




2012

Menorah Review (No. 77, Summer/Fall, 2012)

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VCU Menorah Review

For the Enrichment of Jewish Thought

Summer/Fall 2012 no. 77

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A Golden Poet of Spain's Golden Age

A review essay by Matthew Schwartz

***Yehudah Halevi*, by Hillel Halkin. New York: Schocken**

Living in a highly literary age of culture and great poets, Yehudah Halevi's name will certainly be inscribed near the top of every list. His liturgical poems grace the Jewish prayer books, and his poems about society and love are read today with pleasure. His *Kuzari* strongly influenced many important Jewish thinkers.

Hillel Halkin's biography of this great thinker and poet is itself a sort of poem but of a different nature. He presents good material, much of it recently turned up in the Cairo Genizah, and his translations of Halevi are lively and readable. Yet the book neglects to include an introduction, preface, bibliography, footnotes, chapter titles, table of contents, and index. No page numbers appear on even numbered pages nor on the last and first pages of chapters. Hebrew originals of the translated poems are not supplied. A reader might like to see how closely the translation follows the original or compares to other translators' work. The very title, *Yehudah Halevi*, seems terse and uninformative. What about Yehudah Halevi? The book seems to flow in a stream of consciousness mode perhaps more amenable to a public lecture than to a bound volume. It is not till late in the book that the reader is told that Yehudah Halevi became a sort of role model for Mr. Halkin himself, who like his subject made aliyah after a period of some uncertainty.

Despite these minor complaints, the book offers much of interest. Eight appendices and a chronological chart are helpful. Yehudah Halevi's name was always esteemed, but most of his poems were lost for centuries until in 1838, a book dealer discovered a collection of over six hundred of his poems in Tunis and bought it for the Italian Jewish scholar, Shmuel David Luzzatto, who published them gradually over the following years. Fewer than eighty had been known previously. This *divan* or collection seems to have been assembled from a twelfth

century edition, edited by a Hiyya al-Da'udi.

Yehuda Halevi lived in the Arabic speaking Jewish society of Andalusia, in which poetry was a highly essential medium of interaction both for Moslems and for Jews, whose daily speech was Arabic and who adapted Arabic patterns into Hebrew verse. Mr. Halkin argues that the main impulse went back to the preliterate Bedouin life of the Arabian Desert. Let it be added that Jews too had a poetic tradition going back at least to as far as Eliezer Hakalir and Yose ben Yose and why not to the biblical songs of Moses and Deborah, and the Hebrew prayer books contain poems by R. Gershom of Mainz and Shimon ben Abun, who were more or less contemporary to the earliest known Andalusian Hebrew poets.

Yet in Spain, Jews wrote poems on matters far beyond the religious. Prowess in poetry was greatly admired. It is told of the brilliant Shmuel Hanagid that he once had quoted to him a couplet on the topic of biting an apple. He responded by composing one after another fifteen short but well-constructed poems on that same theme. It was an age that used poetry for all sorts of communications: sending invitations and responding to them, sending thank-you notes, praising friends, deriding enemies and, of course, wooing. Parties or get-togethers would be venues to produce beautiful poems. Popular poetry tournaments were held at commercial fairs. Mr. Halkin opens the book describing a scene in which a young Yehuda Halevi acknowledges in verse the gift of a jug of wine from an admirer at a nearby table in a tavern.

Poetry was not in free or blank verse like today's norm, but it followed established rules of meter and rhyme. A gifted poet would become a sought-after figure supported by wealthy patrons.

Yehuda Halevi was born probably in Tudela (or perhaps Toledo) between 1070-1075. He studied Torah as a boy and later spent time in the great yeshiva of Lucena with R. Yitzchak Alfasi and R. Yosef Ibn Megas. Contemporary documents refer to him as Ravan (Rabbi), and he was obviously a scholar of biblical and rabbinic literature. He was anxious to meet the great poet Moshe Ibn Ezra of Granada, but his

rhymed letters to the famous man brought no invitation. Then Yehuda Halevi was once drinking with friends, probably in Cordoba, who were struggling to form a poetic response to a complex, tricky poem, in the new *muwashah* style, which Ibn Ezra himself had written. As Yehuda Halevi described it himself in a latter rhymed prose letter, it was he who formed a virtuoso response to the master's poem. Moshe Ibn Ezra was sufficiently impressed with the young man's writing to send him the longed for invitation, given of course itself in a beautiful poem. Moshe Ibn Ezra would become mentor to the young Yehuda.

The more or less stable years of Umayyad rule over Muslim Spain had ended long before, and Yehuda Halevi's life, ca. 1070-1141, saw many disruptions in Spain, Christians conquering from the north and fanatical Berbers from North Africa invading the south. Jewish life was often precarious. We know today little enough of Yehuda Halevi's biography or his family. He married and begat several children. One daughter may have married a son of Abraham Ibn Ezra. At one point Yehuda practiced medicine.

Yehuda Halevi's classic *Kuzari* has influenced many lines of Jewish thinking Zionist, Musarist, historical.

Kuzari developed through several stages and rewrites. Perhaps starting as a response to Karaitism, it became largely an opposition to philosophy and less so to Islam and Christianity. Our earliest known reference comes in a letter of Yehuda Halevi to Halfon ben Netanel in which he mentions the *Kuzari* and thanks a certain Yosef ben Bargl for praising "whatever foolishness comes from my pen." The rabbi in the *Kuzari* presents many arguments regarding Judaism. Central to the case for Judaism are the revelation of Torah and the course of Jewish history.

Mr. Halkin focuses especially on the discussion between king and rabbi of the importance of Eretz Israel, and the rabbi's ultimate decision to make aliya reflects a point in Yehuda Halevi's own life and in Mr. Halkin's as well, for he too went through a period of indecision before settling in Israel shortly after the Six Day War.

Recently an important cache of letters of Halfon ben Netanel was found in the Cairo Geniza. An Egyptian Jew, Halfon traveled widely on business and formed a friendship with Yehuda Halevi. The cache included five letters from Yehuda Halevi and several more that mention him, and they supply important new information on the final act of Yehuda's life, his famous journey to Israel. Yehuda became the great poet of the Jews' longing for Zion, and Mr. Halkin refers to his "My Heart is in the East" as the perfect poem. Nevertheless, Yehuda was no longer young, and a journey from Spain to Israel would be both difficult and dangerous. Parting from family and friends and a lifetime of memories was not easy, and Yehuda reflects this in some of his poems. A poem about storms at sea seems to reflect his inner turmoil.

The rabbi's discussion with the Khazar king in *Kuzari* about making aliyah probably also reflects the author's own inner storm. He may have looked to the Patriarch Abraham and his journey to Israel at age seventy-five as a role model. In 1140, he finally did depart from Andalusia, sailing toward Egypt. Geniza documents allow us to reconstruct an account of Yehuda Halevi's stay of some months in Alexandria and a shorter visit to Fustat (Cairo). The presence of the well-known poet caused a stir in Egypt's Jewish community, and Yehuda Halevi was under constant pressure to accept invitations and to prolong his stay. He remained 2 months in Alexandria then traveled by pack animal to Fustat arriving before Hanukah. He was very moved by scenes of the Israelites' experience under the pharaohs. The Jews of Egypt were at the time fairly secure under Fatimid rule. Yehuda participated in a number of get-togethers which centered around poetry. Some of the poems were about women. Others praise local dignitaries or Eretz Israel.

There are hints that Yehuda quarreled with his son-in-law, who was probably a son of the famed Abraham Ibn Ezra. A legend tells that Yitzchak Ibn Ezra, who had accompanied Yehuda from Spain to Egypt, may have then proceeded to Baghdad, where he converted to Islam. Yehuda Halevi returned to Alexandria and boarded ship in early May 1141, for the journey to Israel. Contrary winds delayed the departure

for a number of days, so that the ship actually left port on Shavuot. A poem about sailing was probably written earlier since the day was actually the holiday. It appears that his young grandson may have already been en route from Spain to join him in Israel.

