

SUMMARIES

Dov Schwartz

THE THOUGHT OF RABBI LICHTENSTEIN: BETWEEN IMAGE AND REALITY

The article claims, that the inner motive of Rabbi Lichtenstein's theoretical and practical philosophy is implanting the norms of North American Orthodoxy in Eretz Israel. Rabbi Lichtenstein wanted to create the philosophy of the yeshiva or yeshiva's scholar (*ben Torah*). His spiritual attitude towards his father-in-law, Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik was dialectic, between admiration and criticism. Rabbi Lichtenstein's thought focused on a few motifs that were in a way unique in Israeli Rabbinic thought: the major role of Aesthetics, compartmentalization of moral values and so on.

Shlomo Fischer

THE RELIGIOUS HUMANISM OF R. AHARON LICHTENSTEIN

This paper presents R. Aharon Lichtenstein as a non-liberal religious humanist. It argues that as such, R. Lichtenstein holds a unique place in the intellectual landscape of the Diaspora as a figure who cuts across the organizing categories of Jewish life and thought in Western countries. The paper also examines the tension between R. Lichtenstein's thought and main of currents of contemporary Israeli religious Zionist thought while pointing out certain points of contact between them. It argues that R. Lichtenstein's major contribution on the cultural and public level of Israeli religious life is the creation of a space of "culture", precisely in the sense of Matthew Arnold – "turning a stream of fresh and free thought upon our stock notions and habits."

Isaac Hershkowitz

RABBI AHARON LICHTENSTEIN AND NAHMANIDES
BETWEEN PERSONAL ADMIRATION AND AN INTELLECTUAL
INFLUENCE

Rabbi Aharon Lichtenstein expressed numerous times his admiration to Nahmanides (*Ramban*). However, observing his writings reveals that the actual effect of Nahmanides on Rabbi Lichtenstein's works is meager, and cannot compete by any means with that of Maimonides. Moreover, dealing with several fundamental issues within Nahmanides' literary corpus Rabbi Lichtenstein consciously and openly chooses alternative ways to those proposed by Nahmanides.

This dissonance is a result of his esteem of Nahmanides' unique contribution to an infrastructure of life in light of the Torah, while he is less impressed by Nahmanides' actual contribution to the forming of an ample rabbinic outlook. Rabbi Lichtenstein learned from Nahmanides the secret of the expansion of the Torah and its ability to contain numerous intellectual worlds - all without exiting the *Beit Midrash*.

Rabbi Lichtenstein insinuates a modern and innovative interpretation of Nahmanides' intellectual stature, while repeatedly expressing reluctance toward some of Nahmanides' major recognized conceptual foundations, as they were known and highly appraised throughout the ages by rabbinic scholars.

Eliezer Baumgarten

TORAH IN THE TEACHINGS OF
RABBI YITZHAK ISAAC HEVER WILDMAN

This article examines the theosophical function of the Torah in the teachings of Rabbi Yitzhak Isaac Hever Wildman. One of the remarkable things is his use of the tradition of the Kabbalah of Rabbi Yisrael Saruk. This tradition of Rabbi Yisrael Saruk uses a world of images distinct and different from the accepted tradition of the Lurianic teachings and of Rabbi Hayyim Vital. Rabbi Yitzhak Hever creates an original connection between these two traditions, which produces a unique interpretation of the *Torat Ha'atzilut*.

According to this interpretation the Torah receives special status, relating both to the Torah as a holy object and to the significance of Torah study; thus, Torah study is perceived as theurgic. Using this outlook, which develops the works of Rabbi Hayyim of Volozhin in his *Nefesh Ha-Hayyim*, Rabbi Yitzhak Hever transfers the theurgic focus from Kabbalistic intentions in prayer and commandments to Torah study. The focus of Kabbalistic activity, according to this way of thinking, is not accomplished by Kabbalists, but by persons active in the realms of Talmud.

Yair Farber

TORAH IN EXILE: RABBI ELYASHOV BA'AL HALESHEM AND
VILNA GAON'S DISCIPLES

The Kabbalah since the time of the Ari (Isaac Luria) and Safed Kabbalists have a Messianic focus. The disciples of the Vilna Gaon, in addition, redirected its meaning to more practical terms such as the resettlement of the Land of Israel, namely to hasten the redemption. Consequently, the traditions of the Vilna Gaon existed in contrast to the Ultra-orthodox thoughts that developed later on which opposed making the resettlement of the Land of Israel as a means to hasten the redemption. Amidst the active Kabbalists of the Vilna Gaon and the ultra-orthodox thoughts, emerged the Kabbalist Rabbi Shlomo Mordekhai Elyashov, author of "Leshem Shvo Ve'Ahlama". Rabbi Elyashov explained the Kabbalah by excluding its historical dimension, and thus his interpretation successfully gave a new Kabbalah concept to the passive ultra-orthodox view.

