



Reverend Katz Library

New Book Reviews

March 2021

We are delighted to announce that the committee of the Rev Katz Library is once again functioning, and we will be meeting regularly to continue the successful running of our library and purchasing new books to add to our interesting collection.

We welcome new members to join our committee to assist in the smooth running of our library and to participate in the selection of new books for the library. We meet on the first Wednesday of each month from 10.00am – 12.0pm. If you are interested in joining our committee or if you would like further information please phone Jan 0416166257 or Rachele 0414940980.

As we reopen the Rev Katz Library we invite all readers to come to the library to make your reading selection for 2021. ***There is great interest and enjoyment available for all those who enjoy reading books with a Jewish background.***

Please read the reviews of some of the new books purchased this month.

Colum McCann, *Apeirogon*: a novel F MCC

From the National Book Award–winning and bestselling author of *Let the Great World Spin* comes an epic novel rooted in the unlikely real-life friendship between two fathers.

Bassam Aramin is Palestinian. Rami Elhanan is Israeli. They inhabit a world of conflict that colors every aspect of their lives, from the roads they are allowed to drive on to the schools their children attend to the checkpoints, both physical and emotional, they must negotiate.

But their lives, however circumscribed, are upended one after the other: first, Rami's thirteen-year-old daughter, Smadar, becomes the victim of suicide bombers; a decade later, Bassam's ten-year-old daughter, Abir, is killed by a rubber bullet. Rami and Bassam had been raised to hate one another. And yet, when they learn of each other's stories, they recognize the loss that connects them. Together they attempt to use their grief as a weapon for peace—and with their one small act, start to permeate what has for generations seemed an impermeable conflict.

This extraordinary novel is the fruit of a seed planted when the novelist Colum McCann met the real Bassam and Rami on a trip with the non-profit organization Narrative 4. McCann was moved by their willingness to share their stories with the world, by their hope that if they could see themselves in one another, perhaps others could too.

With their blessing, and unprecedented access to their families, lives, and personal recollections, McCann began to craft *Apeirogon*, which uses their real-life stories to begin another—one that crosses centuries and continents, stitching together time, art, history, nature, and politics in a tale both heartbreaking and hopeful. The result is an ambitious novel, crafted out of a universe of fictional and nonfictional material, with these fathers' moving story at its heart.

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER • "A quite extraordinary novel. Colum McCann has found the form and voice to tell the most complex of stories, with an unexpected friendship between two men at its powerfully beating heart."—Kamila Shamsie, author of *Home Fire*. * Longlisted for the Booker Prize *Winner of the National Jewish Book Award* Named one of the best books of the year by The Independent.

Robert Spencer, The Palestinian delusion: the catastrophic history of the Middle East peace process MID SPE

Every negotiated settlement between the State of Israel and its Palestinian adversaries has failed to establish a stable and lasting peace. This is the history of what was attempted, why those failures were inevitable, and what must be done instead.

Every new American President has a plan to bring about peace between the Israelis and the Palestinians, and every one fails.

Every “peace process” has failed in its primary objective: to establish a stable and lasting accord between the two parties, such that they can live together side-by-side in friendship rather than enmity.

But why? And what can be done instead?

While this failure is a consistent pattern stretching back decades, there is virtually no public discussion or even basic understanding of the primary reason for this failure.

The Palestinian Delusion is unique in situating the Israeli/Palestinian conflict within the context of the global jihad that has found renewed impetus in the latter portion of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first. Briskly recounting the tumultuous history of the “peace process,” Robert Spencer demonstrates that the determination of diplomats, policymakers, and negotiators to ignore this aspect of the conflict has led the Israelis, the Palestinians, and the world down numerous blind alleys. This has often only exacerbated, rather than healed, this conflict.

The Palestinian Delusion offers a general overview of the Zionist settlement of Palestine, the establishment of the State of Israel, and the Arab Muslim reaction to these events. It explores the dramatic and little-known history of the various peace efforts—showing how and why they invariably broke down or failed to be implemented fully. The Palestinian Delusion also provides shocking evidence from the Palestinian media, as well as statements from the Palestinian leadership, showing that negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians will never work.

But there is still cause for hope. Spencer delineates a realistic, viable alternative to the endless and futile “peace process,” that shows how the Jewish State and the Palestinian Arabs can truly coexist in peace—without illusions or unrealistic expectations.

Jonathan Sacks, Morality: Restoring the common good in divided times JUD SAC

Internationally acclaimed thought-leader Jonathan Sacks demonstrates how we can build a strong collective morality for the modern era.

In today's world of cultural climate change, argues Jonathan Sacks, we have outsourced morality to the markets on the one hand, and to government on the other. If the market rewards it, it must be OK - unless the law says not to.

