



God in Search of Man: A Philosophy of Judaism

Abraham Joshua Heschel

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Abraham Joshua Heschel was one of the most revered religious leaders of the 20th century, and *God in Search of Man* and its companion volume, *Man Is Not Alone*, two of his most important books, are classics of modern Jewish theology. *God in Search of Man* combines scholarship with lucidity, reverence, and compassion as Dr. Heschel discusses not man's search for God but God's for man--the notion of a Chosen People, an idea which, he writes, "signifies not a quality inherent in the people but a relationship between the people and God." It is an extraordinary description of the nature of Biblical thought, and how that thought becomes faith.

God in Search of Man: A Philosophy of Judaism Details

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From Reader Review God in Search of Man: A Philosophy of Judaism for online ebook

Daniel Stefanski says

To be clear, I am not a theology student, and don't really have too much of a background in studying philosophy and religion. This is not a collection of inspiration nuggets-i.e. Rabbi Harold Kushner's work-but is compelling nonetheless, especially if you've inherited a Jewish or Christian religious background. That being said, the book is dense, and I have the feeling that there is some required reading to do before this one. I just don't know what direction to point you in-any answers?

Dan says

I'd been warned that this book was hard sledding and that I'd almost surely never make it all the way through.

I fought that warning. I denied it. But, finally, I've come to terms with the fact that it's true: I'm almost surely never going to pick this back up and I should stop pretending that I'm going to do so. It's just not going to happen.

Rabbi Heschel was a giant. His thoughts are intriguing. His influence enormous. But this book wasn't exactly written by him -- it's a reconstruction by his students of his speeches, from his note cards, which they didn't necessarily have in order and which weren't designed to be placed end-to-end into a single work, even if they did.

That's a shame. Because they are fascinating, but, given how they were cobbled into a book, they're also more repetitive than cumulative.

I'd give a lot to be able to go back and sit through the lectures they were trying to recapture. It may say more about me than it does about the book that I find the book to be insufficiently close to that experience for me to finish the slog.

Alexis says

"Faith in God is, we repeat, not easily attained. Had it been possible to prove His existence beyond dispute, atheism would have been refuted as an error long ago."

Faith is not easy, and neither is this book, but that's a virtue. This isn't simple theology; it's a bit of a slog, though it's divided into short chunks. I don't think I can do justice to it without writing a college term paper, but even when I found myself disagreeing with it, I was forced to challenge my own conception of God and faith.

Jana Light says

It took me a couple days to write a review of this book, because I have had a hard time sorting out what I think about it. It's beautiful, intricate, winding, cohesive, dense... so many things. Heschel provides a rich Jewish mystical theology that explores God, God's revelation to man, and man's response to God. Every page contains something stirring and profound. A proper reading should take a while -- there is a lot to absorb and this book deserves full attention.

I have only two caveats to my effusive praise. First, I'm not thrilled with calling this is a Philosophy of Judaism. It is very much a theology, not a philosophy, which is no denigration of the work itself. Heschel has written a wonderful theology. Calling it a philosophy simply doesn't do justice to what Heschel accomplishes here.

Secondly, I was pretty underwhelmed by the middle section on Revelation (even while highlighting *many* inspiring passages). Several claims were left unfounded and the section seemed particularly subjective/mystical/whathaveyou. This is not to say that I don't find value in a mystical theology, only that I appreciate it being acknowledged as such with appropriate recognition of the unknowableness of mystical experiences.

But there are too many other riches to make those criticisms mar my experience with the book. As a Christian reading a Jewish theology, I savored Heschel's explanation of the Judaic focus on deeds and action rather than salvation (though all within the unified tapestry of faith), finding it uniquely constructive, moving, and challenging.

I could go on about the many moments that sparked my spiritual interest, but I'll let you experience those moments anew for yourself. This is a book worth reading if you enjoy theology and Jewish or Christian mysticism.

