

picts the psychological horrors of anti-Semitism, a recurrent shtetl theme.

The Shtetl will benefit those with a background in Yiddish literature, as well as those without any background. This anthology is a gem. And its splendid binding and excellent typography make it an ideal gift.

—L.S.

STUDIES IN MEDIEVAL JEWISH HISTORY AND LITERATURE

Isadore Twersky, ed.

Harvard University Press, \$18.50

This book is a collection of studies by scholars who have been associated with Harvard University. Eminent authorities such as Alexander Altman and Shlomo Pines are represented, as are a number of notable younger writers. Some of the articles will be of interest primarily to specialists in Medieval Jewish history and philosophy, but others are fully accessible to the educated and thoughtful layperson. For example, Jacob Katz presents a fascinating exposition of changing conceptions of *semika*, Rabbinic ordination. Katz's article also has a note-worthy excursus on a serious calendar controversy which arose in the year 921. James Kugel explores various attempts at understanding the structure of Biblical poetry, while

Bezalel Safran uncovers the hidden agenda behind Bahya ibn Paquda's *Hobot ha-Lebabot*, the popular ethical work known in English as *The Duties of the Hearts*. The editor, Isadore Twersky, focuses on Joseph ibn Kaspi, a fourteenth-century Maimonidean thinker who advanced a historicist method of Biblical interpretation, and had some very surprising things to say about the significance of pure Talmud study.

In short, the book is full of fresh ideas and unexpected turns of thought. Though certain methodological issues keep re-emerging in the book, there is no single unifying schema, and some topics, such as Kabbalah, are almost completely untouched. The topics which are covered, however, are given meticulous, scholarly, even elegant, treatment.

—N.P.

THINK JEWISH

Zalman I. Posner

Keshet Press, 1817 21st Avenue S.,
Nashville, Tn. 37212, \$7.95 hc; \$3.95 pb.

In his travels throughout the world, Rabbi Zalman I. Posner, noted scholar of the Chabad Lubavitch movement and spiritual leader of a Nashville, Tennessee congregation,

found himself plied with questions by members of both the academic and lay worlds who challenged the relevance of Torah teachings to contemporary life. Asked variously out of stormy belligerence, casual disdain, or an intense longing to understand and integrate Jewish roots, these questions convinced Rabbi Posner that some rational and well substantiated answers—in the form of a book—were in order. The result, *Think Jewish* is a happy melding of cogency, lucidity and readability.

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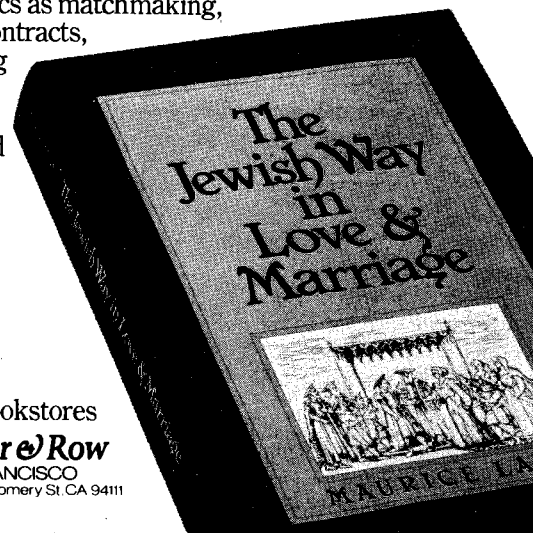
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OUR COVER

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