

זרמים  
Zeramim

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## A LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

Dear readers,

We (the editors) like to read essays that raise interesting questions, and present for your consideration three such articles. Shai Cherry starts with a question raised by Abraham Joshua Heschel: how are we to understand the various Midrashic teachings that our prayers somehow strengthen or empower God? Analyzing a wide variety of texts, Shai Cherry suggests, in “The Camouflaged *Ta’am* (‘Motive’): Redemptive Implications of Rabbinic Theurgy,” that there is a critical messianic undercurrent to these teachings – and identifying that theme can perhaps help us to better contextualize their message.

Another question: is there a common element in how we understand our own personal travails, and how we understand the travails of the People Israel generally? We often think of the Book of Job as addressed to the challenges we face as individuals. Nathan Moretto and Richard Claman, in “Reading Job (*Iyyov*) as a Stand-In for the People of Israel,” review, however, the curious history of how the Book of Job has been understood, by Martin Buber and others, as having a collective dimension.

Lastly, the final of the Ten Commandments raises the curiosity of law that appears to try to regulate our inner thought-processes. Zachary James Silver, in “Mind Control? A Halachic and Meta-Halachic Investigation of Forbidden Thoughts” reviews how traditional commentators have struggled with this concept, and some approaches towards an answer.

Thoughtful questions deserve, we suggest, the opportunity for the sort of sustained engagement that we try to offer through *Zeramim* – in this new issue, and in our prior issues, all of which are available at our website, [www.zeramim.org](http://www.zeramim.org), and are indexed on RAMBI, the Index of articles in Jewish Studies maintained by the National Library of Israel in Jerusalem. Our next issue, which we look forward to releasing in the Spring/Summer, will likewise be open to addressing a variety of questions. We are starting, however, to plan for ‘next year’ and so include here a Call For Papers, an initial outline of some questions that interest us in the category of “Why Medieval

Matters?" Again, we appreciate the encouragement of our authors and readers.

With gratitude,  
The Editors

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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.*