If Durkheim made sociology the exploration of the fluidity between the sacred and the profane, Weber and Simmel developed sociology as the study of the polarity reversals of religious and national community as well as those of individualism under economic change.

The final chapter of Goldberg's book shows how Robert Park and the Chicago School refigured the European discourse on the universalization of economic "Jewishness" into one of a general urbanization and alienation. Arguing that Park's notion of "the Marginal Man looks pretty Jewish," Goldberg points to the irony that American sociology quickly took the question of Jewish cultural adaptation and hybridity as a model for immigration in general: the puzzle that acculturation, assimilation, and secularization must be studied together but are often nonidentical to each other, not least in the case of Jews. Goldberg's excellent study deserves to be read widely by sociologists, political theorists, and historians of European and Jewish thought.

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Mara H. Benjamin. *The Obligated Self: Maternal Subjectivity and Jewish Thought*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2018. 155 pp.
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My first time doing ethnographic fieldwork, I fretted about how often I needed to bring my small children along with me if they were sick or if childcare fell through. I fretted about being interrupted in the evenings by my children with their pressing concerns when I was trying to make sense of my field notes. I reasoned that *real* anthropologists (picturing, of course, famous men), whose work was treated seriously, were not distracted by children. Long after, it dawned on me that my challenges of being both mother and ethnographer were the very same ones experienced by the female Torah scholars I was studying, since most had families, some large ones. What I thought delegitimized me in fact connected me to their worlds.

In *The Obligated Self: Maternal Subjectivity and Jewish Thought*, Mara Benjamin declares that while subjective maternal experiences (granted: time-consuming, distracting, and physically exhausting) have been overlooked, suppressed, or rendered invisible, they are sources of embodied wisdom that can be pressingly relevant to the work of Jewish thought. Specifically, they facilitate apprehending matters of relationality: "Engaging with the details of material life does not detract from but rather enhances our ability to engage the theological and ethical significance of the world we inhabit" (xv). Wisely, while Benjamin parses her own experiences and mines them for insight into "boundedness, dynamic responsiveness, autonomy redirected or challenged and contingent power" (xiv), she does not claim that hers are standard. Thus, readers who have

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cared for children in different generations or under other conditions might have to adjust Benjamin's paradigms so that they can forge their own relevant links to Jewish religious thought. Further, readers who draw on experiences as fathers might need to recalibrate if their subjective experiences of childrearing do not correspond to Benjamin's.

Using a "key word" approach, in part 1 of her book Benjamin explores four themes in which maternal experiences shed light on Jewish readings of texts and understandings of the nature of God. Beyond the traditional texts, she turns to the work of modern Jewish thinkers (Hermann Cohen, Franz Rosenzweig, Martin Buber, and Emmanuel Levinas), who, on different terms, look to interpersonal human relationships and obligatedness (or commandment) as paths to theological understanding.

For the first theme, "Obligation," Benjamin explores Jewish notions of commandedness in light of having become, as a mother, "an obligated self" to her child, who "exerted a gravitational pull, and my role was now to orbit her" (8). Unlike Cohen, Rosenzweig, and Levinas, who render obligation to the Other as an abstraction, Benjamin boldly proposes that "if the rabbinic notion of obligation comes into felt experience almost viscerally in caring for young children, then God is not an overlord but a vulnerable, dependent being who needs virtually constant attention" (13). This calls to mind Ora Horn Prouser's use of the lens of disability to read the Bible and even understand God as a figure who struggles to self-regulate.

In explicating her second theme, "Love," Benjamin recognizes how her intense attachment to her child reminds her of the "active and behavioral" (23) aspect of Jewish praxis. Further, the alternation between love with fury and frustration that she has known as a parent helps her to read both God's volatile style of parenting, ricocheting between "grand gestures of caretaking" and "vicious outbursts of frustration" (25).

Benjamin thoughtfully expands feminist theory in exploring "Power," her third theme, and the one that offered this reader the most productive opportunities for theological reflection. As she understands it, power, in both the relationship between mothers and children and between God and Israel, is "simultaneously intimate and structurally asymmetrical" (37). While an asymmetrical relationship between companions would obviously be problematic, its place in the experience of mothering is valid. In fact, Benjamin notes that "motherhood may be the one sphere in which a woman inhabits a superordinate position of power" (41); it gives her the authority to control her child's behavior and to educate the child in self-control and, as it inevitably turns out, in resistance. Thus, it is a power that feminist theorists might accept as a "power which facilitates transformation through empowering others" (43). Even when the parent is powerful, she is also vulnerable to feeling her child's pain. Here, Benjamin turns to Heschel's understanding of a God who does not need man, but who *chooses* to need man.

In explicating her fourth theme, "Teaching," she introduces us to the one-year-old in a high chair who discovers that when she drops her sippy cup, her mother will retrieve it: the pediatric law of falling bodies. Benjamin places a mother's nonverbal and verbal modes of daily, embodied, intimate, and often

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invisible instruction into conversation with the rabbinic mode of transmission of knowledge, which appropriates the language of parenthood. She notes that within the clearly gendered rabbinic context, "the familial parents provide merely the raw materials for life; the master, by contrast, brings creation to its ultimate purpose, namely, Torah" (62). Yet God, in her reading of biblical narratives, especially the episodes of feeding, teaches within a maternal paradigm, engaging over and again in the "nurturing, tedious, and frustrating work of caring for the newborn nation" (65). This eventually leads Benjamin to posit: "The fully realized meaning of Torah is grasped and transmitted in the quotidian work of caring for young children, and the *talmid ḥakham* is one who disciplines the mind, heart, and body to engage in this work" (70).

Part 2 of Benjamin's book expands the possibilities for insight by including others who come into contact with mother and child. There is "The Other" (God), "The Third" (nonparental caregivers), and "The Neighbor" (expanding to all others in a social network, and linking the relationship to one's neighbor and to the divine). It is in this last chapter that Benjamin compares the engaged stance of the mother who negotiates her child's encounters with the social world to the stance of Cohen, Buber, Rosenzweig, and Levinas, who, while "interested in the substructure of intersubjectivity," saw that engagement as "abstract and removed" (121) from ordinary life, seen as superficial. Here, Benjamin presents what I read as an irresistible challenge to readers who will go on to engage productively with her work: "The ultimate theological significance of a maternal intervention into modern and contemporary Jewish thought lies in the new knowledge of the ineffable that emerges through the daily, quotidian work of caring for one's child" (122).

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Jessica Cooperman. *Making Judaism Safe for America: World War I and the Origins of Religious Pluralism*. New York: New York University Press, 2018. vii + 209 pp.
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In *Making Judaism Safe for America*, Jessica Cooperman details the efforts of the Jewish Welfare Board (JWB) both to establish Judaism as an accepted element in the American religious mainstream and to recraft American Judaism to be worthy of that acceptance. In so doing, she argues that the roots of "tri-faith America" (Protestant, Catholic, Jewish) extend back to World War I, when the JWB became an officially recognized agency for welfare work in the suddenly enlarged American military. Thoroughly researched, clearly written, and cogently argued, *Making Judaism Safe for America* makes a significant contribution to the

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