

RECEIVED SEP 23 1999

Notable Books

Food and Wine—Confessions of an End of the Millennium Mom, Jennifer Moses (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1999)

Jennifer Moses is the one doing the whining throughout this chronicle of motherhood circa 1999. But if David Letterman were to write a cookbook, it might read something like this. Moses' lively anecdotes about family life are interspersed with tongue-in-cheek recipes that, while not always practical, will provide solace to the most harried middle-class mom: "Wash and skin chicken. Or don't. Whatever. You're too tired to make these decisions."

Judaism often serves as the foil for Moses' wisecracking. Who cares "that you decided *before* you were married that you were going to keep kosher?" she ruminates while making Mom's "Barbecued" Chicken. "You think God cares? You think He even knows about you, and your kids, and your narcissistic belief that if life were fair, you, rather than Julia Roberts, would be a famous and rich movie star?" It's not until the satisfying conclusion that Moses realizes she doesn't want to be Julia Roberts after all.—JR

The Jewish Search for a Usable Past, David G. Roskies (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998)

Visiting Tishevit in southeastern Poland, "the romance of the shtetl died within me," writes David Roskies, professor of Jewish literature at the Jewish Theological Seminary. This book and that trip were both animated, says Roskies, "by loss and retrieval." Roskies locates "memory sites" as diverse as the buried milk cans containing Emanuel Ringelblum's searing documentation of the Warsaw Ghetto, a row of gravestones in the Mt. Carmel cemetery in Queens, and Yiddish songs.

The songs chapter spotlights the early Yiddish troubadours of Second Avenue and laments the "loss of Jewish parody ... the art of spoofing that which they hold most sacred." Of all the baggage that came with desperate and hopeful Jews to the shores of the New

World between 1881 and 1924, "what traveled best," says Roskies, "was a repertory of Yiddish songs." Roskies' bonus for musical readers is nine pages of musical notation within his pungent historical account.—SFS

Jewish Holiday Style—A Beautiful Guide to Celebrating the Jewish Rituals in Style, Rita Milos Brownstein (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1999)

Holiday customs are "redecorated" by combining Martha Stewart's approach to homemaking with an Oprah Winfrey-style spirituality. From a Yom Kippur accomplishment diary for recording hopes, dreams, and aspirations for the coming year to a Cape Cod-style sukkah, Brownstein offers excellent suggestions about activities for aging Jewish baby boomers in their leisure time. Young and old will enjoy *Jewish Holiday Style's* crafts, games, and recipes.—MV

Books Received

Visiting the Sick—The Mitzvah of Bikur Cholim, Sharon Selib Epstein (Northvale, NJ: Aronson, 1999). A practical introduction to the Jewish obligation of visiting the sick or dying ... **The House of Rothschild—The World's Banker, 1849–1999,** Niall Ferguson (New York: Penguin Putnam, 1998). A history of the banking family chronicling its struggles against nationalism and anti-Semitism ... **Gideon's Spies—The Secret History of the Mossad,** Gordon Thomas (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999). An examination of Israel's intelligence organization based in part on interviews with agents ... **Waging Peace—Israel and the Arabs at the End of the Century,** Itamar Rabinovich (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1999). Israel's former ambassador to the United States analyzes the status of Israeli-Arab relations as Prime Minister Ehud Barak begins his administration ... **Searching for my Brothers—Jewish Men in a Gentile World,** Rabbi Jeffrey K. Salkin (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1999). The author of *Putting God on Your Guest List* offers a spiritual road map for Jewish men in the 21st century.

from making the mistake that the man made in the story with which I began, the mistake of thinking that there are western walls anywhere else in the world that are similar to the one in Jerusalem.

Rabbi Jack Riemer of Congregation Beth Tikvah in Boca Raton, Florida, is the editor of six books of modern Jewish thought and founder of the National Rabbinic Network, a support system for rabbis across denominational lines.

Jewish Justice

Jewish Dimensions of Social Justice—Tough Moral Choices of Our Time Albert Vorspan and David Saperstein

New York: UAHC Press, 1998. 358 pp., paperback \$12.95

REVIEWED BY
DAVID TWERSKY

If you thought Austin Powers was the only one trying to revive the '60s, you obviously missed this past May's gathering of Reform rabbis in Pittsburgh. After adopting a new set of principles, the outgoing president of the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR), Rabbi Richard Levy, quipped that since next year on the Jewish calendar will be 5760, many people are saying the '60s are coming back.

Levy's joke fell on fertile soil—Reform rabbis tend to be a politically liberal lot. Generationally, those under 60 are likely to have come of age during America's coming of age, while those under 35 look back with frustration at having missed that complex decade of American upheaval and change.

Although not present at the CCAR conference, Rabbi David Saperstein has been a leading voice in shaping the political and social action programs of Reform Judaism. Saperstein's platform is the movement's Religious Action Center in Washington, DC, a joint project of Reform's rabbinic and congregational arms. In *Jewish Dimensions of Social Justice*, along with coauthor Al Vorspan, Saperstein has sustained and articulated Reform Judaism's commitment to social action, and to marrying aspects of Jewish tradition with the modern quest to better the world, as a core concept of what it means to be a modern Jew. (Vorspan was for many years the lay head of the movement's Social Action Commission, a position now held by former MOMENT editor Leonard Fein). This book, an updated version of the authors 1992 volume, *Tough Choices—Jewish Perspectives on Social Justice* (UAHC Press), is a codification of Saper-