BOOK REVIEWS

The Jewish Dietary Laws, by DAYAN DR. I. GRUNFELD (London/Jerusalem/New York: Soncino Press, 1972; 2 volumes).

Reviewed by Norman Lamm

A book by Dayan Dr. I. Grunfeld is always a welcome event in religious literary circles. The eminent translator and interpreter of Samson Raphael Hirsch—one of the few such whose English is free from the heavy hand of the original German syntax—is a distinguished Talmudist and international lawyer who has written lucidly and persuasively on a number of major Jewish themes.

Much before the present spate of books and booklets in Hebrew and English on the laws of *Shabbat* and on their underlying religious significance, Grunfeld had already produced the best of them. His short book, *The Sabbath*, is a gem, and has justly been translated into several languages. In many ways, it remains the model for our *hasbarah datit* literature.

Soncino has now published a two-volume work by Dayan Grunfeld on *Kashrut*. Hardly anything previously written on the subject in English is sufficiently serious, authoritative, and comprehensive to recommend to the student or to the layman who seeks guidance and enlightenment. *The Jewish Dietary Laws* fortunately fills that void.

These are handsomely bound and tastefully printed volumes, in the best Soncino tradition. Volume I treats of the "dietary laws regarding forbidden and permitted foods with particular reference to meat and meat products." In the second volume, Dr. Grunfeld turns his attention to "dietary laws regarding plants and vegetables, with particular reference to produce of the Holy Land," i.e., *mitzvot hateluvot baaretz*. Here, the laws of *Ma'aserot*, *Kilayim*, *Challah*, and *Shemittah*, amongst others, are covered in commendable detail.

For the purpose of the present brief review, we shall concentrate on Volume I, and more on its ideational than on its halakhic content.

The Jewish Dietary Laws is a major effort to present the *taamei*

hamitzvot of the kosher laws. I do not believe there is any need to present an apology for such an endeavor. The elaboration of the fundamental significance and theological meaning of the Halakhah is an educational act and not necessarily an exercise in apologetics. Anyone acquainted with contemporary culture, its tastes and prejudices, knows how much misunderstanding abounds when it comes to *kashrut*. Seemingly intelligent and sophisticated people have only the vaguest and most distorted notions of what *kashrut* is all about. So even if such a work be apologetics, its publication requires no apology.

Grunfeld's explanations run along three parallel lines: the ethical, the mystical, and the symbolical. Ethically, the dietary laws transform the natural food-instinct into self-discipline. This moral freedom that the Jew thereby gains is identical, according to our author, with the Biblical category of "holiness." Symbolically, Grunfeld concentrates on the prohibition of meat and milk, and seems to prefer the Hirschian interpretation. His mystical insight, at the beginning of his book, is the most interesting of all. He offers a trenchant analysis of the words *tahor* and *tamei*, usually translated as "pure" and "impure" or "clean" and "unclean." I have had occasion in another context, to refer to these translations as "a semantic disaster." Grunfeld's dissection of these terms reveals a wealth of understanding that should be required reading for every Jew who aspires to the honorific epithet "informed Jew." It is best not to offer a digest of the author's comments. He speaks well for himself, and deserves the reader's close personal attention.

Grunfeld is one of the foremost disciples and interpreters of Hirsch. It is to be expected, therefore, that his own writings on themes Hirsch had discussed would bear the imprint of the master. Indeed, it is both Hirschian content and spirit that informs almost every chapter of these splendid volumes.

If there is any argument I have with the author it is over his central premise, namely, that the laws of *kashrut* are founded on the interrelationship between and interdependence of body and soul. Dayan Grunfeld can certainly cite chapter and verse from the vast literature of Judaism to support such a contention. But I question whether a rationalization formulated in the Middle Ages, or earlier, must necessarily be revived in the twentieth century, when biology, psychology, and psychosomatics are somewhat more developed. "The dietetics of the body and the dietetics of the soul," he writes, "are closely connected" (p. 17). They certainly are, if only because the Divine decree concerns such things as foods, and thus an act involving material substance is now raised to a spiritual level. But Grunfeld does not mean that they are related in this purely formal sense. He goes much further: *trefah*, he argues, has a "contaminating" influence on the soul of man, in the same way that alcohol has a deleterious effect on man's mind. Mind and soul are presumed to be identical, and theology is now in an embrace with physiology. He

thus accepts as valid the contention of Hirsch that non-kosher food makes the body too active in a carnal sense and thus less submissive to spiritual direction by his soul (p. 9). Hence too, his citation of the Talmud (*Nid.* 9a) that the blood of a pregnant animal is decomposed and turns into milk, and therefore when milk and meat are boiled together, the milk turns back into blood, which is prohibited.

