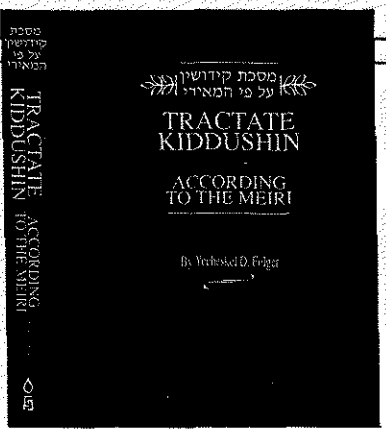
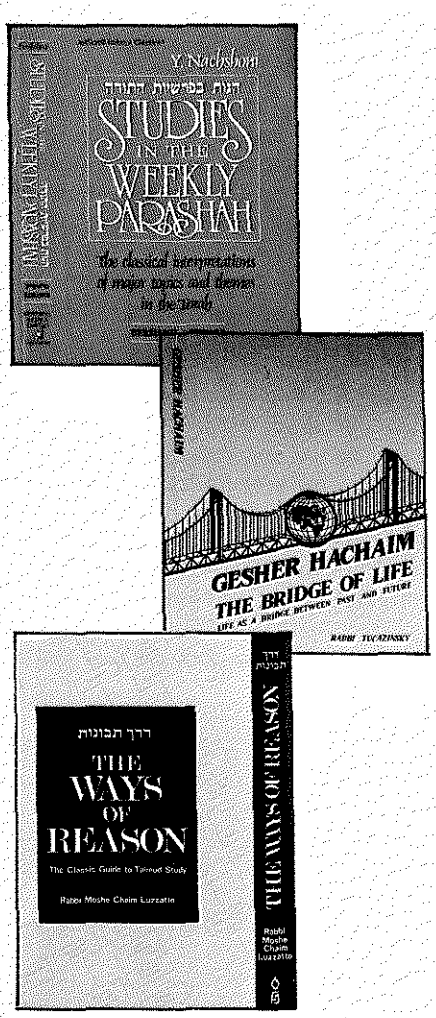


Books in Review



Among the multitude of Judaica that are published these days, a special place is occupied by the classics—major works of Torah scholarship that are now made accessible to the English reader.

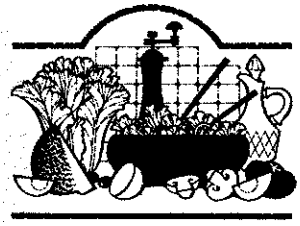
~ Classics ~



■ THE ESSENTIAL TORAH TEMIMAH by *Rabbi Baruch Halevi Epstein*, translated and elucidated by *Shraga Silverstein* (Feldheim, Jerusalem—New York, 1989, 5 volumes, $75.00) furnishes a translation of the verses of the Torah in accordance with Talmudic interpretation, and of the Talmudic sources which provide this interpretation of the Biblical text. Rabbi Silverstein does not include the author's elaborate and original commentary on the Talmudic sources quoted (for the reader interested to look up the commentary in a Hebrew edition of *Torah Temimah*, he provides the relevant reference numbers, though they are hardly needed for locating the passage wanted). But he renders the Talmudic text in a felicitous and meaningful manner that is true to the Hebrew text and yet is most readable and easily understood by the reader; where necessary, he adds a few words in brackets to make the meaning quite clear. In this way the aim of the *Torah Temimah's* author is achieved—"to show that this Torah, the Written Law, is a twin sister, as it were, to the Oral Law. They are inseparable. . . . And so long as the Written Law is not conjoined with the explanations and addenda of the Oral Law, it is not a complete Torah. Its message is not complete. . . . " Rabbi Silverstein has shown



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in his previous works that he is truly a master in presenting complex and demanding Hebrew texts in a manner that appeals to the English-speaking student. The present work is yet another significant achievement of his. He who is accustomed to using the *Torah Temimah* will miss the commentary; but somebody who has difficulty studying the Hebrew work will now be able to see—and benefit from—the inseparable unity of the Oral and Written Torah.

■ STUDIES IN THE WEEKLY PARASHAH, by *Y. Nachshoni*, translated from the Hebrew by *Shmuel Himelstein* (Mesorah Publ., Brooklyn, 5 volumes, 1988-89 $15.95 h.c., $12.95 p.b.) is quite unlike the standard *Chumash* commentary or *Drush* work. It does not provide explanations on a verse-by-verse basis; nor does it offer homiletic discourses connected to this or that passage. Instead, Rabbi Nachshoni has chosen the central episodes and topics in each *Sidrah*, and assembled in concise form the classical interpretations on them—ranging from *Chazal* to Rashi and Rambam, Ibn Ezra and Abarbanel, the medieval philosophers, Hirsch and Malbim, and the outstanding Chassidic thinkers. Thus each topic is discussed from a variety of angles and with a wide range of insights. Naturally every commentary—or anthology—reflects the thinking of the author, and Rabbi Nachshoni's personal approach to some topics can be clearly perceived by the reader; it will be up to him to decide which line of thought he wants to follow. The translation is excellent, and makes the perusal of this work a real pleasure. Unfortunately, this edition does not contain the Index of Topics of the Hebrew edition; the reader is advised to look through the Table of Contents of the five volumes to obtain an idea of the variety of themes treated. He will undoubtedly find some of particular concern to him, and be inspired by the wisdom of the sages on whom the author drew.

