

maintain that Aquinas combines the merits of both and that his philosophy of mind and language provides the materials for answering the naturalist.

Inevitably there are problems in the book. I was irritated by the identification of Wittgensteinian Fideism, a view supposedly held by Wittgenstein himself and D. Z. Phillips, as an approach to philosophizing about God opposed to that of Aquinas. There is now a wealth of literature, starting with Phillips himself and continued by authors like Mikel Burley, challenging the fideistic and non-cognitivist reading of this tradition. It is unfortunate that it persists in a book which acknowledges the work of Wittgenstein-influenced Thomists such as Herbert McCabe and Brian Davies.

In the great scheme of things, however, this is a minor quibble. This book is very good indeed. I would use it for graduate and upper-level undergraduate courses on Aquinas, and include it on reading lists more broadly. It deserves, however, a much wider readership than that.

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Alan L. Mittleman (ed.) *Holiness in Jewish Thought*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018). Pp. x + 241. £65.00 (Hbk). ISBN: 978 0 19 879649 7.

What is holiness in Judaism? Is it one thing or many? Is 'holy', in this tradition, synonymous with 'good', or does it point to something in addition to, or different from, the ethical? Of what importance is holiness to Jewishness and of Jewishness to holiness? These are among the hard and pressing questions that *Holiness in Jewish Thought*, an interdisciplinary collection of essays, addresses. The volume consists of an introduction, ten essays and an afterword, and is organized roughly chronologically: beginning with Leviticus, it moves through the rabbinic period, the mediaeval Jewish philosophers, Hasidism, and finally on to modern thinkers.

In the first essay, Elsie R. Stern attempts to redress the imbalance in our readings of the theologies of the Pentateuch, which are heavily weighted towards the covenantal and anthropomorphic. She does so by attending to its relatively neglected priestly theologies. The priestly theology is the theology of the priestly source, the placeholder author of a number of biblical texts primarily in Leviticus. Rather than read a theology directly from these texts – a theology which is typically found 'alienating' (14) or 'theologically empty' (17) – Stern asks what the point of the

texts is. Some of them, such as Lev 1–16, are taken to be ‘cultic instructions for cultic professionals’ (18). The question then becomes: what God can the priestly source be read as responding to? Stern discerns two Gods: both are ‘radically non-anthropomorphic’, but while one is amoral, the other is ‘morally inflected’ (26). The latter is concerned with our holiness construed as our ethical behaviour, i.e. our ‘observance of ethical and ritual commandments’ (30). Stern argues that the two theologies can be reconciled through a ‘pollution paradigm’ providing post-Shoah non-orthodox Jews with a minimally moral non-anthropomorphic theology (33).

In Tzvi Novick’s contribution he argues that during the classical rabbinic period, law displaced holiness as the primary structuring principle of Jewish thought and practice. Legal notions, such as *what is more or less restricted*, came to take precedence over ideas of *what is heavy and light*, which are drawn from what is intrinsically important or sanctified, and what is not (42). Nonetheless, Novick argues that the rabbis’ idea of holiness remained that of a real and substantial thing, that is, the idea of a property like mass. As such, the diminished importance of holiness was not due to any change in the rabbis’ conception of it. They didn’t, for instance, reduce or diminish holiness from a metaphysical to a nominal or aspirational status. The holy is displaced *in spite of* its being regarded as real. Novick leaves us wanting more: was the structuring role of the holy really displaced by legal thinking, or did it instead become entrenched deep within the legal categories and the justifications for the law? And why did the shift to the legal occur in the first place?

Martin Lockshin takes up the intriguing question of the logical possibility of holiness contagion. The rabbis typically accept that one may be made unholy by contact with unholy things, but why shouldn’t things work in reverse? Why shouldn’t contact with the holy make holy? If so, one could become accidentally holy. The rabbis have, almost without exception (63), maintained an anti-contagion principle: holiness may not transmit accidentally. And this is sustained by the view that holiness can only be predicated of persons, for it is an intentional notion, dependent on action or refraining from action (55). As such, holiness cannot be acquired accidentally, and so holiness contagion is impossible. Lockshin charts the imaginative rabbinic readings of those biblical passages which appear to support holiness contagion, in their attempt to render them consistent with the anti-contagion principle. He further suggests what the theological basis for this principle might be (65).

In his essay Joseph Isaac Lifshitz considers the holiness of land, specifically of the Holy Land. He first asks what makes a land, a part of physical space, holy. This appears particularly puzzling in the light of the intentional idea of holiness discussed in the previous essay. Given that no land is a person – though some lands may have person-like qualities (e.g. Lev. 18:28) – the holiness of a land must be something quite different. There are two aspects of the holiness of a land. On the one hand it is a ‘gateway to heaven’ (70), ‘an emanation of the

divine presence' (74). On the other, holiness lies in the human response to this: 'God's reality has an awesome effect on the believer. It is this effect that we call holiness' (71). Lifshitz argues that the Holy Land has both attributes. First, the divine presence emanates from this location in physical space, which is sensed by those who are drawn to live on it. Second, there are commandments which are 'directly related' to the Holy Land and cannot be carried out elsewhere (74, 85). Lifshitz argues that observing the commandments that can only be carried out in the Holy Land is a direct response to the divine presence in that land, and depends upon it (74, 83). It is unfortunate that Lifshitz's enthusiasm for Israel and *aliyah* - the 'ascent' of diasporic Jews to the Holy Land - at times gets the better of him.

