

קורות חיים ורשימת פירסומים 3.08.2015

א. פרטים אישיים

- יליד ארגנטינה, 21.11.1960.
- שנת עלייה: 31.1.1980.

ב. השכלה

- Ph.D - מחשבת ישראל, האוניברסיטה העברית, נמסר לסנאט האוניברסיטה ב 20.1.92. אושר על ידי סנאט האוניברסיטה ב- 5.3.93.
- סמיכה לרבנות, J.T.S (מכון שכטר למדעי היהדות), 1992.
- תואר בחינוך, J.T.S (מכון שכטר למדעי היהדות), 1992. במהלך לימודים אלה נטלתי חלק בקורסים לפיתוח תוכניות לימודים בהנחיית פרופ' דוד זיסנון מאוניברסיטת תל-אביב.
- M.A - לימודי יהדות, J.T.S (קאמפוס ירושלמי - מכון שכטר למדעי היהדות), 1992.
- M.A - מחשבת ישראל, האוניברסיטה העברית, 1985 (בהצטיינות).
- B.A - מחשבת ישראל ופילוסופיה, האוניברסיטה העברית, 1983 (בהצטיינות).
- תעודת הוראה במחשבת ישראל, האוניברסיטה העברית, 1984.

ג. מינויים ודרגות אקדמיות

- פרופסור חבר 2015 -
- 1999-2014 מרצה בכיר למחשבת ישראל במכון שכטר ללימודי היהדות.
- 1993-1999 מרצה למחשבת ישראל במכון שכטר ללימודי היהדות היהדות.

תעסוקה אקדמית

ד.

- 2015- פרופסור חבר
- 1995-2015 מרצה למחשבת ישראל
- 1995-2005 דיקן לעניינים אקדמיים במכון שכטר למדעי היהדות.
- 1994-1995. סגן דיקן לעניינים אקדמיים - מכון שכטר ללימודי היהדות.
- 1993 - עוזר לדיקן - מכון שכטר ללימודי היהדות.
- 1985 - מתרגל בחוג למחשבת ישראל. במסגרת זו העברתי שני קורסים סמסטריילים: (א) "נהריים" לפ.רוזנצוויג; (ב) "מורה נבוכי הזמן" לרנ"ק.
- 1985 - עוזר מחקר של פרופ' י. סרמוניטה.
- 1982-1985 - עוזר מחקר של פרופ' שלום רוזנברג.

תפקידים ציבוריים ופעילות חינוכית

ה.

- 1991-1992. מורה לתושב"ע ורכז פיתוח פעילויות החינוך היהודי הלא-פורמלי בבית הספר התיכון המסורתי בירושלים.
- 1988-1991. עורך "עיוני שבת" - הגות ומדרש לפרשיות השבוע. התנועה המסורתית
- 1989 - יועץ פדגוגי לפרוייקט חינוכי בבית התפוצות.
- 1987 - מנחה ב"מרכז למורשת היהדות ע"ש פנחס ספיר". התפקיד כלל הנחיה ופיתוח תוכניות.
- 1985-1987 - שרות צבאי בחיל החינוך (במסגרת "המדרשה לחינוך מפקדים בהר-גילה). תפקדתי כקצין הסברה, הנחתי סמינרים חינוכיים לקצינים ונגדים. מאוחר יותר, הייתי מפקד המרכזיה הפדגוגית. לאחר מכן, הייתי מ"מ מפקד יחידת החינוך בבית החיל.
- 1985 - מדריך בפרוייקט שיקום ב-א.ק.י.ם.
- 1984 - מורה ליהדות - מכון למדריכי חו"ל בקרית מוריה, ירושלים.

