

Ascetic Hasidism In Jerusalem The Guardian Of The Faithful Community Of Mea Shearim Studies In Judaism In Modern Times Vol 10

This book goes farther than any previous work in uncovering the historical Israel ben Eliezer--known as the Ba'al Shem Tov, or the Besht--the eighteenth-century Polish-Jewish mystic who profoundly influenced the shape of modern Judaism. As the progenitor of Hasidism, the Ba'al Shem Tov is one of the key figures in Jewish history; to understand him is to understand an essential element of modern Jewish life and religion. Because evidence about his life is scanty and equivocal, the Besht has long eluded historians and biographers. Much of what is believed about him is based on stories compiled more than a generation after his death, many of which serve to mythologize rather than describe their subject. Rosman's study casts a bright new light on the traditional stories about the Besht, confirming and augmenting some, challenging others. By concentrating on accounts attributable directly to the Besht or to contemporary eyewitnesses, Rosman provides a portrait drawn from life rather than myth. In addition, documents in Polish and Hebrew discovered by Rosman during the research for this book enable him to give the first detailed description of the cultural, social, economic, and political context of the Ba'al Shem Tov's life.

In 1945, there were 20,000 Hasidim in the world. Today there are between 350,000 and 400,000, about half of whom are living in Israel. This represents a population explosion that cannot be explained in ordinary demographic terms. Jacques Gutwirth gives a vivid portrait of the major Hasidic centers--from Antwerp to New York and from Jerusalem and Bene Brraq to Paris. He describes the main characteristics of Hasidism today, as well as its contributions to spiritual and intellectual life, and recent developments in its history and its influence worldwide. Hasidism is a phenomenon that goes beyond any particular religious conception or lifestyle. Its rapid development is linked with contemporary politics and global economics, to which it contributes in turn. In this rigorous and balanced analysis of one of the most dynamic communities in Judaism, the author brings his knowledge to bear on a wealth of previously unpublished information that will inspire further discussion concerning the return of the religious life in relation to its social and political context.

The Faith of the Mithnagdim is the first study of the theological roots of the Mithnagdic objection to Hasidism. Allan Nadler's pioneering effort fills the void in scholarship on Mithnagdic thought and corrects the impression that there were no compelling theological alternatives to Hasidism during the period of its rapid spread across Eastern Europe at the turn of the nineteenth century. In Nadler's account, Mithnagdim emerges as a highly developed religious outlook that is essentially conservative, deeply dualistic, and profoundly pessimistic about humanity's spiritual potential—all in stark contrast to Hasidism's optimism and aggressive encouragement of mysticism and religious rapture among its followers.

The home and the museum are typically understood as divergent, even oppositional, social realms: whereas one evokes privacy and familial intimacy, the other is conceived of as a public institution oriented around various forms of civic identity. This meticulous, insightful book draws striking connections between both spheres, which play similar roles by housing objects and generating social narratives. Through fascinating explorations of the museums and domestic spaces of eight representative Israeli communities—Chabad, Moroccan, Iraqi, Ethiopian, Russian, Religious-Zionist, Christian Arab, and Muslim Arab—it gives a powerful account of museums' role in state formation, proposing a new approach to collecting and categorizing particularly well-suited to societies in conflict.

This book, the first comprehensive critical study of this intriguing movement in English, offers a wide-ranging treatment of the subject in all its aspects by what is effectively the entire present generation of scholars working in the field.

Swimming against the Current comprises a collection of essays celebrating the career and achievements of Rabbi Chaim Seidler-Feller, who served as Executive Director of Hillel at UCLA for forty years and continues to be an influential leader in the Los Angeles and wider American Jewish community. These articles, like the honoree, challenge intellectual convention and accepted wisdom by breaking new ground in how they approach their subjects. They are divided into four categories that hold special interest for Seidler-Feller: Bible and Talmud, Jewish Thought and Theology, Modern Jewish History and Sociology, and Zionism and Jewish Politics. The volume also includes a sketch of Seidler-Feller's life and work, a bibliography of his publications, and tributes by students and colleagues.