Yet while the markets have brought wealth to many and the state has done much to contain the worst excesses of inequality, neither is capable of bearing the moral weight of showing us how to live.

On the one hand, traditional values no longer hold, yet recent political swings show that modern ideals of tolerance have left many feeling rudderless and adrift. In this environment we see things fall apart in unexpected ways - toxic public discourse that makes true societal progress almost

unattainable; the rise of religious extremism on the one hand and of aggressive atheism on the other; a drive for respect of all that establishes 'safe space' only where true debate is off limits. How can we build - or rebuild - a collective culture that is able to both respect difference and draw us together to work for the common good? Talking to key modern influences and thinkers - including Jordan Peterson, Melinda Gates and David Brooks - and drawing inspiration from the Bible and the historical experience of the Jewish people, Sacks argues that there are eight key factors in establishing, maintaining and passing on resilient moral values within a broad group, among them attitudes of lifelong learning and of thanksgiving, the importance of family life and community, and a culture of positive argument in place of destructive conflict.

Combining his passionate belief in a positive way forward with a careful weighing of the realities and challenges of the position in which we find ourselves, Jonathan Sacks sets out a clear picture of a world in which we can all find our place and build a future worth working for.

Maristella Botticini and Zvi Eckstein, How education shaped Jewish History 70-1492 HIS BOT

In 70 CE, the Jews were an agrarian and illiterate people living mostly in the Land of Israel and Mesopotamia. By 1492 the Jewish people had become a small group of literate urbanites specializing in crafts, trade, moneylending, and medicine in hundreds of places across the Old World, from Seville to Mangalore. What caused this radical change? *The Chosen Few* presents a new answer to this question by applying the lens of economic analysis to the key facts of fifteen formative centuries of Jewish history. Maristella Botticini and Zvi Eckstein offer a powerful new explanation of one of the most significant transformations in Jewish history while also providing fresh insights into the growing debate about the social and economic impact.

Abraham J Twerski, The shame borne in silence: Spouse abuse in the Jewish community JUD TWE

The myth that Jews do not abuse their spouses must be shattered!

In this revised edition, Rabbi Dr. Abraham Twerski directly addresses the problem of spouse abuse in the Jewish community. We cannot permit ourselves to deny the existence of this terrible crime. The time has come to confront the truth and to take definitive steps to end this violation of all that Judaism represents. A leading rabbi and psychiatrist, with striking candour, firmness and compassion, reveals what may have been closely kept dark secrets in many Jewish families, and offers urgently needed advice and direction.

Monday Morning Cooking Club, Now For Something Sweet COO MON

In this stunning fourth book, the MMCC girls have handpicked their favourite and 'can't-live-without' sweet recipes from Australia and the world. Uniquely, the book contains a series of essential 'how to' guides for the home cook and ends with a savoury chapter you will delve into over and over.

'We are always dreaming of soft, airy, pale chiffon cake, thinking about chocolate-swirled, glossy yeasted babke, imagining flaky, chewy, jammy strudel, baking almond-studded, citrus-glazed Dutch buns, frying golden, syrup-drenched coiled fishuelas, biting into hot, sugared jam-filled doughnuts ... and sharing it all with abundance and love...'

We are back, with the very best, sweetest and outstandingly delicious recipes curated and perfected from Jewish kitchens across Australia and the world. A joyful cookbook that honours and celebrates the most treasured family recipes, alongside moving stories of warmth, family, friendship, community and survival, this is a book to both treasure and cook from, day after day.

Norman Lebrecht, Genius and anxiety; how Jews changed the world HIS LEB

In a hundred-year period, a handful of men and women changed the world. Many of them are well known—Marx, Freud, Proust, Einstein, Kafka. Others have vanished from collective memory despite their enduring importance in our daily lives. Without Karl Landsteiner, for instance, there would be no blood transfusions or major surgery. Without Paul Ehrlich, no chemotherapy. Without Siegfried Marcus, no motor car. Without Rosalind Franklin, genetic science would look very different. Without Fritz Haber, there would not be enough food to sustain life on earth.

What do these visionaries have in common? They all had Jewish origins. They all had a gift for thinking in wholly original, even earth-shattering ways. In 1847, the Jewish people made up less than 0.25% of the world's population, and yet they saw what others could not. How? Why?

Norman Lebrecht has devoted half of his life to pondering and researching the mindset of the Jewish intellectuals, writers, scientists, and thinkers who turned the tides of history and shaped the world today as we know it. In *Genius & Anxiety*, Lebrecht begins with the Communist Manifesto in 1847 and ends in 1947, when Israel was founded. This robust, magnificent, beautifully designed volume is “an urgent and moving history” (The Spectator, UK) and a celebration of Jewish genius and contribution.