

ent contradiction which there is reason to believe, and that there is good reason to believe a mystery if and only if firstly there is reason to believe that its contradictory appearance is apparent only, and secondly there are strong reasons to believe it. But if all three persons of the Trinity are omnipotent beings, as a passage on p 16 suggests, then the first condition is unsatisfied, and if so, there is no coherent 'it' for the second condition to apply to.

Davis' Conclusion distinguishes the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob from the God of philosophy, but, unlike my paper on the same distinction (*Religious Studies*, 1973) has no brief for the latter concept except where it coincides with a

third, the God of Christian philosophers, who explicate the presuppositions of the Bible. If, however, these presuppositions are contradictory, and if (as I argue in *God and The Secular*) the only good arguments for belief in God relate to a God who is essentially omnipotent, omniscient, non-dependent and immutable *ab extra*, then there is a clear choice between (otherwise unsupported) belief in the God of (parts of) the Biblical "revelation" and a well-grounded belief in a God with the ability to create. Perhaps this latter concept of God is as similar to that of the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as Christian and other philosophers can rationally maintain.

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MENAHEM NAHUM OF CHERNOBYL (Classics of Western Spirituality)

edited and translated by Arthur Green. *SPCK*, 1982. pp xiii + 290. £9.50.

Eastern European Hasidism was a revivalist movement founded in Poland by Rabbi Israel, the "Baal Shem Tov" (c. 1698 - 1760), a wonder-worker who taught a Judaism of joy and love rather than exclusive study. His teaching accorded as high a standing to the piety of the unlearned as it did to that of scholars. It taught all to "worship God with joy". Heavily mystical in orientation, it drew upon Kabbalistic symbols and concepts. Its charismatic character was expressed in the doctrine of the *zaddiqim*, "the saints", living bridges between Godliness and humanity by precept and example, of which the Baal Shem Tov was the prototype. Several of the Baal Shem Tov's spiritual descendants were accorded the role of *zaddiqim*, and became the founders of several extant Hasidic lineages.

It is widely believed that Hasidism has an aversion to Jewish scholasticism, and that its early masters were invariably iconoclastic and anti-intellectual generators of Zen-koan-like stories. This belief is not contradicted by Martin Buber's popular two-volume collection of Hasidic stories, *Tales of the Hasidim* (N Y: Schocken, 1947-48), which are seldom read in conjunction with his more academic writings

on Hasidism. An acquaintance with several important early Hasidic works, such as the *Tanya* and *Shulhan Arukh* of Rabbi Shneur Zalman (1747 - 1813), shows this to be a misconception. Both of these works - and they are representative - are considerable works of Rabbinic scholarship. They demonstrate that while Hasidism did not look down upon those without a capacity for learning, it encouraged learning in those capable of it.

Rabbi Menahem Nahum of Chernobyl (1730 - 1797) was, like Shneur Zalman, a disciple of Rabbi Dov Baer, the Maggid ("preacher") of Mezirichi (1710 - 1773), the Baal Shem Tov's successor. Dov Baer was a man of great learning, and his academy attracted and produced students of notable erudition. Menahem Nahum was no exception to this rule. Prior to his avowal of Hasidism, he obtained a thorough Rabbinical education, which culminated in study at one of the Rabbinical academies of Lithuania, the "Oxbridge" of Eastern European scholars. Several Hasidic lineages trace their ancestry back through him.

Two texts are translated in this volume. *Upright Practices* is a short tract on pious practices in everyday life. *The Light of*

the Eyes, which forms the bulk of the book, is the translation of the portion on Genesis of a collection of homilies on the Pentateuch which bears the same title. Neither text is of the same genre as the *Tanya*, a doctrinal treatise, or Shneur Zalman's *Shuham Arukh*, an *halakhic* (religious-legal) rule of Jewish life. Both of Menahem Nahum's texts nevertheless demonstrate a close and intelligent acquaintance with Rabbinic literature and its canons of discourse. They are introduced and translated by Arthur Green, the author of a seminal biography of Rabbi Nahum of Bratslav (1772 - 1810), the founder of Bratslav Hasidism (*Tormented Master: A Life of Rabbi Nahman of Bratslav* by A. Green, N.Y. Schocken, 1981), and is co-editor with Barry Holtz of an anthology of Hasidic contemplative texts, *Your Word is Fire*, Paulist Press, N. Y. 1977.

The main burden of Menahem Nahum's teaching in the two translated works is that the whole world, which includes all our actions, is filled with the presence of God. All that we think or do can and must be lifted up to God, and even those things which we despise and fear are to be seen as God's gift. Illicit love, for instance, has that in it which ought to be transformed into the love of God, its proper object. Menahem Nahum draws on the entire range of Rabbinic exegetical tools to convey this message. Kabbalistic imagery, *pilpul* – the "peppery" casuistry so loved by Rabbinical scholars, Midrashic, Talmudic and Zoharic allusions, plays on words and on their numerical values, are all used consummately. His arguments are always complex, and are sometimes tortuous, but Green's general introduction to the vol-

ume, his introductions to the individual homilies, and his notes in the body of the text, make it possible for the general reader to follow its flow.

The translation and notes, while scholarly, are geared to the needs of the general reader and not specialists. Green has no hesitation in occasionally paraphrasing where a literal translation would be obscure. His translation nevertheless retains nearly all the flavour of Rabbinic homilies in their native context. Those readers who care to look up the numerous Rabbinic allusions in the homilies can do so with the aid of a list of sources appended to each section of the homilies.

Each bloc of homilies bears the Hebrew name for the weekly portion of the Pentateuch recited in the synagogue. It is odd that Green does not explain this in his introduction, since it is essential to a grasp of the liturgical setting of the homilies. Nor does Green explain anywhere that the Kabbalah teaches a doctrine of the transmigration of souls, which plays a significant part in the Hasidic doctrine of the *zaddiq*. There are certainly other omissions, but they are not necessary to the general reader's appreciation of the book, and their inclusion would have made the introduction over-technical. This is a competent and readable translation of two texts which are the most important for being representative of a genre as yet unavailable to the general English reader. I would strongly recommend it to anyone interested in Judaism in general, and in Rabbinical biblical exegesis and Hasidism in particular.

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PUSEY REDISCOVERED, Perry Butler (editor), *SPCK*, 1983.
pp xii + 402. £19.50 (£23.50 from January 1984).

This important collection of essays, marking the centenary of Pusey's death and the 150th anniversary of the Oxford Movement, goes some way towards placing Pusey in proper perspective. Without the benefit of an *Apologia* detailing a classic spiritual journey, and lacking the obviously attractive qualities of the saintly poet priest, Pusey has always been less

accessible and more difficult to appreciate than either Keble or Newman. Liddon's great work of *pietas* in his four volume biography both left the impression that everything had been said and in its very massiveness hid as much as it revealed about its subject.

For Newman Pusey was *ho megas*, 'a host in himself'. Brilioth characterised him