Chelsea Wegrzyniak says

I was already sold on AJH before I started this book, but my love for his writing has only continued to grow. Such a rich discussion of what Judaism means as a religion and of the relationship of God and humankind. I actually brought three of the earlier chapters of this book to a philosophy of religion reading group and I think that this book is excellent in its discussion of some primary philosophical issues pertaining to monotheism (obviously Judaism is Heschel's subject matter, but some of the issues apply to the other Abrahamic religions as well). Heschel concisely presents issues about the religious relationship to nature (and problems with nature worship), negative theology, and more. Honestly one of my favorite writers and thinkers of all time. It's a long read but profoundly worth it.

Antimidas says

Beginning with the first page of this book, I was hooked on Heschel. In one paragraph, he summed up my thoughts on the religious experience and the problems with religion in modern society.

“It is customary to blame secular science and anti-religious philosophy for the eclipse of religion in modern

society. It would be more honest to blame religion for its own defeats. Religion declined not because it was refuted, but because it became irrelevant, dull, oppressive, insipid. When faith is completely replaced by creed, worship by discipline, love by habit; when the crisis of today is ignored because of the splendor of the past; when faith becomes an heirloom rather than a living fountain; when religion speaks only in the name of authority rather than with the voice of compassion--its message becomes meaningless."

Volkert says

It is not easy to write a review of *God in Search of Man: A Philosophy of Judaism*, by Abraham Joshua Heschel. This book was recommended to me 20 years ago by a fellow seeker, an intellectual, and it came up again recently by another fellow seeker, who is also a deep thinker. So I checked out a copy from the library. But because it was a library copy, I was not free to highlight the many outstanding quotes I encountered.

Much of this book was over my head, but I persisted, and I'm glad I did. The many insights I gained that help me to understand my own spiritual journey were worth the effort. Without going back and retracing the book (before returning it to the library), here are some thoughts that rise to the top:

1. God really is in search of us, and the prophets of the Bible (the Old Testament from my perspective) were chosen against their will to speak to their generations. They felt unworthy and unprepared, but were willing to listen to God and share his voice with those around them. Heschel rebuts the notion that man has made God in his image.
2. The prophets were not poets and artists who wrote and spoke creatively.
3. We can find our way into God's presence through "wonder," and participating in the sublime.
4. It is better to do good works with poor motives than to do nothing with good motives. Good works are often rewarded with grace that comes from God (which is much like the Eastern Orthodox Christian concept of "synergy").
5. The Torah (or what is usually translated "the law") would be better translated as "the teachings."
6. While the hallmark of Judaism is (are?) the Ten Commandments, which have been translated into virtually every language, the one word that has not been translated is "Sabbath," which is what sets Judaism apart.
7. Sabbath is the day when all men (and women) are equal and free.
8. Living liturgically (through prayers, readings, attending services) prepares us for those moments when we need to respond to events in life spontaneously and spiritually. It is like when a musician practices their instrument every day.
9. While Heschel doesn't really say this, the roots of Christianity are in Judaism, and Christians would benefit greatly from reading Jewish authors like Heschel. Eastern Orthodoxy, the branch of faith I identify with, builds closely on these roots.

Again, I wish I had collected several quotations from this volume to share here. You can find some Heschel quotes here on Goodreads.

Bob says

The depth of Dr. Heschel is overwhelming. He understands the spiritual journey and the Biblical story as no

other.

Graham Sommers says

This book is a treasure. Heschel writes with great wisdom and beautiful language. I look forward to spending more time with his writings.

