that time only differs in minor details from the modern pattern, details which the author does not discuss extensively. Jews were as much addicted to card playing 500 years ago as they are now. Present communal trends towards establishing distinguishing minor local practices and customs, the love for Palestine, the business preferences for commerce, medicine, and sometimes craftsmanship, and the love of nature of the majority of modern Jews appear to be established on early foundations.

Whoever reads this book will get the well established impression that we Jews of today would still be understood by Rabbi Isserlein, exactly as we are able to understand his own reasoning well and throughout. Not only are there trends in history which change from generation to generation, but there are stabilizing forces as well which can

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be modified only gradually, if at all, and are perhaps much stronger as a rule than is generally realized.

We are grateful to the author for a well-documented and instructive book.

The Authentic Jew and his Judaism, by RABBI LEONARD B. GEWIRTZ (New York: Bloch Publishing Company, 1961).

Reviewed by Pesach Schindler

Rabbi Gewirtz is one in a long array of men who have throughout the ages striven to interpret the basic concepts of Traditional Judaism for his perplexed generation. Quite in the spirit of our times, the author states his main purpose in maintaining a "dialogue between the Orthodox and non-Orthodox viewpoints to the advantage of Klal Yisrael." He believes "that ultimately the non-Orthodox, in their honest desire to live full Jewish lives as authentic Jews, will gradually accept a reformulated, re-interpreted statement of normative classic Judaism based on Halakhah and the philosophic-rational tradition."

The author presents his material existentially. Basic concepts and doctrines are depicted as they are actually perceived, abused, or misinterpreted in the present day and are then contrasted with the traditional view. This comparative approach weaves a thread of relevance throughout the work and succeeds in engaging the reader's interest. Rabbi Gewirtz assembled this material from a series of High Holy Days themes delivered from the pulpit over a period of seven years.

The work opens with a black-gray-white color spectrum covering the inauthentic, tainted, and authentic Jew who respectively either escapes from, camouflages, or naturally accepts his heritage. The authentic Jew takes his Jewishness in stride on every level of his existence. This genuineness is manifested in his yearning for the People of Israel, the Torah of Israel and the God of Israel.

Lip service alone cannot, however, create ultimate authenticity. A meaningful discipline must be adopted. The author is most effective in discussing the contemporary relevance of Jewish Ritual, Prayer, and Halakhah. The Reform, Reconstructionist, and Conservative positions vis-a-vis Halakhah are especially treated with care and convincingly rejected. Religious commitments lead to an ideal fusion of body and soul in man (chapter 6), which enable him to recognize and realize the moral purpose of life (chapter 7). This age, more than any other preceding it, has before it the challenge to restrain its materialistic pursuits from spiraling upwards and to harness its leisure time for the spiritual, the ethical, the cultural. In this climate, the "lost" dialogue between man and man, and between man and God, will be restored.

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The sophisticated will probably not discover material which has not already been presented in one form or other in defense of uncompromising tradition in every age. The strength of Rabbi Gewirtz's approach lies in its stimulating presentation

But therein we find the underlying weakness. Aiming at as wide an audience as possible, the author chooses to overload the essential material with homiletical exegesis, anecdotes, parables, statistics, irrelevant sources, and hyperbole. These contemporary hard-sell techniques may be perfectly in place within the confines of a sermon, but tend to dilute, in our opinion, an ambitious and scholarly attempt at defining the authentic doctrines of Orthodox belief.

For example, the author points to Franz Rosenzweig as a model "modern, western assimilated, highly educated Jew," whose spiritual odyssey led to the road of authentic Judaism. We shall not deal here with Rosenzweig's actual acceptance of Orthodoxy* in theory only. (His close friend Dr. Ernst Simon could not classify Rosenzweig as a *shomer mitzvot*.) Even assuming his "conversion" to be complete, however, and in no way detracting from Rosenzweig's greatness, does it in any manner add relevance to genuine doctrine? Orthodox Jews, especially, are surely aware

that veracity of belief is neither enhanced nor diminished by conversion even when it is made in our favor. Genuine faith exists on a plane above human vicissitudes. Similarly is the factor of extra-sensory perception injected into the discourse on the efficacy of prayer. It rings with irrelevancy.

