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## NIYUMJ - NELSON BRONSON

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The eight studies in this volume focus on additional aspects of the narratives in the Five Books of Moses that have frequently been glossed over by commentators, ancient and modern, and remain contentious to this very day. These studies address subjects such as the primal mission of man in the creation narrative, the 'covenant between the pieces,' the symbolism of circumcision, the story of Jacob and his four wives, and the rape of Dinah, as depicted in the book of Genesis; the story of the exodus from Egypt as related in the book of Exodus; the reason for the premature death of the sons of Aaron, Nadav and Avihu, and the reason for the dietary laws, as set forth in the book of Leviticus. Although these studies do not claim to resolve the issues they examine, it is their purpose to stimulate further interest in the complexities of the ancient biblical narratives and the hidden insights about human nature they provide.

According to the biblical narrative, in addition to the Ten Commandments, Moses received a series of supplementary instructions to guide the people as they

set about establishing a society in conformity with the covenant that are to be found in the so-called the Book of the Covenant. The book, which is imbedded in the biblical book of Exodus essentially contains addenda or amendments to longstanding customary laws with which the children of Israel were already familiar, and for this reason its various components vary widely in scope, depending on the extent of differentiation from customary law that they entail. This study of the ordinances in the Book of the Covenant focuses not only on what they meant for the ancient Israelites but also how those laws, rules, instructions, and admonitions were treated and in some instances modified as they were incorporated into the huge corpus of Jewish Law, as it emerged over a period of some two and a half millennia.

Index to microfiche collection of 4,934 titles filmed on 11,453 microfiche. It is divided into three sections: Author/Title, Subject and Imprint.

This comprehensive history, the first to appear in English, gives a vivid portrayal of the Book of Esther's role in the intellectual and cultural life of Jews in the Middle Ages. Much of the study is based on

material that exists only in manuscripts, and it introduces many exegetes hitherto unknown or unstudied.

This book is a continuation of an earlier work, *Reading Genesis Politically*, the primary focus of which is the first ten chapters of the much larger book of Genesis. The present study begins with chapter eleven of Genesis which introduces the story of the emergence of Abraham, the iconic founder of the Jewish nation and Judaic civilization. As indicated by the title of the present study its primary concern is with the prehistory of ancient Israel. The sole source of information about Israel's national origins is imbedded in the Pentateuch, the five books of the Torah, in which the birth of Israel is portrayed as part of a divine plan for the betterment of mankind. As a result, its prehistory beginning with Abraham and concluding with Moses is necessarily theopolitical in nature, reflecting the critical divine role in its formation. There are of course virtually innumerable studies of the Pentateuchal narratives that address the roles of the Patriarchs in preserving the religious heritage of Abraham until its culmination in the work of Moses. However, there are very few studies that direct attention to the necessarily socio-political aspects of the narratives that establish the basis for the ultimate emergence of a viable but querulous nation out of what the biblical text repeatedly terms "a stiff-necked people," primarily related by common ethnicity as descendants of the Patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

The *Seventeenth Century Hebrew Book* covers the gamut of Hebrew literature in that century. Each entry has a descriptive text page and an accompanying reproduction. There is an extensive introduction with an overview of Hebrew printing in the seventeenth century.

The studies in this volume discuss some of the issues implicit but not resolved in the Hebrew Scriptures including the problems inherent in the topics of theology and religious philosophy as discussed and argued by scholars for more than two millennia. The studies address the problem of philosophy, the troublesome issues of moral autonomy and divine omniscience and theodicy, from a Judaic perspective. In addition, it includes a study of the biblical story of the Golden Calf and its religious implications that are more complex than a cursory reading of the biblical text will suggest. Finally, it includes a discussion of the often misunderstood concepts of the prophet and prophecy as set forth in the biblical texts. Although this book does not and cannot resolve the philosophical and theological issues that have persisted through the millennia, it hopes to make clear how these issues have been wrestled with from a Judaic perspective, which will have relevance with regard to the perspectives on these matters of other monotheistic faiths.

