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ENGLISH ABSTRACTS

CLOTHED NUDITY: THE ESOTERIC CULT OF PHILO

by Yehuda Liebes

Philo of Alexandria says that Nadab and Abihu were naked when they made their sacrifice, but on the other hand they were also clothed, since he insists that the garments in which they were borne out (Leviticus 10:4) were their own and did not belong to the carriers. This contradiction may be solved by further delving into the significance of nudity for Philo. For him nudity symbolizes direct and private communion with God outside institutionalized religion, and therefore it must be covered and hidden from the eyes of the multitude (in describing this matter Philo uses the vocabulary of Greek stadiums and theaters). The meaning of this clothed nudity is developed further in Philo's description of the high priest's entrance into the holy of holies; he enters naked although he is also clad (in four garments instead of the usual eight). In this case the meaning of clothed nudity could not be exactly the same as that mentioned above, since the priest is told precisely how to enter, in order to avoid the fate of Nadab and Abihu (Leviticus 16). However, it may be interpreted similarly: the tension between nakedness and clothing symbolizes the tension between established religion and individual mysticism. In discussing the nudity of Adam and Eve Philo again contradicts himself, now possibly to avoid revealing that his mystical ideal transcends both good and evil. Such concealment points to still another level at which Philo's clothed nudity should be interpreted, namely the esotericism ascribed by Philo to Scripture, and likewise the esoteric manner of Philo's own writing, which I have expounded in previous articles. In this respect Philo is comparable to other Jewish classics, especially the Zohar.

MOSES' ROLE IN THE WRITING OF THE TORAH IN RABBINIC
LITERATURE AND IN THE TRANSITION TO THE MIDDLE AGES

by Eran Viezel

A basic axiom of Judaism over the generations has been that the Torah is of divine origin and that it was written by Moses with the guidance of the Holy Spirit. However, *Hazal* and the medieval sages did not agree about the nature of God's revelation to Moses, which enabled him to write the Torah. Did God dictate the Torah to Moses word by word (a textual revelation), or might Moses have had a role in selecting content and words? This article examines the question of Moses' role in the authorship of the Torah as addressed in rabbinic literature, showing that the Sages actually devoted little attention to it, and no single answer emerges from the relevant references. Some Sages maintained that Moses was merely an amanuensis for God, while others attribute a degree of discretion to him. This diversity of opinion deeply influenced medieval sages and exegetes.

R. SHEM TOV FALAQUERA'S METHOD IN ABRIDGING
R. SOLOMON IBN GABIROL'S *FONS VITAE*

by Dov Schwartz

The article explores the motive of Falaquera in abridging *Fons Vitae*, arguing that Falaquera believed that *Fons Vitae* preserved the philosophy of the ancients. However he criticized *Fons Vitae* for its length. The principles of the abridgment were pedagogical as well as philosophical. Falaquera rearranged Gabirol's work, omitting vague discussions and problematic or controversial teachings. He ignored inner contradictions in *Fons Vitae*. The article supplies detailed analysis of the abridgment of the first article of *Fons Vitae*, as well as a few additional examples from the other chapters.

‘YOU SHALL NOT MURDER’ IN THE WRITINGS OF MAIMONIDES:
ETHICS VS. POLITICS

by Eliezer Haddad

Maimonides implicitly described the prohibition against killing human beings as stemming from the understanding of natural providence delineated in *The Guide of the Perplexed*. He distinguished between individual providence, which governs human beings, and that pertaining to entire species, which governs other living things: unlike human beings, whose intellect and discretion serve the purpose of preserving individual life, animals act from natural energies, whose purpose is the preservation of species. Since the purposes of nature reflect the divine will, the natural purpose of preserving the life of individual human beings establishes an ethical norm that bars the killing of people. Conversely, since the natural order seeks to preserve animals only on the level of species, one is not barred from killing individual animals.

Analysis of Maimonides’ comments shows that the prohibition of murder, as presented in *The Guide of the Perplexed* and *Mishneh Torah*, is predicated not on an understanding of providence, but on the purpose of perpetuation of the state. Nevertheless, Maimonides’ understanding of providence is reflected in the ethical prohibition against killing a resident stranger, as expressed explicitly in his statement that the soul of a murder victim is ‘property of the holy One, blessed be He’. Therefore murder is unforgiveable. Neither in *The Guide of the Perplexed* nor in the *Mishneh Torah* does the prohibition stem from political purpose: killing a resident stranger or accepting a ransom in lieu of capital punishment does no violence to the stability of the state. Thus although man is political by nature, his life also has value inasmuch as it serves a purpose beyond the political domain.

