

## The Prayer Of Rabbi Yishmael The Kohen Gadol

For thousands of years the Jewish tradition has been a source of moral guidance, for Jews and non-Jews alike. As the essays in this volume show, the theologians and practitioners of Judaism have a long history of wrestling with moral questions, responding to them in an open, argumentative mode that reveals the strengths and weaknesses of all sides of a question. The Jewish tradition also offers guidance for moral conduct by individuals, communities, and countries and shows how to motivate people to do the good and right thing. The Oxford Handbook of Jewish Ethics and Morality is a collection of original essays addressing these topics--historical and contemporary, as well as philosophical and practical--by leading scholars from around the world. The first section of the volume describes the history of the Jewish tradition's moral thought, from the Bible to contemporary Jewish approaches. The second part includes chapters on specific fields in ethics, including the ethics of medicine, business, sex, speech, politics, war, and the environment.

People who helped exterminate Jews during the shoah (Hebrew for "holocaust") often claimed that they only did what was expected of them. Intrigued by hearing the same response from individuals who rescued Jews, David R. Blumenthal proposes that the notion of ordinariness used to characterize Nazi evil is equally applicable to goodness. In this provocative book, Blumenthal develops a new theory of human behavior that identifies the social and psychological factors that foster both good and evil behavior. Drawing on lessons primarily from the shoah but also from well-known obedience and altruism experiments, My Lai, and the civil rights movement, Blumenthal deftly interweaves insights from psychology, history, and social theory to create a new way of looking at human behavior. Blumenthal identifies the factors — social hierarchy, education, and childhood discipline — that shape both good and evil attitudes and actions. Considering how our religious and educational institutions might do a better job of encouraging goodness and discouraging evil, he then makes specific recommendations for cultivating goodness in people, stressing the importance of the social context of education. He reinforces his ideas through stories, teachings, and case histories from the Jewish tradition that convey important lessons in resistance and goodness. Appendices include the ethical code of the Israel Defense Forces, material on non-violence from the Martin Luther King, Jr., Center, a suggested syllabus for a Jewish elementary school, and a list of prosocial sources on the Web, as well as a complete bibliography. If people can commit acts of evil without thinking, why can't even more commit acts of kindness? Writing with power and insight, Blumenthal shows readers of all faiths how we might replace patterns of evil with empathy, justice, and caring, and through a renewed attention to moral education, perhaps prevent future shoahs.

The phenomena we call magic and mysticism had a profound effect on the shaping of Judaism in late antiquity. In this volume, Michael D. Swartz offers a wide-ranging study of the purposes, world-views, ritual dynamics, literary forms, and social settings of ancient Jewish magic and mysticism and their function in religion and history. Based on the author's studies over the past few decades, he proposes innovative methods for the study of these two phenomena. The author focuses especially on the rituals of early Jewish magic and mysticism, their social contexts, and the textual dimension of this complex literature. He also offers introductions to these phenomena. Michael D. Swartz argues that the authors of these texts employed intricate technologies, literary and artistic forms, and physical practices to negotiate between the values and world-views of their cultures and the texture of everyday life.

This collection of primary texts introduces readers to the mystical literature of the world's great religious traditions. Beginning with an introduction by Steven T. Katz, a leading scholar of mysticism, the anthology comprises poetry, prayer, narrative, and other writings from Jewish, Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, Taoist, Confucianist, and Native American traditions. This collection provides readers not only with the primary mystical texts from each religious tradition, but with an explanation of the context of the source and tradition. Comparative Mysticism shows how the great mystical traditions of the world are deeply rooted in the religious traditions from which they originated. The contextual methodological approach taken throughout the anthology also addresses the critical question of what these mystical traditions, at their highest level, have in common. Despite the prevailing view that mystical traditions throughout the world are essentially similar, the presentation of the sources in this volume suggests that, in fact, the various traditions have distinct teachings and different metaphysical goals. The writings collected in Comparative Mysticism address the most fundamental and important methodological, epistemological, and hermeneutical questions regarding the study and interpretation of mysticism and mystical sources across cultures. This anthology will be an invaluable resource to students and scholars of mystic tradition for years to come.

