

A HEDGE OF ROSES / Jewish insights into marriage and married life / by Norman Lamm (New York, 1966, Philipp Feldheim, \$1.75)

THIS LITTLE VOLUME endeavors to explain the profound significance of the Jewish laws of family purity. Extremely well-written, it should be made required reading for all those who ignore or belittle these crucial teachings of the Torah. The author does not preach—he explains his subject in terms intelligible and meaningful to contemporary minds; in language simple and effective.

Among many important points made by the author, this reviewer would single out his emphasis that, in enquiring into the explanations of *mitzvos*, “we want to know *not why* G-d commanded them but what He wanted us to learn from them” (p. 49). He warns that the observance of “the law must contain independent of and unconditioned by the values, reasons, and purposes we believe we have found in it.” (p. 50)

Needless to say, the effort to cover large areas of thought in limited space is bound to lead to some oversimplifications (thus the reader may conclude that women are excused by the Torah from *all* time-oriented positive precepts; or will fail to find in the author's definition of *Tumoh* any clue to *Tumas Sheretz*.) Also a few formulations could perhaps be improved upon (the *Mikvoh* is not “an ancient institution,” p. 35, but a Divine one, and the *Kohen* is not forbidden to be in the same ‘room’ with a corpse, p.80, but in the same house.)

These are, however, mere minutiae. There is only one suggestion of more basic importance that this reviewer would like to offer: an elimination of the remarks on page 59 that can be read as an acceptance

of the concept of the honeymoon. This concept is so foreign to us in its essence, and in practice it is such an utter obstacle to the observance of *Taharas Hamish-pocho*, that it deserves the same clear and complete rejection that the author has accorded to other aspects of our contemporary *morés*.

While offering this suggestion, the reviewer wants to express at the same time his hope that this fine work will succeed in reaching all those within our American Jewish community who so urgently need to hear its message.

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