Winner of the Jewish Book Council Nahum M. Sarna Memorial Award in Scholarship This book explores the reception history of the most important Jewish Bible commentary ever composed, the *Commentary on the Torah of Rashi* (Shlomo Yitzhaki; 1040-1105). Though the *Commentary* has benefited from enormous scholarly attention, analysis of diverse reactions to it has been surprisingly scant. Viewing its path to preeminence through a diverse array of religious, intellectual, literary, and sociocultural lenses, Eric Lawee focuses on processes of the *Commentary's* canonization and on a hitherto unexamined--and wholly unexpected--feature of its reception: critical, and at times astonishingly harsh, resistance to it. Lawee shows how

and why, despite such resistance, Rashi's interpretation of the Torah became an exegetical classic, a staple in the curriculum, a source of shared religious vocabulary for Jews across time and place, and a foundational text that shaped the Jewish nation's collective identity. The book takes as its larger integrating perspective processes of canonicity as they shape how traditions flourish, disintegrate, or evolve. Rashi's scriptural magnum opus, the foremost work of Franco-German (Ashkenazic) biblical scholarship, faced stiff competition for canonical supremacy in the form of rationalist reconfigurations of Judaism as they developed in Mediterranean seats of learning. It nevertheless emerged triumphant in an intense battle for Judaism's future that unfolded in late medieval and early modern times. Investigation of the reception of the Commentary throws light on issues in Jewish scholarship and spirituality that continue to stir reflection, and even passionate debate, in the Jewish world today.

This work focuses on the conception of God of the medieval Jewish philosopher and legal scholar, Hasdai Crescas (1340-1410/11). It demonstrates that Crescas' God is infinitely creative and good and explores the parallel that Crescas implicitly draws between God as creator and legislator.

The fourth volume concludes the critical edition of the original Hebrew text and English translation of Moscato's sermons and includes studies on his cultural background and significance.

The Reader's Guide to Judaism is a survey of English-language translations of the most important primary texts in the Jewish tradition. The field is assessed in some 470 essays discussing individuals (Martin Buber, Gluckel of Hameln), litera-

ture (Genesis, Ladino Literature), thought and beliefs (Holiness, Bioethics), practice (Dietary Laws, Passover), history (Venice, Baghdadi Jews of India), and arts and material culture (Synagogue Architecture, Costume). The emphasis is on Judaism, rather than on Jewish studies more broadly.

The biblical narrative of the Exodus and of Moses, the reluctant prophet who was chosen to lead it, deals with the critical formative event in the history of ancient Israel. However, the narrative also contains a number of enigmatic passages as well as some seemingly unrelated episodes. In this book, the author undertakes to unravel the enigmas and show how the various disparate elements contribute to the narrative. The focus in *The Exodus and the Reluctant Prophet* is on what the biblical text is telling us, explicitly as well as implicitly, about the world in which the ancient Israelites became transformed from a mass of ethnically related people into a nation bound by a divine covenant, and the extraordinary role that the Exodus played in the process. In the effort to comprehend and explain the highly complex biblical text, the author has consulted a wide range of commentaries and studies written over a period of some two millennia that have sought to understand the biblical texts from a wide variety of perspectives, many of which are presented for the reader's consideration, including many sources inaccessible to those without a working knowledge of Hebrew.

Compiled from materials originally published in *Encyclopedia Judaica*

The Geonic period from about the late sixth to mid-eleventh centuries is of crucial importance in the history of Judaism. The Geonim, for whom this era is named, were the heads of the ancient talmudic

