

instance, it is not clear why the editors include lengthy apologetics for antisemitism on behalf of various churches and African Americans, but write “space constraints prevent including documents by Muslim scholars and religious leaders who explicitly reject jihadist terrorism . . . and do not share in the demonization of Jews” (p. 308).

Furthermore, Perry and Schweitzer’s explanatory essays, intended to provide context for the documents, do not conform sufficiently to scholarly standards of argumentation, evidence, and citation, and at times tend toward polemics. The editors use few footnotes in their historical narratives and often put phrases, even entire sentences, in quotation marks, but provide no attribution. They also occasionally insert their own commentary into the texts in brackets that do not distinguish them from factual clarifications, also in brackets. In so doing, the editors do not allow the documents to speak for themselves in terms of their shocking and abhorrent content.

Finally, instead of going to the unadulterated original sources, on several occasions Perry and Schweitzer use excerpts from other anthologies, present second-hand quotations, and cobble together excerpts from multiple sources, presenting them as one entry with multiple footnotes. They also alter several texts, compiling speeches without individual references or rearranging passages “since the original remarks are turgid and disordered” (p. 299). This limits the utility of the volume to scholars and students seeking first-hand knowledge of the subject.

Despite these shortcomings, *Antisemitic Myths* represents a forceful reminder of the enduring power and danger of bigotry.

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**Conversion, Halakhah, and Practice**, by Menachem Finkelstein. Ramat Gan: Bar Ilan University Press, 2006. 782 pp. \$99.95.

Classical *halakhah* (Jewish Law) in religio-theological terms rather than a historio-sociological study to understand the dynamics of conversion to Judaism is presented by Menachem Finkelstein (IDF Brigadier-General, who served as Israel Defense Forces Advocate General, taught at the Law Department of Bar Ilan University, and is currently a judge in the Haifa Municipal Court). Informed by voluminous halakhic sources on the role, rule, and *raison d’être* of *giyyur*, Finkelstein presents a balanced, non-judgmental synopsis of rabbinical opinion on what is and what is not legal acceptance and recognition of a non-Jew’s entrance to Judaism, the religion and the peoplehood. Between a brief

introductory overview and a longish “Summary and Conclusions” (64 pages), the multiple chapters assess the fundamentals, principal components, and ritual acts of conversion (partial and complete); categorical distinctions between potential proselytes and rulings thereof (*ger tsedek*, *ger toshav*, Canaanite Slave, *yefat to’ar*, Noachide, and Gentile); acceptance of the commandments as received in the Written Torah and authoritatively interpreted in the Oral Torah; the role or non-role of the Beit Din (religious court), before, during and after conversion; the conversion of minors; and valid and invalid conversions, *ab initio* and *ex post facto*. The legally formatted, minutia-laden rabbinic exegesis and eisegesis perforate text and footnotes, and this may prove burdensome to the non-initiate in rabbinic argumentation. But the concerned novice, who is willing to work at reading—dialogue—reading the text and proof-text, will unveil the synchronic structure and composition of the halakhic sources. More than not, the rabbinic gems unearthed by the spade of self-inflicted questions—answers—reflections are worthwhile. The end is the beginning of an erstwhile venture into the will and way of the Dual Torah to bring home the seeking stranger into the House of Israel.

From the Torah of Moses (“The *ger* [stranger, proselyte] that sojourns with you shall be unto you as the home-born among you, and you shall love him as yourself; for you were *gerim* [strangers] in the land of Egypt—I am the Lord your God,” [Lev 19:34]) to the *torah* of Moses Maimonides (“All Gentiles—all of them—when they convert and take upon themselves all of the commandments of the Torah . . . are like Israelites in every respect . . . and are permitted to enter the community of the Lord immediately,” *Mishneh Torah, Hil. Issurei Biyah* 12:17); from the biblical-rabbinic attitude of seeking converts openly to the medieval Jewish position of not seeking proselytes aggressively; from the open door of European emancipation to the sealed door of Nazi Europe, to the open gates of the State of Israel accepting thousands of non-Jewish spouses and siblings under the Law of Return, there has never been a lack of non-Israelites in every era of Jewish wandering and settlement, voluntarily or by so-called force or pressure, wishing or needing to “enter[ing] under the wings of the *Shekhinah*.”

Furthermore, in the post-Auschwitz age, when Jews suffer from unparalleled shrinking numbers due to attrition, low birth rate, intermarriage, and assimilation into the general culture, it may well be that a quality Jewish life now and in the future physically, spiritually, and culturally will depend on successful proselytizing of the Gentile. To the non-Jew who finds meaninglessness in secularism and/or in religions based on human depravity and on mythic salvation ideology, Judaism offers a bold ethical manifesto to a “this worldly” life enshrined with rich symbolism, sensuality, mysticism, and rationalism. In-

deed the Sages have taught that the divine spirit rests on each of us in accordance with his or her deeds, and the Synagogue has prayed in the spirit of the Prophets of Israel for the ultimate conversion of humankind not to the cult of Israel but rather to the God of Israel, Creator and Redeemer: "Let the inhabitants of the world perceive and know that unto thee every knee must bend and every tongue give homage. Before thee, O Lord our God, let them bow down and worship, and to thy glorious Name let them give honor" (from the *Aleinu* prayer recited thrice daily).