Jonathan Jacobs's essay on rationalism is the first of three on mediaeval Jewish philosophers. Jacobs asks how Saadia Gaon and Bahya ibn Pakuda understood holiness, and demonstrates the intimate interconnections of tradition, revelation, and reason within Jewish epistemology. Gaon and Pakuda both aimed to show that Judaism has the 'support of reason' without this being a matter of showing either its fit with a particular philosophical system (88) or its derivability from rational principles (91). The project was to learn from the Greeks - showing that 'philosophy is not an enemy of Judaism and can be employed in support of it' (90) - without bowing down to them. How does holiness fit into this picture of rational Judaism? Gaon and Pakuda see holiness as a human achievement, not as something that may arise by accident or contagion. Holiness is understood as the activity of drawing near to God, and this may be achieved through the imitation of God (95). We imitate God by responding to His commandments in the right way. As in the first Psalm, this way crucially involves understanding why they are true and why they are good (103), so that we may love them and follow them in gratitude, thereby 'sanctifying ourselves and our deeds in this world and for the world to come' (106). So holiness requires the confident and ethical exercise of reason, *not* fearfully following the commandments blindly.

The second essay on the mediaeval period turns to Maimonides's nominalist understanding of holiness, against the backdrop of his transcendent God. Menachem Kellner argues that for Maimonides holiness is a normative, legal, or institutional status of something; it is a challenge, something to aspire to. This makes holiness a God-given, non-conventional, and contingent feature of social reality (115-117), and not an essential property. If holy things are not the essence of anything, what then distinguishes them from the non-holy? It is 'the way in which the Torah commands that they be treated' (115). The extent to which a *life* is holy is determined by the extent to which the commandments are fulfilled in it (122). All forms of ritual impurity are prohibited in order to achieve the commanded moral behaviour which brings one closer to God. Holiness for Kellner's Maimonides is open to all (125); it is a universal ethical ideal which is addressed to all people, not to Jews alone and, significantly, it does not require serious philosophical reflection. A puzzle we are left with is how holiness,

understood as an ethical ideal, can be applied to things for which it makes no sense that they may meet it: physical objects, lands, times, the Torah, and of course, the transcendent God.

The last of the essays on the mediaeval period moves away from the rationalist tradition to the mystical one. Hartley Lachter addresses a concrete consequence of certain Jewish mystical discourses on holiness, beginning his essay by describing the massacre of twenty-nine Arab Muslims by Baruch Goldstein at the Cave of the Patriarchs in Hebron on Purim, 1994. Goldstein's action was defended by Rabbi Yitzchak Ginsburgh, according to whom 'Jews are ontologically different from, and superior to, non-Jews' (137). Lachter finds that this view does indeed have roots in Kabbalah's classic mediaeval text the *Sefer ha-Zohar*. In this text, the Jewish people are taken to be the embodiment of the divine image (139). The origin of the Jewish soul is on the 'right' side of God, while the Gentile soul originates in the 'demonic Other Side of the left' (139). However, Lachter argues, contra Ginsburgh, that such views of racial superiority were not intended to legitimate acts of violence against non-Jews (143, 155). Further, Lachter puts these mediaeval sources in context, allowing us to see them as a reaction to – perhaps some remedy for – the hardships of diasporic life (139). He even reads such discourses as an empowering 'form of cultural resistance in an environment in which the legitimacy of Jewish life and identity was contested' (139). Lachter identifies the constant potential for racism in Jewish holiness discourse, and shows the need for constant vigilance. For we may be drawn to its racist forms at times – as catharsis or even resistance – but this same discourse may be used at other times for domination (155).

Eitan P. Fishbane continues the mystical theme by examining the holiness of the Sabbath in the 'hasidic mystical imagination' (179). Hasidism contains metaphysically and phenomenally rich and heady ideas of holiness – to be contrasted with Maimonides's austere ethical concept. In Fishbane's essay the object of holiness is a day, and he brings out how magnificent the hasidic experience of this day might be. As in several previous essays, a need is found for two conceptions of holiness set in dialogue: one is divinely given, the other forms the creative human response to it (159). The human response is sanctification, which requires preparation to receive the holiness of the Sabbath, and culminates in its reception, the 'experience of holiness' (163). Fishbane's essay takes three hasidic rabbis who emphasized different aspects of the holiness of the Sabbath: Zadoq ha-Kohen the spiritual (not merely physical) sensation of the holy, Yehudah Aryeh Leib of Ger the realm in time that is timeless through which consciousness may be transformed, and S. N. Barzofsky the liberation from everyday life and the revelation of a 'pantheistic vision of Being' (179).