academies of Babylonia. They gained ascendancy over the older Palestinian center of Judaism and were recognized as the leading religious and spiritual authorities by most of the world's Jewish population. The Geonim and their circles enshrined the Babylonian Talmud as the central canonical work of rabbinic literature and the leading guide to religious practice, and it was a predominantly Babylonian version of Judaism that was transplanted to newer centers of Judaism in North Africa and Europe. Robert Brody's book -- the first survey in English of the Geonic period in almost a century -- focuses on the cultural milieu of the Geonim and on their intellectual and literary creativity. Brody describes the cultural spheres in which the Geonim were active and the historical and cultural settings within which they functioned. He emphasizes the challenges presented by other Jewish institutions and individuals, ranging from those within the Babylonian Jewish setting -- specially the political leadership represented by the Exilarch -- to the competing Palestinian Jewish center and to sectarian movements and freethinkers who rejected rabbinic authority altogether. He also describes the variety of ways in which the development of Geonic tradition was affected by the surrounding non-Jewish cultures, both Muslim and Christian. "This book is a fresh and thorough examination of the period in question, a masterpiece of scholarship and erudition". -- Neil Danzig, Jewish Theological Seminary

The paucity of material, which has limited the study of Aramaic for too long, is gradually being alleviated. An ever growing body of well-edited texts is being made available to the scholarly world. These publications have provoked a number of important and penetrating linguistic and grammatical studies. Generally,

however, corresponding literary studies of these texts are still lacking. The present work is an attempt to add a literary approach to the earlier analyses. The study deals with Aramaic poetry of the period between c. 100 B.C.E. and c. 600 C.E. The discussion of the textual material is organized in a number of levels, one superimposed upon the other. The basis is formed by a close exegetical and literary reading of the poems to elucidate essential elements of content, style and form. Particular attention is paid to structure and composition as a function of the content of the poems, and to the use made by the poets of stylistic devices as structural elements.

The five studies in this volume focus on aspects of the narratives in the Five Books of Moses (The Pentateuch) that have frequently been glossed over by commentators, ancient and modern, and remain contentious to this very day. These studies address issues such as the complex triangular relationships between Sarah, Abraham, and Hagar as depicted in the book of Genesis; the 'bridegroom of blood' episode in the story of Moses and his Midianite wife Zipporah as related in the book of Exodus; the meaning and implications of the Golden Rule of biblical ethics as set forth in the book of Leviticus; the zealotry of Phinehas as seen from different perspectives in the book of Numbers; and the differences between the episodes of the Israelite spies as depicted in the books of Numbers and Deuteronomy. Although these studies do not claim to resolve the issues they examine, it is their purpose to stimulate further interest in the complexities of the ancient biblical narratives and the hidden insights about human nature they provide.

The Ten Commandments is an exploratory

tion into the background, meaning, and implications of the Decalogue from a Judaic perspective. Although they have become a universal symbol of Judeo-Christian civilization, it is only within Judaism that the Ten Commandments have a juridical function that goes beyond the mere announcement of a set of key precepts for man and society. In Judaism, the Ten Commandments are considered an epitome of the vast body of biblical legislation, a concise statement of a mere 172 Hebrew words that was presented as a credo that could easily be memorized and serve as a basic list of essentially easily understandable general rules. It was not expected that the ordinary citizen would remember or fully understand the plethora of commandments found in the Torah that demand compliance and observance by the children of Israel, their descendents, and those who chose to cast their lot in life with them. To understand the meaning and significance of the Ten Commandments in Judaic thought, it is therefore necessary to correlate them with the body of legislative enactments set forth in the Torah dealing with the same subject matter, a rather complex endeavor that this study hopes to facilitate.

This book explores three schools of fascinating, talented, and gifted scholars whose philosophies assimilated the Jewish and secular cultures of their respective homelands: they include halakhists from Rabbi Ettlinger to Rabbi Eliezer Berkowitz; Jewish philosophers from Isaac Bernays to Yeshayau Leibowitz; and biblical commentators such as Samuel David Luzzatto and Rabbi Umberto Cassuto. Running like a thread through their philosophies is the attempt to reconcile the Jewish belief in revelation with Western culture, Western philosophy, and the conclusions of scientific re-

search. Among these attempts is Luzzatto's "dual truth" approach. The Dual Truth is the sequel to the Ephraim Chamiel's previous book *The Middle Way*, which focused on the challenges faced by members of the "Middle Trend" in nineteenth-century Jewish thought.

Based on the biblical commentaries of rabbis and writers who were exiled from Spain in 1492, *The Land Is Mine* presents late medieval and early modern Iberian Jewish intellectuals as deeply concerned with questions about human relationships to land.