In the timeless time of eternity, does God have a pre-history? What was God "before" (so to speak) God became GOD? Was there some terrible mistake involving culpability? If so, how did this God of pre-history handle His mistake? Availing himself of certain currents found in Scripture and in classical Rabbinic sources, the author makes the case that God is a being with moral fault. The author argues that how God handled His mistake was the process which allowed God to become the celebrated: THE GREAT THE MIGHTY THE TERRIBLE GOD who remains steadfast to his covenant and loving bond. [Nehemiah 9:32] And it all started with Noah: But Noah found grace/favor in the eyes of Hashem. [Genesis 6:8]

Fifteen years in the making, The Encyclopedia of Jewish Prayer is a monumental achievement. Never before has such a comprehensive resource been available to those searching for answers to questions on Jewish prayer. Macy Nulman has provided, in one unique, accessible volume, information on each and every prayer recited in the Ashkenazic and Sephardic traditions, creating an invaluable tool for study or quick reference. Prayer books are essentially cumulative anthologies that evolved over time as new prayers were added. Study of these prayers reveals insights into the history of Judaism, providing a deeper appreciation of the heritage that has sustained the Jewish people throughout the centuries. This volume, through its encyclopedic format, makes such a study easy and enjoyable. Arranged alphabetically by prayer, the encyclopedia entries include extensive liturgical information on the prayers, their composers and development, the laws and customs surrounding them, and their place in the service. All prayers, including not only prayers recited in the synagogue, but also the Grace After Meals and the prayers to be said before going to bed, prayers for special occasions such as weddings and circumcisions, prayers for the funeral ritual and for private devotion, are featured. The entries make extensive use of cross-referencing and bibliographical information to facilitate further study. In addition, the author discusses the many poetic insertions, known as piyyutim, recited on special Sabbaths, Holy Days, and festivals. Concise and easy to consult, The Encyclopedia of Jewish Prayer contains several indexes: two title indexes - one in Hebrew and one in transliteration - as well as an index of biblical verses and a name index. Additionally, a glossary defining technical terms and vocabulary associated with the prayers is provided. This important,

one-of-a-kind reference volume is ideal for scholars, students, and others who want to know more about Jewish tradition.

Over 150 tales from the Talmud, the Zohar, Jewish folktales, and Hasidic lore.

The High Holy Days -- Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur -- are for many Jews the highlight of the Jewish year. The liturgy for the Days of Awe are the longest and most complex of the year, leaving a large number of attendees without a complete understanding of the occasion's significance. *Entering The High Holy Days* provides historical background and interpretation of the ideas, practices, and liturgy and lends them contemporary relevance to today's Jews. Reuven Hammer received his ordination and doctorate in theology from the Jewish Theological Seminary of America. He is the former president of the Rabbinical Assembly and head of the Rabbinical Court of the Masorti Movement.

In exploring the social background of early Jewish mysticism, *Scholastic Magic* tells the story of how imagination and magic were made to serve memory and scholasticism. In the visionary literature that circulated between the fifth and ninth centuries, there are strange tales of ancient rabbis conjuring the angel known as Sar-Torah, the "Prince of the Torah." This angel endowed the rabbis themselves with spectacular memory and skill in learning, and then taught them the formulas for giving others these gifts. This literature, according to Michael Swartz, gives us rare glimpses of how ancient and medieval Jews who stood outside the mainstream of rabbinic leadership viewed Torah and ritual.

Through close readings of the texts, he uncovers unfamiliar dimensions of the classical Judaic idea of Torah and the rabbinic civilization that forged them. Swartz sets the stage for his analysis with a discussion of the place of memory and orality in ancient and medieval Judaism and how early educational and physiological theories were marshaled for the cultivation of memory. He then examines the unusual magical rituals for conjuring angels and ascending to heaven as well as the authors' attitudes to authority and tradition, showing them to have subverted essential rabbinic values even as they remained beholden to them. The result is a ground-breaking analysis of the social and conceptual background of rabbinic Judaism and ancient Mediterranean religions. Offering complete translations of the principal Sar-Torah texts, *Scholastic Magic* will become essential reading for those interested in religions in the ancient and medieval world, ritual studies, and popular religion. Originally published in 1996. The Princeton Legacy Library uses the latest print-on-demand technology to again make available previously out-of-print books from the distinguished backlist of Princeton University Press. These editions preserve the original texts of these important books while presenting them in durable paperback and hardcover editions. The goal of the Princeton Legacy Library is to vastly increase access to the rich scholarly heritage found in the thousands of books published by Princeton University Press since its founding in 1905.