רשימת פרסומים

ספרים

1. השכלה, פרגמטיזם ואמונה – עין במשנתו הפילוסופית של נפתלי הירץ אולמאן, עבודת מחקר לשם קבלת התואר דוקטור, האוניברסיטה העברית, ירושלים 1992.
 2. קול מן הערפל - אברהם יהושע השל, בין פנומנולוגיה למיסטיקה, תל-אביב 1999.
 3. אלכסנדר אבן חן, תרגום + מבוא: אברהם יהושע השל, השבת, תל-אביב 2003.
 4. אלכסנדר אבן-חן, עקדת יצחק בפרשנות המיסטית והפילוסופית של המקרא, תל-אביב 2006.
- ביקורת על הספר פורסמה על ידי: David R. Blumenthal, Jay and .Leslie Cohen Professor of Judaic Studies, Emory University והתפרסמה ב: [Volume 15 *Reviews in Religion & Theology*](#) Issue 2, Pages 269 – 272. מצורפת בהמשך.
 - כמו כן, לכבוד הספר נערך ערב עיון במכון ון ליר בירושלים (6.1.2008). בהשתתפות: פרופ' רחל אליאור (האוניברסיטה העברית בירושלים) (יו"ר), פרופ' זאב הרוי (האוניברסיטה העברית בירושלים), פרופ' משה אידל (האוניברסיטה העברית בירושלים) ופרופ' רות קרטון בלום (אוניברסיטת בן-גוריון).
5. Alexander Even-Chen and Ephraim Meir, *Between Heschel and Buber. A Comparative Study*, Boston, Academic Studies Press, 2012. – פרופ' אפרים מאיר מהמחלקה לפילוסופיה יהודית באוניברסיטת בר-אילן מומחה להגותו של מרטין בובר. אני מומחה להגותו של אברהם יהושע השל.
 - לכבוד הספר נערך דיון בסמינר המחלקתי של החוג לפילוסופיה יהודית באוניברסיטת בר-אילן (20.5.2013). בהשתתפות: ד"ר חנוך בן פזי (אוניברסיטת בר-אילן), פרופ' רון מרגולין (אוניברסיטת תל-אביב), ד"ר עינת רמון (מכון שכטר למדעי היהדות).

- על הספר נכתבו דברי הערכה ומאמרי ביקורת על ידי: Prof. Edward Prof. Steven Kepnes , K. Kaplan (Brandeis University) Dr. Michael Marmor (Hebrew Union ,Colgate University) פרופ' יהודע College - Jewish Institute of Religion, Jerusalem) עמיר (Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion, Jerusalem). דברים אלה מצורפים בהמשך.

Review of my Books:

A. Review of my Book: *The Binding of Isaac - Mystical and Philosophical Interpretations of the Bible* (Hebrew), Tel-Aviv 2006.

David R. Blumenthal, Jay and Leslie Cohen Professor of Judaic Studies, Emory University. The Review was published in: [Reviews in Religion & Theology](#), Volume 15 Issue 2, Pages 269 – 272.

"I have been studying the story of the binding of Isaac (Genesis, chapter 22) for as long as I can remember and I thought I had a pretty good grasp of the range of the interpretational literature until I read Alexander Even Chen's new book on the subject. The Akeda (from the Hebrew for "binding") is only nineteen verses long but it has produced a whole library of poetry, short stories, art, and music, as well as commentary. Even Chen, instead of presenting a review of the exegetical traditions, has given us a typology of readings of this well-known biblical narrative.

After a brief introduction, Even Chen deals with the Akeda in the literature of Hasidei Ashkenaz (northern Europe, during the Christian crusades). Rabbi Elazar of Worms, following the rabbinic midrash, sees in this story the hand of Satan (read, the crusaders) who is totally vanquished by Abraham (read, the Jews). Isaac is petrified into silence. He is killed, resurrected, and is about to be slaughtered again

when the angel stops Abraham. He, then, goes to heaven until he is healed. (Read, the Jews killed in the crusades will be resurrected and healed.) Sarah, upon hearing what happened, chokes and dies. This reading of the Akeda is mirrored in the horrifying poetry written at that time that depicts fathers slaying their children, as Abraham slaughtered his, so that the crusaders would not defile them.

Even Chen next deals with the philosopher's reading. Maimonides (d. 1204, Egypt) maintains that the Akeda never actually happened. Rather, the story is part of a prophetic moment. It is a metaphor for an event that happened in the consciousness of Abraham who, at the beginning of the Akeda, is in a dream state (level four of prophecy) and, at the end, has advanced to speech-with-an-angel (level eleven). In this latter state, Abraham realizes that the Divine would never want child sacrifice, an error he had made at the beginning of the story in a lower state of mind. The Akeda, thus, is a lesson in intellectual perfection. It also has a political moral: that, ultimately, love and fear of God are embodied in obedience.