The interpretation of Traditional Judaism by any means may be defended in some quarters, even when non-traditional sources are employed. Untenable, however, is the position of a treatise depicting the principles of authentic Jewish belief that disregards an aspect basic to its very core: namely, the unique relationship of Eretz Yisrael to the authentic Jew. Is it conceivable that a Halevi or a Ha-Rav Kook, whose thoughts the author accepts, could have produced an image of the maximal Jew divorced from this prime facet of Jewish substance? The personal tie of the individual Jew to Israel, we believe, is of equal relevance to the thinking Jew alongside those of prayer and ritual.

Nevertheless, this work has made its contribution in the vivid depiction of the futility and spiritual void of our modern materialistic society. In addition, Rabbi Gewirtz continues to sow the seeds of dialogue which will ultimately bring forth the truth for the benefit of mankind.

* Rosenzweig himself emphatically pointed out his sharp disagreement with the orthodox view of revelation.—*Ed.*

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Tzion min ha-Torah, edited by RABBI ZEVI TABORY (New York: The Department for Torah-Education and Culture of the Jewish Agency, 5723).

Reviewed by
Kurt Klappholz

Dedicated to the memory of Rabbi Zev Gold, illustrious spokesman for religious Zionism, this volume of sermons by a galaxy of Orthodox rabbis is a unique contribution to modern sermonic literature in Hebrew. *Tzion Min Ha-Torah* is designed to show the centrality of the Holy Land in the religious consciousness of Judaism, as it is derived from basic Torah concepts.

Considering the deplorable fact that the modern Orthodox pulpit has lost its didactic function, books like *Tzion Min Ha-Torah* will go a long way in restoring the centrality of Zion to its proper place in the teachings of the synagogue. The reader of this volume will develop a sense of awareness of his identification with the "timeless Community of Israel," of which the various segments of Jewry in their different geographical locations are but an integral part.

The position of the Land of Israel within the fabric of Jewish thought transcends geographical boundaries and political constellations. The Land of Israel as a

spiritual concept is deeply ingrained in the religious thinking and observations of the Jew. Through it the Jew can attain a higher level of spiritual consciousness and from it can come the spiritual nourishment that is necessary for the survival of Universal Israel within a society with strong secularistic and assimilatory tendencies. The idea of Zion and its spiritual impact will stem the tide of the centrifugal forces that are at work in breaking the bond that unites Israel with its land and its Torah. In conformity with the ideology of religious Zionism, the centrality of Zion is an integral part of Jewish living and a *conditio sine qua non* for a totality of Jewish life that is rooted in genuine Torah concepts.

It is to be hoped that this book will find the wide distribution among rabbis and laymen that it so greatly deserves. A special vote of merit is due Rabbi Tabory, the indefatigable Director of the Torah-Education and Culture Department of the Jewish Agency, whose personal dedication to the idea of Torah and Zion made possible the publication of this important volume.

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Liqqutei Amarim (Tanya), by RABBI SCHNEUR ZALMAN OF LIADI, translated from Hebrew with Introduction by NISSAN MINDEL (Brooklyn: Kehot Publication Society, 1962).

Reviewed by
Philip Zimmerman

The initial translation of a great classic is an event of importance regardless of the merits of the translation. If the translator is successful, readers in future generations unacquainted with the original are in his debt. If the work is not faithfully done, errors and misunderstandings will arise which may persist for centuries. It is a pleasure to report that the great Habad classic, *Tanya*, has been rendered into crystal-clear English prose by Dr. Nissan Mindel. Dr. Mindel seems to possess in ample measure the three prerequisites of the ideal translator listed by Rabbi Jehuda Alcharisi in his Introduction to the translation of Maimonides' Mishna commentary: knowledge of the language from which he is translating, knowledge of the language to which he is translating, and knowledge of the wisdom with which he is dealing.

The present translation is marked throughout by a great felicity in finding the right word for difficult concepts. Dr. Mindel has wisely transliterated rather than translated certain key-words.