Negative theology is the attempt to describe God by speaking in terms of what God is not. Historical affinities between Jewish modernity and negative theology indicate new directions for thematizing the modern Jewish experience. Questions such as, What are the limits of Jewish modernity in terms of negativity? Has this creative tradition exhausted itself? and How might Jewish thought go forward? anchor these original essays. Taken together they explore the roots and legacies of negative theology in Jewish thought, examine the viability and limits of theorizing the modern Jewish experience as negative theology, and offer a fresh perspective from which to approach Jewish intellectual history. This volume of the *My People's Prayer Book* series celebrates Shabbat morning and guides us to a new understanding of this day of rest, memory and joy.

*Permission to Believe* is a powerful statement of belief and faith by Samuel Karff, a prominent rabbi, spiritual leader, and outstanding figure in Jewish-Christian relations. Rabbi Karff, describing conversations he has had his entire career with agnostics, atheists, and other doubters, has been struck by the fact that "on some level my challengers wanted me to win the argument....Granting ourselves permission to believe does not require that we turn away from the 'ordinary world' but that we heed these deep intuitions of our heart....Life is not only a puzzle to solve but a mystery to embrace." The book contains 10 chapters and explores themes of brokenness, stubbornness, doubt, and faith. Chapter titles: What Is Faith? What Kind of Life Is This Anyway? Confronting the Obstacles to Faith, Recovering Faith, Prayer—The Vital Connection, Overcoming A Crisis of Faith, When Prayer Is Not Enough, The Power of Love, Living in a Broken World, Sustaining Faith in Our Later Years, Dance, Laughter, and Hope.

Not unlike Rimbaud's "batteau ivre," Judaism drifts further and further away from its life-force and source without which Judaism cannot long endure. This book is a challenge to the true "talmudim" within Jewish Orthodoxy to boldly reclaim for Judaism and reinscribe into Jewish study and practice that which was suppressed at the very dawn of Rabbinic Judaism. Only by so doing can Judaism be nourished once more by its life-force and source. Further, only Jewish Orthodoxy is equipped for this life-saving task. If it doesn't get accomplished by Orthodoxy it will not get accomplished at all.

Includes text of Maaseh merkavah in English translation.

Throughout the generations, Jews have been inspired and guided by the tales of gedolim, our great masters of piety and wisdom. Simcha Raz's "Tales of the Righteous", newly translated by Rabbi Dov Peretz Elkins, brings the lives of these masters to life. Raz's pithy vignettes and awe-inspiring tales show that together with their brilliance in Torah study, these rabbis were also paragons of sensitive, ethical behaviour.

This landmark collection showcases the writings of Hayim Greenberg, a founder of the Labor Zionist movement in America and a foremost writer, thinker, and activist in the fields of twentieth-century Jewish culture and politics.

In many of the world's religions, both polytheistic and monotheistic, a seemingly enigmatic and paradoxical image is found--that of the god who worships. Various interpretations of this seeming paradox have been advanced. Some suggest that it represents sacrifice to a higher deity. Proponents of anthropomorphic projection say that the gods are just "big people" and that images of human religious action are simply projected onto the deities. However, such explanations do not do justice to the complexity and diversity of this phenomenon. In *Religion of the Gods*, Kimberley C. Patton uses a comparative approach to take up anew a longstanding challenge in ancient Greek religious iconography: why are the Olympian gods depicted on classical pottery making libations? The sacrificing gods in ancient Greece are