Moses Maimonides—a proud heir to the Andalusian tradition of Aristotelian philosophy—crafted a bold and original philosophical interpretation of Torah and Judaism. His son Abraham Maimonides is a fascinating maverick whose Torah commentary mediates between the philosophical interpretations of his father, the contextual approach of Biblical exegetes such as Saadya, and the Sufi-flavored illuminative mysticism of his Egyptian Pietist circle. This pioneering study explores the intersecting approaches of Moses and Abraham Maimonides to the spark of divine illumination and revelation of the divine name Ehyeh asher Ehyeh, "I am that I am / I will be who I will be."

The Book of Deuteronomy, the last of the Five Books of Moses or Pentateuch, consists in the main of Moses' final discourses delivered to the children of Israel as they stood poised to begin the conquest and settlement of the land upon which they were to build a national society. The central concern of Moses, as reflected in these discourses, is with the challenge of nation building, creating an Israelite nation out of a mélange of ethnically related tribes and clans that were just liberated from centuries of subjugation.

tion and servitude in a relatively sophisticated pagan environment. That which is to bind them together is not a compact between them but rather a common covenant with God to which all would be equal parties. Many of the terms of the covenant were revealed incrementally in the earlier books of the Pentateuch. However, it is only here in Deuteronomy that Moses begins to give them the clearly discernible shape of a constitution for the covenantal society to be established as a nation-state in its divinely assigned territory. Within the constitutional framework set forth in the work is a range of precepts, rules, and regulations governing both those matters that are between man and God and those between man and man, understood as the two sides of a common coin, the covenant. In the effort to comprehend and explain the highly complex biblical text, the author has consulted and cited a wide range of commentaries and studies written over a period of some two millennia that have sought to understand the biblical texts from a variety of perspectives, many of which are virtually inaccessible to those without a good working knowledge of Hebrew.

This book describes how medieval Jewish Bible scholars sought to answer the question of what is meant by the Angel's message from God to Abraham: 'Now I Know', as written in Genesis 22 verse 12. It examines these scholars' comments on the nineteen verses in Genesis that tell the story of Abraham's readiness to sacrifice his own son Isaac, the Aqedat Yişhaq. It explores the answers they found to the question of what, indeed, this story is trying to tell us. Is it a drastic way to condemn the practice of child sacrifice? Does it call for replacing human sacrifices with animal sacrifices? Is

it a trial by which the Almighty tests the fidelity of one of His followers? Or is it His way to show the world the nature of true belief? The book starts with an introduction to familiarize readers with the many and varied manifestations of the Aqedah theme in Jewish culture and with the developments of medieval Jewish Bible exegesis in general. Next, it offers translations and analyses of the classical medieval Jewish Bible commentaries that deal with the exegesis of Genesis 22, exploring the many angles from which the Aqedah story has been understood. No less than five centuries of medieval Aqedah exegesis are reviewed, from Saadya (882-942) to Isaac Abrabanel (1437-1508). These texts from the commentaries are combined with hermeneutical key passages by Moses Maimonides, Joseph Ibn Kaspi, Ḥasdai Crescas, and others, which were familiar to the minds of the exegetes, or which, conversely, reflect the impact of biblical Aqedah exegesis on religious thought. Together, the passages discussed illustrate the growth and development of Jewish Bible exegesis in dialogue with the rabbinic sources and with the various trends of thought and theology of their times. The consistent focus on the Aqedah constitutes a unifying theme, while the insights presented here greatly advance our understanding of the various developments in medieval Jewish Bible exegesis. Includes entries for maps and atlases.

This book takes issue with the widespread assumption that Maimonides' famous Thirteen Principles are the last word in Orthodox Jewish theology.