The translation, appearing as it does near to the 150th *Yahrzeit* of the author, should serve to reawaken interest in the *Baal Ha-Tanya* and his works, especially among those unacquainted with the ori-

ginal and outside the sphere of influence of the movement which he founded. While *Tanya* has been elevated to the highest levels by the *Chabad* movement, it has been neglected by most non-Hasidic scholars. This is unfortunate, for the work (especially the section which Dr. Mindel has translated) surely belongs to all Israel. No one, *hasid or mitnagged*, can study it without some benefit. As for those "Jewish intellectuals" who pursue esoteric philosophies in the strange vineyards of Now and Zen, *Tanya* may be the enlightenment of a lifetime. Those in contact with such intellectuals might attempt the experiment of placing them in touch with authentic Jewish knowledge, via the *Tanya*.

The present volume is of added value because of an excellent introduction and glossary, the latter being a concise summary of the terminology of the Kabbalah. The translator makes an interesting comparison between Rabbi Schneur Zalman and Maimonides. Both men were giants in Halakhah as well as in Jewish thought. The *Bal Shem Tov's* comment on his great student's name is as appropriate as it is ingenious: Schneur — *schne* (two), *ur* (lights), — two lights — in revealed and in hidden learning. The *Tanya* can be called the *Hasidic Guide for the Perplexed*. However, the *Baal Ha-Tanya*, unlike the *Rambam*, was not

influenced by the philosophy of his time. The works of both men brought forth criticism, but in the case of the *Tanya*, this criticism was largely restricted to the latter parts of the work, and not to the section presently translated. These parts ("Gate of Unity and Faith," "Letter of *Teshuva*," etc.) were added to the work by his sons after the author's death.

The system of transliteration used is a minor point which may confuse some readers, however scientific it may be. To most readers, for example, "*Kabbalah*" or even "*Cabala*" are superior to "*Quabba-*

lah." This point aside, few will disagree that Dr. Mindel has accomplished a real *Tikkun* (or as he spells it *Tiqqun*). As the Lubavitcher Rabbi points out in a Preface to the work, the author of the *Tanya* taught that "any of the 'seventy tongues' when used as an instrument to disseminate the Torah and *Mitzvot*, is itself 'elevated' thereby from its earthly domain into the sphere of holiness, while at the same time serving as a vehicle to draw the Torah and *Mitzvot*, from above downward, to those who read and understand this language.

Two Jews In A Gentile World: Portrait of a Jew, by ALBERT MEMMI (New York: The Orion Press, 1962); *Memoirs of a Special Case*, by CHAIM RAPHAEL (Boston, Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, 1962).

Reviewed by William Brown

Galut is an unpleasant word in American-Jewish ears, rarely used and best forgotten. For the contemporary Jewish writer, however, it is a topic that invites continuous scrutiny and is an endless subject of speculation. Mr. Raphael and Mr. Memmi have joined the review that has been going on for the last two thousand years, each in his own way. Mr. Raphael writes of *Golah* lightly and evocatively, Mr. Memmi bitterly and resentfully.

Memoirs of a Special Case consists of a number of autobiographical vignettes: life in an English *Yeshiva* and a friendship with a

latter day Job; visits to Florence with a High Church clergyman and to Spain for a celebration of the Maimonides anniversary; Jerusalem in the days of the Mandate and German Jewish refugees interned on a race course during the first air raids in 1940. All are aspects of Jewish life in a gentile world, at once sad and happy, comical and moving.

Mr. Raphael is one of those rare and fortunate people who does not find it difficult to live in both worlds at once. In that small Tyneside town where he grew up the two worlds were still separate. The home was old-fashioned, ritualistic with the warmth of synagogue attendance and holiday celebra-

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tions. But outside the green cricket fields were beckoning. Mr. Raphael discovers the key that opens the door from the one to the other in a very special English *Yeshiva* whose students also attend grammar school, and in the Bible, if one only reads it correctly. As an adolescent Mr. Raphael is fascinated by Joseph, another man of two worlds and by Judah, the friend of Adulam, "who had a full life, one might say, among the non-Jews." From there it's only a small step to Donne and Herbert. Then the worlds merge and new vistas open up.

Mr. Raphael does not reject his Jewish heritage. He retains his warmth and affection for the people he came from. Oxford, for example, is a delightful place, especially when one reads the copy of one's father's Talmud in that ancient pinnacled background, followed by dinner at the High Table and port in the Senior Common Room. Mr. Raphael as an Oxford Don manages the unusual feat of working on a commentary on the *Midrash* for Lamentations but also having an affair with Heather, a charming High Church Anglican.