compared to gods who perform rituals in six other religious traditions: the Vedic gods, the heterodox god Zurvan of early Zoroastrianism, the Old Norse god Odin, the Christian God and Christ, the God of Judaism, and Islam's Allah. Patton examines the comparative evidence from a cultural and historical perspective, uncovering deep structural resonances while also revealing crucial differences. Instead of looking for invisible recipients or lost myths, Patton proposes the new category of "divine reflexivity." Divinely performed ritual is a self-reflexive, self-expressive action that signals the origin of ritual in the divine and not the human realm. Above all, divine ritual is generative, both instigating and inspiring human religious activity. The religion practiced by the gods is both like and unlike human religious action. Seen from within the religious tradition, gods are not "big people," but other than human. Human ritual is directed outward to a divine being, but the gods practice ritual on their own behalf. "Cultic time," the symbiotic performance of ritual both in heaven and on earth, collapses the distinction between cult and theology each time ritual is performed. Offering the first comprehensive study and a new theory of this fascinating phenomenon, Religion of the Gods is a significant contribution to the fields of classics and comparative religion. Patton shows that the god who performs religious action is not an anomaly, but holds a meaningful place in the category of ritual and points to a phenomenologically universal structure within religion itself.

Rabbi Isaac has gathered a wide range of teachings about Jewish worship to help the reader feel more at home with the activity of prayer. The topics addressed include the language of liturgy and the development of the prayerbook, major concepts of important prayers, and terminology.

Examines the origins of the En Yaaqov in the tumultuous medieval period and the motivations of its creator, exiled Spanish rabbi Jacob ibn Habib.

The original teachings of the Baal Shem Tov, the founder of chasidism, on more than fifty subjects.

From tales of Adam, Moses, and other biblical figures, to the fall of Lucifer and the quarrel of the sun and moon, an anthology of Jewish myth presents seven hundred key stories and through extensive commentary places them in context with the literature of the world.

ISRAEL; the people, the nation, the religion. While remaining acutely aware of the shortcomings of both Heidegger and Derrida, the writer nevertheless uses insights and terminology from their discourse in the service of exposing the historical and thought trends of hegemonic proportions which have had the effect of deracinating Judaism from ISRAEL. The writer makes the claim that a "critical/spelunkative" analysis of what went into that final and anonymous redaction of the Babylonian Talmud points the way towards a retrieval of Judaism's "burning living center." The writer further contends that such a retrieval can have the effect of "returning" [teshuba] Judaism back to ISRAEL.

This volume of the My People's Prayer Book series underscores the mystery of the twilight moments and the opportunity for insight that they bring.

In this final volume of A Theological Commentary to the Midrash, Jacob Neusner presents both what is common to the animating theology of Rabbinic Judaism in all its documentary components, and what is unique to Mekhilta, attributed to R. Ishmael. Neusner alleges that each Rabbinic document has its particular problem to solve, a problem set forth by the book of Scripture upon which it is focused, around which it is organized.

The first book in any language ever to reveal the methodology of the ancient Kabbalists, this is one of the oldest and most important of all ancient Kabbalistic texts. All references, both to manuscripts and printed material are carefully cited, and the complete Hebrew text of The Bahir is included.

Exegesis - interpretation and explanation of sacred texts - is the quintessence of rabbinic thought. This volume delineates the connections between biblical interpretation and Jewish religious thought.

Angelic beings can be found throughout the Hebrew Bible, and by late antiquity the archangels Michael and Gabriel were as familiar as the patriarchs and matriarchs, guardian angels were as present as one's shadow, and praise of the seraphim was as sacred as the Shema prayer. Mika Ahuvia recovers once-commonplace beliefs about the divine realm and demonstrates that angels were foundational to ancient Judaism. Ancient Jewish practice centered on humans' relationships with invisible beings who acted as intermediaries, role models, and guardians.

Drawing on non-canonical sources—incantation bowls, amulets, mystical texts, and liturgical poetry—Ahuvia shows that when ancient men and women sought access to divine aid, they turned not only to their rabbis or to God alone but often also to the angels. On My Right Michael, On My Left Gabriel spotlights these overlooked stories, interactions, and rituals, offering a new entry point to the history of Judaism and the wider ancient Mediterranean and Near Eastern world in which it flourished.

