

texts, which help to clarify the main text's meaning and larger purpose. For those not schooled in astrology and its history, I suggest studying these shorter selections together with Sela's prefaces before attempting *The Book of the World*.

Learning astrology "at the feet" of a master such as Ibn Ezra is important, first for a better appreciation of the lives and times of medieval Jews. Second, it is important if we wish to understand how many in the past understood the Bible. Third, astrological references appear in all sorts of Jewish texts from a wide variety of periods. For us today astrology may not be part of our lives or Jewish commitments, but that was certainly not the case for our ancestors. I heartily recommend this book for inclusion in all academic and in some congregational libraries.

Daniel J. Rettberg, *Hebrew Union College-JIR, Cincinnati, OH*

Idel, Moshe. *Old Worlds, New Mirrors: On Jewish Mysticism and Twentieth-Century Thought.* Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press (Jewish Culture and Contexts Series), 2010. 323 p. \$59.95 (ISBN 978-0-8122-4130-3).

Jewish mysticism and the study of kabbalah have become popular universal subjects of exploration during the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Jewish thinkers have contributed extensively to the development of European and Western philosophy. Some of them (e.g., Arnaldo Momigliano and Eric Voegelin) emphasized the Jewish experience and others (Franz Kafka, Walter Benjamin, Gershom Scholem, Hans Jonas, Emanuel Levinas) wanted to incorporate and assimilate Judaism with eastern and central European cultures.

In *Old Worlds, New Mirrors*, Moshe Idel compares the two approaches in an organized, objective fashion. The book includes extensive lists of abbreviations and sources, notes, and an index. Searching for spiritual guidance in a complex modern world, *Old Worlds, New Mirrors* is a timely book. Laypersons, academicians, Jews, and non-Jews, will find a clearer route for understanding their heritage. A welcome addition to academic, public, Jewish, and synagogue libraries.

Nira Glily Wolfe, *Highland Park, IL*

Kabakov, Miryam, ed. *Keep Your Wives Away from Them: Orthodox Women, Unorthodox Desires: An Anthology.* Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books, 2010. 169 p. \$16.95. (ISBN 978-1-55643-879-0).

In the wake of Rabbi Steven Greenberg's *Wrestling with God and Men*, much has been written about gay men who are committed to living Orthodox Jewish lives, but who struggle to find a place in the Orthodox community. In this anthology, lesbians and transsexuals describe their efforts to find a place as well. As in many anthologies, the length, depth, and tone of the entries vary greatly. Two of the essays in this collection are scholarly with extensive citations; one addresses rabbinic responses to female homosexuality, and the other is about gender identity in rabbinic literature. One author remarks ruefully that it is both comforting and insulting to have so little mention of lesbians in the Bible and rabbinic literature.

The bulk of the essays are more personal statements about the women's efforts to reconcile the various parts of their identities and their need for finding community and family acceptance. Some of the essays are narrative while others are written in

more poetic free forms. The volume includes a glossary of Jewish terms and an annotated list of Jewish LGBT resources. Recommended.

Sheryl Stahl, *Hebrew Union College-JIR, Los Angeles, CA*

Medoff, Rafael, ed. *Rav Chesed: Essays in Honor of Rabbi Dr. Haskel Lookstein.* Jersey City: Ktav, 2009. 2 v. \$79.50. (ISBN 978-1-60280-115-8).

A wide-ranging collection of essays honoring communal leader, rabbi, and educator Haskel Lookstein. The list of contributors to these volumes, colleagues and former students of Rabbi Lookstein, reads like a Who's Who of contemporary Jewish educators and thinkers. Topics range from biblical exegesis to American- and world-Jewish history, education, and relations between Orthodox and other Jews. While primarily of interest to modern Orthodox institutions, this collection should not be overlooked by academic libraries.

Daniel Scheide, *Florida Atlantic University, Boca Raton, FL*

Mundill, Robin R. *The King's Jews: Money, Massacre and Exodus in Medieval England.* London: Continuum, 2010. 240 p. \$34.95 (ISBN 978-1-8425-186-2).

The Jewish community of medieval England existed from some time after the Norman conquest of 1066 until the swift and brutal expulsion in 1290. The history of this community can be recovered partially from a range of artifacts, including passages in rabbinic literature, archeological finds, and thousands of financial records kept by various archives. These artifacts have been combed for information over the past century by antiquarians, rabbis and the occasional serious historian. Their many discussions have been diffuse and often wildly speculative. *The King's Jews* is an attempt to bring all those strands together for a new retelling of the history of medieval Anglo-Jewry. The book deals with all the different aspects of Jewish life in medieval England, from the question of when Jews first landed on English soil to the intricacies of Jewish ritual baths (*mikva'ot*). But the author is at his best unraveling the complicated financial dealings of Jewish businessmen in the Middle Ages. As he explains, some of the financial arrangements described in the stars and chirographs from those times laid the groundwork for modern-day speculators. Up-to-date on recent scholarship and written in laymen's language, Mundill's book is a good introduction for anyone interested in this little-understood Jewish community.

Pinchas Roth, *Hebrew University, Jerusalem*

Nathan, Joan. *Quiches, Kugels and Couscous: My Search for Jewish Cooking in France.* New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2010. 416 p. \$40.00. (ISBN 978-0-307-26759-7).

Joan Nathan's latest book offers a culinary and historical tour of France, spanning nearly 1000 years. Each of the two hundred recipes is accompanied by the story of how it was selected for inclusion. These stories take the reader through country homes and restaurants in Alsace and apartments, bakeries, and restaurants in Paris, and describe twentieth-century Jewish life before WWII, how Jews survived during the War and modern life. The Alsatian recipes make use of goose, duck, and their rendered fats as cooking oils, and because of politics and proximity show the influence of German cooking. Recipes from Paris and other