The category of *ger/proselyte* is mentioned in the Tanakh, but the process of conversion is expressed in the Talmud. Succinctly stated, the candidate must demonstrate convincingly before a rabbinical court his/her willingness to accept fully and freely the commandments before "enter(ing) the covenant (only) through circumcision, immersion, and the sprinkling of blood" (*Kritot* 9a). The fundamentals of conversion are interrelated *inversely* to the Children of Israel's acceptance of the (Book of) Covenant: *Na'aseh ve-Nishma'* ("We shall do and we shall hear [reason]" [Exod 24:7]). The want-to-be Jew unequivocally states reasons before the Court why s/he chooses to be chosen. Elements of adult conversion include sincere belief, behavior, and intent, which pave the way for the ritual rite of passage. The male emits blood (*brit milah* or *hatafat dam brit*), and male and female undergo immersion (*tevilah*) before they commit "to the blood of the covenant [biblical, 'sprinkling of blood'; talmudic, a Temple offering] which the Lord has made with you in agreement with all these words (acceptance of the yoke of the Torah)" [Exod 24:8]. *Nishma' ve-Na'aseh*.

Finkelstein's chapters are a wellspring on the *halakha* of conversion and practice, cultivated mainly from Talmud, Codes, and Responsa sources. As such, it is a welcome and needed repository of classic rabbinic legal discussion, disputation, and decision on the process of conversion of the Gentile to Judaism. However, this learned tome is exclusive on two fronts. Regarding Diaspora Jewish communities in the West, there is no consideration or recognition of the interpretations, regulations, and standards of contemporary non-Orthodox branches of Judaism, whose acceptance of *torah mi-shamayim* (Heavenly Torah) is questionable, and hardly any discussion of attempts at interdenominational efforts to establish a unified Bet Din for conversions inside and outside the State of Israel (e.g., the private agreement between Rabbis Joseph Soloveitchik and Saul Lieberman in the 1950s, which was aborted when certain factions within American Orthodox and Conservative groups felt disenfranchised by this unifying move.) Alas, "who will be a Jew?" is grounded in "who is a Jew?" and the questions are without closure. Paradoxically, the Fin-

kelstein volume is seen as a foundation, not closure, to the mosaic of thoughts on Jewish conversion.

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**Judaism and the Gentiles: Jewish Patterns of Universalism (to 135 CE)**, by Terence L. Donaldson. Waco, Texas: Baylor University Press, 2007. 563 pp. \$59.95.

This sourcebook identifies and documents the various patterns of Jewish universalism, from the Hellenistic era to the Bar Cochba revolt. The presentation follows that of Menahem Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism* (Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1974), in which the author aims to deliver the principal texts *ad seriatim*, each receiving a full discussion. After an introduction (Chapter 1), Part I presents the texts and commentary, organized by corpora of sources (pp. 15–466). Part II synthesizes the findings (pp. 467–513), a good place for readers to start.

Donaldson assigns each text to one of four discrete patterns of Jewish universalism: (1) *sympathization*, texts describing Gentiles engaged in Jewish activity and association; (2) *conversion*, texts describing Gentiles becoming proselytes; (3) *ethical monotheism*, texts aligning Greek philosophy and Torah religion as parallel paths to a universal God; and (4) *eschatological participation*, texts describing Gentiles as beneficiaries in the end-time redemption of Israel (see précis on pp. 10–11). Inclusion in one or other of these categories does not mean that the text provides positive evidence for the pattern (p. 539). In many cases, Donaldson has to argue by context that the particular pattern is implicit in the text. To do so, he applies a methodology appropriated from the study of the historical Jesus, called the criterion of multiple attestation: “Where a similar viewpoint is attested in multiple sources—especially if those sources differ in form and provenance—it is appropriate to conclude that the viewpoint is present—at least in latent form—in the tradition. That is, we are justified to think that it was an inherent option, something that could exist between and beyond the points on the graph for which we have evidence” (p. 507).

Most of the texts from Scripture, the Septuagint, and Apocrypha (Chapter 2) fall under the sympathization and conversion categories. The important biblical book is Daniel, which describes the possibility that a Gentile king could venerate God and even be prepared to “become a Jew” (p. 30). Texts from the Pseudepigrapha (Chapter 3) are a mixed bag. Unsurprisingly, apoca-