Humor has had a profound effect on the way the Jewish people see the world, and has sustained them through millennia of hardships and suffering. God Laughed reviews, organizes, and categorizes the humor of the ancient Jewish texts—the Hebrew Bible, the Talmud, and Midrash—in a clear, readable, and accessible manner. These works have influenced the Jewish people in many ways, and all are replete with humor and wit. Inevitably, this oeuvre of Jewish humor has itself influenced generations of comics, as well as genres of humor. The authors use examples of Biblical humor from several broad categories, including irony, sarcasm, wordplay, humorous names, humorous imagery, and humorous situations. Because their primary purpose is not to entertain, but to teach humanity how to live the ideal life, much of the humor in the Talmud and the Midrash has a single purpose: to demonstrate that evil is wrong and even, at times, ludicrous. This may help explain why approximately 1,500 years after its closing, the Talmud is still such a fascinating work. God Laughed is the latest addition to Transaction's Jewish Studies series.

This book represents the first English translation of Maaseh Merkabah, which is part of a body of early Jewish mystical texts known as palace (hekhalot) or chariot (merkabah) texts. Through a complex dialogue, a rabbi-teacher reveals to his student the techniques of ascent, methods for traveling up through the heavens by means of recitation of hymns. The teacher gives vivid descriptions of the heavenly realm, filled with flaming chariots and a chorus of angels engaged in praising the deity. The emphasis in the text is on language, on the correct recitation of the words to achieve the ritual. The particular focus is on the divine Name, which can be employed in unusual ways. The author relates the structures of the text to the linguistic ideologies. The complex structures of the text begin to unfold in light of the theories about the ritual function of language. The hymns include praise of the deity and voces magicae, words that have no semantic meaning, but draw attention to sounds of letters in God's name. Since God's name is used to create the world, the sounds of the name are creative, but the Name cannot be spoken. The hymns create a multiplicity of Name-equivalents, words that have the functional status of the divine Name and which can be employed in ritual. Voces magicae are not so much nonsense as they are logical extensions of the linguistic theory. The final chapter surveys recent theories of ritual language and then uses the conclusions from the study to refine the general issue of the relationship between the semantic meaning of words and their ritual efficacy. The dialogic structure of the text permits the reader to become the next student in a chain going back to the deity by means of Moses.

The contributors and editors dedicate this volume of research to Professor Stefan C. Reif on the occasion of his 75th birthday. Together these twenty papers reflect our appreciation for his exemplary scholarship and lifelong commitment to acquaint our world with the theological and cultural riches of Jewish Studies. This collection reflects the breadth of Prof. Reif's interests insofar as it is a combination of Second Temple studies and Jewish studies on the roots of Jewish prayer and liturgy which is his main field of expertise. Contributions on biblical and second temple studies cover Amos, Ben Sira, Esther, 2 Maccabees, Judith, Wisdom, Qumran Psalms, and James. Contributions on Jewish studies cover nuptial and benedictions after meals, Adon Olam, Passover Seder, Amidah, the Medieval Palestinian Tefillat ha-Shir, and other aspects of rabbinic liturgy. Moreover, the regional diversity of scholars from Israel, continental Europe, the United Kingdom, Ireland and North America mirrors Stefan's travels as a lecturer and the reach of his publications. The volume includes a foreword of appreciation and a bibliographic list of Professor Reif's works.

Features the authentic Hebrew text with a new translation designed to let people know what prayers to say. introductions tell the reader what to look for in the the prayer service, how to use the commentaries, how to search for and find meaning in the prayer book.

Mekhilta de-Rabbi Ishmael is a classic collection of midrash. It contains commentary on a large part of the Book of Exodus (chapters 12 to 23) and represents the two main modes of interpretation: the halakhah (legal doctrine), and the aggadah (moral and religious teachings). The work also contains allusions to historical events and ancient legends not found elsewhere. A new introduction by noted scholar David Stern highlights the work, now published in a convenient two-volume set. It retains the original text from the JPS 1933 edition, reset in a modern, readable typeface, with Hebrew and English on facing pages and the original indexes. This classic work is widely recognized as a model of meticulous and thorough scholarship. Its translation is accurate, straightforward, and usable by scholars, students, and lay readers. Out of print for many years, it will be heralded as an important reissue that should belong to every rabbi, rabbinical school, and Jewish Studies professor, and will be an important addition to synagogue libraries and public libraries with Judaica collections

Jewish prayers are presented in traditional Hebrew, accompanied by both a modern translation and commentary by Jewish scholars and teachers, who cover the prayers' connections to the Bible, history, traditional law, Kabbalistic wisdom, feminism, modern developments, and more.

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