"In the solitude of self-reflection the self may seem to be a fountain of beautiful thoughts and ideals. Yet thought may be a spell, and ideals may be worn like borrowed diadems. It is in deeds that man becomes aware of what his life really is, of his power to harm and to hurt, to wreck and to ruin; of his ability to derive joy and to bestow it upon others; to relieve and to increase his own and other people's tensions. It is in the employment of his will, not in reflection, that he meets his own self as it is; not as he should like it to be. In his deeds man exposes his immanent as well as his suppressed desires, spelling even that which he cannot apprehend. What he may not dare to think, he often utters in deeds. The heart is revealed in the deeds." p284

Sarah says

"Religion consists of Gods question and mans answer. The way to faith is the way of faith. The way to God is a way of God. Unless God asks the question, all our inquiries are in vain"

I have to give this a 4 star rating because at first it felt disjointed. The chapters and paragraphs didn't seem to flow the same way Heschel's usual writing does. But this is a minor thing and easily overlooked once you get into the bulk of the book.

In this work, Heschel places an emphasis on "two sources of religious thinking: memory and personal insight. We must rely on our memory and we must strive for fresh insight. We hear from tradition, we also understand through our own seeking." The grand premise of religion for man is to surpass himself, but for the modern man he is so caught up in science and reason, the grandeur of religion is fading away. Indifference to the wonder of living is the very root of sin for Heschel.

Ryan says

This was a quick read for me. I read it during two overnight shifts. That is my biggest regret with this book. It deserves a slow, close reading and I did not do it justice. Herschel poetically extracts an inherent philosophy from within Judaism. Not only is it philosophically poignant, but it is a truly enjoyable read. I recommend this book for anyone interested in a Hebraic worldview.

Braktheitalian says

This book took me a while to read, not because it is obtuse, but because it is so rich. I had to take a while to digest each part and "chew the cud".

I am not a Jew, but a Gentile believer in Hashem (Christian), so my perspective in reading is not one of self-definition but of relation. As we Gentile believers have been 'grafted into God's olive tree (Israel)'[Rom 11:24], we should be able to celebrate our root and profess our commonalities.

All too often, we Christians have instead stumbled over our pride and alienated the very people who first brought light to the Gentiles. Reading Jewish sources is a small step I am taking in the hope of total future reconciliation.

That said, everyone who can stomach the rich descriptions of philosophical thinking would benefit from reading this book. The jaded skeptic may sense the sublime and grow softer; the religious believer may be reminded of God's wonder; everyone must acknowledge the beauty of the One who asks man, "Where are you?"

I can't do this work justice with my own words. Instead, here are some of Heschel's words which struck me:

"When reduced to terms and definitions, to codes and catechisms, religion is, indeed, little more than a desiccated remnant of a once living reality."

"The life of religion is given not in the mental preservation of ideas [as is philosophy] but in events and insights, in something that happens in time."

"All worship and ritual are essentially attempts to remove our callousness to the mystery of our own existence and pursuits."

"There seem to be two courses of human thinking: one begins with man and his needs and ends in assuming that the universe is a meaningless display or a waste of energy; the other begins in amazement, in awe and humility and ends in the assumption that the universe is full of a glory that surpasses man and his mind, but is of eternal meaning to Him who made being possible."

"To the speculative mind, the world is an enigma; to the religious mind, the world is a challenge. The speculative problem is impersonal; the religious problem is addressed to the person. The first is concerned with finding an answer to the question: what is the cause of being? The second, with giving an answer to the question: what is asked of us?"

Needless to say, I will read this work again.

Andy Oram says

This book, I think, has helped me find my way as a person, as well as a Jew. Although Heschel focuses on Judaism and expects his readers to be observant Jews, I sense that his approach to spirit, action, and the purpose of life has a lot to say to sensitive non-Jews as well (although it's hard for me to step outside of myself enough to be sure). The book is certainly a big commitment to the reader: long, repetitious, sometimes abstract. Although you can gain a lot by parsing and considering each paragraph, I suggest that you regularly step back and try to consider what lies in between the words (as one does in interpreting sacred texts)--what is the deeper and more hidden message.

Chad says

An absolutely beautiful book on Jewish doctrine. Goodreads recommended this book to me; as I wanted to better live Stendahl's approach to interacting with other religions (1. when learning about other religions, ask them, not their enemies, 2. Don't compare your best with their worst, 3. Leave room for "holy envy."), and I am nearly illiterate when it comes to Judaism, I thought this would be a good introduction.

