

זרמים  
Zeramim

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Dear readers,

In forging Jewish philosophies relevant to the 21<sup>st</sup> century, thinkers inevitably arrive at the intersection of two—or more—differing thought trajectories. The encounter with the tension held in the space that lies in between each path forward begs each of us not to stand still at the convergence or at the conundrum but to seek a reasoned resolution to the problem ahead.

Our issue opens with “*Al Parashat D'rakhim: The Negotiated Crossroads as a Rabbinic Metaphor*,” in which Martin S. Cohen explores the talmudic trope of ‘crossroads.’ Cohen reimages rabbinic literature’s presenting the splitting of pathways as not a challenge whereby one path proves correct and the other faulty but as the opportunity for drastically different courses of action to be harmonized by the seeker standing before life’s options.

Responding to the dilemma among Reform clergy regarding the officiation of interfaith marriages, Reeve Robert Brenner presents an alternate route: a category of identity that is neither a converted Jew nor a gentile unaffiliated with Jewish life. In “*The Toshav Tzedek: Identity, Weddings, and Co-Officiation: Halakhic Structural Connectives*,” Brenner traces the origins of his proposal for the integration of the partners he brings into the fold that has often left unenveloped those awaiting a communal embrace.

Also aspiring towards a greater acceptance of the disenfranchised along the path of traditional Jewish law, Lucia Pizarro Wehlen highlights the halakhic neglect of the husbands whose wives’ biological children were conceived with the assistance of sperm donors. “*Who’s the ‘Real’ Father? Paternity and Maternity in the Case of an Infertile Couple Who Become Parents Through Donor Gametes or Donor Embryos*” argues that the Conservative Jewish world has adopted so technical an understanding of fatherhood that Conservative practice, as it stands today, ritually allots undue psychological damage to the people whom the governing bodies of many of the world’s largest Jewish populations consider the legal fathers in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Looking back to the last century, David Golinkin provides an intellectual biographical contextualization of Milton Steinberg, whose historical novel *As a Driven Leaf* continues to be reprinted in new editions and new translations. “*As a Driven Leaf After 80 Years*” attempts to locate the voices of Steinberg and his contemporaries

among the characters featured in his literary depiction of the juncture of Hellenism and Judaism taking place nearly two millennia before him.

Drawing anew on the polar tensions of ‘faith vs. reason’ illustrated in Steinberg’s work, Richard L. Claman suggests that Steinberg’s philosophic fiction may have placed stronger arguments into the mouths of the fictive Rabbi Akiva and Elisha ben Avuyah if only the author could have lived long enough to participate in contemporary philosophical discourse, which would have aided him in providing guidance to the perplexed. “A Philosophical Note On *As a Driven Leaf*” illuminates intellectual pathways most coherently constructed in the works of such thinkers as Catherine Elgin, Hilary Putnam, and Ruth Anna Putnam—writers whose most masterful treatises were only penned after Steinberg’s soul had left this world, thus leaving *As a Driven Leaf* not-fully-equipped to argue for a cohesion of ‘Greek’ and Jewish thought.

As dichotomous trails approach their own meeting of ways, it becomes increasingly prudent to recognize the unpaved paths that may yet connect the disjointed points of discord and forge the coherence never before found. *Zeramim* (meaning “Streams”)—representative of a variety of Jewish thought—is catalogued by ISSN, indexed by RAMBI (The Index of Articles on Jewish Studies), and archived on our website at [www.zeramim.org](http://www.zeramim.org). The editors of our journal are blessed to present in this issue—and all issues—the convergence of Jewish thoughts that never before coincided.

With gratitude,

Jonah Rank, Managing Editor & Designer

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*The editors of Zeramim receive and solicit submissions from a range of authors diverse in age, gender, and denominational identity. For information on how to submit original works to Zeramim, please see the back of this issue.*