The last poem of Yehuda's that we know comes from this time and expresses his friendship for a certain Shlomo Ibn Gabbai. The Geniza provides the latest known contemporary reference to Yehuda Halevi. A letter of May 11, 1141 from Abu Nasr ben Avraham to Halfon ben Netanel mentions the harassment of Yehuda by "that apostate dog" Ben Albasri, who complained to the police about some complicated affair. Yehuda was brought to the local qadi and set free upon swearing to his innocence. Ben Albasri, nevertheless, continued to slander the poet publicly. The letter ends "How is it possible for such mental cases to drag strangers through the gutter without being prevented by you?"

Mr. Halkin argues that the famous legend of Yehuda Halevi being trampled by an Arab horseman in Jerusalem may be essentially true. A letter of November 1141 to Halfon refers to Yehuda Halevi as "May the memory of the righteous be a blessing." The letter goes on to mention the deaths of three important Jews that year. The one whose name is not mentioned is likely Yehuda Halevi. No other reference to the story appears in a Jewish source until publication of *Shalshet Hakabbala* in 1586, which tells of Yehuda being murdered by the Arab horseman as he bowed in the dust of Jerusalem. Heinrich Graetz and many others thought the story pure legend. The Geniza has recently supplied another letter, much of it indecipherable which, however, refers to Yehuda as gone and says "at the gate of Jerusalem." A further complication is that Benjamin of Tudela reported seeing Yehuda Halevi's grave in Tiberias during his visit less than thirty years later.

Yehuda's *Kuzari* made a lasting impression on Jewish literature and on Jewish love of Zion, probably influencing some of the people who returned to Israel long before modern Zionism. Although most of his poems were lost over the years, his story and his poetry also influenced such writers as Heinrich Heine who wrote a poem about him.

Judah Al-Harizi, thirteenth century author of *Tahkemoni*, praised him highly. Some modern Israeli thinkers have criticized Yehuda Halevi as abusively nationalistic; e.g., Yeshaya Leibowitz and Avraham Burg. The historian Maria Rosa Menocal sees *Kuzari* as ethnocentric, an intellectual assault on her concept of the *convivencia*, the relative harmony of Islam, Christianity and Judaism in early Mediaeval Spain. Mr. Halkin correctly warns moderns not to read too much of their own isms into Yehuda Halevi, whose search was personal and not a political ideology.

Perhaps the truest word on Yehuda Halevi as a poet and thinker and as a Jew is Heine's opinion of Yehuda's writings of Zion as love poems. Mr. Halkin also tells a wonderful story that Rabbi Avraham Kook once, during a sleepless night in London, copied down from memory Yehuda Halevi's beautiful poem, "Waked by my thoughts and driven to profess God's praise in song and plead my neediness, I from my eyes brush midnight's sleepiness to seek the pleasance of the Lord's palace..."

Matthew Schwartz is a professor in the history department of Wayne State University and a contributing editor.

Beyond the Second Coming

A poem by Richard Sherwin

Repent me in soap
and ashes scrubbing pure of
sin your escutcheon
 Millennia of lighting
 lamp shades of my skin for trash
Keeping promises
though bored returning to judge
what youve done to you
 As example take the Jew
 lets not ah thats your problem
No theirs O now I
see you cant stomach even
the least part of me
 Lets not exaggerate please
 its in the throat they choke us

Going peacefully
from ghetto to gas chamber
work camp to lime pit
 Polish fire to Russian ice
 the bastards just wont stay dead
Sorry your honor
didnt meant it quite O hell
you know what we meant
 Youd think theyd take the hint and
 quit shoving in where not wanted
Where do you suggest

they go well really thats your
province more than ours

And waving the wafer wont
solve it so easy neither

Its not what they do
or are but that they are here
at alls what galls us

Now thats not very friendly
without them where would I be

You said that not us
we're saying its unjust we
didnt create them

Choose them dont want them never
did never will and thats that

Do you speak for all
well not to be honest all
of us all the time

But all of us most times and
most of us all times and souls

Churches and parties
left right and center nations
and movements and worlds

The big two and the third and
even the outcast fourth one

Use secret ballots
poll the United Nations
Disunited too

Man to man now theyre fucking
up the peace of the world Sir

Not to mention oil
we need to wash with and keep
the home fires burning
 It really shouldnt be so
 hard for you to find a place
If reports are right
youve inherited lots of
mansions out in space
 What say we pack them up and
 you choose the coordinates
That way we'll kiss them
off say Representatives
In Space sounds good huh
 Sounds okay but what about
 Quakers they love every one
Some a little more
some a little less and no
Jews a little more
 But whatll you do without
 them I'll have to take me too

Hallelujah weve
convinced him weve won past and
present and future
 You do your part we'll do ours
 Lord just leave the earth to us
Weve got science and
philosophy and yoga
we'll get by not bad
 You come back on a visit

you'll see how well we do Sir
You must have noticed
how far we've come since last time
you dropped in on us

We've got infrared goggles
to see in the darkness with

--Richard Sherwin

Richard Sherwin is Menorah Review's "poet laureate" and a contributing editor.

Books in Brief: New and Notable

***Mornings at the Stanton Street Schul* by Jonathan Boyarin**

Bronx, NY: Fordham University Press

In these pages, Boyarin invites us to share the intimate life of the Stanton Street Schul, one of the last remaining Jewish congregations on New York's historic Lower East Side. This narrow building is full of clamorous voices the generations of the dead who somehow contrive to make their presence known, and the newer generation, keeping the building and its memories alive and making themselves Jews in the process. Through the eyes of Boyarin, at once a member of the congregation and a bemused anthropologist, the book follows this congregation of "year round Jews" through the course of a summer when its future must once again be decided. Coming inside with the author, we see the congregation's life as a combination of quiet heroism, ironic humor, disputes for the sake of heaven and perhaps otherwise, and above all the ongoing search for ways to connect with Jewish ancestors while remaining true to oneself in the present.

***Narrating the Law: A Poetic of Talmudic Legal Stories* by Barry Scott Wimpfheimer**

Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press

Works of law, including the Talmud, are animated by a desire to create clear usable precedent. This animating impulse toward clarity is generally absent in narratives, the form of which are better able to capture the subtleties of lived life. Wimpfheimer proposes to make these different forms compatible by constructing as narrative-based law that considers law as one of several "languages," along with politics, ethics, psychology, and others, that together compose culture. A narrative-based law is capable to recognizing the limitations of theoretical statutes and the degree to which other cultural languages interact with legal discourse, complicating any attempts to actualize a hypothetical set of rules. This way of considering law strongly resists the divide in

traditional Jewish learning between legal literature (Halachah) and non-legal literature (Aggadah) by suggesting the possibility of discourse broad enough to capture both. This book activates this mode of reading by looking at the Talmud's legal stories, a set of texts that sits uncomfortably on the divide between Halachah and Aggadah. After noticing that such stories invite an expansive definition of law that includes other voices, the author also mines the stories for the rich descriptions of rabbinic culture that they encapsulate.

***The Mixed Multitude: Jacob Frank and the Frankist Movement, 1755-1816* by Pawel Maciejko**

Philadelphia: University Pennsylvania Press

To most Christians, Jacob Frank and his followers seemed to be members of a Jewish sect; to Jewish reformers, they formed a group making a valiant if misguided attempt to bring an end to the power of the rabbis; and to more traditional Jews, they were heretics to be suppressed by the rabbinate. What is undeniable is that by the late 18th century, the Frankists numbered in the tens of thousands and had a significant political and ideological influence on non-Jewish communities throughout eastern and central Europe.

Based on extensive archival research in Poland, the Czech Republic, Israel, Germany, the United States, and the Vatican, *The Mixed Multitude* is the first comprehensive study of Frank and Frankism in more than a century and offers an important new perspective on Jewish-Christian relations in the Age of Enlightenment.