As an LDS reader, I was surprised but not surprised at some of our common understandings and vocabulary. Covenants, salvation, sanctification, exaltation, a nation of priests, holiness, prophets, revelation. Many of these have been inherited by Christianity as a whole, but I felt the Jewish conception was closer to our understanding as Latter Day Saints.

But in addition, there was a whole new vocabulary that was beautiful and inspiring. I learned the difference between wonder, awe, and reverence; the importance of mystery; *havanah* (the deeds) and *kavanah* (the sincerity behind the deeds); *mitsvah*, which are commandments but actually encompasses more than commandments; and events versus processes.

The title is actually what the author considers the essence of Judaism: rather than man's search for God, it is God's search for man: "It is as if God were unwilling to be alone, and He had chosen man to serve Him... God is in search of man. Faith in God is a response to God's question."

I felt a measure of holy envy for Judaism, and I will apply much to my own life. I particularly liked his confrontation of a Jewish stereotype: that Jews are sticklers of the law, regardless of the sincerity of their actions. He shows the importance of both, that deeds themselves are vital and the sincerity behind the deeds is also important. But if he were to choose one over the other, he'd pick deeds without sincerity, because in the end, doing the good deeds brings about the change of heart, and God's grace can help us gain the sincerity (fake it til you make it).

I have a whole bunch of quotes, so I'll just unload them all here:

It is customary to blame secular science and anti-religious philosophy for the eclipse of religion in modern society. It would be more honest to blame religion for its own defeats. Religion declined not because it was refuted, but because it became irrelevant, dull, oppressive, insipid. When faith is completely replaced by creed, worship by discipline, love by habit; when the crisis of today is ignored because of the splendor of the past; when faith becomes an heirloom rather than a living fountain; when religion speaks only in the name of authority rather than with the voice of compassion-- its message becomes meaningless. (1)

Theology starts with dogmas, philosophy begins with problems. Philosophy sees the problem first, theology has the answer in advance... Philosophy is, in a sense, a kind of thinking that has a beginning but no end. In it, the awareness of the problem outlives all solutions. Its answers are questions in disguise; every new answer giving rise to new questions. In religion, on the other hand, the mystery of the answer hovers over all questions. (4)

Conceptual thinking is adequate when we are engaged in an effort to enhance our knowledge of the world.

Situational thinking is necessary when we are engaged in an effort to understand issues on which we stake our very existence (5)

Religion is more than a creed or an ideology and cannot be understood when detached from acts and events. It comes to light in moments when one's soul is shaken with unmitigated concern about the meaning of all meaning, about one's ultimate commitment which is integrated with one's very existence; in moments when all foregone conclusions, all life-stifling trivialities are suspended. (7)

The chief danger to philosophy, apart from laziness and woolliness, is scholasticism, the essence of which is treating what is vague as if it were precise and trying to fit it into an exact logical category. (8)

If a religion claims to be true, it is under obligation to offer a criterion for its validity either in terms of ideas or in terms of events. (10)

Hypocrisy rather than heresy is the cause of spiritual decay (11).

Philosophy of religion as criticism of religion will not fulfill its function if it acts as an antagonist or as an imitator or rival. (11)

Since religion tends to become self-inflated and to disregard those aspects of reality which are not immediately relevant to dogma and ritual, it is the task of philosophy of religion to place religious understanding in relation to the entire range of human knowledge (12).

