The Jewish Publication Society
2019 CATALOG
“Even as he was immersed in his scholarship, my father [Abraham Joshua Heschel] was always concerned with his fellow Jews and the state of their spirit. He wrote to offer not comfort but challenge, yet in his words of challenge from the 1930s there is always hope: ‘moral and spiritual recovery in the face of political catastrophe.’

This volume opens a new view of the experience of German Jews in their years between dignity and despair and demonstrates the remarkable vitality of the young Abraham Joshua Heschel, one of the extraordinary figures of Jewish history.”

—From Susannah Heschel’s foreword to In This Hour: Heschel’s Writings in Nazi Germany and London Exile
In This Hour
Heschel’s Writings in Nazi Germany and London Exile
Abraham Joshua Heschel
Foreword by Susannah Heschel
Edited and annotated by Helen Plotkin
Translations by Stephen Lehmann and Marion Faber

Important writings by Heschel, in English for the first time

In This Hour offers the first English translations of selected German writings by Abraham Joshua Heschel from his tumultuous years in Nazi-ruled Germany and months in London exile, before he found refuge in the United States. Several of the works have, moreover, never been published in any language. Composed during a time of intense crisis for European Jewry, these writings both argue for and exemplify a powerful vision of spiritually rich Jewish learning and its redemptive role in the past and the future of the Jewish people.

The collection opens with the text of a speech in which Heschel laid out with passion his vision for Jewish education. Then it goes on to present his teachings: a set of essays about the rabbis of the Mishnaic period, whose struggles paralleled those of his own time; the biography of the medieval Jewish scholar and leader Don Yitzhak Abravanel; reflections on the power and meaning of repentance written for the High Holidays in 1936; and a short story on Jewish exile written for Hanukkah 1937. The collection closes with a set of four recently discovered meditations—on suffering, prayer, and spirituality—in which Heschel grapples with the horrors unfolding around him. Taken together, these essays and story fill a significant void in Heschel’s bibliography: his Nazi Germany and London exile years.

These translations convey the spare elegance of Heschel’s prose, and the introduction and detailed notes make the volume accessible to readers of all knowledge levels.

As Heschel teaches history, his voice is more than that of a historian: the old becomes new and the struggles of one era shed light on another. Even as Heschel quotes ancient sources, his words address the issues of his own time and speak urgently to ours.

Abraham Joshua Heschel (1907–72) was a rabbi, scholar, and philosopher. In 1937 Martin Buber appointed him as his successor at the central organization for Jewish adult education in Frankfurt am Main. In time he became one of the most influential modern philosophers of religion in the United States. He formulated an original philosophy of Judaism, expressed in such foundational books as Man Is Not Alone (1951) and God in Search of Man (1955).

“This is a tremendously important work of testimony and erudition in the service of saving Jewish history—and the Jewish people—from oblivion. The essays fill a significant void in Heschel’s bibliography. The academic community will welcome the relatively unknown aspects of Heschel’s development as a teacher and public intellectual, and all readers will appreciate Heschel’s gripping literary testimony in impeccable translation.”—Edward K. Kaplan, author of Abraham Joshua Heschel: Prophetic Witness

JUNE 2019
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ALSO OF INTEREST
Abraham Joshua Heschel
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Typically Jewish
Nancy Kalikow Maxwell

A warm, funny, and candid guide to being Jewish

Is laughter essential to Jewish identity? Do Jews possess special radar for recognizing members of the tribe? Since Jews live longer and make love more often, why don’t more people join the tribe? “More deli than deity” writer Nancy Kalikow Maxwell poses many such questions in eight chapters—“Worrying,” “Kvelling,” “Dying,” “Noshing,” “Laughing,” “Detecting,” “Dwelling,” and “Joining”—exploring what it means to be “typically Jewish.” While unearthing answers from rabbis, researchers, and her assembled Jury on Jewishness (Jewish friends she roped into conversation), she—and we—make a variety of discoveries. For example:

• Jews worry about continuity, even though Rabbi Mordechai of Lechovitz prohibited even that: “All worrying is forbidden, except to worry that one is worried.”

• Kvell-worthy fact: About 75 percent of American Jews give to charity versus 63 percent of Americans as a whole.

• Since reciting Kaddish brought secular Jews to synagogue, the rabbis, aware of their captive audience, moved the prayer to the end of the service.

• Who’s Jewish? About a quarter of Nobel Prize winners, an estimated 80 percent of comedians at one point, and the winner of Nazi Germany’s Most Perfect Aryan Child Contest.