If the author had intended a history or compendium of *taamei hamitzvot* on the dietary laws, certainly these should have been included. But in a work that is directed to "thinking young men and women," one may legitimately wonder if such chemically and biologically based explanations had better been left unsaid. After all, these are matters that can be easily tested in a laboratory. If such "reasons" do not hold up under rigorous scientific criticism, then they cannot qualify as adequate explanations of the Biblical laws and the Halakhah. Primitive science cannot succeed in making eternal laws more palatable or reasonable to knowledgeable moderns. Talmudic law is binding; talmudic science is not.

Yet these animadversions must by no means be permitted to divert the reader's attention from the inestimable value of this superb work. Dayan Grunfeld has served us well. He has organized his material systematically, written with insight and lucidity, and manifested scholarily competence. We are all, once again, in his debt.

Judaism and Drugs; edited by LEO LANDMAN; (New York, Commission on Synagogue Relations of Federation of Jewish Philanthropies of New York, 1973).

Reviewed by Reuven P. Bulka

George Harris, reacting to a statement by the former head of the Federal Drug Program under Nixon, Jerome Jaffe, that by 1971 the rapid growth of heroin addiction was ending, though concern about the crisis proportions of the problem were at a peak, remarked, "That's natural—we usually worry about problems after the worst is over" (*Psychology Today*, August, 1973, p. 70). In such a state of reality ,it might seem futile to issue a book on Judaism and Drugs, even more so to review it. Nevertheless, *Judaism and Drugs*, as a reaction to the drug crisis, is important not only for the drug issue but also as a possible prototype for other volumes tackling societal ills from a Judaic vantage point. Moreover, whilst the crisis might have abated, drugs are still a problem, as is evidenced by the pending and passed legislation in many states pertinent to hard and soft drugs.

According to the book's editor, Dr. Leo Landman, himself the contributor of some useful historical

information on drugs, ". . . in this age of drugs, young people can be offered an alternate peer culture to identify with in order to help them resist the natural desire to conform with what is 'in' for the majority. They can be given the opportunity to choose life, not death. This book attempts to provide a basis for this choice (Page 28)." To provide for this choice, the editor gathered noted writers to contribute halakhic, historical, philosophical, psychological, and sociological input. As such, it is hardly surprising that the book is permeated in all these dimensions with a negative attitude to drugs, as if the decision had already been made in advance, the only exercise needed to rationalize the decision retroactively. The lone exception is the article by Kraut, who challenges the pronounced ban on marijuana by Rabbi Cohen, though he admittedly does not advocate its use. This reflects with uncanny accuracy the divergent views on drugs of the adult and student generations, as Kraut is the only student contributor to the book.

The book begins with a foreward by Nelson Rockefeller, the former governor of New York and the driving force behind the tough drugs laws recently enacted in New York State. (As an aside, it is interesting to note that while the editor, primarily concerned with the Judaic view on drugs, titled the work Judaism and Drugs, Rockefeller, pre-occupied with the drug problem rampant in his area of responsibility, refers to the work as Drugs and Judaism.)

Included are halakhic and hashkafic approaches to drugs by Tendler, Drazin, Cohen, and Kraut, historical renderings by Landman and Hoenig, philosophical arguments by Berkovits and Wurzburger, sociological observations by Frimer, psychological insights by Birner, and practical methods of tackling the problem by Trainin, Schrage, Hofstein, and Friedman.

The book contains the occasional overstatement, as in "The motivation for this self mutilation (use of drugs—RB) is the refusal to accept the burden of the 'Yoke of Mitzvos.'" (Page 65). There are surely more fundamental psychological, sociological reasons for the drug problem. It would be more accurate to say, as is the general feeling in the book, that lack of awareness of Jewish values in their proper expression-setting, is at work rather than refusal to accept.