Avi Elqayam

AS SNAKE SHEDS OLD SKIN
THE NEOPLATONIC MEANING OF NUDITY IN THE POETRY
OF IBN SĪNĀ

Nudity in Neoplatonic philosophy is a symbolic expression of unveiling consciousness and is dialectically interpreted as the tension between veiling and

unveiling, reality and metaphor. This dialectic tension is reflected in the early Sufi literature, which had crucial influence on the same dialectic tension between veiling and unveiling in Medieval Spanish Kabbalah. Neoplatonic myths on the clothing of the soul in its journey down to the world and its disrobing in its journey back to its divine origins have profoundly shaped Ibn Sīnā's (b. 1037) mystical philosophy on the states of the soul.

In this paper I will discuss the theme of nudity in two poems attributed to Ibn Sīnā: *Risālat al-Ṭāīr* (Epistyle of the Birds); and *al-Qaṣīda al-'Āīniyya fī al-Nafs* (The Ode on the Soul). I highlight the role of nudity as simile and symbol of the sadness of the soul following its fall from the divine world and its donning of the clothes of this world of becoming and unbecoming, as well as the soul's liberating disrobing of the appetites of the body and its return to divine haven. These poem seminally shaped medieval Hebrew poetry in Moslem Spain and Kabbalah literature in Christian Spain, as well as Sufi thought. Their idea enrich our understanding of the Neoplatonic meaning of nudity in medieval Jewish thought.

Shalom Sadik

THE "WILL OF GOD", "GODS' KNOWLEDGE" AND "THE WILL OF MAN" IN THE THOUGHT OF RABBI ISSAC PULGAR

The goal of this article is to analyze the meaning of the terms "the will of God", "Gods' knowledge" and "the will of man" in Rabbi Isaac Pulgar's book *Ezer ha-Dat*. Three different meanings of the term "God's will" are identified proven by three examples that distinctly show the different meanings of the term. The three meanings are: 1. God's will while creating the world and determining it's laws. 2. God's will to maintain the world at every given moment, which is expressed by the rotation of the cycle of the first sphere through it the world exists. 3. God's will that gives every new creature a form. Two different meanings of the term "Gods' knowledge" are also explained. The different meanings are: 1. God's knowledge of the laws of nature which is a knowledge that never changes. 2. Knowledge of the individuals of the world which is a knowledge that is constantly changing.

In the summary of section one the connection between the three meanings of the term “God’s will” is explained. The three meanings are in essence three stages of nature: The first stage is what defines Nature. The second stage maintains Nature, and the third does all the individual actions in the way the nature functions. Based on the above references to “God’s will” we can determine that Pulgar is a naturalist philosopher who identifies the will of God with nature.

There are two different interpretations of the concept of “human will”: 1. The desire of the human intellect- which is predetermined, similar to that of the angels. 2. Human active will’s ability to err and therefore it’s free will. The conclusion is that the more one is knowledgeable the less free will he has.

David Ben Zazon

THE COMMENTARY OF DON ISAAC ABRABANEL TO THE
GUIDE OF THE PERPLEXED

Abrabanel was committed to the accepted Jewish tradition according to the Written and Oral Law. He attempted to interpret the *Guide* in a manner that was compatible both with the Maimonidean text and the accepted Jewish tradition. The exegesis of Don Isaac Abrabanel to the *Guide of the Perplexed* is implementation of the Sephardi *iyyun* approach to learning Talmud in the field of philosophy. Many years Abrabanel devoted to the study of the *Guide*. When examining closely his exegesis to the Guide, we can see that he changed his attitude in a variety of subjects and especially towards Maimonides. His published exegesis is one of the editions of his exegesis which he had worked on in his late fifties. A study of his life in conjunction with his interpretation of the *Guide* reveals a restless individual, intellectually active and full of conceptual conflicts. These conflicts come to light only by carefully comparing the positions he adopts in his different writings.