In 1756, Jacob Frank, an Ottoman Jew who had returned to the Poland of his birth, was discovered leading a group of fellow travelers in a suspect religious service. At the request of the local rabbis, Polish authorities arrested the participants. Jewish authorities contacted the bishop in whose diocese the service had taken place and argued that since the rites of Frank's followers involved the practice of magic and immoral conduct, both Jews and Christians should condemn them and burn them at the stake. The scheme backfired, as the Frankists took the opportunity to ally themselves with the Church, presenting themselves as Contra-Talmudists who believed in a triune God. As a Turkish subject, Frank was released and temporarily expelled to the Ottoman territories, but the others were found guilty of breaking numerous halakhic prohibitions and were subject to a Jewish ban of excommunication. While they professed their adherence to everything that was commanded by God in the Old Testament, they asserted as well that the Rabbis of old had introduced innumerable lies and misconstructions in their interpretations of that holy book. Who were Jacob Frank and his followers? To most Christians, they 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 eighteenth 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 book talks of the Hasidic movement, what it stands for, and what it includes.

Zvi Mark uncovers previously unknown and never-before-discussed aspects of Rabbi Nachman's personal spiritual world. The first section of the book, Revelation, explores Rabbi Nachman's spiritual revelations, personal trials and spiritual experiments. Among the topics discussed is the powerful "Story of the Bread," wherein Rabbi Nachman receives the Torah as did Moses on Mount Sinai— a story that was kept secret for 200 years. The second section of the book, Rectification, is dedicated to the rituals of rectification that Rabbi Nachman established. These are, principally, the universal rectification, the rectification for a nocturnal emission and the rectification to be performed during pilgrimage to his grave. In this context, the secret story, "The Story of the Armor," is discussed. The book ends with a colorful description of Bratzlav Hasidism in the 21st century.

The academic study of diamonds is as multi-faceted as the precious stones themselves. Mineralogists and geographers have written about them, as have historians and economists and students of art and fashion. They each shine their light on a different aspect of this source of luminous radiance. But who would venture to describe the entire complicated worldwide system starting in the diamond mines and ending with the consumers of Western metropolises? In *The Mazzel Ritual: Culture, Customs and Crime in the Diamond Trade*, Russian-Israeli cultural anthropologist and criminologist Dina Siegel follows the route of a diamond from the mines of Africa to the shops of Europe and the United States, as it passes through countless hands and places and is smuggled, stolen, cut, polished, sold, exchanged and, finally, worn as jewelry. In the course of this long and exciting journey, a wide range of people face all sorts of risks and criminality, as well as various moral and ethical judgments. Siegel describes the range of ethnic groups that are active in the diamond trade and the culture and customs that are specific to this business. She analyses the dangers and threats to the industry and aims to uncover the strategies and tactics to deal with them. Finally, this story of risk, trust and crime examines the vulnerability of diamond production and distribution to illicit and criminal activities. This book is about the diamond business itself as well as about those involved in it. It tells the story of people who simply cannot stay away from this expensive and alluring commodity.

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Now available in English, a provocative new biography of the founder of Hasidism

An anthropologist's view on Hasidic life in Mea Shearim, Jerusalem. Unlike most studies, this focuses on daily life in an isolated, ascetic community. Not only does the author discuss ideas, but he also deals with such topics as community organisation, social control, religious and political leadership, and attitudes towards the outside world.

Winner of Biblical Archaeology Society Award - Best New Testament Book "We are left to construct a portrait of Paul with only scraps of what was once a large and imposing canvas - a small collection of letters and a historical narrative written a generation after his death. This reconstruction focuses on important parts of the image that usually fall in the shadows, parts dealing with Paul's sexual asceticism, his preoccupation with holiness - holy Spirit, holy community, and holy ethos - the evolution of his theology, and his emergence as a legendary figure. Although I have tried to follow the strict rules of historical investigation, of necessity much guesswork is involved in any exploration of Paul's life... All of these efforts are attempts to deal with the gaps in the text, understood in the broadest sense to include not just Paul's written words but also the culture, social world, and political realities surrounding them. - From the Introduction

This book endeavors to fill a lacuna in the literature on early twentieth-century kabbalah, namely the lack of a comprehensive account of the traditional kabbalah in Jerusalem from 1896 to 1948.