There are moments in Mr. Raphael's recollections when the two worlds are really at peace, as is the case during the Maimonides anniversary in Spain. More often the gap seems unbridgeable, even though Mr. Raphael would not want to admit it. Can one explain Malcah, a Polish *Chalutzah* stranded in Florence, to Sedgewick, the Anglican clergyman who has taken the boy there to admire Cimabue

and Giotto? Jerusalem is an even greater enigma. Mr. Raphael is at his best when he portrays the Jewish and English characters during that exciting time that preceded the riots. Yet he seems unwilling to convey the feeling of doom and destruction that he must have felt moving among the Yishuv, bracing itself for a battle for its very existence.

Mr. Raphael's recipe for being happy in both worlds is a kind of *joie de vivre* derived from a "right" reading of the Bible. A countryman of his, the Very Reverend Sir George Adam Smith, the author of a famous historical geography of the Holy Land, is an excellent example of this spirit. His book is not a text, Mr. Raphael tells us, but poetry. If the Bible means anything at all it is worth thinking about it slowly, not with *part* of one's mind, the part reserved for Church and synagogue, but with all that had ever passed through it, every scrap of knowledge and experience. Mr. Raphael's own experiment in Jewish scholarship, the commentary to the *Midrash* of Lamentations, admittedly falls short of perfection. While he had given the manuscript every possible care, a German refugee rabbi's discourse on the same topic possesses the very quality that Mr. Raphael's work lacks. Faith comes from an active participation in Jewish life that Oxford seems not capable of providing.

Instead Mr. Raphael chooses to live in both worlds. He does not discover the Promised Land in Jerusalem, but together with Harry

Golden, he finds it in New York. In Gotham the Bible is really alive. Walking down Broadway, one can mingle with all the tribes of Genesis. Manhattan is a land flowing with milk and honey, mostly milk. Mr. Raphael is not unaware of the more threatening aspect of his Promised Land. It sometimes devours its inhabitants. But where else can one take Pat, the all American dream girl who has a Jewish grandfather, to Sardi's and quote Isaiah in the King James version to her? Only in New York do the worlds seem to mingle happily.

Mr. Memmi's book is altogether different. Perhaps it is not quite fair to review it together with Mr. Raphael's lighter memoirs. It is a searching, painstaking, extremely personal essay on the meaning of Jewish existence.

If it is possible for a Jew to be obsessed by the fact of his Jewishness, obsessed to the point where this awareness colors and darkens every thought and idea, then Mr. Memmi has experienced this state. He moves in a structurally hostile universe. Rarely has the Jewish predicament been described with such cold precision, with such inexorable pitilessness. The accumulated misfortune of two thousand years of exile has been caught and intensified by Mr. Memmi. One can only guess at the traumatic experience that must have caused Mr. Memmi's bitterness. But it once and for all shatters the comfortable conclusion that Oriental Jews (Mr. Memmi was born and educated in Tunis and now lives and writes in Paris) have been less

exposed to the evils of anti-Semitism than their less fortunate European co-religionists.

For Mr. Memmi, Jewishness is a misfortune, a burden, a misery, a problem that cannot be evaded no matter what path one might choose. Mr. Memmi's essay derives from personal experience, recaptulating and bringing to a logical conclusion everything that he has written and thought on the subject in the past. While he brings an intensely personal view to bear on the subject, Mr. Memmi insists that his own experiences have universal value. Every Jew, at some time or another, meets with some of Mr. Memmi's problems.

For the Jew there is no escape: this is the basic assumption with which Mr. Memmi starts out. If there do exist countries that have avoided the scourge of anti-Semitism, it is only because they do not have any Jews. Jewish history, then, is but a long contemplation of Jewish misfortunes. There are no happy Jews, at least not as Jews. Jewish life is always one of insecurity and strangeness, full of uncertainty and anxiety. Each generation has had its historic mishap, its incredible anti-Semitic tragedy. The farther one retreats into the past, the more striking and obvious the misfortune of the Jew becomes.

Significantly, Mr. Memmi discovered the fact of his Jewish predicament not in the Tunisian ghetto, where he was brought up, not in the forced labor camp into which he was dragged during the war, but in Paris, where he had gone to study. He insists that such a rev-