***The Origins of Jewish Secularization in Eighteenth-Century Europe* by Shmuel Feiner**

Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press

Throughout the 18th century, an ever-sharper distinction emerged between Jews of the old order and those who were self-consciously of a new world. As aspirations for liberation clashed with adherence to tradition, as national ethnic, cultural, and other alternatives emerged

and a long, circuitous search for identity began, it was no longer evident that the definition of Jewishness would be based on the beliefs and practices surrounded the study of the Torah.

In this book, Feiner reconstructs this evolution by listening to the voices of those who participated in the process and by deciphering its cultural codes and meanings. On the other hand, a great majority of observant Jews still accepted the authority of the Talmud and the leadership of the rabbis; on the other, there was a gradually more conspicuous minority of "Epicureans" and "freethinkers." As the ground shifted, each individual was marked according to his or her place on the path between faith and heresy, between devoutness and permissiveness or indifference.

Feiner unfolds the story of critics of religion, mostly Ashkenazic Jews, who did not take active part in the secular intellectual revival known as the Haskalah. In open or concealed rebellion, his subjects lived primarily in the cities of western and central Europe Altona-Hamburg, Amsterdam, London, Berlin, Breslau, and Prague. They participated as "fashionable" Jews adopting the habits and clothing of the surrounding Gentile society. Several also adopted the deist worldview of Enlightenment Europe, rejecting faith in revelation, the authority of Scripture, and the obligations to observe the commandments.

Peering into the synagogue, observing individuals in the coffeehouse or strolling the boulevards and peeking into the bedroom, Feiner recovers forgotten critics of religion from both the margins and the center of Jewish discourse. His is a pioneering work on the origins of one of the most significant transformations of modern Jewish history.

Women and the Messianic Heresy of Sabbatai Zevi, 1666-1816
by Ada Rapoport-Albert

The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization. Oxford: U.K.

Sabbatai Zevi addressed to women a highly original liberationist message. The author traces the diverse manifestations of this vision

in every phase of Sabbatianism and its offshoots. These include the early promotion of women to center-stage as messianic prophetesses; their independent affiliation with the movement in their own right; their initiation in the esoteric teachings of the kabbalah; and their full incorporation, on a par with men, into the ritual and devotional life of the messianic community. Their investment with authority was such as to elevate the messiah's wife (a figure mostly absent from traditional messianic speculation) to the rank of full messianic consort, sharing in her husband's redemptive mission as well as his divine dimension. By the late 18th century, a syncretistic cult had developed that recognized in Eva the unmarried daughter of Jacob Frank, one of Sabbatai Zevi's apostate successors an incarnate female aspect of the kabbalistic god-head, worshipped by her father's devotees as "Holy Virgin" and female messiah. This was the culmination of the Sabbatian endeavor to transcend the traditional gender paradigm that had excluded women from the public arena of Jewish spiritual life.

***The Jewish Annotated New Testament* edited by Amy-Jill Levine and Marc Zvi Brettler**

Oxford University Press

This is a groundbreaking text for scholarship, interfaith dialogue, and secular or religious readers. Clear, accessible scholarship brings out the Jewish context of the New Testament. It presents Judaism before, during, and after the time of Jesus and his immediate followers. It explores the early community of Jesus-followers and their eventual separation from Judaism. There is unflinching treatment of anti-Judaism in the New Testament and in later history. For Jewish readers, this publication is a trustworthy introduction to this essential cultural text. For Christians, it offers a new view of the Jewish contexts in which the New Testament and the community of Jesus followers arose. And for all readers, it provides essential background and new perspectives on these pivotal writings.

Flags over the Warsaw Ghetto: The Untold Story of the Warsaw

***Ghetto Uprising* by Moshe Arens**

Jerusalem and New York: Gefen Publishing House

In his new book, Arens brings to light the truth about Jewish heroism and self-sacrifice in the Warsaw ghetto. His thorough research does justice to groups and individuals whose critical role and extraordinary bravery have up until now been largely left out of the historical record. Facing unimaginable odds and internecine differences, these men and women fought and fell for the honor of the Jewish people, and they deserve to be recognized. Arens' groundbreaking work is another remarkable chapter in the life of a leader who has dedicated himself to strengthening the Jewish people.

***Complicity in the Holocaust: Churches and Universities in Nazi Germany* by Robert P. Ericksen**

New York: Cambridge University Press

In one of the darker aspects of Nazi Germany, churches and universities generally respected institutions grew to accept and support Nazi ideology. Ericksen explains how an advanced, highly educated, Christian nation could commit the crimes of the Holocaust. This book describes how Germany's intellectual and spiritual leaders enthusiastically partnered with Hitler's regime, thus becoming active participants in the persecution of Jews and, ultimately, in the Holocaust. Ericksen also examines Germany's deeply flawed yet successful postwar policy of denazification in these institutions. The author argues that enthusiasm for Hitler within churches and universities effectively gave Germans permission to participate in the Nazi regime.

***Chelmno and the Holocaust: The History of Hitler's First Death Camp* by Patrick Montague**

Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press

As the first extermination camp established by the Nazi regime and the prototype of the single-purpose death camps of Treblinka, Sobibor, and

Belzec, the Chelmno death camp stands as a crucial but largely unexplored element of the Holocaust. This book is the first comprehensive work in any language to expose all aspects of the camp's history, organization, and operations and to remedy the dearth of information in the Holocaust literature about Chelmno established in a small pastoral village in rural Poland to launch a campaign of mass murder. Chelmno was the first camp to be created with the explicit aim of killing, thus launching the process of industrialized human extermination which the Nazis came to perfect.

***We Are Here: Memories of the Lithuanian Holocaust* by Ellen Cassedy**

Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press

The author's longing to recover the Yiddish she'd lost with her mother's death eventually led her to Lithuania, once the "Jerusalem of the North." As she prepared for her journey, her uncle, 60 years after had had left Lithuania in a boxcar, made a shocking disclosure about his wartime experience, and an elderly man from her ancestral town made an unsettling request. Gradually, what had begun as a personal journey broadened into a larger exploration of how the people of this country, Jews and non-Jews alike, are confronting their past in order to move forward into the future. How does a nation how do successor generations, moral being overcome a bloody past? How do we judge the bystanders, collaborators, perpetrators, rescuers, and ourselves? These are the questions Cassedy confronts, one woman's exploration of Lithuania's Jewish history combined with a personal exploration of her own family's place in it. She finds that it's not just the facts of history that matter, but what we choose to do with them.

***The Aleppo Codex* by Matti Friedman**

Algonquin Books: Chapel Hill, NC

This true-life detective story unveils the journey of a sacred text the 10th century annotated Hebrew Bible known as the "Aleppo Codex"

from its hiding place in a Syrian synagogue to the new founded State of Israel. Based on the author's independent research, documents kept secret for 50 years, and personal interviews with key players, the book proposes a new theory of what happened when the codex was torn from a grotto in Aleppo, Syria in the late 1940s and eventually surfaced in Jerusalem mysteriously incomplete. The closest thing Jews have to the word of God, the codex provides vital keys to reading biblical texts. By recounting its history, Friedman explores the once vibrant Jewish communities in Islamic lands and follows the thread into the present, uncovering difficult truths about the manuscript's clandestine travels and how its most important pages went missing. He raises critical questions about who owns historical treasures and about the role of myth and legend in the creation of a nation. In an age when physical books matter less and less, here is a thrilling story about a book that meant everything.

***City of Rogues and Schnorrers: Russia's Jews and the Myth of the Old Odessa* by Jarrod Tanny**

Bloomington: Indiana University Press

Old Odessa, on the Black Sea, gained notoriety as a legendary city of Jewish gangsters and swindlers, a frontier boomtown mythologized for the adventurers, criminals and merrymakers who flocked there to seek easy wealth and lead lives of debauchery and excess. Odessa is also famed for the brand of Jewish humor brought there in the 19th century from the shtetls of Eastern Europe and that flourished throughout Soviet times. From a broad perspective, Tanny examines the hybrid Judeo-Russian culture that emerged in Odessa in the 19th century and persisted through the Soviet era and beyond. The book shows how the art of eminent Soviet-era figures grew out of the Odessa Russian-Jewish culture into which they were born and which shaped their lives. Another element of Odessa is its depiction as a site of wit and irony, where thieves and lowlifes evoke laughter through their dissolute behavior. Odessa's Jewish criminals, as portrayed in literature and film, display a brand of humor that was brought to the city from the shtetls

of Eastern Europe. Along with the Jews themselves, Jewish humor found a new home in Odessa, where it quickly became the dominant mode for articulating the Odessa myth.