Even Chen then approaches the Akeda from the point of view of the Zohar (c. 1293, Spain) in which the Akeda is also interpreted as a moment in spiritual development and praxis. Abraham's leaving Mesopotamia and wandering in the Holy Land is interpreted as his search for his true character as the embodiment the sefira of Hesed (grace). However, after arriving in the south (Hesed), he still cannot effect tikkun (rehabilitation of the Divine) because he has no identification with the sefira of Gevura (judgment). In the Akeda, Abraham experiences extreme judgment, even replying brusquely to Isaac's question. This enables him, then, to combine Hesed and Gevura and generate Tiferet (mercy). In that combination, he effects tikkun. As such, Abraham serves as a model for all theosophic meditation. (I

disagree with Even Chen that the sefirot of the Zohar seek “balance”; I think it is more correct to say that they seek an interactive flow of energy.)

Having contrasted historical, philosophical, and mystical readings of the Akeda, Even Chen moves to Abarbanel (d. 1508, Venice) who, together with others, believes that Abraham misunderstands God’s command to sacrifice Isaac and, hence, fails the test. It is the angel who corrects him.

Moving into the pre-modern period, Even Chen deals with the hasidic figure, Rabbi Levi Yitzhak of Berditchev (d. 1810, eastern Europe). This chapter is long and, in my opinion, confused, partly because Even Chen tries to read the anthologized homilies of Levi Yitzhak as one continuous text. There are, it seems to me, five themes that Even Chen identifies: first, the Lurianic motif of contraction, shattering, and rehabilitation of divine sparks; second, the zoharic motif of the union of Hesed and Gevura; third, the hasidic motif of the annihilation of the self through shedding of this-worldly habits in order to mystically “cling” to God; fourth, the hasidic motif of the contrast between love of God (“devoting one’s soul to God”; *mesirut nefesh*) and fear of God (meticulous observance of the commandments); and fifth, the hasidic motif of the role of the *tsaddik* (*rebbe*) as the one who must redeem the hidden divine sparks from their shells of evil. Levi Yitzhak touches on all of these themes and makes the point that, both in his leaving Mesopotamia and in the Akeda, Abraham experiences 'total devotion of his soul to God' and, hence, mystical annihilation into the Godhead (*Ayin*). The difference between Abraham’s initial and his last mystical experience is that, in the first encounter, Abraham experiences God only for himself; the mystical experience has no rehabilitative power. However, in the Akeda, Abraham’s experience of God

'sweetens the judgments,' i.e., it rehabilitates the divine and other realms. In this, Levi Yitzhak adds to the zoharic and Lurianic teachings.

From the modern period, Even Chen chooses Samson Raphael Hirsch (d. 1888, Germany), Rabbi I. Kook (d. 1935, Palestine), and Abraham Joshua Heschel (d. 1972, New York). Rav Kook, a kabbalist who was also the first Chief Rabbi of Palestine (not, the State of Israel), believes that reality is an illusion and that one must penetrate to the most inner self, the point where one meets the divine image, and free that self from all social, intellectual, physical, and moral norms – just as God, Godself, is beyond all such limits. Abraham tries this all his life and, in the Akeda, he finally achieves this breakthrough by using supernatural force to split the wood and by shattering all moral norms and accepting God's command to sacrifice his child. Isaac, too, accepts this breaking of all intellectual and moral norms as the only true way to the inner self / spark and, hence, to God Who is above all law. In the moment of putting Isaac on the altar, Abraham and Isaac's souls are filled with divine light and holiness, and they are not even conscious that what they are doing is contrary to all (human) ethical norms. It is the angel who, in stopping Abraham, brings him back to earthly reality. The centrality of self-discovery in Rav Kook's thought and in his poems (cited by Even Chen at the end and the beginning of this chapter) is shocking.

Even Chen closes the book with Heschel who dealt with the Akeda in his early work on the prophets and, again, in his last work on the Kotzker Rebbe and Kierkegaard. The latter is the fuller interpretation. In it, Heschel teaches that Abraham frees himself from the lies of normal reality and confronts the Absolute in his own total nakedness. Abraham's faith is in his separating himself from his ego and society, and in following God wherever God takes him. To this,

Heschel adds that Abraham survives the test of faith twice: once in the beginning when God commands him to sacrifice Isaac, and Abraham must give up all his dreams and hopes for the future as well as his love for his son; and again, in the moment when the angel countermands the original command, and Abraham must give up all the energy he has invested in worshipping God as he was told. The compassionate nature of the angel's counter-order, however, reassures Abraham of God's love as the dispute over Sodom reassured him of God's justice.