Then, too, there is the odd naive remark, as in "An open public declaration by the great rabbis and Roshei Yeshiva of our generation may indeed help stem the tide and yet save scores and scores of human lives (Page 80)." Without attempting to denigrate the Roshei Yeshiva or the Rabbis, it is hardly likely what they say will reach the addicted or the on-the-way-to-be addicted. Such declarations are akin to putting on the lights in broad daylight, or sermonizing about the importance of attending the minyan to your daily constituency, who are there anyway. What would help stem the tide more than statements or sermons are concerted efforts by Rabbis and Roshei Yeshiva to invade the field, to establish and maintain a strong and

meaningful link with the addicts, in the mold of the prophets.

Of more importance are halakhic inaccuracies. ". . . Many drugs do not directly bring about death. Yet when their usage over a period of time has a deleterious effect upon the health, as is common, the *halakhah* would prohibit their use (Page 93)." Extended logically, this statement would prohibit the use of aspirin, sleeping pills, and almost any medication over an extended time, yet I have not seen nor heard of any recognized *Posek* who would ban aspirins, sleeping pills, etc. This seems to be a hazy area where intuition urges us to say "no", but careful analysis is needed to establish a clear and definitive line separating prohibition from permission. And, as Kraut points out, a *Psak* by a recognized *Posek* which would amalgamate accurate and encompassing knowledge of the medical implications of drugs with Halakhic acumen is still sorely missing and thus most necessary.

The book would have been greatly enhanced with more comprehensive footnoting, as well as with a bibliography. In balance, however, it is a highly readable book, with much useful information and applicable insights. Whilst it might not dissuade the addict, it can no doubt strengthen the committed and give them intellectual leverage with which to approach the addict-kores. It is highly recommended to anyone in a position of influence.

One almost consensual view to issue from the book is that prevention is more likely to bring positive results and efforts should be concentrated in that area. This is in accord with the classical Jewish approach to the *ben sorer u'moreh*, the wayward son. (Somehow, no author even mentioned the connection between the wayward son and the addict.) Prevention in its best form is a strong, vibrant, value-expressive family unit.

The issue of prevention points to two other areas hardly mentioned in the present volume but nevertheless of increasing controversy. One is the question of health and healthy food. Kraut, either in jest or in exercise of *reductio ad absurdum*, suggests we should prohibit foods with preservatives, colorings, emulsifiers, and other additives that are known to harm man (Page 213). The argument is much too serious to be easily dismissed, and we are too intelligent to rely on the cop-out that God preserves the fools. If drugs are a problem, so are coffee, white sugar, doughnuts, white bread, etc. True, this can be carried to the extreme, but we are obligated to be extremists when it is a matter of self-preservation. That is why the problem of drugs concerns us. Consistency demands that we concern ourselves with those products that threaten us in the long run.

A second area that needs further elaboration is the use of drugs as psychochemicals to control behavior, notably deviant behavior. First impulse is to say "Why not?' yet extension of this practice to any form of conduct that is deemed (by whom?) as undesirable, such as a general ordering his troops to launch an attack, or

a corporation president blowing his stack, or even a parent slapping his child, would surely raise some very grave doubts. The problem of drugs is much more ubiquitous than we care or dare to imagine.

Nachlat Tzvi: Part Two, by GEDALIAH FELDER (New York, 1972).

Reviewed by Morris Gorelik

The blessing of *Shehecheyanu* applies whenever Rabbi Gedaliah Felder issues a new volume. He has already established himself through his previously published works as a Talmudic scholar. His books have been widely acclaimed and, within a short period of time, his name has become a household word in Rabbinic and scholarly circles. His prolific literary output is distinguishable by its wide range of topics and its comprehensiveness.

In his most recent volume, *Nachlat Tzvi,* Rabbi Felder produces a much needed work on the laws of Jewish divorce. It possesses three distinctive qualities.

First, the style is lucid and eloquent. Rabbi Felder's writing, which is in the traditional rabbinic idiom, is characterized by a felicitous and pleasant manner of presentation. Difficult and abstruse concepts are couched in readable and understandable terms. At times his prose waxes poetic. This is especially discernible in his lengthy introductory chapter on the role of the *Posek* in Jewish history. Occasionally beautiful and appropriate Aggadic or Midrashic passages are woven into the fabric of his halakhic discussions.

Second, the range of topics is phenomenal. They include such varied subjects as the writing of a divorce document, the religious qualifications of witnesses and scribes, the spelling of various names and the *Cherem* of Rabbenu Gershom. Many other topics discussed at great length reflect the concern of the *Posek* on the contemporary scene. For example, the legitimacy of civil marriages, the halakhic validity of marriages performed by Reform rabbis, the religious qualifications of scribes who worship in mixed pew congregations and the halakhic validity of proxy appointments by telephone or television.