The Spinoza Problem: A Novel by Irwin D. Yalom

New York: Basic Books

When 16-year-old Alfred Rosenberg is called into his headmaster's office for anti-Semitic remarks he made during a school speech, he is forced, as punishment, to memorize passages about Spinoza from the autobiography of the German poet Goethe. Rosenberg is stunned to discover that Goethe, his idol, was a great admirer of the Jewish 17th-century philosopher Baruch Spinoza. Long after graduation, Rosenberg remains haunted by this "Spinoza problem": how could the German genius Goethe have been inspired by a member of a race Rosenberg considers so inferior to his own, a race he was determined to destroy? Spinoza himself was no stranger to punishment during his lifetime. Because of his unorthodox religious views, he was excommunicated from the Amsterdam Jewish community in 1656, at the age of 24, and banished from the only world he had ever known. Though his life was short and he lived without means in great isolation, he nonetheless produced works that changed the course of history.

Over the years, Rosenberg rose through the ranks to become an outspoken Nazi ideologue, a faithful servant of Hitler, and the main author of racial policy for the Third Reich. Still, his Spinoza obsession lingered. By imagining the unexpected intersection of Spinoza's life with Rosenberg's, Yalom explores the mindsets of two men separated by 300 years. Using his skills as a psychiatrist, he explores the inner lives of Spinoza, the saintly secular philosopher, and of Rosenberg, the godless mass murderer.

Shuva: The Future of the Jewish Past by Yehuda Kurtzer

Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press

Modern Jews tend to relate to the past through "history," which relies

on empirical demonstration and rational thought, rather than through “memory,” which relies on the non-rational architectures of mythology. By now “history” has surpassed “memory” as a means of relating to the past a development that falls short in building identity and creates a disconnect between Jews and their collective history. Kurtzer seeks to mend this breach. Drawing on key classical texts, he shows that “history” and “memory” are not exclusive and that the perceived dissonance between them can be healed by a selective reclamation of the past and a translation of that past into purposefulness.

***Eichmann’s Jews: The Jewish Administration of Holocaust Vienna, 1938-1945* by Doron Rabinovici**

Boston, MA: Polity Press

This book is a major new study of the role of the Jews, and more specifically the “judenrat” or Jewish Council, in Holocaust Vienna. It was in Vienna that Eichmann developed and tested his model for a Nazi Jewish policy from 1938 onwards, and the leaders of the Viennese Jewish community were the prototypes for all subsequent Jewish councils. By studying the situation in Vienna, it is possible to gain a unique insight into the way that the Nazi regime incorporated the Jewish community into its machinery of destruction. Rabinovici’s rich and insightful account enables us to understand in a new way the terrible reality of the victims’ plight: faced with the stark choice of death or cooperation, many chose to cooperate with the authorities in the hope that their actions might turn out to be the lesser evil.

***The Holocaust, Religion, and the Politics of Collective Memory: Beyond Sociology* by Ronald J. Berger**

Piscataway, NJ: Transaction Publishers

As historical scholarship on the Holocaust has proliferated, perhaps no other tragedy or even has been as thoroughly documented. Sociologists have paid less attention to the Holocaust than historians and have been slower to fully integrate the genocide into their corpus

of disciplinary knowledge and realize that this monumental tragedy affords opportunities to examine issues that are central to some main themes of sociological inquiry. Berger's book fuses history and sociology; it illuminates the Holocaust as a social construction. Berger's aim is to counter sociologists who argue that the genocide should be maintained as an area of study unto itself, as a topic that should be segregated from conventional sociology courses and general concerns of sociological inquiry. Berger argues that the issues raised by the Holocaust are ventral to social science as well as historical studies.

Herbert Hoover and the Jews: The Origins of the "Jewish Vote" and Bipartisan Support for Israel by Sonja Schoepf Wenting and Rafael Medoff

Seattle, WA: CreateSpace Publishers

Although Herbert Hoover is not remembered as having had much interaction with Jews or interest in issue of Jewish concern, he in fact played a significant role in aiding Jewish communities devastated by World War One and pogroms; supported the cause of a Jewish state despite pressure from his own State Department; actively promoted the rescue of Jews from the Holocaust; and played a key part in the emergence of the "Jewish vote" in American politics and bipartisan support for Israel. The authors uncover a hidden history of how it was in fact Republicans, led by Herbert Hoover, who first made a concerted effort to organize the American Jewish vote. The late Benzion Netanyahu, the current Israeli Prime Minister's father, was instrumental in reaching out to U.S. politicians to support the Jewish people living in Israel and their eventual statehood. This is an important book for anyone interested in the role of Jews in the U.S. political system.

Jews Welcome Coffee: Tradition and Innovation in Early Modern Germany by Robert Liberles

Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press

Tracing the introduction of coffee into Europe, Robert Liberles chal-

lenges long-held assumptions about early modern Jewish history and shows how the Jews harnessed an innovation that enriched their personal, religious, social, and economic lives. Focusing on Jewish society in Germany in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and using coffee as a key to understanding social change, Liberles analyzes German rabbinic rulings on coffee, Jewish consumption patterns, the commercial importance of coffee for various social strata, differences based on gender, and the efforts of German authorities to restrict Jewish trade in coffee, as well as the integration of Jews into society.

***The Fervent Embrace: Liberal Protestants, Evangelicals, and Israel* by Caitlin Carenen**

New York University Press

When Israel declared its independence in 1948, Harry Truman issued a memo recognizing the Israeli government within eleven minutes. Today, the U.S. and Israel continue on as partners in an at times controversial alliance an alliance, many argue, that is powerfully influenced by the Christian Right. In *The Fervent Embrace*, Caitlin Carenen chronicles the American Christian relationship with Israel, tracing first mainline Protestant and then evangelical support for Zionism. In the aftermath of the Holocaust, American liberal Protestants argued that America had a moral humanitarian duty to support Israel. Christian anti-Semitism had helped bring about the Holocaust, they declared, and so Christians must help make amends. Moreover, a stable and democratic Israel would no doubt make the Middle East a safer place for future American interests. Carenen argues that it was this mainline Protestant position that laid the foundation for the current evangelical Protestant support for Israel, which is based primarily on theological grounds. Drawing on previously unexplored archival material from the Central Zionist Archives in Israel, this volume tells the full story of the American Christian-Israel relationship, bringing the various "players" American liberal Protestants, American Evangelicals, American Jews, and Israelis together into one historical narrative.

***The Rise of the Individual in 1950s Israel: A Challenge to Collectivism* by Orit Rozin**

Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press

In this sharply argued volume, Orit Rozin reveals the flaws in the conventional account of Israeli society in the 1950s, which portrayed the Israeli public as committed to a collectivist ideology. In fact, major sectors of Israeli society espoused individualism and rejected the state-imposed collectivist ideology. Rozin draws on archival, legal, and media sources to analyze the attitudes of black-market profiteers, politicians and judges, middle-class homemakers, and immigrants living in transit camps and rural settlements.

Part of a refreshing trend in recent Israeli historiography to study the voices, emotions, and ideas of ordinary people, Rozin's book provides an important corrective to much extant scholarly literature on Israel's early years.

***Were the Popes against the Jews? Tracking the Myths, Confronting the Ideologues* by Justus George Lawler**

Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.