PERUSH SHEL MEOR HAQODESH:

THE METAMORPHOSES OF ZOHARIC HOMILIES IN R. MOSES DE LEÓN'S
HITHERTO UNKNOWN COMMENTARY ON THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

by Avishai Bar-Asher

Edited here for the first time is an anonymous kabbalistic commentary on the Ten Commandments, whose author is identified in this study as R. Moses de León. The commentary is introduced by a theosophical controversy with earlier trends in medieval Kabbalah, which referred to the divine commandments as corresponding to (and in parallel with) the *Ten Sephirot*. De León's own theory on the Decalogue is based on a different comprehension of the divine *Sephirot*, and it is formulated with fully Hebrew literal parallels to a number of Aramaic passages preserved in the *Zohar*.

The commentary, entitled *Sod 'Aseret haDibrot* (=the Secret of the Ten Commandments) belongs to a group of unsigned theosophical texts on liturgy, rituals, and scriptures composed by de León at a late stage of his literary activity. These texts include peculiar references to allegedly ancient sources – often called 'The Ancients', 'The Sages', etc., to whom the author attributes all of his innovative views. In addition to this sort of attribution, however, the author of *Sod 'Aseret haDibrot* refers to a book of his own, called *Sefer Etz-haHayyim* (=The Book of the Tree of Life), which is no longer extant. Interestingly, de León's short quotation from this book matches a fragment from another untitled commentary attributed to him in the past.

The main contribution of this article is in shedding light on de León's affinity with certain textual units in the *Zohar*, revealing the relationship between these texts and his later writings.

‘FIRE BEARING FIRE’: AN UNKNOWN ZOHARIC TEXT AND THE
BEGINNING OF ZOHARIC COMMENTARY IN THE EARLY FOURTEENTH
CENTURY – THE CASE OF R. MENAHEM RECANATI AND R. JOSEPH
ANGILET

by Iris Felix and Ruth Kara-Ivanov Kaniel

The debate concerning the authorship and compilation of the Zohar remains at the forefront of scholarly discourse and investigation. In this article we suggest that the Italian R. Menahem Recanati and the Aragonese R. Joseph Angilet, two kabbalists who were active in the post-discovery generation of the Zohar, were among the first commentators of this newly revealed literary corpus originating from Castile. Through analysis of a relatively large zoharic fragment not found in any publication or extant manuscript of the Zohar but fortunately quoted in their respective commentaries on the Zohar, we compare their exegetical styles and attitudes towards this body of mystical literature. Since both kabbalists consider the Zohar to be an ancient and authoritative text, its teachings can, as far as they are concerned, override the mystical and exegetical conclusions even of the revered school of Nachmanides.

The appearance of the same otherwise unknown zoharic text in the works of both Recanati and Angilet provides us with an opportunity to study the contents of this unique text – the mystery of sacrifice – as well as to examine the Zohar through the eyes of these two important medieval kabbalists.

HALAKHAH, PIETISM, KABBALAH AND REVELATION IN SIXTEENTH
CENTURY SAFED: A STUDY IN R. YOSEF KARO’S WORKS

by Hagai Pely

Safed of the sixteenth century was a religious and intellectual center in which halakhic, kabbalistic, and pietistic activities flourished, ordinarily without any conflicts. However, confrontations occasionally occurred between the juristic establishment and members of the other two socio-intellectual groups, who did not belong to the rabbinic leadership. In this article I examine the attitude of R. Yosef Karo, one of the most

influential figures of sixteenth century Safed, regarding the relations and the hierarchy between these factions. The examination of Karo's case, more than others, enables us to understand the concepts prevalent in the rabbinic establishment of sixteenth century Safed in discussing these issues, because Karo was both a halakhic authority and a kabbalist with pietistic leanings, who also sought divine revelation.

As I demonstrate, Karo (like other figures in the rabbinic establishment of his day) confronted pietists and kabbalists who, in his opinion, deviated from the correct halakhic method of adjudication, either out of ignorance or individualistic scholarship. Karo avoided publishing his diary of revelations diary (*Maggid Mesharim*) because of concern that an incorrect interpretation of his halakhic method would justify reliance on divine entities.

BETWEEN 'RECTIFICATION OF EVIL' AND 'PLAIN NONSENSE'

THE STRICT REQUIREMENT OF 'A CLEAN BODY' AS A CASE STUDY

OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HASIDISM AND HALAKHAH

by Iris Brown (Hoizman)

This article deals with the obligation to maintain a clean body (the requirement to clear one's bowels before prayer and the related prohibition against delaying bowel movements) as a case study on the tension between Halakhah, Kabbalah, and Hasidism. It surveys the development of the prohibition in Hasidism throughout the ages, from its beginning until our times.