Medieval Jewish philosophers have been studied extensively by modern scholars, but even though their philosophical thinking was often shaped by their interpretation of the Bible, relatively little attention

has been paid to them as biblical interpreters. In this study, Robert Eisen breaks new ground by analyzing how six medieval Jewish philosophers approached the Book of Job. These thinkers covered are Saadiah Gaon, Moses Maimonides, Samuel ibn Tibbon, Zerahiah Hen, Gersonides, and Simon ben Zerah Duran. Eisen explores each philosopher's reading of Job on three levels: its relationship to interpretations of Job by previous Jewish philosophers, the way in which it grapples with the major difficulties in the text, and its interaction with the author's systematic philosophical thought. Eisen also examines the resonance between the readings of Job of medieval Jewish philosophers and those of modern biblical scholars. What emerges is a portrait of a school of Joban interpretation that was creative, original, and at times surprisingly radical. Eisen thus demonstrates that medieval Jewish philosophers were serious exegetes whom scholars cannot afford to ignore. By bringing a previously-overlooked aspect of these thinkers' work to light, Eisen adds new depth to our knowledge of both Jewish philosophy and biblical interpretation.

This book is a study of rabbinic legal interpretation (midrash) in Judaism's rabbinic, medieval, and modern periods. It shows how the rise of Reform, Conservative, and Orthodox Judaism in the modern period is tied to distinct attitudes toward the classical Jewish heritage, and specifically, toward rabbinic midrash halakha. What has gone unnoticed until now is the extent to which the fragmentation of modern Judaism is related to the interpretative foundations of classical Judaism. As this book demonstrates, spokespersons for any form of Judaism that engaged modernity on any level had to explain the basis for their rejection or continued acceptance of the au-

thority of rabbinically developed law. Inevitably and invariably, this need led them to address anew what were long-standing questions regarding the ancient interpretations of biblical law. Were they compelling? Were they reasonable? Were they still relevant? Each form of Judaism fashioned its own response to these challenges, and each argued forcefully against the responses of the other denominations. Jay M. Harris describes the fragmentation of modern Judaism in terms of each denomination's relationship to classical Judaism's system of interpretation in part two of this book.

The biblical narrative of the revelatory events at Mount Sinai, and the covenant with God entered into by the children of Israel, deals with the critical formative event in the religious and cultural history of ancient Israel. However, the narrative also contains a number of enigmatic passages that have long troubled readers of Scripture. In this book, the author undertakes to unravel some of these enigmas and to show how they contribute to a fuller understanding of the narrative. The focus in *The Convocation at Sinai* is on what the biblical text is telling us, explicitly as well as implicitly, about the world in which the ancient Israelites became transformed from a mass of ethnically related people into a nation bound by a divine covenant, and the extraordinary role that the covenant between God and Israel played in the creation of the religious civilization known as Judaism. In the effort to comprehend and explain the highly complex biblical text, the author has consulted a wide range of commentaries and studies written over a period of some two millennia that have sought to understand the biblical texts from a wide variety of perspectives, many of which are presented for the reader's consideration, including many sources inac-

cessible to those without a working knowledge of Hebrew.

The stories in the book of Genesis have been studied intensely for more than two millennia, providing a virtual mountain of commentary on every aspect of the narratives contained therein. Viewed from a traditional perspective, the stories related in Genesis are essentially graphic philosophical and theological narratives designed to convey profound ideas and insights that would otherwise be found only in tomes designed for students of philosophy and theology. A close substantive examination of these narratives, as presented in the Masoretic text but often lost in translation where the subtleties of the Hebrew wording are glossed over, will reveal a treasure trove of insights into the fundamental issues of religious belief, the divine-human relationship, freewill and determinism, the complex nature of humankind, and

theodicy, to name a few of the issues dealt with in the narratives. The present work contains four “deep dive” studies of key interrelated narratives in the first twenty-two chapters of Genesis that address the questions of the nature of man and his relationship to God and, most critically, the distinction between divine justice and human justice. It is the hope and expectation of the author of these studies that the reader will come away from them with even more questions about the biblical texts than they had before. As will be seen, there has always been little consensus over the centuries about the meanings of these essentially right-brained texts, primarily because they are constructed and written in a manner that tends to challenge left-brained analysis. Nonetheless, they remain intellectually important because the topics they deal with are of great pertinence to contemporary society.