How many people know that a modern pope publicly referred to Jews as "dogs;" that two other modern popes called the Jewish religion "Satan's synagogue"; that at the beginning of the 20th century another pope refused to save the life of a Jew accused of ritual murder, even though the pope knew the man was innocent? Lastly, how many people know that only a decade before the rise of Hitler, another pope supported priests who called for the extermination of all the Jews in the world? The answer has to be "great numbers of people" since those accusations appeared in David I. Kertzer's *The Popes Against the Jews* (2001), a book which had been lauded in major journals and newspapers in the U.S. and the U.K., and which by 2006 had been translated into nine foreign languages, while Kertzer himself according to his website, had become "America's foremost expert on the modern

history of the Vatican's relations with the Jews." It is thus undeniable that very many people in very many countries have heard of the appalling misdeeds and misstatements mentioned above -- even though, in fact, not one of them was ever perpetrated by any pope. But this book is not only about the disclosure of these shocking slanders, however fascinating and important such an expose is. In the broader perspective, it is about the power of ideology to subvert historical judgments, whether the latter concern the origins of anti-Semitism and the papacy, the distortion of documents to indict Pius XII, or the fabrication of Pius XI as "codependent collaborator" with Mussolini (the announced subject of Kertzer's next book). Justus George Lawler's confrontation with ideologues will gratify all who are seeking not triumph over opponents, but peace and justice for all.

***Holy Dissent: Jewish and Christian Mystics in Eastern Europe* ,
edited by Glenn Dynner**

Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press

The religious communities of early modern Eastern Europe particularly those with a mystical bent are typically studied in isolation. Yet the heavy Slavic imprint on Jewish popular mysticism and pervasive Judaizing tendencies among Christian dissenters call into question the presumed binary quality of Jewish-Christian interactions. In this book, editor Glenn Dynner presents twelve essays that chart contacts, parallels, and mutual influences between Jewish and Christian mystics. With cutting-edge research on folk healers, messianists, Hasidim, and Christian sectarians, this volume presents instances of rich cultural interchange and bold border transgression.

***Einstein's Jewish Science: Physics at the Intersection of Politics and Religion* by Steven Gimbel**

Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press

Is relativity Jewish? The Nazis denigrated Albert Einstein's revolutionary theory by calling it "Jewish science," a charge typical of the

ideological excesses of Hitler and his followers. Philosopher of science Steven Gimbel explores the many meanings of this provocative phrase and considers whether there is any sense in which Einstein's theory of relativity is Jewish. Arguing that we must take seriously the possibility that the Nazis were in some measure correct, Gimbel examines Einstein and his work to explore how beliefs, background, and environment may or may not have influenced the work of the scientist. You cannot understand Einstein's science, Gimbel declares, without knowing the history, religion, and philosophy that influenced it. No one, especially Einstein himself, denies Einstein's Jewish heritage, but many are uncomfortable saying that he was being a Jew while he was at his desk working. To understand what "Jewish" means for Einstein's work, Gimbel first explores the many definitions of "Jewish" and asks whether there are elements of Talmudic thinking apparent in Einstein's theory of relativity. He applies this line of inquiry to other scientists, including Isaac Newton, Ren Descartes, Sigmund Freud, and mile Durkheim, to consider whether their specific religious beliefs or backgrounds manifested in their scientific endeavors. Gimbel intertwines science, history, philosophy, theology, and politics in fresh and fascinating ways to solve the multifaceted riddle of what religion means and what it means to science. There are some senses, Gimbel claims, in which Jews can find a special connection to $E = mc^2$, and this claim leads to the engaging, spirited debate at the heart of this book.

Cantorial Challenges

An essay by Frances T. Goldman

***The Making of a Reform Jewish Cantor/Musical Authority, Cultural Investment* by Judah M. Cohen. Bloomington: Indiana University Press**

An ethnomusicologist and professor of Jewish Culture at Indiana University, Judah Cohen has taken an insider's look at the arcane process by which cantors are educated and invested/ordained to become musical authorities and spiritual leaders in the Reform movement of Judaism. The book is a result of three years of field work he did both in Israel and at the School of Sacred Music in New York from 1999-2002. The study was approved as his PhD dissertation from Harvard.

The Making of a Reform Jewish Cantor is a scholarly work which should be read with the voluminous notes accompanying each chapter as well as with a CD included to exemplify points along the way through classroom discussion and musical examples. This makes it rewarding but a slow and time-consuming process. The many quotes he includes from students and faculty at the School help to make us, the outsiders, feel more in touch with the inner feelings of the class members and their teachers and illuminate some of the methods and styles by which the students assimilate the large body of material both intellectual and practical.

The organization of the book has an effective arc framed between two different ceremonies of investiture (2000 and 2001). It then moves through an historical perspective followed by a detailed examination of the student cantor from initial application process to final projects and exams which after four years gain him/her the status to be called "cantor" with all the rights, privileges and responsibilities therein.

Perhaps the most concise definition of a "cantor" stated in the book is a quote taken from a publicity brochure for the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion School of Sacred Music, c. 1999: "For

2,000 years, the cantor has served as the Jewish people's prayer leader before God, as composer of liturgical poetry and song, and as educator and communal leader. Today, the cantor is part of a professional synagogue team working to enhance Jewish life. As a calling and a career, the cantorate continues 'to wed the worlds of spirit and art' the mission for which the School of Sacred Music prepares its students." Judah Cohen utilizes this description as he studies with and about the cantorial students he encounters on a daily basis for the duration of his field work at HUC-JIR both in Israel and in New York City.

If one stretches the definition of a cantor into an historical perspective, it could be said that the institution started with the Levite musicians of the early temple. We surmise from archaeological evidence of musical instruments, from the instructions given to the singer or musician in some of the Psalms and from later Mishnaic writings that there were accomplished musical presenters of the very early temple liturgy. We also know that the bible was intoned and by the 8th century those patterns or tropes were finally compiled and written down. By the Middle Ages, we have evidence that there was a precentor or hazzan in the synagogue. Commentary suggests that this individual have a pleasing voice, a clean, well-groomed appearance and have the highest moral integrity. He would have been expected to lead the worshippers in prayer, chant from the scrolls and also teach children. The piyyutim or religious liturgical poetry written during the Golden Age in Spain came down in both written and oral form and required sophisticated musicianship both to compose and interpret. By the late Middle Ages we have tunes which were institutionalized for certain holidays and liturgical needs, some of which are now referred to as "Missinai" melodies, as though they came down from Sinai. During the 19th century, Jewish musical scholar/composers and/or cantors such as Naumbourg, Sulzer and Baer began to compile the voluminous oral tradition of the synagogue based on "nusachot," the particular modal, musical phrases which identify the individual liturgies by time of day, weekday or Shabbat and the holidays. Thus, a modern cantor has an awesome responsibility: to study, digest and utilize the many elements

of a long-standing musical tradition and to meld them with modern musical practice and style in order to engage with and provide spiritual sustenance for his/her congregational family. We discover in this book how a Reform cantor may accomplish this lofty goal as s/he attains Jewish musical authority and becomes a member of the Reform Jewish clergy.

In order to provide full disclosure, it must be said that this reviewer, though a qualified Reform cantor, is considered to some extent an "outsider" as a certified cantor. That is what makes this book tantalizing for me. It also means that although I gained great insight from Cohen's detailed and esoteric analysis of the path to investiture/ordination and authority, my main concern is for the health of the cantorate in 2012 and the people who are its practitioners. Cohen disclosed the other Reform path to the cantorate called "Certification" in his notes pp. 2308240, #7. I am in this category and was certified by the American Conference of Cantors in 1994 after about ten years of independent study, first becoming an Associate Member of the Reform cantorate, then passing exams at the School of Sacred Music administered by the American Conference of Cantors in New York in June of 1994 after which I was formally welcomed into the membership of that body. The cantorial certification program was suspended in 2006 but is to be reinstated in January, 2013 under the administration of the newly named Debbie Friedman School of Sacred Music with coordination by Cantor Ellen Dreskin. Dr. Bruce Ruben, the Director of the School, described their plans for a new certification program which includes more stringent educational and musical requirements and a requirement to spend a summer in Jerusalem. Students enrolled will then embark upon an independent program which will include three-week intensives at the School and distance learning courses which would take advantage of new web-based and video learning tools. Certified cantors make up a relatively small group within the organization.