It is the desire to reconcile philosophy and science with religion, attempts have often been made not only to prove that there are no conflicts between the doctrines imparted by revelation and the ideas acquired by our own reason, but also that they are intrinsically identical. Yet such reconciliation is not a solution but a dissolution in which religion is bound to fade away. (13)

If science and religion are intrinsically identical, one of them must be superfluous. In such reconciliation, religion is little more than bad science and naive morality. Its depth is gone, its majesty forgotten, its values become questionable. Its only justification is pedagogical, as a shortcut to philosophy, as a philosophy for the masses. (13)

The worship of reason is arrogance and betrays a lack of intelligence. The rejection of reason is cowardice and betrays a lack of faith. (20)

The grand premise of religion is that man is able to surpass himself... that man who is conditioned by a multiplicity of factors is capable of living with demands that are unconditioned. (33)

The Greeks learned in order to comprehend. The Hebrews learned in order to revere. The modern man learns in order to use. (34)

Dazzled by the brilliant achievements of the intellect in science and technique, we have not only become convinced that we are the masters of the earth; we have become convinced that our needs and interests are the ultimate standard of what is right and wrong. (35)

There is no room in Biblical Hebrew for doubt; there are many expressions of wonder. Just as in dealing with judgments our starting point is doubt, wonder is the Biblical starting point in facing reality. The Biblical man's sense of the mind-surpassing grandeur of reality prevented the power of doubt from setting up its own

independent dynasty. Doubt is an act in which the mind confronts the universe. Radical skepticism is the outgrowth of subtle conceit and self-reliance. Yet there was no conceit in the prophets and no self-reliance in the Psalmist. (98)

For the essence and greatness of man do not lie in his ability to please his ego, to satisfy his needs, but rather in his ability to stand above his ego, to ignore his own needs; to sacrifice his own interests for the sake of the holy. (117)

No other deficiency makes the soul more barren than the lack of a sense for the unique... True insight is a moment of perceiving a situation before it freezes into similarity with something else. (202)

There is more discernment in sensing the ineffable uniqueness of an event than in trying to explain it away by our stereotyped doubts. (202)

Two stones, two things in space may be alike; two hours in a person's life or two ages in human history are never alike. What happened once will never happen again in the same sense... It is ignorance of time, unawareness of the depth of events that leads to the claim that history repeats itself. (203)

A process has no future. It becomes obsolete and is always replaced by its own effects. We do not ponder about last year's snow... Great events, just as great works of art, are significant in themselves. Our interest in them endures long after they are gone. (211)

Does one generation have the right to commit all other generations to a covenant? Why must we feel committed, and to what? (213)

Socrates taught us that a life without thinking is not worth living. Now, thinking is a noble effort, but the finest thinking may end in futility... The Bible taught us that life without commitment is not worth living; that thinking without roots will bear flowers but no fruits. (216)

To say the obvious is not yet to speak truth. When the obvious and the Word stand in conflict, truth is the refusal to rest content with the facts as they seem. Truth is the courage to fathom the facts in order to see how they relate to the Word. (271)

We must beware of the obscurantism of a mechanical deference to the Bible. The prophetic words were given to us to be understood, not merely to be mechanically repeated. The Bible is to be understood by the spirit that grows with it, wrestles with it, and prays with it. (273)

The Bible is not an intellectual sinecure, and its acceptance should not be like setting up a talismanic lock that seals both the mind and the conscience against the intrusion of new thoughts. Revelation is not vicarious thinking. Its purpose is not to substitute for but to extend our understanding (273)

It is in deeds that man becomes aware of what his life really is, of his power to harm and to hurt, to wreck and to ruin; of his ability to derive joy and to bestow it upon others; to relieve and to increase his own and other people's tensions. It is in the employment of his will, not in reflection, that he meets his own self as it is; not as he should like it to be. In his deeds man exposes his immanent as well as his suppressed desires, spelling even that which he cannot apprehend. What he may not dare to think, he often utters in deeds. The heart is revealed in the deeds. (284)

No one is mature unless he has learned to be engaged in pursuits which require discipline and self-control,

and human perfectibility is contingent upon the capacity for self-control. (300)

The law, stiff with formality, is a cry for creativity; a call for nobility concealed in the form of commandments. It is not designed to be a yoke, a curb, a strait jacket for human action. (307)