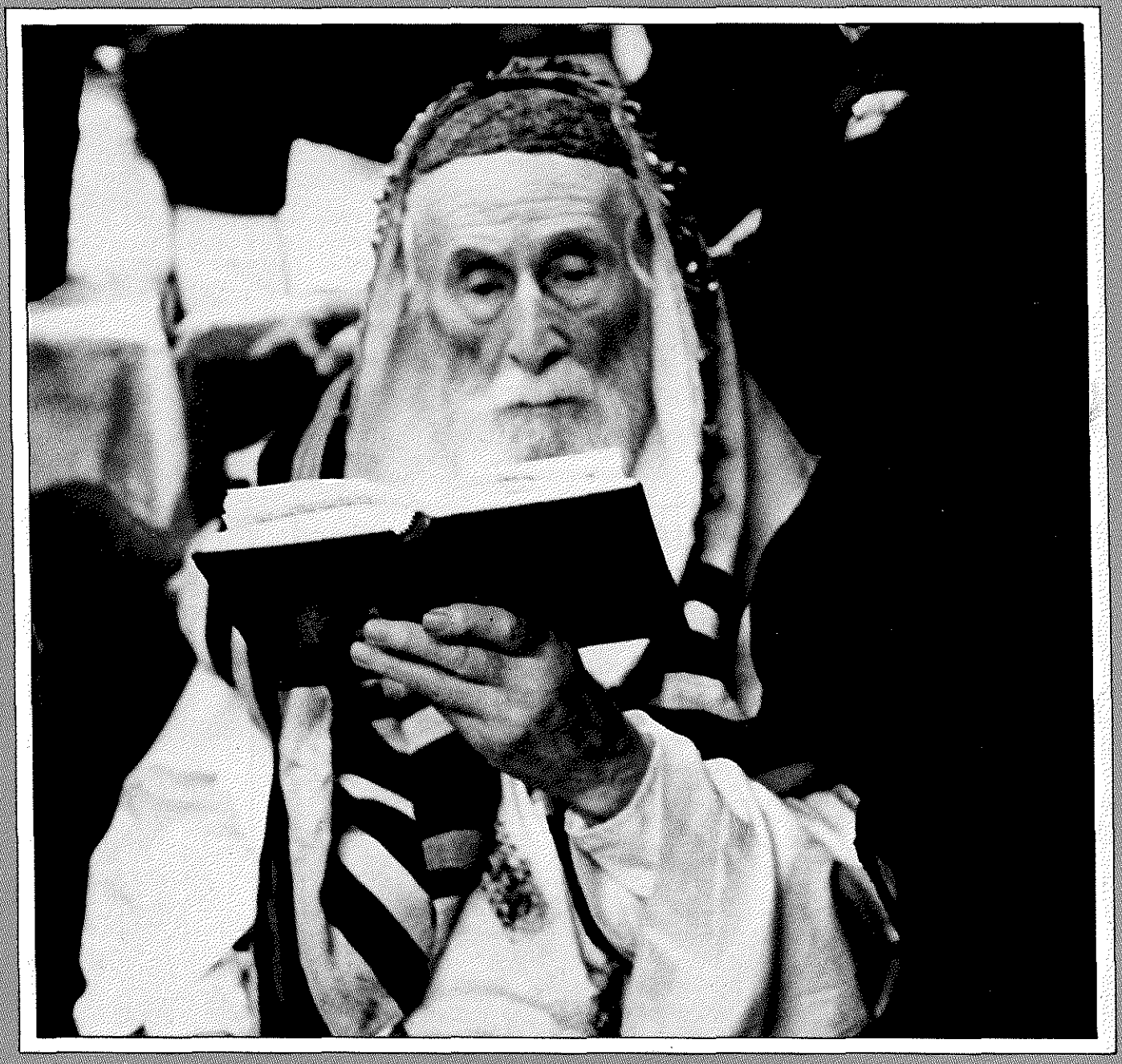
■ One of the outstanding Torah personalities of the 16th century was Rabbi Moshe Alshich, a member of Rabbi Yosef Karo's Beth Din in Safed. Of his many works, his commentary on Torah gained particular recognition because of the wealth of ideas offered, and the depth of insight. While starting out with *Pshat*, the author progressed from there to ever more profound vistas. TORAT MOSHE, Commentary of Rabbi Moshe Alshich on the Torah, translated and condensed by *Eliyahu Munk* (Rubin Mass Ltd., Jerusalem, 1988, 2 vols, $39.95 h.c.) represents a dedicated effort to make this classic available to the English-reading public. Its originality is obvious wherever one glances into it (the reader is referred, as an example, to the explanation of the sums of money required in payment of a vow, vol. II, pp. 599-601). The presentation of the idea is clear and easy to follow. Each volume is preceded by a list of topics discussed by the author, and the second volume contains an index of Bibli-

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The Bluzhever Rebbe

זצ"ל צדיק לברכה

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4
The Bluzhever Rebbe זצ"ל
A Biographical Appreciation,
Rabbi Shimon Finkelman

18
Popularizing the Talmud,
An Analytical Study of the Steinsaltz Approach to Talmud.
Rabbi Joseph Elias

29
The Human Rights Bill in Israel,
Ezriel Toshavi

36
Funding Torah Education: Anatomy of a Crisis,
Avi Moses

43
Books in Review: Classics
The Essential Torah Teminah/Studies in the Weekly Parshah/
Torat Moshe/Ibn Ezra on Hoshea/The Family Chumash/
The Ways of Reason/A Letter For the Ages/Gesher Hachaim/
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