Though my personal path to the professional cantorate ("to wed the worlds of spirit and art") was long and grueling, it was accomplished to some degree in a vacuum without the intellectual and social interface

which exists at a seminary. As I read Cohen's book, I was struck by how much I had missed by not being able to matriculate as a student at the School of Sacred Music. I felt I had benefited from the certification program and was grateful that it existed, but I believe that those who are "insiders" have a special bond and have shared a unique educational and spiritual process which may not be possible to replicate on the "outside."

One of the many fascinating insights into the culture of the School of Sacred Music was Dr. Cohen's examination of the application process for one to enter the cantorial program. Although there were many types of applicants with many different backgrounds and reasons for pursuing the cantorate as a profession, Dr. Cohen discovered that over half of the students he interviewed "came to the cantorate as a final and fulfilling career choice," (p. 54) thus going to cantorial school gave people an opportunity to fulfill their spiritual lives and to have the opportunity to sing. Many of these students had degrees in music and had trained as professional singers. They now saw the cantorate as a better path to musical, personal and spiritual fulfillment than they would find in opera, musical theater or other performance or academic positions. They saw "the cantorate as a kind of professional singing career; at the same time, the music seemed to become a vessel for some students to explore their Jewish identities in new and inspiring ways." (p. 55) This certainly describes my own motivation to enter the Reform Certification program.

On page 6, Dr. Cohen states his purpose in writing this book: "I aim to take a deeper look into the creation of musical authority by scrutinizing the process by which one such figure, The Reform Jewish cantor, gains identity and prestige." Thus, the core of Cohen's book is his close examination of the academic and artistic process by which male and female cantorial students in the Debbie Friedman School of Sacred Music achieve musical authority and then slowly begin to wed their knowledge and expertise with ideas about their own spirituality and meeting the religious and spiritual needs of future congregants. He takes us into the classroom, into workshops dealing with the different

streams of cantorial tradition, into the world of private vocal coaching, and most fascinating to this outsider, into the preparations for "the Practicum," a very specialized and detailed exercise in research and performance led by the student cantor for the entire faculty and student body. This is the culmination of each student's experience at the school. Dr. Cohen writes with an insider's point of view as he served as both a student and a teacher while researching his book. As mentioned earlier, he includes interviews with students and faculty on many facets of their experiences in cantorial school. Some quotes are not particularly illuminating or enjoyable to read because they are very colloquial and halting. On the other hand, many express deep emotion, commitment and pride towards their studies and performance even though other quotes hint at confusion, doubt and even disagreement with a particular teaching method or model. The CD also includes a few snippets of classroom teaching and discussion which may be illuminating only to someone who is familiar with the subject matter. From today's vantage point in 2012, it is also very noticeable that in the past there was not nearly enough cooperation and crossover between the rabbinic and cantorial tracks, something now being addressed in the administration of Dr. Bruce Ruben at the School.

There is another caveat which I feel is important to note when commenting upon this fine book. It is now over a decade since Judah M. Cohen did his fieldwork. Not that the basic educational program has yet changed dramatically, but I believe that the trends in the Reform movement are changing the cantorate and will inevitably change the curriculum. Dr. Cohen alludes to these changes in his text and notes. For example in 2002, a requirement was added that all cantorial students would have to show instrumental competency in guitar; in 2004 a course was added exploring congregational dynamics. (pp. 227) These additions reflect two very important aspects of change within the Reform movement: the not-so-new but even more general use of folk/pop style, participatory music in synagogue worship; and the blurring of the lines between rabbinic and cantorial responsibilities and duties as co-clergy. Related to the changing musical styles prevailing

in our synagogues, we must mention last year's somewhat controversial renaming of the cantorial school after the late Debbie Friedman, believed by many to have become the musical/spiritual guru of our movement over the last thirty years though she was not a cantor. The kind of music Debbie and many others of her generation composed and the large influence of the Reform camping movement upon generations of Reform Jewish youth, including cantors and rabbis, have had a profound influence on synagogue liturgy. The success of music by Jeff Klepper, Dan Freeland, Craig Taubman, Danny Mesang, Dan Nichols and Lisa Levine, along with many more, is irrefutable and has proceeded at a rapid pace. There are more and more cantors and rabbis who play guitar and choose primarily camp or folk tunes when leading prayer. Many congregations now have at least one service a month which includes popular instrumental accompaniment. The classical Reform composers of synagogue music based upon traditional modes such as Solomon Sulzer, Louis Lewandowski, Isadore Freed and Lazar Weiner as well as those serious composers of modern liturgy, Ben Steinberg, Charles Davidson, Simon Sargon, Benjie-Ellen Schiller and Stephen Richards, again to name only a handful, are being heard less and less overall as a more accessible solo and choral sound and style prevails. I now ask: will the HUC-JIR five-year cantorial program prepare our 21st century Reform cantors for a synagogue culture where less and less of the rich musical heritage and legacy which they spend so many years absorbing is appreciated by either their younger rabbinic colleagues or today's diverse congregations?

The other serious issue which I mentioned above and which may not have been as obvious when this book was written is the very real blurring of the lines today between rabbinic and cantorial authority. Both are ordained as clergy and often share liturgical, educational and pastoral duties within their congregations. Is there a disparity in pay and respect between rabbis and cantors? Noting that over half of the entering classes at the school is made up on women, is there a pay disparity between male and female cantors?

Has the recent economic downturn negatively affected more cantors than rabbis? Are more congregations electing to hire cantorial soloists, soloists or song leaders rather than hiring a cantor? Would congregations rather hire an additional rabbi than hire a professional cantor? The anecdotal evidence would suggest that there are some trends surfacing which may not be favorable to the cantorate. Many colleagues do find that their professional expertise is utterly respected and they are able to utilize their talent, intellect, personal and spiritual gifts to enhance synagogue life to its fullest. Their education at the Debbie Friedman School of Sacred Music is relevant because they have the opportunity to teach about Judaism and spirituality and model Jewish values through their musical and cantorial artistry. Others seem to feel under siege by the demands of some rabbis and congregations to be relevant and on the cutting edge of today's participatory, pop style musical liturgy while largely ignoring everything one has been taught of the cantorial art in five years at the School. Still others now feel that it is time to award full rabbinic ordination to cantorial graduates as well.

Change is certainly inevitable and often quite reinvigorating. The question is: are we now preparing 21st century Reform cantors for jobs which no longer reflect the curriculum being taught? Are cantors willing and able to blend styles from our rich heritage into a beautiful tapestry comprising old and new? And if we are seeking to transform ourselves from musician/scholar to spiritual leader as rabbi/cantor will there be a place for us on the pulpit? The new paradigms in worship and present economic realities demand new solutions both in educational structure and congregational relations. Dr. Bruce Ruben of the Debbie Friedman School of Sacred Music does not feel that the cantorate is threatened but that we must satisfy our new demands with creativity. The school continues their commitment to providing a relevant educational experience, deepening the students' spirituality and providing the opportunity to create more competitive Jewish professionals with a range of new course requirements and mentoring.

Dr. Cohen's work is an important history of a venerable institution, the first cantorial school in the United States, now known as Debbie

Friedman School of Sacred Music of the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion. It is a detailed and fascinating study of the path to “ordination,” the new designation awarded cantors at their graduation ceremony. It demonstrates how an individual may transform him/herself from aspiring student into an ordained cantor with musical authority and spiritual leadership abilities. It underscores the deep commitment of our cantors and the scope of education required to become one. It should be required reading for all cantors in all denominations (including cantors and music ministers in Christian denominations). I also highly recommend it to anyone engaged in Reform worship or congregational life, whether clergy, leadership or congregant. One of the operational words of Cohen’s exploration is “transformation.” Transformation is, indeed, required and will always be required, not only to accomplish a single goal, but for everyone who is a part of the Reform movement of Judaism. We must listen to the deepest yearnings our hearts, reach out to one another across generation gaps, experiment with both old and bold, new ways to tap into the ineffable spirit of the divine. In doing so, we will continue to reinvigorate ourselves and our faith.