What a fine typology – a very good selection of strongly contrasting readings of the same nineteen verses. What an intelligent way to show how some masters have read this most masterful of stories. This book deserves to be translated into English and published for a wider audience."

B. Review of my Book: *Alexander Even-Chen, The Binding of Isaac - Mystical and Philosophical Interpretations of the Bible* (Hebrew), Tel-Aviv 2006.

1. Prof. Yehoyada Amir, Hebrew Union College, Jerusalem
Lector's Review:

At your request I have read thoroughly Meir and Even-Chen's book, offered for publication at "Academic Studies Press". I hereby submit my review.

The book is focused on a detailed study of two most influential, respected and sometimes controversial twentieth century Jewish philosophies. Buber and Heschel contributed substantially, to the making of liberal Judaism and the shaping of the philosophy of Jewish religion. In addition they can both be credited as major and influential contributors to the perception of Hebrew bible Hassidism among Jews and Christians all over the globe. Christians.

The fact that they were both close and distanced from each other, personally, theologically and as hermeneutics, is visual almost from the first glance at their biography and writings. It is repeatedly mentioned in the scholarly-philosophic discourse over the last generations. Nevertheless, this commonly agreed-upon insight was never realized in a systematic manner. Remarks, referring to specific issues were made from time to time, most commonly out of sympathy to one of the two and reservations from the other, or in order to emphasize and defend Heschel's independence from Buber and to situate him as far as possible from Buber's gigantic shade. Meir and Even-Chen took upon themselves the challenge of a detailed analysis of those dimensions in Buber's and Heschel's works that allow a comparative study. They put aside almost altogether the question of influence versus independence and offer a parallel reading of the two in order to point to areas of closeness and of essential differences.

Meir and Even-Chen chose to organize their study in a thematic order, focusing each time on one philosophic-scholarly issue (the perception of *Mensch* and of human dialogue, the notion of God and of human-Divine relationships, the Hebrew bible and its interpretation, *Mitzva* and religious deed, Hassidism, Zionism, Jesus and Christianity). This thematic system allows, and in a matter of fact compels, to view each of the discussed philosophies as a unified whole, giving only minor attention to questions of inner changes within the thought of these philosophers. They argue convincingly that Heschel's philosophy was quite stable and took the same direction throughout his life. Such a perception allows them to discuss his very early poetry, written in Yiddish, together with his later, scholarly and philosophically designed writings. The large selection of this poetry brought in the book

in Yiddish as well as in English translation, is one of the most gracious contributions the book contains.

As to Buber the state of affairs is more complex. It is well known and acknowledged that there was an essential shift in his philosophy between the early “mystic” period and the late dialogical one, first to be fully expressed in “I and Thou” (1923), though Buber’s interpreters would not necessarily understand this shift in the same manner. The authors of this book also point to the further progression in Buber’s thought after 1923, mostly under Rosenzweig’s influence as well as the impact of the intensive reading\translating of the Hebrew bible. They choose to focus most of their reading in “I and Thou”, rightly viewed as the root for all further developments. It is certainly a reasonable choice, taking in account Buber’s own notion that “I and thou” is the first step in his philosophic work as well as the enormous echo it had and has. Nevertheless the choice to place at the heart of the discussion a somewhat immature text cannot but have its price. In order to deal with this difficulty the authors choose to bring, from time to time, a large selection of later writings broadening the discussion’s scope.

Another necessary price for the fruitful choice to organize their book in a thematic order is that both philosophies’ “organic” nature and the interconnectivity they draw between various themes and dimensions cannot be fully and systematically discussed. For example: the inter-relatedness of the perception of the bible on the one hand and of the *Mitzvot* on the other in Buber’s thought; the inter-relatedness of Heschel’s notion of the bible and Rabbinic literature on the one hand and of interfaith dialogue on the other. The book’s ordering also compels the authors to turn quite a few times to the same texts, issues

and motifs. It is evident that this is an unavoidable price; comparative study requires such an ordering. A careful look by a sophisticated lingual editor might help minimizing this price.