William Plevan examines holiness as understood by three twentieth-century German Jewish philosophers. The problem of holiness arose for them as diasporic Jews in a modern nation-state. If Jewish holiness requires being set apart, what can this mean in such conditions – for many, our current conditions – and is it possible

or desirable? The question is investigated through the work of Hermann Cohen, Martin Buber, and Franz Rosenzweig. With nation-states being concerned with origins and destinies, these thinkers aimed at a synthesis: showing that Judaism was not only consistent with German life but was 'actually a vital and superior spiritual resource for Germany and humanity as a whole' (184–185). But they had different conceptions of holiness. Cohen's idea reflected his ethical monotheism, and humanistic universalism, while Buber's and Rosenzweig's conception of holiness reflected their acceptance of Jewish particularism – Zionism and traditionalism, respectively – together with a universalist messianism which nonetheless recognized a distinctive role for the Jews (203).

Sharon Portnoff's essay is a reading of Emil L. Fackenheim's political theology: an attempt to bring holiness back into the post-Shoah world so that Jews may enact it (205). If holiness is sanctification in order that the world be repaired, then to enact holiness we must surely believe that repair is possible (205). Yet Fackenheim takes the actual situation of contemporary Jews to be one in which such confidence is absent: the covenant between the Jews and God can no longer be taken for granted, which leaves the possibility of Jewish holiness in doubt. Fackenheim, on Portnoff's reading, insists that Jews must nonetheless act without the security that we may have a partner in God (206). We must act *as if* it were possible that Jews and the world may be holy again (206). We are asked to live this contradiction of thought and action, not to overcome it in a system. According to Portnoff, Fackenheim 'opens up a space for humility before God, even if that God does not exist' (207). Portnoff goes on to assess the plausibility of Fackenheim's 'quasi-historicist' framework for thinking about the possibility of a post-Shoah holiness which sustains religious hope for Jews.

This volume aids our understanding by helping us see the similarities and differences, continuities and discontinuities of Jewish ideas of holiness across time and space, and from a variety of disciplinary perspectives. It exhibits the richness and vitality of Jewish thought, and because Jewish thought about holiness is effectively Jewish thought about Jewishness, it enriches our understanding of what it is to be Jewish. The book will be of interest to all levels of philosophers, historians, and theologians and can be read by anyone else – for the collection assumes little prior knowledge, and explains all its technical terms, ensuring it is not speaking only to some select scholarly audience. It is of particular importance in a time of rising anti-Semitism for us all to grapple with this topic. The book helps us see that holiness is a powerful, so dangerous thing, which we must reflect on carefully if its promise is not to be undermined.

Good as it is, the volume offers little guidance on how the dangers of holiness may be navigated. What is still needed is a *critical* volume about Jewish holiness which cultivates vigilance. Such a volume would treat the real-world consequences of Jewish holiness. Here are just three examples of how it would do so. It would examine: (1) the dialectical relationship between Jewish holiness and anti-Semitism, (2) access to holiness for Jewish women, and (3) the use of

Jewish holiness discourse to legitimate Israel's domination of Palestinians and Palestine (see R. Firestone. *Holy War in Judaism: The Fall and Rise of a Controversial Idea* (2012)). These topics would necessitate expanding the range of authors beyond only men – women make up two of the twelve contributors to the collection under review – and beyond Jews. The aim of such a volume would be to provide a critical perspective on holiness in somewhat the way that Barbara Applebaum has with goodness (in *Being White, Being Good* (2010)).

A final note: one recurring thought in the present collection is that the Jewish concept of holiness has two aspects – as something given, and as something to be achieved. The book's intricate examination of holiness helps shed light on Jewishness and *its* double aspect. On the one hand, it is what we are, or find ourselves being. The other hand is best elaborated by the following hasidic tale: 'Before he died, Rabbi Shelomo Hayyim said to his sons: "You are not to think that your father was a zaddik, a 'rebbe', a 'good Jew.' But all the same I haven't been a hypocrite. I did try to be a Jew"' (M. Buber, *Tales of the Hasidim: Later Masters* (1948), 158).

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Robert R. Williams *Hegel on the Proofs and the Personhood of God: Studies in Hegel's Logic and Philosophy of Religion*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017). Pp. 319. £65.00 (Hbk). ISBN 978 0 1987 9522 3.

Robert Williams, who sadly died not long after the publication of the book under review, played an important role in the recent revival of interest in the philosophy of Hegel, becoming well known for books and articles, especially in relation to the theme of Hegel's concept of *Anerkennung* – 'acknowledgement' or 'recognition'. Indeed, in two books from the 1990s (*Recognition: Fichte and Hegel on the Other* (1992) and *Hegel's Ethics of Recognition* (1998)), Williams was one of the first within the English-speaking world to draw attention to this now widely discussed concept. For Hegel recognition occurs between human subjects and is normatively *mutual*, but in a *deeper sense* than may be immediately apparent. It is not a simple moral imperative that one should recognize/acknowledge other subjects *as* subjects. Rather, withholding recognition from others is ultimately self-defeating because being embedded within networks of *mutual* acts of recognition is essential to the very constitution of a subject *as* a subject.