A change occurred in the understanding of the concept, both at the level of discourse as well as at the substantive level. At the level of discourse, in early Hasidism the discussion focuses on the kabbalistic justification for the commandment, whereas in later hasidic sources it revolves around its halakhic parameters and associated hygienic and rational considerations. On the substantive level, Hasidism moved from the drastic and extreme demand for a clean body (to the point that the Ba'al Shem Tov ruled that one must always keep himself diarrheal) to demanding only the minimum halakhic requirement and sometimes even in its lenient interpretation.

This shift indicates a historic change in the attitudes of the Hasidic movement towards the Halakhah and to deviations from it. It also

reflects the growing awareness of the hasidic leadership of the dangerous consequences of customs that were adopted or 'invented' by early Hasidism and the tensions that arose in certain situations between hasidic leaders, who wished to revive pre-hasidic halakhic norms, and some of their followers, who sought to uphold the customs of their *rebbe*s, the founders of Hasidism.

RABBI SHIMSHON RAPHAEL HIRSCH AND THE DOCTRINE OF
'TORAH IM DERECH ERETS' IN THE EYES OF THE HAREIDIM

by Emmanuel Bloch

This article examines how the founder and champion of German Neo-Orthodoxy, Rabbi Shimshon Raphael Hirsch, and his philosophy of 'Torah Im Derech Erets', have been perceived by the leading rabbinic authorities in Eastern Europe over the last 150 years.

This perception was not limited, as was heretofore widely believed, to a begrudging post factum admission of the validity of the German approach, coupled with a strict limitation of its acceptability to the context of nineteenth century Germany. On the contrary, a close inspection of the relevant sources reveals a number of patterns and marked shifts in reaction over the period considered, as both Western and Eastern Jewries were variously affected by social evolution and historical events.

Beyond the question of the apprehension of German orthodoxy by Eastern European religious leaders, this article sheds light on the complex interactions between Western and Eastern Jewries and on the evolution of Orthodox Judaism.

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ANTI-SEMITISM FROM A THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE
A STUDY IN THE THOUGHT OF RABBI AVRAHAM ITZHAK HACOHN KOOK
AND HIS FOLLOWERS

by Uriel Barak

One of the great riddles of Jewish history and, in fact, of the history of Western culture is the persistence of anti-Semitism. The present article illuminates the attitude of Rabbi Avraham Itzhak HaCohen Kook and his circle (particularly his son Rabbi Zvi Yehudah Kook and his outstanding disciple Rabbi Yaakov Moshe Harlap) toward the problem of anti-Semitism throughout history and the profound connection between its underpinnings and the fate and destiny of the Jewish people. I analyze the way that Rabbi A. I. Kook and his circle addressed this burning issue. In doing so, I show how the disciples developed and expanded upon the views of their master, giving his metaphysical theology lucid expression while exposing certain ramifications of his ideas. I also propose a preliminary typology for conceptualizing the differences in approach of these thinkers.

Throughout this essay I utilize and argue for the importance of the integrated methodology that I conceived and developed in my doctoral dissertation for the study of the thought of Rabbi A. I. Kook and his circle. The present discussion makes it clear that the influence of the master on his students was even greater than hitherto thought by scholars. I also show that when studying this circle, it is necessary to pay special attention to its intellectual and spiritual milieu, and to consider these men as a distinct mystical-philosophical circle.

JEWISH PHILOSOPHY AS EXISTENTIAL HERMENEUTICS
A REVISITING OF THE RELATION BETWEEN PHILOSOPHY AND JUDAISM
IN EMANUEL LEVINAS

by Eli Schonfeld

The relation between philosophy and Judaism is one of the major themes in Emmanuel Levinas' thought. Levinas often uses the metaphor of translation to describe his project, his effort consisting of translating

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Jewish ideas, which philosophy lacks, to the language of philosophy. This paper proposes a reevaluation of this theme in light of posthumously published texts from the 1930s and 1940s, as well as texts from that period which Levinas did not include in his published corpus. These texts describe the experience of persecution and suffering as an experience lived by the Jew as a modality of his relation to transcendence, to the divine. In this paper I demonstrate how this experience lies at the basis of Levinas' philosophy, and how the Jewish experience of suffering – while impossible to translate into the universal language of philosophy – paradoxically nourishes Lévinas' phenomenological project: translating Jewish wisdom into the language of philosophy.