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Jewishness in the World: A Chabad Definition

An essay by Steven Windmueller

***The Visual Culture of Chabad* by Maya Balakirsky Katz, Cambridge University Press.**

The Visual Culture of Chabad by Maya Balakirsky Katz is but the latest publication to appear concerning Chabad Lubavitch. For folks who are outside of the world of Hassidism, this text serves as a most useful roadmap toward understanding the cultural and social messages that this highly creative and successful religious movement is seeking to convey. Well researched and highly resourceful in unpacking Chabad's operational modality, Dr. Katz, provides her readers with a specific set of images that frame the mechanism and message of this movement. Trained as an art historian and committed to exploring the nexus between media and religion, Maya Katis uniquely qualified to carry us through this inquiry. Through the use of image, Chabad has sought to advance its specific religious, political, and social goals. "Chabad's belief that God's hand could be forced to inaugurate the messianic age using the tools of publicity-architecture- painting- mass media- and photography-drives much of its late-twentieth century visual culture." Over time, according to Katz, Chabad has created a form of "*visual messianism*".

While other organizing principles are introduced by Dr. Katz, as are some of the core controversies surrounding Chabad within and outside of the Jewish world, I have framed this review around ten guiding principles that would seem to capture the core themes associated with the marketing of Chabad and its current message:

1. Committed to the new media, Chabad has been able to employ following the death Rav Schneerson the "rebbe archive" in order to create "the virtuality of leadership".
2. Under the Rav's leadership the movement was transformed into a global network, creating "*Chabad sacred space*". This involved

constructing distinctive graphic symbols including logos-publications-stamps-stickers-posters that served to define and individuate the organization and its message.

3. Employing the notion of "*ufaratzta*" the Hebrew term derived from the biblical passage (Gen. 28:14), "*Your descendants shall be as the dust of the earth; you shall spread out to the West and to the East, to the North and to the South*," Chabad in the late 1950's and 60's established its own organizing principle. Its institutional motto for the promotion of "*yiddishkayt*" (religious Jewish culture) would be repackaged and marketed in "song, literature, architecture, and graphic design."

4. The appearance of *ufaratzta* can also be found in Isaiah (54:3) where geographical expansion is aligned with a *messianic vision*. Employing a numerological formula (*gematria*), *ufaratzta* corresponds to "770", the address of the world headquarters of Chabad, *770 Eastern Parkway* in Brooklyn. Being able to make this physical connection permitted Chabad to join together its worldwide mission and programs to its center of operations.

5. Over the course of his tenure Rav Schneerson would introduce *mitzvoyim* (religious revival campaigns). Some of these campaigns had associated with them "acts of kindness" directed toward Jews and non-Jews, while others were identified with performing specific religious practices, including the wearing of tefillin for young men over the age of bar mitzvah, encouraging women and young girls to light Shabbat candles, and engaging married women to visit a ritual bath following their menstrual cycle.

6. Chanukah menorahs displayed in public parks, malls and other open spaces would serve as the single most defining element of this campaign of engagement. By adopting a menorah "that not only represents a break with traditional menorah design but with the Zionist-inspired design", Chabad would establish its own "*religious diaspora symbol*" which over time has become a central marketing and branding image of the organization.

7. "By drawing on the idioms of 'art' and 'display' for presentation of *mivtzoyim*, Chabad not only promoted religious Jewish culture, or *yiddishkayt*, but did so in a manner that was unapologetic, publicly embracing its diaspora roots and future." Countering the Zionist focus on the land, Hasidim through its use of public ceremonial art would celebrate the "return of religion". While the rest of American Judaism would claim the private space of the sanctuary, Chabad would *capture the public square*.

8. In taking ownership of the street, Chabad would employ art and "musicological practices" as a way to attract unaffiliated Jews. In creating "a comfortable and familiar environment for culturally aware, nonobservant Jews" Chabad focused on reinvigorating traditional Jewish culture, by transforming public space into a sanctuary for religious engagement and connection.

9. Employing its array of public programs afforded Chabad the opportunity to achieve "*brand recognition*". For example, Rav Schneerson would single out the month of Kislev, "employing Chanukah as a particularly auspicious occasion to reflect on the movement's institutional mission." Through its intercontinental satellite programs, streaming video presentations, its *Chanukah Live* spectacular, the movement was able to target key constituencies and to deliver core messages. In doing so, Chabad achieved yet another of its marketing and mission functions: *kiruv* (outreach) to key Jewish and non-Jewish audiences.

10. Over the course of time, Chabad has successfully been able to achieve many of its core operating goals. On the one hand "much of Chabad visual production consciously embeds the styles, pictorial conventions, and symbols of other cultures to manifest a distinct worldview," while at the same time the organization continues to strive to maintain its "theological absolutism".

Chabad would move over time from a charismatic leader-centered institutional model to the largest international Jewish religious organization, where movement branding was to be its central mantra and

focus. Toward that end Dr. Katz captures the essence of her study when she writes:

"We are justified in viewing the history of Chabad visual culture predominantly as the art of protest, rooted in a long tradition of political, social and religious activism. Portraits of religious leaders double as commentary on citizenship, pictures of celebration double as campaigns against assimilation, public holiday exhibitions double as demonstrations, and Chabad symbol systems double as symbols of revision."

As part of her succinct summary, Maya Katz would argue that Chabad redefined "Jewishness in the world." As a movement with its "defense of diaspora culture" and its celebration of "American pluralism," Katz holds to the notion that Lubavitch Hasidism is seeking to replace Zionism in the United States.

The story of Chabad Lubavitch continues to unfold as one of the most unique, yet at times controversial, Jewish stories of the 20th and 21st centuries. Maya Katz takes us on a significant journey that is designed to unpack the core elements of this movement and its message.

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Moreshet – From the Classics: A 1797 Wedding

Dr. Benjamin Rush (1745-1813), a prominent physician, was active in the Sons of Liberty in Philadelphia. In June 1776 he was elected to attend the provincial conference to send delegates to the Continental Congress. He was appointed to represent Philadelphia that year and so signed the Declaration of Independence. In 1797 Dr. Rush treated the family of Jonas and Rebecca Phillips. On June 27, 1797, Mr. and Mrs. Phillips invited Dr. Rush, who was not Jewish, to attend the wedding of their daughter, Rachel, to Michael Levy, who was from Virginia. After attending the wedding Dr. Rush wrote a letter to his wife, Julia, describing the "*chasauna*:"

"I accepted the invitation with great pleasure, for you know I love to be in the way of adding to my stock of ideas upon all subjects. At 1 o'clock the company, consisting of 30 or 40 men, assembled in Mr. Philips' common parlor, which was accommodated with benches for the purpose. The ceremony began with prayers in the Hebrew language, which were chanted by an old rabbi and in which he was followed by the whole company. As I did not understand a word except now and then an Amen or Hallelujah, my attention was directed to the haste with which they covered their heads with their hats as soon as the prayers began, and to the freedom with which some of them conversed with each other during the whole time of this part of their worship.

"As soon as these prayers were ended, which took up about 20 minutes, a small piece of parchment was produced, written in Hebrew, which contained a deed of settlement and which the groom subscribed in the presence of four witnesses. In this deed he conveyed a part of his fortune to his bride, by which she was provided for after his death in case she survived him.

"This ceremony was followed by the erection of a beautiful canopy composed of white and red silk in the middle of the floor. It was supported by four young men (by means of four poles), who put on

white gloves for the purpose. As soon as this canopy was fixed, the bride, accompanied with her mother, sister, and a long train of female relations, came downstairs. Her face was covered with a veil which reached halfway down her body. She was handsome at all times, but the occasion and her dress rendered her in a peculiar manner a most lovely and affecting object. I gazed with delight upon her. Innocence, modesty, fear, respect, and devotion appeared all at once in her countenance.