**The book gives words to something I had a hard time finding in Mormonism, perhaps the closest equivalent being the letter and the spirit of the law. Halacha (something like law or commandments) and agada (inspiration and meaning):

Halacha represents the strength to shape one's life according to a fixed patten; it is a form-giving force. Agada is the expression of man's ceaseless striving which often defies all limitations. Halacha is the rationalization and schematization of living; it defines, specifies, sets measure and limit, placing life into an exact system. Agada deals with man's ineffable relations to God, to other men, and to the world. Halacha deals with details, with each commandment separately; agada deals with the whole of life, with the totality of religious life. Halacha deals with subjects that can be expressed literally; agada introduces us to a realm which lies beyond the range of expression. Halacha teaches us to perform common acts; agada tells us how to participate in the eternal drama. Halacha gives us knowledge; agada gives us inspiration. (336)

Trying to remain loyal to both aspects of Jewish living, we discover that the pole of regularity is stronger than the pole of spontaneity, and, as a result, there is a perpetual danger of our observance and worship becoming mere habit, a mechanical performance... It is a problem that concerns the very heart of religious living, and is as easy to solve as other central problems of existence (343)

Should we then despair because of our being unable to retain perfect purity? We should, if perfection were our goal. However, we are not obliged to be perfect once and for all, but only to rise again and again beyond the level of the self. Perfection is divine, and to make it a goal of man is to call on man to be divine. All we can do is to try to wring our hearts clean in contrition. Contrition begins with a feeling of shame at our being incapable of disentanglement from the self. To be contrite at our failures is holier than to be complacent in perfection. (403)

Bob says

I liked this book though at times I had to plough through some sections; here is the opening paragraph; "Religion declined not because it was refuted, but because it became irrelevant, dull, oppressive, and insipid. When faith is completely replaced by creed, worship by discipline, love by habit; when the crisis of today is ignored because of the splendor of the past; when faith becomes an heirloom rather than a living fountain; when religion speaks only in the name of authority rather than with the voice of compassion--its message becomes meaningless."

There is much to commend in this book, it is not always easy but I believe it is always profitable. There are many thought provoking thoughts & statements throughout this work, just take your time in reading it and you will glean much from its pages. In one place he says, "Hypocrisy rather than heresy is the cause of spiritual decay" he then cites Psalm 51:8.

He sets philosophy on its ear, I believe, he says, "The role of religion is to be a challenge to philosophy, not

merely an object for examination. There is much that philosophy could learn from the Bible. To the philosopher the idea of the good is the most exalted idea. But to the Bible the idea of the good is penultimate: it cannot exist without the holy. The holy is the essence, the good is its expression.”

However our author is not telling us to send our brains on vacation for he says, “The employment of reason is indispensable to the understanding & worship of God, & religion withers without it. The insights of faith are general,...Without reason faith becomes blind...” Reading that got me hooked.

The average layperson would not find much here of interest, but those interested in the Bible, theology, philosophy etc. and those who pastor churches I believe will find great value in this work.

Ron says

A must read for any studious Christian.

Isaac says

This holy and sacred sefer (book) poetically and logically portrays the essence and raison d'etre for believing in G-d and the sacredness of being a practicing Jew. No other book that I have ever read elucidated for me the depth and sublime nature of our relationship with G-d, as this one has.

Join us at <http://philoofreligion.blogspot.com/> for extensive reviews and essays of Rav Heschel's magnificent work – G-d in Search of Man.

catechism says

Man, I don't know. I really, really dislike philosophy, but I really like religion, and the place where those things meet is very hit-or-miss for me. And so that's how this book went: parts of it really resonated with me and I read them quickly, and parts were nonstop ugh-ugh-move-ON. Probably I will buy a copy! The prose is lovely, and there's a lot here.

Jim Killion says

I agree with the review from TIME: "subtitled 'A Philosophy of Judaism,' but it speaks to all those for whom the Bible is a holy book."

