

that liturgical conventions may shed some light on some problems of redactional arrangement. R. Coggins considers the books of Joel, Nahum, and Habakkuk as possible examples of prophetic traditions from an alternate stream of tradition than the main stream prophets. In addition, he discusses the possible role of the Deuteronomistic school in the redaction of the prophetic books. W. Zimmerli examines the status of vision reports within the overall framework of the psychology of Jeremiah. R.E. Clements probes the hypothesis of prophetic schools responsible for the collection and compilation of prophetic books. He bases his discussion on the book of Ezekiel. R. Mason concerns himself with the books of Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi in regard to the various suggestions that have been made about the relationship between prophecy and apocalyptic. The same topic is approached from a different angle by M.A. Knibb, who widens the inquiry to deal also with definition of the term apocalyptic and the relationship between the literatures of apocalyptic and wisdom traditions.

The third section of the Festschrift deals with the relationship between prophecy and wisdom (R.N. Whybray), the cult (R. Murray), and law (A. Phillips). The book concludes with the aforementioned uncategorized essays by Sawyer and Simon.

Each essay is accompanied by its own bibliographic list. Along with the overview of major current issues in the study of the prophets that each essay provides the bibliographies, which are quite extensive, should prove invaluable as aids to students beginning the study of the prophets, or to any O.T. scholar who does not specialize in this particular field of biblical research. Moreover, the collection, offers a wealth of new insights into the various focuses it provides so that it will be useful to active researchers as well as students. In particular, Sawyer's hermeneutical reflections on the context of interpretation is a most suitable contribution to honour Peter Ackroyd's considerable contribution to this important area of study on the prophetic traditions.

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Emanuel S. Goldsmith & Mel Scult, eds., *Dynamic Judaism. The Essential Writings of Mordecai M. Kaplan*, Schocken Books & The Reconstructionist Press, New York, 1985, pp. 263, paper \$12.95

Although Mordecai Kaplan was one of the most influential Jewish thinkers of the twentieth century, he was little known outside the American Jewish community. This was largely because, unlike figures like Martin Buber or Abraham Joshua Heschel, much of whose writings were devoted to trans-

mitting the wisdom of Judaism (as they interpreted it) to the world at large, K.'s message was addressed almost exclusively to the Jewish public. Even his great influence on American Jewish life and thought was largely indirect, achieved through the mediation of generations of his students. Thus many of the most characteristic features of his thought have long since entered the "public domain," and only a few will still remember that these were once novel and controversial notions when introduced by K. decades ago. Among these ideas we should include: the very conception that Judaism is not only a religion or set of doctrines and observances, but rather "the evolving religious civilization of the Jewish people," with all that this implies in the realms of culture, art, and folkways; his early espousal of Zionism; his promotion of the Jewish community center as a major instrument for Jewish survival; and to some extent, the acceptance of critical methodology, even with reference to Bible study, as a legitimate approach in rabbinical seminaries.

As one reads through the texts selected for the present anthology, the overwhelming impression that one receives is of an uncompromising intellect who refuses to dilute what he sees as the rational truth, even when it clashes with the traditional beliefs of the religious culture to which he is attached. This refusal to compromise is what constitutes the main point of division between K. and the Conservative Movement of American Judaism, to which he continued to be attached for most of his long life, and to which his ideas are generally in agreement. The ideology of Conservative Judaism generally assumed that the traditional methods of interpretation and midrash coupled with an appreciation of the historical development of Judaism, would enable the tradition to digest and assimilate the religious and philosophical world-views of modernity, whether in the realm of belief or of religious observance and ethics halakhah. K., on the other hand, could not ignore some basic differences and disagreements. Intellectual honesty demanded that Jews admit the existence of certain contradictions between traditional beliefs and laws, and modern ideas, and that the divergence cannot be bridged. In such cases one must reject those elements of the tradition which are unacceptable to modern science, philosophy, or values. A good example is K.'s emphasis on the religious equality of women, a principle which is contrary to traditional Jewish law (the Orthodox apologists would at best argue that women have a "separate but equal" status), and which the Conservative movement has been able to approach only through patchwork changes in the halakhah, or by tacitly hoping that popular custom will create "a fait accompli" before submitting it to the decision of the Rabbis.