“She was led by her two bridesmaids under the canopy. Two young men led the bridegroom after her and placed him, not by her side, but directly opposite to her. The priest now began again to chaunt an Hebrew prayer, in which he was followed by part of the company. After this he gave to the groom and bride a glass full of wine, from which they each sipped about a teaspoonful. Another prayer followed this act, after which he took a ring and directed the groom to place it upon the finger of his bride in the same manner as is practised in the marriage service of the Church of England. This ceremony was followed by handing the wine to the father of the bride and then a second time to the bride and groom. The groom after sipping the wine took the glass in his hand and threw it upon a large pewter dish which was suddenly placed at his feet. Upon its breaking into a number of small pieces, there was a general shout of joy and a declaration that the ceremony was over. The groom now saluted his bride, and kisses and congratulations became general through the room.

“I asked the meaning, after the ceremony was over, of the canopy and of the drinking of the wine and breaking of the glass. I was told by one of the company that in Europe they generally marry in the open air, and that the canopy was introduced to defend the bride and groom from the action of the sun and from rain. Their mutually partaking of the same glass of wine was intended to denote the mutuality of their goods, and the breaking of the glass at the conclusion of the business was designed to teach them the brittleness and uncertainty of human life and the certainty of death, and thereby to temper and moderate their present joys.

“Mr. Phillips pressed me to stay and dine with the company, but business and Dr. Hall's departure, which was to take place in the afternoon, forbade it. I stayed, however, to eat some wedding cake and to drink a glass of wine with the guests. Upon going into one of the rooms upstairs to ask how Mrs. Philips did, who had fainted downstairs under the pressure of the heat (for she was weak from a previous indisposition), I discovered the bride and groom supping a bowl of broth together. Mrs. Phillips apologized for them by telling me they had eaten nothing (agreeably to the custom prescribed by their religion) since the night before.

“Upon my taking leave of the company, Mrs. Phillips put a large piece of cake into my pocket for you, which she begged I would present to you with her best compliments. She says you are an old New York acquaintance of hers.

“During the whole of this new and curious scene my mind was not idle. I was carried back to the ancient world and was led to contemplate the Passovers, the sacrifices, the jubilees, and other ceremonies of the Jewish Church. After this, I was led forward into futurity and anticipated the time foretold by the prophets when this once-beloved race of men shall again be restored to the divine favor.”

Painful Presence: Jews in Russian Music

A review essay by Brian Horowitz

James Loeffler, *The Most Musical Nation: Jews and Culture in the Late Russian Empire*. New Haven: Yale University Press

Here is a first book from a young scholar on Jewish music in Late-Tsarist Russia. The book has much to recommend it. We find chapters on the central figures, including Anton Rubinstein, Joel Engel, Zisman Kiselgof, and a number of lesser-known individuals. We are also presented with the essential issues of the day: among them: whether Jewish musicians should be accepted in Russian music, how Jewish musicians feel as Jews about their work, whether Jewish music exists as a separate category of music, and whether a modern composer can compose folk music. Richard Wagner's notorious essay, "Judaism in Music" (1850), had a pervasive influence among Russian composers, "society," and educated Jews.

The author's unexpressed, but identifiable thesis is that simultaneously the following was occurring: Jews sought to use their talents in music for social advancement when other avenues were closed to them; Jewish musicians, even those we associate with Jewish folk music, were liberals in the sense that they wanted to participate as equals in at least two contexts, Russian and Jewish music; the government and society was at a loss about how to deal with the many Jewish prodigies. The government gave them access to the St. Petersburg conservatory, but discriminated against them socially. Thus, the last circumstance inhibited the first two, but did not suppress them entirely.

So Jewish musicians fought on two fronts. While they attempted to expand their rights with the goal of achieving equal rights (with the nobility, let it be remembered), they also reserved for themselves the right to identify as Jews and write, collect, and study Jewish music. The biographical trajectory of Anton Rubenstein is emblematic. He converted to Russian Orthodoxy to facilitate his integration and yet neither

he nor his detractors could forget his Jewish origins. He showed an undying interest in Jewish liturgical and folk music and especially in Jewish themes. His opera, "The Macabees," is an example. Rubenstein's role clearly was to blaze the initial path for others to follow. He did this most effectively by establishing the St. Petersburg Music Conservatory in which many Jews, boys and girls, thrived as musicians and gained upon graduation permanent privileges, such as the right to live in Russia proper (out of the Pale of Settlement).

In the book Professor Loeffler traces the rise of Jewish nationalism and the role of music among self-conscious Jewish intellectuals. Just as in my book on the Society for the Promotion of Enlightenment among the Jews of Russia (*Jewish Philanthropy and Enlightenment in Late-Tsarist Russia*, 2009), so too the author discovers that Jewish nationalism emerges not from the folk, but rather the highly acculturated educated elite. Young Jews almost fully russified had to react to anti-Semitism, but they also sought to enrich themselves by practicing cultural nationalism. In this case they promoted the appreciation of Jewish music. Their concerts, sheet music, and recordings on a gramophone acquire enormous success.

Professor Loeffler explicates debates over what constitutes Jewish music. Questions swirl around whether music written by a concrete author constitute folk music or is folk music only music that cannot be attributed to a concrete composer; should music played by Jews but sounding a lot like that played by Hungarians or Czechs be included in the Jewish canon? The author's final verdict, borrowed from Engel, is that whatever sounds like Jewish music is Jewish music. Today's comparative folklore studies offer a porous model of cultural development, but back then these issues were bound up with politics writ large.

My only criticism is that the author underestimates how cosmopolitan a city like St. Petersburg was, despite its anti-Jewish laws. The experience of Jews was clearly two-sided. They lived in a world of full acceptance with allies and friends among the cultural elite, and yet were objects of opprobrium by the state (however mainly in the abstract,

since many of these Jews were invited to court to perform). Although the author explains that Jews who wanted to get closer to the folk found that they could not do so and therefore neither belonged to the Russians or traditional Jews, there lacks a discussion about liberalism as an identity, which was a true alternative in late-tsarist Russia. Most, if not all the musicians, embodied this identity.

This book describes the intersection of music, politics, Jewish nationalism, and Jewish identity. It fills an important gap in our knowledge and will rest on the handbooks shelf for scholars of Russian and Jewish studies.

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Zachor: Sicut Judaeis ("And Thus to the Jews")

Pope Callixtus II (1119-1124) was the author of a papal bull known as Sicut Judaeis ("And Thus to the Jews"). This bull was the official position of the papacy regarding the Jews throughout the Middle Ages and later. This bull was reaffirmed by twenty subsequent popes over the next four hundred years, a sign of the bull's ultimate ineffecacy (i.e. the bull wasn't in the end effective!). The original version--written by Pope Callixtus--is no longer extant, so we rely on Pope Alexander III's bull, which is the oldest existing version. He lived 1105-1181 and served as Pope 1159-1181. Here are translated excerpts from this oldest existing version:

"[The Jews] ought to suffer no prejudice. We, out of the meekness of Christian piety, and in keeping in the footprints of Our predecessors of happy memory, the Roman Pontiffs Calixtus, Eugene, Alexander, Clement, admit their petition, and We grant them the shield of Our protection. For We make the law that no Christian compel them, unwilling or refusing, by violence to come to baptism. But, if any one of them should spontaneously, and for the sake of the faith, fly to the Christians, once his choice has become evident, let him be made a Christian without any calumny. Indeed, he is not considered to possess the true faith of Christianity who is not recognized to have come to Christian baptism, not spontaneously, but unwillingly. Too, no Christian ought to presume...to injure their persons, or with violence to take their property, or to change the good customs which they have had until now in whatever region they inhabit. Besides, in the celebration of their own festivities, no one ought disturb them in any way, with clubs or stones, nor ought any one try to require from them or to extort from them services they do not owe, except for those they have been accustomed from times past to perform....We decree... that no one ought to dare mutilate or diminish a Jewish cemetery, nor, in order to get money, to exhume bodies once they have been buried. If anyone, however, shall attempt, the tenor of this degree once known, to go against it...let him be punished by the vengeance of excommunication, unless he correct

his presumption by making equivalent satisfaction.”

(slightly revised from: Synan, Edward. The Popes and the Jews in the Middle Ages, 231-232.)