Third, the erudition of the author is immense. Not only does he cite the relevant Talmudic sources, post Talmudic commentaries and codes, but he also refers to the vast reservoir of Responsa literature. This area is generally neglected in traditional Yeshiva circles. Since *Roshei Yeshiva* and their disciples are not faced with immediate issues they tend to shun Responsa material. On the other hand, Rabbis who are on the scene of decision making are challenged to translate conceptual knowledge into a *Pesak*. Once they have crossed the threshold of the *Beit Midrash* to assume the re-

ligious leadership of their communities they are compelled to face the problems raised by their congregants. The Responsa literature reflects the rabbi's concern for his people, and in his hands the Halakhah acquires an added dimension. Rabbi Felder has made an invaluable contribution to the process of halakhic decision making by amassing the wealth of Responsa sources which he culled not only from the *Rishonim* and *Aharonim*, but, also, from the ever-growing list of contemporary *Poskim*. Thus, the author portrays a living halakhic tradition animated by the continuous concern of the *Posek* in every age.

One must readily conclude that the author has published a unique work which will serve as a source and guide for contemporary and future *Poskim*. One can only pray that Rabbi Felder will continue to produce works in other areas of Halakhah so that *Pesak* Halakhah shall be further enriched by his extensive scholarship and insights.

Two suggestions, however, for future volumes. First, more attention could be placed on the historical settings and the chronological formulation of views. Although the author is at times cognizant of historical delineation, he frequently avoids historical perspectives. In the previously mentioned introductory essay on the historical role of the *Posek*, he does attempt to trace its historical evolvement, but its significance is beclouded by the interweaving of aggadic or philosophical opinions in disregard of the historical perspective. The reviewer is aware that this omission is probably due to a transcendent perspective of Halakhah. Since Torah is Divine and Halakhah is the concretization of the Divine Will, the *Posek* views Halakhah as transcending historical categories of time. It is not a human invention. Man is the active conduit through which the will of the Divine is made known. Although I do not dispute this concept, one must acknowledge historical forces which have helped to shape the *Posek's* perspective. An inclusion of these would enrich the student's insight into the dynamics of Halakhah. Second, Rabbi Felder's personal observations and evaluations on the respective views would be a welcome addition. As an active congregational rabbi and a prominent member of the *Bet Din* of the Rabbinical Council of America, Rabbi Felder is an excellent *Posek*. More of his personal insights and the motivating factors of the *Pesak* would add immeasurably to our understanding of the Halakhah.

Notwithstanding these two minor suggestions the author is to be applauded for a superb work. His place alongside the outstanding halakhic writers of today is secure. May he be blessed with continued strength in his future literary endeavors, so that very soon we may once again have the *Zechut* of reciting *Shehecheyanu*.

World Politics and the Jewish Condition: Task Force Studies Prepared for the American Jewish Committee on the World of the 1970's, edited by LOUIS HENKIN (New York: Quadrangle Books, 1972).

Reviewed by Peter M. Schotten

I

This book principally consists of nine essays, including the editor's introduction. It was written for the Task Force on the World of the 1970's, a body convened for the American Jewish Committee in the hope that it would "guide it in preparing future foreign affairs programs." More specifically, the book's aim was to look ahead into the 1970's "not as an exercise in prophecy but as a quest for understanding as a basis of planning."

The essays cover a variety of topics: World Politics in the 1970's, American Foreign Policy and the Middle East, an Examination of Life in Israel, and another look at the Middle East from the Israeli Perspective. Also discussed are the doings and predicaments of Jews in other lands, including an in depth look at Western Europe, Eastern Europe and Latin America. A final essay examines the International Protection of Human Rights, with special reference to Jewish Rights.

The essays are descriptive yet detailed. Often they are also analytic. They are sufficiently sophisticated to interest those in academic life although the book need not be confined to such an audience. Those interested in one or more of the particular topics will enjoy the generally comprehensive discussion which characterizes virtually every essay contained in the work. Also, it should be noted that in many cases the authors of the articles are well-respected experts in their field. For example, the book's editor, Louis Henkin, is a distinguished Professor of International Law at Columbia. Another contributor, Eugene Rostow, presently a Professor of Law at Yale, was the former United States Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs.