The book is made up of short excerpts and quotations arranged according to general topics, rather than longer passages or complete essays. While this approach tends to discourage deeper study of K.'s ideas, and does not allow us to follow his thought through its historical development (in fact, his ideas changed fairly little over the years), one might presume that the more serious student would in any case not be satisfied with an anthology, and will make use of the full original works. This volume is designed as an introduction, addressed to readers who are not familiar with K.'s thought. The

limitations of the structure are in fact more than counterbalanced by the two introductions which were composed by the editors, summarizing Kaplan's life and thought. Both these essays are impressively well researched and thought-out (as are the bibliography and detailed index), and it is clear that K.'s views hold a profound personal importance for both editors. The "short excerpt" principle of arrangement also serves as an excellent showcase for K.'s distinctive style, which often takes on a proverbial or anecdotal character. He was certainly a master of polemical and publicistic writing, frequently cantankerous and ironic. He could also make artistic use of rhetorical and homiletical devices in clarifying philosophical arguments, such reading his prose is generally an enjoyable experience.

The ordering of the chapters is significant. Rather than begin with such central ideas as K.'s theological beliefs, or with the "Judaism as a civilization" thesis, the editors begin with his critique of the other modern Jewish movements, a critique which sets the stage for the concerns which occupy the subsequent chapters. K. was "emotionally" traditional, a natural product of the old-fashioned Jewish environment and upbringing; yet he could not accept the philosophically primitive thinking of Orthodoxy. The Reform movement he saw as completely devoid of substance, having artificially amputated the rich Jewish national cultural traditions and espoused a theologically primitive (for K.: supernaturalistic) "religion of ethical monotheism," to which it in any case had little real commitment. His critique of Conservative Judaism we have outlined above.

On the basis of this critique we can understand the issues which K. regarded as important: first, there is his emphasis that Judaism is a full-scale civilization, no more and no less. No more – in that it is the civilization of the Jews just as French civilization is that of the French (hence his overly vehement rejection of the "chosen people" concept; it seems to me that, when interpreted fairly, this idea does not warrant the ire which it aroused in K.). No Less – in that Jews' self-expression, especially their religious imagery and ideas, can only be found in the myths and folkways that were formulated through their distinctive history, experiences, and language.

Only after presenting K.'s views on these communal and national questions, do the editors present his ideas about God and theology. K. is a religious naturalist and existentialist; that is to say, he does not believe that God acts through miraculous interventions in nature or history, and he has little patience for speculations about the nature or essence of God; rather, he is concerned only with the effects of religious belief on human behavior. There is little that is original in these views, other than the fact that K. was applying them to Judaism at the time when he was.

These lead in turn to K.'s specific views and programs for the creation of a vital Judaism in modern America, and his theories about how to relate to the teachings and observances of the Torah and the Jewish sages. The book is structured such that the culmination of all these ideas is the development of the Reconstructionist Movement, of which K. was the founder.

It is precisely this notion which is the most questionable aspect of K.'s life work. The thrust of his thought was aimed at the Jewish community as a whole, and as one reads his earlier writings it seems clear that he did not dream of becoming the leader of just a "fourth American Jewish movement" (beside the Orthodox, Conservative and Reform), but rather of redefining the nature and values of all of American Jewry. He describes his ideal follower as a Jew who (like himself) grew up to be at home in traditional Jewish culture, but who finds much of the traditional belief unacceptable. It is doubtful whether the bulk of affiliated Reconstructionist laity would fit such a description. Moreover, it is possible that many of the people to whom K.'s message was addressed were in fact able to find niches within the "Modern Orthodox" or Conservative movements, which have developed considerably since he first expounded his program. Conversely, it would seem that the Reconstructionist Movement has taken some directions which were not in the spirit of its mentor; e.g., the fact that the movement's rabbinical seminary in Philadelphia has become a major center for the study of Jewish mysticism, a field with which K. had little patience!

The time for such evaluations has perhaps not yet arrived. K. died in 1983 (at the age of 102), and we are too close to the events to view them from a proper perspective, especially in the light of such as-yet unclear trends as the shift to the theological and political Right in American Orthodoxy (which leaves in question the fate of the once-thriving "modern orthodox" ideology), and the factionalism in the Conservative movement which was sparked by the question of ordination of woman rabbis. At all events, the material in this anthology, both the passages from Kaplan's writings and the editors' monographs, will be of great value in making such an evaluation.

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E. Alan Morinis' *Pilgrimage in the Hindu Tradition: A Case Study of West Bengal*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1984, \$48.00.

E. Alan Morinis' *Pilgrimage in the Hindu Tradition: A Case Study of West Bengal* is a descriptive and analytical study of the pilgrimage tradition as found in West Bengal. His study, based on primary data drawn from first hand research at three pilgrimage sites, Tarakeswar, Tarapith, and Navadvip, aims at giving the reader a foundation for understanding pilgrimage and on which the comparative study of pilgrimage might proceed. Much of this information is new and a welcome addition to existing research on this topic. Morinis' analysis consists of showing that pilgrimage rites at each of these three



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