

Editor's Introduction

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I am pleased to present the current issue of *Contemporary Jewry* for your perusal. Once again, I believe the articles reflect the wide span of both our journal and our social science field of Jewish studies, with a range of topics, methodologies, and geographies: from religion to education, literature, ethnicity, and anti-Semitism; from ethnography to content analysis and quantitative analysis of large data sets; from the U.S. to Nepal, Israel, Canada, and the Caribbean.

The issue begins with two articles relating to the study of contemporary religious practices, neither of which deal with traditional synagogue practice. The first focuses on how women in a support group for Jewish women with cancer make meaning out of their individual and communal recitation of the familiar “Mi Sheberach” prayer. As such, it touches on the intersection of religion/spirituality and health, which has garnered increasing attention in the medical field, and provides a window on how religion is practiced outside of traditional spaces and structures. The second article takes a critical look at two “discursive practices” relating to two Passover “commodities”: haggadahs, and the food distributed at Chabad seders in Kathmandu, Nepal. The author focuses on the use of hyperbole (“optimistic” reporting) in these discourses and on its implications in terms of functionality and traditional basis.

Our third article analyzes the non-fictional works on education and literature written by the esteemed Israeli writer and politician Yizhar Smilansky (pen name, S. Yizhar), showing what they reveal about his views on the tension between the individual and society. Previous research on these works has been limited, and the essay presented here contributes to a better understanding of Yizhar’s worldview.

The last two articles focus on contemporary American Jews using quantitative analysis of large surveys. The first article revisits a familiar question about how

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distinct American Jews are within the broader American context, utilizing cumulative General Social Survey data (1972–2014) to provide new insights. The second article extends the analysis of the contemporary experience of anti-Semitism, using the National Jewish Population Survey of 2000–2001 as well as aggregated community-study data to examine which types of individuals are more likely to experience anti-Semitism and in which types of communities.

We have a very interesting interview with the director of the Koschitzky Centre for Jewish Studies (York University, Canada) in our Research Updates, and in the Book Review section, reviews of Casteel's *Calypso Jews: Jewishness in the Caribbean Literary Imagination*, which documents the important contributions of Jews in the Caribbean, and of Fishman's cutting-edge edited volume on contemporary *Love, Marriage, and Jewish Families*, incorporating new research on hot topics for today's young and old across the Jewish spectrum.

Lastly, I am excited to be bringing to your attention an innovative book review of Oksman's "*How Come Boys Get to Keep Their Noses?*": *Women and Jewish American Identity in Contemporary Graphic Memoirs*. Keeping in character with Oksman's book, the review by Gordan and Edelglass employs a unique graphic presentation. I encourage you to flip to the end of this issue to take a look at it; I have no doubt you will enjoy it!

ERRATA for v36 (1): Please note, in reference to the article, "American Children's Conceptions and Perceptions of the Jewish State: Laying the Groundwork for a Developmental Approach to Israel Education," that the name of the co-author, Hannah Tobin Cohen, was inadvertently omitted from A. Kelman's introduction to the special issue on Jewish education. We sincerely apologize for the error.