PREFACE

The idea for APPROACHES TO MODERN JUDAISM came from Professor Jacob Neusner of Brown University who hoped that such a volume would serve as a vehicle in three ways. First, it would enable colleagues to address methodological issues in various fields of modern Judaic Studies, especially by asking questions such as what is the most pressing issue in a given area? what have been the traditional ways of looking at these problems? and what might constitute a new approach? It might also stimulate, in various fields, non-methodological articles of substance. Finally, this series might generate fresh thinking about what constitutes modernity, and a discussion about the relationship between Judaism and various elements of modernity.

David Biale explores premodern and modern Jewish marriages in his search for Jewish attitudes and norms which serve as indices of modernity, noting the modern elements, influences and "style" within the traditional institution of marriage and its process of modernization.

Paul Mendes-Flohr argues that secularization is a salient feature of modernity, introduces us to the phrase "secular religiosity" with confidence that it is inherent in the individuation of society and culture that characterizes modernity, and explores post-traditional or modern Jewish sensibilities.

Michael Dobkowski bemoans a lack of interest among Judaic scholars in Marxist theory, and in urging a dialogue between Judaism and Marxist thought he explores several Jewish responses to modernism and suggests ways in which these modern responses have been linked to traditional Judaism.

David Ellenson explores the impact of modernity upon the Orthodox Jewish community of nineteenth century Germany, and especially the response of Rabbi Esriel Hildesheimer to the problem of religious authority. Using categories drawn from the sociology of religion, Ellenson explores Hildesheimer's responses to the challenges of modernity, clarifies the oft-used but vaguely defined phrase "Modern Orthodox" and Hildesheimer's pivotal role in its formulation, reflects upon the modern vs. sectarian orthodox struggles in Germany a century ago, and reveals how modernism (values of Western culture) and tradition (Modern Orthodox) may coexist in one man.
Through a comparison of the literary expression of Southerners and Jews, Stephen J. Whitfield writes about the distinguishing characteristics of the American Jewish experience. These features—set against the background of modernity—including the Jewish historical consciousness, emphasis upon family, special contribution to modern culture, and unique sensibilities.

B. Barry Levy argues that the intellectual and ideological commitments of any Jewish group may be judged by the ways in which it interprets the Bible, and that contemporary Orthodox Jews—who produce, support and study the Artscroll Bible Commentaries—are no exception. He examines, as a "modern" reader, this new commentary, and enables us to evaluate several dimensions of this contemporary Jewish community: the way it believes the Bible should be taught and preached and the ways in which it has understood—and misunderstood—its rich Jewish heritage of Bible-related literature and the contemporary world of Bible study.

These volumes, of which this is the first, will appear as often as necessary. I am extremely grateful to the Ohio State University College of Humanities for providing the typing support and to Professor Jacob Neusner for making publication possible.

Marc Lee Raphael
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