

housed and sheltered clandestinely. Their benefactors shared with them their meager ration-coupons, or secured some from friends who also wanted to help. Others fabricated passports for Jews so that they could flee their countries to a haven of safety. "Fabrication of passports became one of the most important and honest professions of that time," the author informs us. Still others guided the persecuted along secret routes across the frontiers where other helpers awaited them. Many of the most important acts were the ones connected with the rescue of children. Infants and children up to the age of 14 were taken by the helpers who found a pretext for harboring them, often pretending that they were their own children or children of relatives. The author stresses that proselytism—although existent—played a very small role.

Most of these benefactors belonged to the middle or "lower" classes of the population. Only in few instances did members of the higher classes extend their aid. In certain occupied countries, however, the population as a whole participated in the rescue work, notably in France, Holland, Belgium, Denmark and Norway.

What were the motives of those who succored the Jews and who risked imprisonment, torture and death for themselves and their families? Scattered through letters, reports and personal interviews with the author are the sentiments which impelled them and these make moving reading in their simplicity and modesty. All abjure heroic sentiments, some were moved by religious reasons, but most found it only natural to express their humanity and compassion. These men and women stand out in bold relief against the background of brutality, inertia and sordid self-interest. The author has properly included in his book some cases of higher-ranking Nazis who saved Jews for large amounts of money, or to secure an alibi for the future when they would be called to account. Thus we see, as it were, in the compass of one book the full range of the human character, its most noble elements as well as its most bestial and sickening facets.

The book should prove especially valuable to historians and students of that most tragic of eras, but it can be read with profit by the ordinary reader. It is to be hoped that it will soon be translated from the German into other languages.

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Exponent of Traditional Judaism

Reviewed by NORMAN LAMM

THE PHILOSOPHY OF PURPOSE. By Samuel Belkin. Yeshiva University. 34 pp. 75¢

The problems of medieval Jewish philosophy seem to be wholly irrelevant to the major philosophical concerns of modern Jews. And yet, if Torah is to provide answers to our contemporary problems—or at least to direct the questioning—then one of the major inquiries of Jewry's Golden Age must be reopened for investigation. We, too, must be prepared to deal with such metaphysical questions as: why observe? Why *kashrut*? Why *Shabbat*? What is the reason for all these? Indeed, is there a reason for the divine commandment of any of the rituals?

While the modern task of assigning reasons for religious observances is not identical with the medieval polemics on the role of reason in religion—one is mostly pedagogical, the other was primarily philosophical—yet they are contiguous. And the results of the latter-day debate between rationalism (in the footsteps of Maimonides) and anti-rationalism (such as Halevi's) will determine the type of answers we will give to the modern Jew's questions, and thus will affect the complexion of Judaism in our new age. We must, therefore, welcome a significant modern contribution to Jewish philosophy by Dr. Samuel Belkin, president of Yeshiva University. In a booklet entitled *The Philosophy of Purpose*, the first in a series of "Studies in Torah Judaism" published by the community service division of Yeshiva under the editorship of Rabbi Leon Stitskin, Dr. Belkin provides us with an intellectual tool which cuts through to the very heart of the issue.

His formula, with regard to observances, the cornerstone of Judaism, is one of classic simplicity: the distinction between *reason* and *purpose*. "The [philosophy of reason] is the approach of the pure rationalist; the [philosophy of purpose] is the traditional Jewish attitude." Reason projects us into historical research. It centers upon the question: why did God ordain this or that practice? Its concern is with origins, with divine wisdom as it is applied to specific historical conditions which, likely as not, no longer exist. A philosophy of reason is thus primarily concerned with proving the

existence of a Creator, not with the continued state of mutuality between the Creator and the created. Such a philosophy remains spiritually irrelevant. It can explain; it cannot, however, motivate or inspire. It has nothing to offer on the ultimate questions of life, and is unconcerned with the destiny of man.

That is why the traditional Jew always espoused a philosophy of purpose. Purpose is not concerned with origins. It does not ask for historical causes. It is more interested in spiritual effects, in ends rather than beginnings. A reason is circumscribed by the dimensions of time and space; not so a purpose. Purpose, unlike reason, is not concerned with proving the fact of creation by God. It is concerned with improving the quality of man's response to his Creator. Purpose implies meaningfulness, and is vitally involved in the assignment of values, in the question of ultimates, in the destiny of man. Purpose, as Dr. Belkin develops it, is, paradoxically, anthropocentric, while reason is theocentric. Reason poses the question: what was the reason of God? Purpose asks: what is the purpose for man?

Dr. Belkin does not, however, reject reason completely as a fundamental of Jewish philosophy. What he does maintain is that even the rationalists in Judaism were forced to adopt a philosophy of purpose. He shows that from Philo to Maimonides authentic philosophers of Judaism combined the Jewish pursuit of purpose with the Greek emphasis on reason. For pure rationalism, devoid of consequences for human conduct, must remain a secular approach. To become a Jewish philosophy it must be informed with the philosophy of purpose.

Coming from the pen of one who has so distinguished himself in the philosophy of reason—as professor of Greek literature and famed expert on Philo—and in the philosophy of purpose—as brilliant and profound *rosh yeshivah*—this essay is an authoritative indication of the new and mature directions American Orthodoxy will no doubt take in the near future. As a reflection of the intellectual inclinations of Orthodoxy's outstanding leader, this booklet is an encouraging omen for the future of Torah in America.