

group that is committed to the movement's goals and a majority that is less knowledgeable, less observant, and often unaware of what their Conservative affiliation means. Lack of flexibility in the leadership has kept the core small and distant from the majority by stifling the movement's successes: havurot, Ramah camps, and Schechter schools.

While it is easy to view Conservative Judaism's problems as intractable, the book presents some hopeful possibilities. The authors propose that different practices and levels of halakhic strictness be encouraged within a big tent of normative Conservative Judaism, and call for structural adaptability and a concentrated effort to build lay leadership. They recommend narrowing the role of the rabbi to make it an easier one to fulfill. These are a few of the changes they advocate as prerequisites to the creation of a movement that will succeed among Israeli and non-North American Diaspora Jews and in turn revitalize Conservative Jewry in its traditional American center.

Henry Hollander, San Francisco, CA

Frankiel, Tamar, and Judy Greenfeld. *Entering the Temple of Dreams: Jewish Prayers, Movements, and Meditations for the End of the Day*. Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights, 2000. 184 p. \$16.95 (ISBN 1-5802-3079-2).

Tamar Frankiel, author of *The Voice of Sarah: Feminine Spirituality and Traditional Judaism* (HarperSanFrancisco, 1990), has written with Judy Greenfeld this sequel to their 1997 book *Minding the Temple of the Soul: Balancing Body, Mind and Spirit through Traditional Jewish Prayer, Movement and Meditation*, also published by Jewish Lights. *Entering the Temple of Dreams* is a how-to book, with pictures of body movements accompanying recitations of Hebrew verses.

For interested individuals and synagogue libraries.

Roger S. Kohn, Oberlin College, Oberlin, OH

Hart, Mitchell B. *Social Science and the Politics of Modern Jewish Identity*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000. Stanford Series in Jewish History and Culture. 340 p. \$50.00 (ISBN 0-8047-3824-6).

Mitchell B. Hart, assistant professor of modern Jewish and European history at Florida International University, explores the origins in Germany of Jewish social science and its further growth and scientific status in America. This book is an important contribution to the issue of the formation of Jewish identity between the years 1789 and 1945.

Jewish social science is an important scientific tool, oscillating between the assertion of Jewish identity and assimilation. Hart analyzes the historical background of the formation of Jewish social science and its main purpose: to be aware of the interrelationship between Judaism as culture, religion, and people. Hart focuses also on other dimensions, such as the economic and political, to attain a complete insight into Jewish social science and its critical function in the formation of Jewish self-awareness. Hart's research is solidly based on statistical and demographic facts. Also, he tries to set some methodological guidelines for Jewish social science in our time, relating it to Jewish social history and other cultural studies focused on United States Jewry, but applicable as well to world Jewry.

F. J. Weismann, Universidad del Salvador, Buenos Aires, Argentina

Jablon, Schmuël, Rabbi. *Jewish Answers*. Lincoln, NE: Writers Club Press, 2000. 133 p. \$11.95 (ISBN 0-595-12231-0).

Jewish Answers is a bold little book with a big Magen David gleaming peachy and gold over blue velvet, pointing to the title and its humble young author, Rabbi Schmuël Jablon. I do not usually emphasize exteriors, but this one does deserve a comment. First of all, it is a bit unusual for an Orthodox Jewish book to be published by a general secular publisher. Secondly, the cover, at least to me, indicates a warm and healthy pride in being Jewish.

The question-and-answer chapters, gleaned mostly from questions the author received on the Web, indicate readiness to deal with every type of problem and/or refer the questioner to the right source—as one would expect from any Orthodox rabbi.

Rabbi Jablon presents a variety of questions many of us Jews would like to ask, but do not because of a reluctance to display our ignorance. Rounded off by chapters on Holy Days and *Zmanim*, this little book is like one big seder table featuring every shade of the four questioners, and underneath it all a tablecloth embroidered with the bottom line: *veemunah kol zot* ("this is all a matter of faith").

The author stresses the tremendous *emunah* (faith) of his wife's Zaide, a Holocaust survivor. The first chapter deals in depth with *emunah*, and his chapter on Pesach centers once again on this crucial topic. Questions come from all sides, but the main thread, the bottom line, is *emunah*, and along with that, the message of the final chapter: *ahavat chinam*, to *kasher* ourselves of the *sinat chinam* inflated by our *yetzer hara*. No one should feel excluded. On the contrary, the author went out of his way to look for Jews via unexpected media.

Pesach has been a great time to dip into this little surprise!

*Esther Sarah Evans, Albert & Temmy Latner
Jewish Public Library of Toronto, Ontario, Canada*

James-Chakraborty, Kathleen. *In the Spirit of Our Age: Eric Mendelsohn's B'nai Amoona Synagogue*. St. Louis: Missouri Historical Society, 2000. 83 p. \$24.95 (ISBN 1-883982-32-4).

This book was written to coincide with an exhibition, "Architect of Form and Spirit: Eric Mendelsohn in St. Louis," held at the St. Louis Center of Contemporary Arts, which moved into the 1950 building when B'nai Amoona moved out in 1986. Professor James-Chakraborty, a scholar of German expressionist architecture, presents the history of the congregation (in the context of Missouri Jewish history), along with the story of Mendelsohn's career in Germany, Palestine, and the United States. But the major focus here is on the building itself, Mendelsohn's first in America. Making good use of the synagogue's documents and the Mendelsohn Archive, James-Chakraborty shows the evolution of a plan and a design so innovative that it came to epitomize the post-World War II suburban campus-plan synagogue. (Mendelsohn subsequently was commissioned to do synagogues in three other states.)

The story of the project was repeated in countless cities, as Jews of increasing affluence desired larger and more impressive synagogues on bigger sites. B'nai Amoona dealt with all the typical disagreements—how far from the city to build? mixed or separate seating? what limit on construction costs?—thrashing out these issues at conflict-ridden board and congregation