The authors develop in most cases two parallel, separate discussions, pretty rarely commenting on instances of closeness or distance from the other philosopher, leaving the comparative dimension to the closing paragraphs of each chapter. As a result, the reader is provided with a fair and independent discussion of the respective philosopher, before being confronted with the comparative dimension. It also frees the discussion from a repeatedly engagement with the as-if unavoidable question of Buber's influence over Heschel and gives way to phenomenological discussion, concentrating on the contents rather than on "sources".

The right place for an overview, the question of influence included, is in the introduction and conclusion, which I would suggest the authors to consider to re-design. The introduction is, in my mind, much too detailed in mentioning all Heschel's encounters and correspondence with Buber. Fewer details would give way to a further reflection about these "oedipal" relationships (characteristic also to many other philosophers deeply influenced by Buber but energetically aiming to distance themselves from him and harshly criticizing his philosophy). The conclusion can also be, in my mind, sharpened and widened. The brief and good report the authors give about the issues discussed in the book's various chapters should be followed by an overview, reflecting about the overall relationships between these to giants, so close and so different in their "*shoresh-neshama*". The reader should hear here the authentic voice\voices of the authors.

The book would also benefit if the authors would dare to provide the reader with their analysis of the grounding and significant

of the closeness and distance they have defined in each case. A wonderful example for that which the reader would love to get in many more cases is the authors' observation that the essential differences between Heschel and Buber concerning God, prayer and dialoging with Him, are rooted much more in the anthropologic ground, namely in the essential difference between their perception of the human.

Buber's and Heschel's philosophies are of quite different backgrounds, an issue the authors discuss in various places. Many of their preferences, emphasis and stands should be seen from the viewpoint of these backgrounds. Such is, for example, Buber's focusing on the Hebrew bible, reading it much more in the context of near-eastern ancient cultures than in that of Rabbinic hermeneutics; it is a clear continuum of a powerful, dominating direction of 19th century Liberal Judaism on the one hand and secular Zionism on the other. Buber's critical reading, totally independent from Protestant dominating bible criticism, is parallel to that of many other Jewish bible readers of the time (Hermann Cohen, Yehezkel Kaufmann, Umberto Cassuto are just a few names to be mentioned in this context). To the same extent, Heschel's strong holding of Rabbinic hermeneutic of the bible in particular and of Rabbinic literature at large is a clear continuum of pre-Modern as well as Orthodox approaches (Kuk and Soloveitscik are two clear examples). The same is true for Buber's perception of Jesus as a Jewish spiritual figure and his attempt to distinct between him and Christianity (to be understood as Paul's creation). Buber goes here in the same direction so many 19th and 20th century Jewish thinkers, authors and artists were doing; no surprise that Heschel, being shaped in an entirely different atmosphere thou fully aware of these tendencies, did not take this course.

I raise this issue of backgrounds since in many cases it is evident that both Heschel and Buber stick to their positions as “natural” and even “self-evident”. Only the encounter between them could have taught both of them that those positions are far from being “natural”. This sphere of reflections remains untouched and in this book and will certainly evoke further discussions. I believe this issue and its implications should be discussed in a much more systematic manner than that which the authors have chosen.

By the way, it should be noted that though Buber was critical of Christianity, as shown by the authors, and much more interested in Jesus the Jew rather than in Pauline Christianity, he did have a formative role in the first attempt to develop a Christian Jewish dialogue. I would warmly recommend that the pre-Holocaust “*Die Kreatur*” will be mentioned in the book’ as well as Buber’s engagement in early stages of post-Holocaust Jewish Christian dialogue to which Heschel was a most powerful successor.

Comparative study of Buber and Heschel is foremost fruitful in the dimensions, chosen by the current book’s authors, in which both of them express their minds. Nevertheless, it is also important to draw attention to area in which only one is expressive or in which one was much more expressive than the other. Here one may examine the thinker’s horizons and overall context. It is important to emphasize the essential difference between Buber’s deep, critical, committed and life-long engagement in Zionist dilemmas in contrary to Heschel sentimental, occasional statement. For Buber Zionism should have been at the essence of Jewish renewal; Heschel was a Diaspora Jew, excited by Israel’s 1967 victory. Even more so, in order to understand the significance of the paralleling areas, discussed in the book, one should have in mind also the entire scope of areas in which Buber was engaged

(sociology, philosophy of education etc.), or those in which Heschel alone was active (scholarly research of Rabbinic literature or philosophy of [Jewish] prayer). These perspectives are left by the authors to future discussions, to be based on their findings and insights.

