

BRIEFLY NOTED

The Road to Judaism, by WILHELM FREYHAN (London: Lincolns-Prager)

The only recently published French translation of Wilhelm Freyhan's book *Der Weg zum Judentum* has now been followed by a fine English translation which is prefaced by David Daube, Regius Professor in the University of Oxford, Fellow of All Souls College. We are told that a Hebrew translation is also being prepared, which indicates that there is a genuine and widespread demand for this book.

Freyhan, who was influenced in his early youth by H. Cornill, the Protestant professor of theology at the University of Breslau, dedicates his book, which aims to keep alive traditional Judaism, not only to his son who died in the War of Liberation for Israel, but also to everybody who is interested in keeping alive religious faith in our troubled age.

In three momentous chapters, Freyhan explains to the lay reader in plain, easily understood words the path to God through the bond of the community, the

Torah and the post-Semitic tradition. An important postscript is dedicated to the State of Israel, her magnificent achievements as well as her dangerous overemphasis on nationalism. When these "growing pains" are overcome, then "the Torah will go out from Zion and the word of God from Jerusalem."

Bertha Badt-Strauss

The Jew In A Gentile World, edited by ARNOLD A. ROGOW (New York: Macmillan, 1962)

The Jew in a Gentile World gathers under one cover a fascinating array of Gentile opinions on Jews which range in time from the fifth century B.C.E. until our day, in authors from Marcus Cicero through Edmund Wilson, and in ideas from sheer brutality to objective appraisal. Each author is introduced by a brief note which places his writing in its proper historical context, while the book itself contains a magnificent introduction by C. P. Snow which, incidentally, underscores again the humanity and compassion of this remarkable man of letters.

TRADITION: *A Journal of Orthodox Thought*

This book will not solve the riddle of race prejudice. This is not its function or purpose. But it does present a fascinating description of the varied fortunes of the Jew throughout history as reflected in the mirror of the non-Jewish mind, and emphasizes the realistic opinion of Thomas Jefferson that Judaism has "by its sufferings furnished a remarkable proof of the universal spirit of religious intolerance inherent in every sect, disclaimed by all while feeble, and practiced by all when in power."

Emanuel Feldman

The Philosophy of Judaism by ZVI CAHN (New York: Macmillan, 1962)

Viewed as an attempt to impart elementary information about the Bible, Jewish history, and philosophy, this book is acceptable. As anything else it is quite unsatisfactory. For this is nothing other than an introductory guide to some of the fundamentals of Judaism with the typical faults of many introductions: lack-luster style and pedestrian approach.

This reviewer only wishes that the author and publisher had seen fit to give it a less pretentious and more honest title, for this is the most misleading aspect of the book.

It is not *The philosophy of Judaism* — it is not even *a philosophy*; and it is Judaism only in its most elementary sense. Other than that, the title is accurate.

If the title is an exaggeration, the book is an over-simplification. Subjects such as Jewish mysticism, archaeology, the great medieval

Jewish philosophers, the impact of Zionism, are all glossed over glibly and briefly, with scant attention to spiritual depths and philosophic insights, actions, and reactions.

Perhaps the author attempted to attain the unattainable. An attempt to cram into 505 pages of text an ideational history of Judaism must lead inevitably to the temptation to oversimplify, to look for the least common denominator, and to be occasionally inaccurate.

This temptation the author has not effectively resisted.

Emanuel Feldman

Paths in Holiness Section on Laws (Halachot Bakodesh Pirkei Dinim), by RABBI DAVID CARLBACH (Jerusalem: Jewish Agency, Religious Section Youth Department, 5721)

This posthumous volume, originally slated to be part of a larger work, admirably serves its purpose as an introduction to certain basic halakhic concepts. Drawing heavily from the Rambam, the author does not hesitate to use modern authorities in order to support his approach to the subjects of the fundamentals of our faith, Torah study, and ethical conduct. A series of comprehensive questions rounds out the text and makes it a welcome addition as study material for classes and teen-age groups.

William Herskowitz

An Anthology of Medieval Hebrew Literature, edited by ABRAHAM E. MILLGRAM (London-Toronto-New York: Abelard-Schuman, 1961)

Briefly Noted

Though purists and connoisseurs may frown, an anthology, in this day of super-specialization, allows us a welcome view of the forest without getting us confused by the trees.

Dr. Millgram serves as an expert guide in a medieval forest which germinated some of the great offshoots in Hebrew literature and Jewish thought, despite little sunshine, and harassed by the storms of history. In well-balanced selections, running the gamut from "Accounts of Benjamin of Tudela" to "The Zohar," divided into biographically annotated sections of poetry, philosophic literature, halakhic chronicles, ethical literature and folk tales, one remarkable panorama builds up — a self-sustaining forest produced by an unconditional faith in its Maker. Notwithstanding the poetry which at times drags its feet with conventional stock translation, Dr. Millgram has assembled an admirable supplement to anyone's book shelf.

Pesach Schindler

Jewish Concepts and Reflections,
by SAMUEL UMEN (New York:
Philosophical Library, 1962)

Rabbi Samuel Umen's book, "Jewish Concepts and Reflections" is divided into two parts. In the second part, we find some of the author's personal reflections on a variety of subjects. The first part, however, which deals with Jewish concepts, is a completely biased and, at times, distorted view of Judaism and Jewish life. Unlike

the true scholar, Rabbi Umen has utilized secondary, rather than primary sources, to bolster his thinking. In general, the book is simple and juvenile, and should have little appeal for the average layman.

Louis M. Tuchman

Late Summer Fruit by ISAAC LEWIN (New York: Bloch Publishing Co. 1960)

While the essays in the first part of "Late Summer Fruit" present a panoramic review of Jewish life in pre-World War II Poland, and describe the great losses suffered by Jews as a result of Nazi bestiality, Dr. Isaac Lewin, in the second part, discusses such modern day problems as Shechitah, free access to the holy shrines, the right of asylum and that of training the orphan in the traditions of his parents.

The purpose of this book of essays is stated in the foreword. ". . . Even as late Summer fruit, we must look through Autumn and Winter in the seasonal cycle to the following Spring . . . With the resolution of these and other similar problems we anticipate and pray for a brighter day (p. 7-8). That this day will come is no question in the mind of the author, for, despite great losses, . . . the spirit lives — and will continue to live" (p. 20). One of these great losses to Jewry is the author's father, whose biography is poignantly portrayed in the second essay.

This volume of essays is recommended to all who are interested

TRADITION: *A Journal of Orthodox Thought*

in the continuation of religious life in a free society.

Louis M. Tuchman

Judaism and the Scientific Spirit, by W. GUNTHER PLAUT (New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1962)

In this little volume, "Judaism and the Scientific Spirit," W. Gunther Plaut ably discusses the compatibility of religion and science. He clearly indicates the separate

spheres in which each one operates, as well as how they complement one another. In addition, the author discusses both the Jewish and scientific contributions towards a better understanding of the world in which we live.

It is unfortunate that the author's characterization of the Orthodox approach to scientific discovery has been distorted by his outlook as a Reform rabbi.

Louis M. Tuchman

REVIEWERS IN THIS ISSUE

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