II

This book, then, presents itself largely as a compilation of essays written by knowledgeable experts about a variety of situations and circumstances which will concern Jews around the world for the decade of the 70's. The work, therefore, has a great deal to recommend itself to the potential reader who shares this concern with the book's authors.

The book contains essays written by authors who often do not share the same viewpoint. Yet this constitutes a strength of the book as a whole, for their disagreements are presented in such a manner so as to provoke reflection in the thinking reader. For example, Henry Roberts, in his essay on "World Politics in the 1970's," writes that "in many nations there seems to be a marked turning inward, a preoccu-

pation with domestic deficiencies, internalism, a weariness with internationalism, whether Wilsonian or proletarian (p. 55)." Roberts thinks that the United States can be numbered among those nations characterized by this political turning inward. Yet Eugene Aostow, *contra* Roberts, begins his essay on "American Foreign Policy and the Middle East" as follows:

> The only assumption about American foreign policy during this decade that I can accept as realistic is that its major premise will not change. The experience of being dragged into the whirlpool of two great wars has, I believe, convinced a stable majority of the American people, that it is more dangerous to stay out of world politics than to take part in them (p. 63).

From such studied disagreements and their supporting arguments reflection should be derived, and the reader is better for it.

A third strength of the book is that besides its full and competent description of Jewish life around the world, its more theoretical or academic essays are of a first-rate quality. The point is best illustrated by returning to the article authored by Professor Rostow. Here, for once, we are given an analysis of the Middle East situation from a larger, strategic context. It is Rostow's point that much of the tension in the Middle East can be traced to Russian efforts to attempt to outflank and therefore neutralize United States influence in Europe. "The Middle Eastern crisis is a NATO crisis, not an Arab-Israeli quarrel (p. 88)" writes Rostow provocatively, and his proof, presented mostly in strategic terms, is impressive.

III

If *World Politics and the Jewish Condition* is a book which on the whole deserves reading it is not a book without some faults. In the first place, one would have wished there to be an article on Jews and Jewish life in the United States. The lack of such an essay would seem to be an unhappy oversight.

More importantly, there is an inherent difficulty with the very nature of the work as a whole. The self-proclaimed purpose of the book was to predict conditions around the world for Jews in the 1970's. But often, however, the future predictions made by the various authors tend to be similarly trite, merely predicting that prospects for the future will partake much of the character of events of the past.

At this point it might be correctly asserted that in some cases all an author with imperfect knowledge of the future can do is assert a belief that the future may be very much like the past. This might well prove an adequate defense were it not for a complicating problem. Not only are some of the predictions about the future somewhat trivial in nature, but in addition, what would appear to be grave future considerations are insufficiently dealt with or completely ignored. In this category, problems regarding the emigration of Soviet Jews to Israel and the international implications raised by a restrictive Soviet policy are not discussed in

adequate detail. Completely nonexistent is any consideration of the relationship between the currently proclaimed "energy crisis," and what might prove to be a changing American public opinion toward the Arab states as a result of an increased demand for their oil. The implication of such considerations on future American foreign policy will certainly become increasingly important throughout the coming decade and therefore deserve examination. Another problem is presented by the current Arab hoarding of gold which also will raise important questions both for the future of American foreign policy and indirectly for the continued political health of Israel. Nowhere in the book is this significant problem discussed.

On the whole, this group of essays is worth reading not so much for what they predict for the future but for what they tell us about the present. They reveal a great amount of information, all of which can be profitably utilized by a reader interested in the status of Israel, its relationship to the United States, and the general status of Jews around the world. The failings of this book arise from the work's rather ambitious goal of attempting to predict a future which is extraordinarily difficult to predict, rather than from any sort of inadequate description of current Jewish life and problems.

Universal Jewish History, by PHILIP BIBERFELD, vol. 3 (New York: Feldheim Publishing Co., 1972).

Reviewed by Leo Jung

The third volume of Dr. Philip Biberfeld's "Universal Jewish History" crowns his very significant work. In depth as in clarity it offers both, basic information and challenging, fine interpretation. For a re-reading and fuller appreciation of our sacred law and lore the book is a very precious guide.

Its sources, timeless and modern, from high academic level to the intricacies of detailed research, from Rambam and Rav Weinberg to archaeologists and philologists, from Hassidic lore to the treasured views of great Roshe Yeshivot, lend the "Universal Jewish History" a grace and power which thoughtful readers will view with gratitude and enjoy endowingly.

Book Reviews

REVIEWERS IN THIS ISSUE

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