The authors relate to a large number of secondary sources, contemporary and previous generation scholars. In some cases they cite them, fully accepting their views; in other – criticizing them or arguing in a different direction. Having said that I must say that I was quite uncomfortable with the absence of almost all prominent contemporary Israeli Buber scholars (just to mention a few: Avnon, Barzilai, Turner, Mrgolin, Koren, Schweid, Schwarz, Shapira). It is not too late to add references to (some of) them (and maybe to consider also the option relating to Dror Bondi, a Young Israeli Heschel scholar). The book would surely benefit if those scholarly efforts would be allowed into its horizons.

To summarize, I strongly believe that the book offered to you is worthy of publication. It is a considerable contribution to the study of Buber and of Heschel and even more so to that of the relationships between these philosophies. It is an important book which will evoke further discussions and studies, some, presumably by the same authors; others – by their readers. It is a wonderful example for dialogical work, both by its theme and by the way it was carried out. The book will find a dignified place in the academic and philosophic Jewish book-shelve.

2. Edward K. Kaplan, Brandeis University, Biographer of Abraham Joshua Heschel . on the Cover of the Book:

“Two passionate Israeli scholars, Alexander Even-Chen and Ephraim Meir, have marked a new stage of intellectual and spiritual

history in their ground-breaking comparative study of Martin Buber and Abraham Joshua Heschel, two giants of Jewish thought, spirituality, scholarship, and moral activism of the twentieth century. Heschel and Buber knew each other well, even as they developed competing interpretations of revelation, Hasidism, and the Hebrew prophets. The authors also provide the valuable background of Rosenzweig, Levinas, and Christian thinkers. Jews and non-Jews alike will appreciate this lucid introduction and study in depth, highlighting issues of continuing concern and controversy, humanism and theology, religious law and the living God, the Bible, Christianity, Zionism and the State of Israel.”

3. Steven Kepnes, Finard Professor in Jewish Studies, Colgate University. On the cover of the Book:

“In this finely researched and highly insightful study the authors trace out parallels and differences between two seminal modern Jewish thinkers. Through systematic analysis of both correspondence and books Even-Chen and Meir show how Buber and Heschel started out from similar origins in Poland and Germany and came to be leading Jewish thinkers in Europe and Israel (Buber) and in America (Heschel). The authors use Buber and Heschel to present us with a portrait of modern Jewish thought with two dynamic poles, one — a kind of secular religiosity represented by Buber, and the other — a modern traditionalism represented by Heschel. What is truly fascinating however is that Even-Chen and Meir show that both thinkers ground their visions in the same texts: those of the Bible and Hasidism. However, out of these texts Buber and Heschel not only seek to craft new moral and theological visions of Judaism but also attempt to relate Judaism to Christianity and the larger modern world.”

4. Michael Marmur (Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion, Jerusalem), Published on: H-Judaic (April, 2013):

"Articles relating to Martin Buber and Abraham Joshua Heschel account for over nine hundred. entries in the Jewish National Library's Index of Articles on Jewish Studies. Add to this the steady stream of books concerning either Buber or Heschel, and the sheer bulk of the bibliography is even more daunting. Comparisons between the two thinkers, however, are rare. None of the previous attempts to set these two figures alongside each other in search of affinities and contrasts compares in scope and depth to the volume under review. By undertaking a well-structured and thoughtful comparison of the men they describe as "giant and committed thinkers of the twentieth century," Alexander Even-Chen and Ephraim Meir have achieved a significant feat. Rather than being one more entry in a crowded field, *Between Heschel and Buber* deserves a special place within a rapidly burgeoning literature.

As a collaboration between a well-respected scholar of Franz Rosenzweig, Buber, and Emmanuel Levinas (Meir) and the author of a groundbreaking work on Heschel in Hebrew (Even-Chen), the production of this work mirrors its topic. It reads like a conversation between experts in their respective fields considering the thought of their subjects on a number of key themes, each of which merits a chapter—the conception of man, the approach to God, the Bible and its interpretation, the commandments, Hasidism, Zionism, and Christianity. This structure is well conceived, and it provides the reader with a useful grounding in the thought of both Buber and Heschel as applied to these central topics. Further, the book's introduction and conclusion are both excellent, ensuring a worthwhile read for the dilettante browser and dedicated reader alike.