And with The Boston Globe: "One of the most compelling books about being human that has been written in this century."

Brian says

I had pretty high hopes coming in to *G-d in Search of Man*, since I had heard a lot about it before I read it. However, my reaction to the majority of the book can pretty much be summed up in the following image:

I should have known that I wasn't going to like the rest of the book when Heschel started talking about the arrogance of science in thinking it can know everything, and then when he continued in talking about how science cannot be used to understand the ineffable and is therefore inappropriate to the full understanding of religion, it just got worse from there. That's pretty much just a pre-emptive Courtier's Reply as to scientific claims about religion, and should thus be discarded out of hand. I'd say the majority of the book was like that for me--all just the same tired old religious arguments we've heard time and time again, and that's when Heschel isn't just ignoring the argument entirely because it's inconvenient.

So, here's a quote about the purpose of religion:

The grand premise of religion is that man is able to surpass himself. Such ability is the essence of freedom.

And that sounds pretty nice, right? But when you get down to it, it's really just a nicer way of saying that religion is the essence of morality, and without religion why not just treat all humans as the animals we are, and so on. Considering the sheer amount of immorality that's been done in the name of religion all throughout history, I find that argument to be incredibly insulting in its total ignorance even as a religious person. Not to mention that transhumanism has exactly the same basis and is secular, though Heschel gets a pass on that since this was written in the 50s.

The Problem of Evil is pretty much the fundamental problem that omnipotent-G-d-style monotheisms have to answer, and indeed, there is a section about it here. Heschel mentions how many people in the Bible wonder whether G-d has given over the world into the hands of the wicked, and that the world being a place of sorrow is a common sentiment and how Job was written in part as an answer to the Problem of Evil...but he never actually deals with it himself. He just skips straight past the whole "why is there evil?" to how following the mitzvot can help mitigate the evil in the world and in our hearts. Which, sure, okay...but why is that *necessary* at all? It's not like Job is any help--the answer there is G-d telling Job that it is not the place of a puny mortal to question him. "Because I say so" is not a good reason, especially if you're trying to explain the Problem of Evil in a post-Shoah world.

Heschel has a kind of pseudo-Pascal's Wager approach to why the Bible is transcendent. It's evidence of the ineffable because of its importance to so many people and its survival to the present day. That's it. That's the explanation, and yes, this is begging the question and essentially just ad populum. Almost half of Americans believe G-d created the world in six literal days, which is an ancient belief and of great importance to many people and yet is totally wrong. That the Bible survived because people thought it was important is a statement about what people *think* about the Bible, not the Bible itself.

There's a whole section about Judaism being a religion of holy times and not holy places, which completely ignores the existence of holy days in other religions, not to mention **the Temple**, which was our holiest place for centuries at a time and, coupled with "Next year in Jerusalem!" makes any attempt to make the time-not-place argument ludicrous to me.

He claims about prophetic revelation that:

Proof and examination are inapplicable to it.

which could have fooled me, because I would have thought at the very least that you could ask "did it happen?" if it's discussing events. Though if you're talking about something like Ezekiel's vision, I admit that is pretty inapplicable to scientific scrutiny.

I could go on. I could go on at length, but you probably get the idea.

I didn't think it was total schlock. There's a rather thought-provoking section about how conscience can't be the sole guide for determining right and wrong because it mostly judges past actions instead of future ones. Also, the good part about his Problem of Evil section was his note that evil isn't so terrible because of the powerful and horrible evil deeds in the world, but because evil so often masquerades as good. But they were small diamonds in a great pile of dross.

It's possible that my lack of a mystical mindset was what led to so much disappointment. I was pretty much looking for another version of TheTorah.com, which combines traditional halakhic scholarship with modern Biblical criticism, but that's not what this book is at all. If you have a similar mindset to mine, check out that website instead of this, because if you read *G-d in Search of Man* you'll probably just come away disappointed.