Theory of shamanism, trance, and modern Kabbalah -- The shamanic process: descent and fiery transformations -- Empowerment through trance -- Shamanic Hasidism -- Hasidic trance -- Trance and the nomian.

"This unprecedented reference work systematically represents the history and culture of Eastern European Jews from their first settlement in the region to the present day. More than 1,800 alphabetical entries encompass a vast range of topics, including religion, folklore, politics, art, music, theater, language and literature, places, organizations, intellectual movements, and important figures. The two-volume set also features more than 1,000 illustrations and 55 maps. With original and up-to-date contributions from an international team of 450 distinguished scholars, the Encyclopedia covers the region between Germany and the Ural Mountains, from which more than 2.5 million Jews emigrated to the United States between 1870 and 1920. Even today the majority of Jewish immigrants to North America arrive from Eastern Europe. Engaging, wide-ranging, and authoritative, this work is a rich and essential reference for readers with interests in Jewish studies and Eastern European history and culture."--Publisher's website.

The original work has been a favorite of both scholars and laypeople for its straightforward style, in contrast to other medieval writings on ethics that are largely theoretical and reflective.

An illustrated A to Z reference containing over 800 entries providing information on the theology, people, historical events, institutions and movements related to the religion of Judaism. Contradictory stereotypes about Jewish sexuality pervade modern culture, from Lenny Bruce's hip eroticism to Woody Allen's little man with the big libido (and even bigger sexual neurosis). Does Judaism in fact liberate or repress sexual desire? David Biale does much more than answer that question as he traces Judaism's evolving position on sexuality, from the Bible and Talmud to Zionism up through American attitudes today. What he finds is a persistent conflict between asceticism and gratification, between procreation and pleasure. From the period of the Talmud onward, Biale says, Jewish culture continually struggled with sexual abstinence, attempting to incorporate the virtues of celibacy, as it absorbed them from Greco-Roman and Christian

cultures, within a theology of procreation. He explores both the canonical writings of male authorities and the alternative voices of women, drawing from a fascinating range of sources that includes the Book of Ruth, Yiddish literature, the memoirs of the founders of Zionism, and the films of Woody Allen. Biale's historical reconstruction of Jewish sexuality sees the present through the past and the past through the present. He discovers an erotic tradition that is not dogmatic, but a record of real people struggling with questions that have challenged every human culture, and that have relevance for the dilemmas of both Jews and non-Jews today.

From meditation and fasting to celibacy and anchoritism, the ascetic impulse has been an enduring and complex phenomenon throughout history. Offering a sweeping view of this elusive and controversial aspect of religious life and culture, *Asceticism* looks at the ascetic impulse from a unique vantage point. Cross-cultural, cross-religious, and multidisciplinary in nature, these essays provide a broad historical and comparative perspective on asceticism--a subject rarely studied outside the context of individual religious traditions. The work represents the input of more than forty preeminent scholars in a wide range of fields and disciplines, and analyzes asceticism from antiquity to the present in European, Near Eastern, African, Asian, and North American settings. *Asceticism* is organized around four major themes that cut across religious traditions: origins and meanings of asceticism, which explores the motivations and impulses behind ascetic behaviors; hermeneutics of asceticism, which looks at texts and rhetorics and their presuppositions; aesthetics of asceticism, which documents responses evoked by ascetic impulses and practices, as well as the arts of ascetic practices themselves; and politics of asceticism, which analyzes the power dynamics of asceticism, especially as regards gender, cultural, and ethnic differences. Critical responses to the major papers ensure the focus upon the themes and unify the discussion. Two general addresses on broad philosophical and historical-interpretive issues suggest the importance of the subject of asceticism for wide-ranging but serious cultural-critical discussions. An Appendix, *Ascetica Miscellanea*, includes six short papers on provocative topics not related to the four major themes, and a panel discussion on the practices and meanings of asceticism in contemporary religious life and culture. A selected bibliography and an index are also included. The only comprehensive reference work on asceticism with a multicultural, multireligious, and multidisciplinary perspective, *Asceticism* offers a model not only for an understanding of a most important dimension of religious life, but also for future interdisciplinary study in general.