This book notes a number of distinctions between Heschel and Buber. Even-Chen and Meir argue persuasively that the two thinkers

understood human interaction with the divine in different ways. We learn from an analysis of Heschel's poetry that "by intermingling God's existence and his own human existence, Heschel substantially differ[ed] from Buber"(p. 32). Heschel's God confronted the prophet, who identified with divine pathos, while in Buber's view the link to divine presence was accessed through dialogical connection between persons. Heschel's pointed rejection of I-Thou terminology has its roots in this theological dispute. A second distinction relates to the area of practice. Buber preferred religiosity to religion, while Heschel "showed the tension between both realities," and affirmed the concept of mitzvah both in his thought and in his life (p. 160). While both men expressed the inadequacy of dessicated ritual, one concluded that it was to be abandoned, while the other strove to revive it from within.

Some distinctions are underplayed in the book. Heschel, we learn in chapter 3, highlighted the continuity between the biblical and rabbinic periods, while Buber downplayed the significance of the latter. In my view this is an insight of greater resonance and significance than the role afforded it by Even-Chen and Meir. It is well illustrated by an anecdote recorded by Jacob Neusner which did not find its way into this work. Neusner recounts that Heschel told him that he gave Buber a copy of the Talmud in honor of Buber's sixtieth birthday. The recipient of the gift is reported to have thanked the donor, adding: "I've always wanted one." [2] While it is not possible to ascertain the literal veracity of the tale, it is in any case significant that Heschel told it. It implies what other statements attributed to Heschel also make clear, that Buber's attempt to leapfrog such a central aspect of Jewish literature was rejected by Heschel, whose conception of Jewish history contained no Dark Ages, and whose works contain references to every era of Jewish creativity. Buber, in contrast, privileged certain epochs in

Jewish history and paid others relative disregard. One important insight in this book concerns Heschel's pejorative preoccupation with the realm of the symbolic. The authors argue that Heschel's "protest against the use of God as a symbol could be understood mainly as a protest against Buber's thought in his early predialogical period" (p. 68). Readers of Heschel have offered a wide range of explanations of Heschel's antisymbolic stance, and this suggestion is a valuable addition to the debate. Meir and Even-Chen also suggest many parallels between their two subjects, commenting on a number of occasions that words attributed to one would not have been out of place in the mouth of the other. Some insights are particularly interesting, such as the comparison between Heschel's 1939 article on the language of prayer and Buber's conception of the Bible.

Notwithstanding the book's many strengths and undoubted significance, it has one or two surprising omissions and idiosyncracies. The authors have almost nothing to say about Heschel's reading of the Bible. They are surely right to play up Buber's remarkable contribution to the encounter of the today's reader with the Hebrew Bible, but nothing is said of Heschel's approach to the Bible, suggesting instead that he focused on the Oral Torah. As some scholars, including Jon D. Levenson and Dror Bondi, have demonstrated, there is much to be said about the ways in which Heschel read and deployed the Hebrew Bible, but almost none of this discourse finds its way into the current volume.

Another curious absence can be found in the chapter on Hasidism. Meir and Even-Chen explicate much about the ways in which Buber and Heschel understood the phenomenon of Hasidism, and their presentation is characteristically full of helpful and judicious comments. However, very little is said about Heschel's scholarly contributions to the history of early Hasidism. Nor is mention made of

Heschel's explicit references to the (Gershom) Scholem-Buber controversy.

Maurice Friedman has recorded two comments made by Heschel in the wake of Scholem's critique of Buber's approach. First, he notes that "Abraham Joshua Heschel was extremely distressed by the nature of these attacks. 'You know I do not like some of what Buber has done with *Hasidism*,' Heschel said to me, 'but whom else do we have like him?'" Second, in response to a question from a group of African students whether they should study Scholem or Buber, he states that "Heschel ... a scholar whose knowledge and understanding was second to none, said: 'No, if you want to know Hasidism as it was, begin with Buber.'" [4] Inherent in these remarks is some of the complexity that characterized Heschel's relationship—both personal and intellectual—with each of these two figures. In both cases, the preference for Buber is accompanied by a certain reservation: after all, one should *begin* with Buber, but not necessarily settle for him. These comments recorded by Heschel in relation to his erstwhile teacher do not find their way into this work.

That there is yet more to be said about the relationship between these two giants of Jewish thought after the publication of this important work should come as no surprise. Without doubt, Even-Chen and Meir have moved the discourse concerning the interface between Heschel and Buber to a new level of sophistication and depth.

