

comes immediately to mind.

In the final chapters a call is made for policy reform in various areas: taxation; compensation for domestic workers; firms or communities hurt by foreign investment; antitrust; insurance and guarantees through the Overseas Private Investment Corporation; host country expropriation; and investment in the USSR. All of these reforms would be intended to control the level of foreign investment in order to increase

the returns from each unit. In addition the authors favor a new international regime for the MNC: "Rules are needed to protect the firms from escalating and inconsistent demands of the many governments they must deal with. Rules are needed to check the firms' abuses of power, to restore their legitimacy, and to enable them to contribute effectively to world economic and political progress." This book is a strong beginning toward those goals.

and emphasizes the need to read scripture through the eyes of tradition, seeking more for general models than specific norms. However, in his desire to emphasize the singularity of the Jewish contribution to contemporary sexual ethics he apparently feels the need to denigrate other traditions.

Christianity and, specifically, Roman Catholicism is set up as a strawman stuffed with misconceptions and half-truths. Dr. Gordis's book is full of such irresponsible statements as the following: "The Catholic Church has never retreated from its position that divorce is a mortal sin bringing in its wake the penalty of automatic excommunication...." But according to Catholic doctrine divorce is neither sinful nor does it result in excommunication. Gordis would have us believe that the Catholic Church teaches that "sexual relations are permissible only when they may lead to the begetting of children," which is inaccurate, and that "marriage is an estate which can be countenanced [sic] only because it is essential to the perpetuation of the human race; it is a concession to man's lower nature and hence it must bear the stigma of a punishment." He also makes such bald and outrageous statements as: "Since Augustine, the Church has taught that an embryo must be baptized if it is not to suffer eternal damnation," and "In the New Testament, where divorce is generally prohibited, the only ground recognized as permitting or requiring the dissolution of a marriage is adultery; the Catholic Church has enshrined this dictum in canon law."

By this time the reader is ready to swallow anything, if he or she has been able to accept Gordis's major premise in his many sets of self-serving syllogisms: "In classical Christianity, the attitude toward sex is decidedly negative;...unlike Christianity, Judaism cannot be held responsible for the tragic bifurcation between love and sex to which so much of the current moral chaos must be attributed.... This myth derived from the Christian attitude that sex is essentially evil."

Gordis is a professor of the Bible and a Jewish leader. He has written more than twenty books and should, by now, understand the dangers of half-truths and the need to present facts in their historical setting. In his discussion of the Halakah and the development of the authority of tradition as a moderating

Love and Sex: A Modern Jewish Perspective by Robert Gordis

(Farrar, Straus & Giroux; 290 + xii pp.; \$8.95)

John Hawley

In *Stern*, Bruce Jay Friedman's fascinating novel, a heroic schlemiel returns from work to the Wasp suburb in which he lives, only to discover that, in the face of a blinding snowstorm, he cannot find his home. "Feeling ridiculous, he sat down in the snow, but then he quickly became frightened and shouted 'Get me!' into the night.... He urinated in the snow, feeling giddy and dangerous in this white place more private than a thousand bathrooms. When the wind hit him in his open fly, he imagined himself freezing up swiftly, breaking off with a quick snap like winter wood...."

Contemporary Jewish novelists accept the implicit metaphor that sex offers as a language, one that speaks the subliminal words that are crucial but may never become conscious. Thus, Friedman presents Stern's symbolic emasculation as a danger necessarily implied in accepting one's membership in both the diaspora and Gentile America. Surrounded by *goyim* and all that is *goyische* in America, the fact of being Jewish dominates the imaginations of many such authors, rendering them agonizingly self-conscious about those distinctions that, while polyvalent, are surely by now part of the total American experience.

In this multiethnic country, no longer even mythologized as a melting pot, one's "difference" is rapidly becoming one's pride rather than one's albatross.

It is this resistance to being amalgamated that, ironically, is molding a future American identity. For many Jewish writers this has always been the case, although its sincere acceptance has sometimes been vitiated by an author's own ambivalence, verbalized in a mixture of guilt and hauteur. The natural outcome of this combination can be polemics—an aggressive ranking and disparaging of those divergent experiences and ideologies that might be more profitably simply shared. It is unfortunate that in this new book by Professor Gordis, which often voices his desire to remain openminded and pursue the golden mean of simple truth, there is an unnecessary amount of polemic—all the more distracting in its ineptitude.

The author may not be aware of this tendency, for much of his stated purpose flies in the face of such recognition. He presents a fine, if familiar, analysis of the contemporary malaise in sexual ethics and he offers his volume (based, he says, on Jewish scriptures and tradition) as a contribution to the advancement of a rational, rather than overly dogmatic, approach to sexuality. Gordis has, of course, chosen a highly controversial topic and methodology, for exegetes ranging from Louis Epstein to Roland de Vaux have stressed the tentative nature of any search through the Bible for a pre-existent sexual code. Gordis is clearly aware of this danger,

norm for strict law he has been quite careful in his demonstration, some of which must strike the reader as contorted. But his thinking becomes fuzzy-minded, triumphalistic, and simplistic when aimed in other directions.

He begins his real discussion of Christianity and the new morality by dating the modern era from 1453, a dating so inclusive as to be meaningless. Yet he dwells at length on Paul and Augustine, while dispatching Aquinas in one sentence, intent on dismissing the importance of the Council of Trent's declaration of Aquinas's views as authoritative. But, as Andre Guindon has demonstrated in *The Sexual Language* (certainly one of the finest recent treatments of the topic), Aquinas focused on the essential unity of body and soul. For Aquinas, therefore, virtue was "an increased inner power enabling a greater and better operation of man's capacities." Following Aquinas, the Catholic Church has always taught that one characteristic of virtuous activity is the integral pleasure one obtains from doing it. In fact, in such recent reflections of Catholic thinking as *Human Sexuality*, commissioned by the Catholic Theological Society of America, norms have been proposed that have been criticized for being too emphatic in their endorsement of personal integration as the *telos* of sexuality.

These caveats cannot gainsay the real need for a book that offers a scripturally based Jewish sexual ethic. From whichever direction in America's Judeo-Christian heritage one approaches contemporary sexual ethics, what is really needed is not a new code, with subsequent casebooks, but an indication of the significance of one's personally accepted sexuality. In his treatment of the instability of marriage and the incidence of divorce, the morality and social utility of birth control, homosexuality as a legitimate alternative to heterosexual marriage, the patterns of premarital and extramarital relations, and in his discussion of the emotional ethnic question of intermarriage and conversion, Gordis offers many insights that strike me as incomplete. But he speaks as a man deeply versed in the Torah, seeking to allow its wisdom to speak through today's experiences.

Pierre Grelot and others have suggested that monotheism, Israel's fundamental creed, was the most decisive element for the elaboration of the Jew-

ish sexual ethic, for it desacralized sexuality, and Gerhard von Rad has noted that Jewish sexuality, in opposition to the other cultures of the time, thereby became a phenomenon of the creature. As Gordis says, "to accept the natural and to sanctify it is the heart and essence of the Jewish tradition."

For Gordis there are three basic, interdependent Jewish concepts: "the sanctity of the total human personality, the union of sex and love, and the holiness of marriage." His book helps move sexuality away from an act requiring a code, to a mode of existence, a language, a way of relating to others that can assume ever greater significance. It is the rare American, Jewish or Christian, who can accept sexuality as both sacred and profane, for it is a difficult language to learn. This being the case, a truly balanced "modern Jewish perspective" on love and sex might demand a *ménage à trois*: Gordis's book, *Portnoy's Complaint*, and *Annie Hall*.

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