Avishai Bar-Asher

KABBALISTIC INTERPRETATIONS OF THE SECRET OF THE
GARMENT IN THE 16th CENTURY

In the middle of the sixteenth century, within a period of less than three decades, we find an extraordinary interest in ‘The Secret of the Garment’. This is a field that usually binds two major themes in kabbalistic literature: the garment of the spirits in the eschatology of the soul, and the angel’s garment as a part of a theory on revelation and prophecy. This concept has originally evolved and increased in 13th century Kabbalah, giving rise to an intense controversy between Kabbalah and philosophy in the 13th and 14th centuries. Aware of this polemic were Rabbi Meir Ibn Gabbai, Rabbi Moshe Cordovero and R. Obadia Hamon, who independently discussed a multitude of earlier sources, and formulated distinct methods of interpretation. These discussions have a special importance in the study of *Sefer ha’Zohar* – or the Zoharic literature – during this period, and provide an opportunity to investigate prominent trends in Zoharic exegesis. Their writings became popular in the last third of the century as after their first publication. In turn these writings had significantly influenced Kabbalistic literature, even in periods and areas in which Lurianic Kabbalah was already dominant.

By examining a number of passages from the writings in question, I set out some of the fundamental concepts relating to the development of the conception of the Garment. The close study of this debate may contribute to a new evaluation of the main trends in 16th century Kabbalah, providing significant conceptual background in the generation preceding the growth of the centre in Safed.

Yaniv Goldberg

RU’AH IV’IM THE UNIQUE CHARACTERISTICS OF AN ITALIAN
DYBBUK EXORCISM DOCUMENT

Evidences of possession are not unique to Jewish culture. Societies differ with regard to their theories on the nature and properties of the invader. In Jewish society, the notion of “*Dybbuk*” appeared as early as the sixteenth century to

describe Jewish modes of possession in Rabbinic documents from Safed, where the Jewish theory of the *dybbuk* developed.

The ritual to exorcise the *dybbuk* “rectifies” the soul. This rectification or *tikkun*, according to the Kabbalistic perspective, hastens the Redemption and affords the Jewish nation hope for greater economic and spiritual wellbeing in the future.

Ru'ah Iv'im is a *dybbuk* exorcism document from Italy of the eighteenth century and has special characteristics that we don't find in other Jewish communities. Comparing the Italian document to the other *dybbuk* exorcism documents allows to draw conclusions about social and religious norms and conventions of Italian Jews, sources of influence around them, and will give a new perspective about the culture of Italian Jews.

Amir Mashiach

OFFENSIVE ETHOS OF ORTHODOX JEWISH RULERS: PRIMARILY THOUGHTS

This article seeks to trace the influence of an offensive ethos of Orthodox Jewish law since the founding of the State of Israel. The article reviews several studies describing the ethos of the Jewish Diaspora as a defensive one. However, at some point in the process of establishment of the state, which lasted several decades, we have witnessed a dramatic change in response to Jewish behavior. The defensive ethos during the exile becomes a defensive one.

The offensive ethos influenced secular Zionism, religious Zionism and also mysticism in the modern era. This article shows how this ethos has also penetrated into the halakhic discourse among leading Halakhic rulers in the second half of the twentieth century, such as: Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, Rabbi Ovadia Yosef and Rabbi Eliezer Yehuda Waldenberg.

In addition to the description of the offensive ethos and its influence on the halakhic discourse of leading rabbis, I'll review how this expression of a militant and aggressive halakhic literature, is well received among rabbis identified with the political far right in Israel. The book *Torat Hamelekh* and the article ‘Killing a Gentile – halakhic Clarification’, will be the center of discussion in this article.

The article's conclusion is that the offensive ethos has affected both moderate

and extreme Halakhic rulers. Two models of power are described, the concrete - mechanistic of Hobbes, and the cognitive model of Nietzsche's. I'll show that the Jewish ethos since the establishment of the State of Israel, has changed in the halakhic literature from cognitive to concrete.

David Banon

LEVINAS: JEWISH PHILOSOPHER OR A PHILOSOPHER
WHO IS A JEW ?

This article deals with a much debated quandary : is Levinas a Jewish philosopher or a philosopher not necessarily affiliated to his Jewish identity. The question is examined through a survey of his philosophical trajectory. This route encompasses confronting Heidegger's central themes as well as grappling with Husserl's thought and appropriating part of it. Levinas implemented these themes toward his consistent effort of exiting Being and discovering the Other. Notwithstanding, a parallel track is highlighted which also trails a path to ethics and the other. This is the Jewish track which Levinas follows and is outlined in the reflections of H. Cohen, M. Buber and F. Rosenzweig.