Readers will enjoy learning about how Jews feel, think, act, love, and live. They’ll also schmooze as they use the book’s “Typically Jewish, Atypically Fun” discussion guide.

Nancy Kalikow Maxwell is a librarian, an award-winning writer, and a frequent contributor to Jewish media. She is the author of six books and the creator of funny cards for Hallmark’s Tree of Life Jewish card line.

“As Maxwell takes readers on a humorous safari to observe Jews in their natural habitat, even Jews who have never set foot in a synagogue or JCC will recognize themselves with wondrous insight. And Jews who love learning—in other words, all of us—will delight in learning a lot. I definitely did.”—Maggie Anton, author of Rashi’s Daughters and Fifty Shades of Talmud


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MARCH 2019
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A Year with Mordecai Kaplan
Wisdom on the Weekly Torah Portion
Rabbi Steven Carr Reuben

The treasury of Kaplan through the lens of Torah

You are invited to spend a year with the inspirational words, ideas, and counsel of the great twentieth-century thinker Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan, through his meditations on the fifty-four weekly Torah portions and eleven Jewish holidays. A pioneer of ideas and action—teaching that “Judaism is a civilization” encompassing Jewish culture, art, and peoplehood; demonstrating how synagogues can be full centers for Jewish living (building one of the first “shuls with a pool”); and creating the first-ever bat mitzvah ceremony (for his daughter Judith)—Kaplan transformed the landscape of American Jewry. Yet much of Kaplan’s rich treasury of ethical and spiritual thought is largely unknown.

Rabbi Steven Carr Reuben, who studied closely with Kaplan, offers unique insight into Kaplan’s teachings about ethical relationships and spiritual fulfillment, including how to embrace godliness in everyday experience, our mandate to become agents of justice in the world, and the human ability to evolve personally and collectively. Quoting from the week’s Torah portion, Reuben presents Torah commentary, a related quotation from Kaplan, a reflective commentary integrating Kaplan’s understanding of the Torah text, and an intimate story about his family or community’s struggles and triumphs—guiding twenty-first-century spiritual seekers of all backgrounds on how to live reflectively and purposefully every day.

Rabbi Steven Carr Reuben is senior rabbi emeritus of Kehillat Israel Reconstructionist Congregation in Pacific Palisades, California, and a past president of the Board of Rabbis of Southern California. He is the author of numerous books, including Children of Character: Leading Your Children to Ethical Choices in Everyday Life and Making Interfaith Marriage Work.

“There is no greater sage than Mordecai Kaplan to walk us into an appreciation of how religion can add depth and insight to the experience of modernity, and no rabbi with greater sensitivity to guide us along the way than Steven Carr Reuben. Newcomers to Kaplan and longtime aficionados alike will revel in spending a year with Mordecai Kaplan. Relying on the spirit and smarts of these two rabbis not only enlightens us but elevates us.”—Rabbi Bradley Shavit Artson, dean of the Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies, American Jewish University

“A Year with Mordecai Kaplan is inspirational. It reminds me of a less mystical Larry Kushner and a more anecdotal Harold Kushner.”—Rabbi Arnold Rachlis, University Synagogue, Irvine, California

APRIL 2019
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ALSO OF INTEREST

Judaism as a Civilization
Toward a Reconstruction of American Jewish Life
Mordecai M. Kaplan
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A Year with the Sages uniquely relates the Sages’ understanding of each Torah portion to everyday life. The importance of these teachings cannot be overstated. The Sages, who lived during the period from the fifth century BCE to the fifth century CE, considered themselves to have inherited the oral teachings God transmitted to Moses, along with the mandate to interpret them to each subsequent generation. Just as the Torah and the entire Hebrew Bible are the foundations of Judaism, the Sages’ teachings form the structures of Jewish belief and practice built on that foundation. Many of these teachings revolve around core concepts such as God’s justice, God’s love, Torah, Israel, humility, honesty, loving-kindness, reverence, prayer, and repentance.

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Michael Carasik teaches biblical Hebrew at the University of Pennsylvania. He is the compiler and translator of the Commentators’ Bible series and author of Theologies of the Mind in Biblical Israel and The Bible’s Many Voices (JPS, 2014).

“The JPS Commentators’ Bible is one of the most useful resources I have in my library. It opens the door to the wisdom of the classic commentators to Jewish students of all levels of Hebrew fluency. The translations are fluid and accessible, and this important work represents an invaluable invitation to join the centuries-long conversation of Torah commentary and interpretation.” —Rabbi Dan Levin, Temple Beth El, Boca Raton, Florida

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