Heschel entitled a chapter in *Passion for Truth* (1973) devoted to a comparison between the Kotzker Rebbe and Søren Kierkegaard "The Affinity of Strangers." *Between Heschel and Buber* describes both resonant affinities and significant contrasts between two of the most important figures in twentieth-century Jewish thought. Theirs was not a symmetrical relationship—Buber exercised a far greater influence on

Heschel than did Heschel on Buber. Now that interest in the younger man has begun to rival and even overshadow concern with the older, it is a good time to consider the two in proximity. While our reading of each man is unlikely to be transformed by this comparison, Even-Chen and Meir have made a unique and important contribution to our understanding of an important nexus in modern Jewish thought.

Notes: [1]. See, for example, Samuel H. Dresner, "Hasidism through the Eyes of tree Masters," *Judaism* 32, no. 2 (1983): 160-169; Maurice Friedman, "Buber, Heschel and Heidegger: Two Jewish Existentialists Confront a Great German Existentialist," *Journal of Humanistic Psychology* 51, no. 1 (2011): 129-134; Edmond Jacob, "La Dimension du Prophétisme d'après Martin Buber et Abraham J. Heschel," in *Prophecy: Essays Presented to Georg Fohrer on His Sixty-Fifth Birthday*, ed. J. A. Emerton (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1980), 26-34; Edward K. Kaplan, "Sacred Versus Symbolic Religion: Abraham Joshua Heschel and Martin Buber," *Modern Judaism* 14, no. 3 (1994): 213-231; Steven T. Katz, "Abraham Joshua Heschel and Hasidism," *Journal of Jewish Studies* 31 (1980): 82-104; Laurence J. Silberstein, "The Renewal of Jewish Spirituality: Two Views," in *Jewish Spirituality*, ed. Arthur Green (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1987), 2:402-432; and Evan M. Zuesse, "The Gate to God's Presence in Heschel, Buber and Soloveitchik," in *Thinkers and Teachers of Modern Judaism*, ed. Raphael Patai and Emanuel S. Goldsmith (New York: Paragon House, 1994), 121-149. Some further peripheral information is provided in Frederic Krome, "Correspondence between Martin Buber, Hans Kohn, Abraham Joshua Hechel and Adolph Oko, 1939-1944," *Jewish Culture & History* 5, no. 1 (2002): 121-134. Of all the above, only the Kaplan article is listed in the bibliography of the work under review (although other works by Dresner and Friedman are cited). It is

unclear if these other books and articles were deemed unworthy of mention or went unnoticed. [2]. Jacob Neusner, "Abraham Heschel: The Man," in *To Grow in Wisdom: An Anthology of Abraham Joshua Heschel*, ed. Jacob Neusner with Noam M. M. Neusner, (Lanham: Madison Books, 1990), 8. [3]. Jon D. Levenson, "Religious Affirmation and Historical Criticism in Heschel's Biblical Interpretation," *AJS Review* 25, no.1 (2000-2001): 25-44; and Dror Bondi, "Gishato Haparshanit shel Avraham Yehoshua Heschel" [Abraham Joshua Heschel's Interpretive Approach] (PhD diss., Bar Ilan, 2011). [4]. Maurice Friedman, "Interpreting Hasidism: The Buber-Scholem Controversy," *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 33, no. 1 (1988): 450.

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ספר בהכנה:

השם המפורש-אדם – על שירה, מרד ואמונה בהגותו המוקדמת של אברהם יהושע השל. אני כותב ספר בו אני מנתח את ספר השירים שפירסם השל בשנת 1933 בוורשה. אני מנתח את הספר מבחינה רעיונית. אמנם, התייחסתי בעבר למספר קטן של שירים, אבל הניתוח של כל השירים והסדר בו הם מוצגים מאפשר לחשוף ביתר בהירות את מה שהתרחש בנפשו של השל הצעיר. אדם שמצד אחד עזב את הכן החסידי

בו נולד ובחר ללמוד באוניברסיטת ברלין, אך מצד שני מצוי במאבק רוחני בלתי פוסק עם אלהים. על רקע זה צומחת כמיהתו העצומה לנביאים ואין זה מקרה שנושא עבודת התואר השלישי שלו הוא הנביאים.

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שבתון

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