This volume contains essays dealing with complex relationships between Judaism and Christianity, taking a bold step, assuming that no historical period can be excluded from the interactive process between Judaism and Christianity, conscious or unconscious, as either rejection or appropriation

In *Yearnings of the Soul*, Jonathan Garb uncovers a crucial thread in the story of modern Kabbalah and modern mysticism more generally: psychology. Returning psychology to its roots as an attempt to understand the soul, he traces the manifold interactions between psychology and spirituality that have arisen over five centuries of Kabbalistic writing, from sixteenth-century Galilee to twenty-first-century New York. In doing so, he shows just how rich Kabbalah's psychological tradition is and how much it can offer to the corpus of modern psychological knowledge. Garb follows the gradual disappearance of the soul from modern philosophy while drawing attention to its continued persistence as a topic in literature and popular culture. He pays close attention to James Hillman's "archetypal psychology," using it to engage critically with the psychoanalytic tradition and reflect anew on the cultural and political implications of the return of the soul to contemporary psychology. Comparing Kabbalistic thought to adjacent developments in Catholic, Protestant, and other popular expressions of mysticism, Garb ultimately offers a thought-provoking argument for the continued relevance of religion to the study of psychology.

With race being discredited as a rallying cry for populist movements because of the atrocities committed in its name during World War II, culture has been adopted by right-wing groups instead, but used in the same exclusionary manner as racism was. This volume examines the essentialism, which is implicit in racial theories and re-emerges in the ideological use of cultural identity in new rightist movements, and presents case studies from different parts of the world where researchers were confronted with racism and worked out ways of coping with it.

New and classic explorations of the work of Rabbi Nahman of Bratslav, a major Hasidic thinker, using a wide range of approaches.

The term 'rabbi' predominantly denotes Jewish men qualified to interpret the Torah and apply halacha, or those entrusted with the religious leadership of a Jewish community. However, the role of the rabbi has been understood differently across the Jewish world. While in Israel they control legally powerful rabbinical courts and major religious political parties, in the Jewish communities of the Diaspora this role is often limited by legal regulations of individual countries. However, the significance of past and present rabbis and their religious and political influence endures across the world. *Rabbis of Our Time* provides a comprehensive overview of the most influential rabbinical authorities of Judaism in the 20th and 21st Century. Through focussing on the most theologically influential rabbis of the contemporary era and examining their political impact, it opens a broader discussion of the relationship between Judaism and politics. It looks at the various centres of current Judaism and Jewish thinking, especially the State of Israel and the USA, as well as locating rabbis in various time periods. Through interviews and extracts from religious texts and books authored by rabbis, readers will discover more about a range of rabbis, from those before the formation of Israel to the most famous Chief Rabbis of Israel, as well as those who did not reach the highest state religious functions, but influenced the relation between Judaism and Israel by other means. The rabbis selected represent all major contemporary streams of Judaism, from ultra-Orthodox/Haredi to Reform and Liberal currents, and together create a broader picture of the scope of contemporary Jewish thinking in a theological and political context. An extensive and detailed source of information on the varieties of Jewish thinking influencing contemporary Judaism and the modern State of Israel, this book is of interest to students and scholars of Jewish Studies, as well as Religion and Politics.

A must-read book for understanding this vibrant and influential modern Jewish movement Hasidism originated in southeastern Poland, in mystical circles centered on the figure of Israel Ba'al Shem Tov, but it was only after his death in 1760 that a movement began to spread. Today, Hasidism is witnessing a remarkable renaissance around the world. This book provides the first comprehensive history of the pietistic movement that shaped modern Judaism. Written by an international team of scholars, its unique blend of intellectual, religious, and social history demonstrates that, far from being a throwback to the Middle Ages, Hasidism is a product of modernity that forged its identity as a radical alternative to the secular world.

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