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Adam Sutcliffe. *Judaism and Enlightenment.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003. 314 S. $60.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-521-82015-8.

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With *Judaism and Enlightenment*, Adam Sutcliffe has written an important new study that intervenes strongly in debates surrounding the European Enlightenment and its relationship to Jews, the Enlightenment's legacy for the present, and problems of culture and difference, more generally. In a series of exacting readings, Sutcliffe analyzes the writings of a wide range of Enlightenment intellectuals, showing how their varied attempts to grapple with religious tradition, the legacy of the Church, monarchic authority, and the advent of Enlightenment principles of reason and toleration worked to shape their views of Jews and Judaism from antiquity to the present.

In the course of his study, Sutcliffe avoids categorizing various thinkers as "anti-Semitic" or not. Instead, he approaches the responses of Enlightenment thinkers to Jews in terms of what the sociologist Zygmunt Bauman has called "allosemitism": "the conviction that Jews are in some sense radically different from all others" (p. 9). Allosemitism, for Sutcliffe, suggests a fundamental ambivalence in medieval and early modern society, and in Christianity more generally. Jews, in these contexts, occupied intermediate positions of "quintessential incongruity" and, came to embody "ambivalence incarnate," since they fit into none of the dominant categories. By adopting this analytical framework, Sutcliffe argues, one can account for the "intricate mix of admiration and repulsion, and of identification and expulsion, that suffuses so much Enlightenment writing on Jewish topics" (p. 9). And by adopting this approach, Sutcliffe avoids the problem of inscribing seventeenth- and eighteenth-century utterances in a simple narrative of vitriolic (or "eliminationist") anti-Semitism, beginning either with Luther– or Enlightenment reason–and leading ineluctably to the Nazi catastrophe; he also avoids offering apologias for the not infrequent animus directed at Jews. The figure of Voltaire, to whom Sutcliffe devotes a late and incisive chapter, is a case in point, since Voltaire's vitriolic remarks on Jews have been a recurrent point of reference for historians of anti-Semitism as well as apologists for such anti-Jewish utterances coming from within the liberal Enlightenment.

Instead of judging whether certain figures are anti-Semitic, Sutcliffe seeks to define and analyze the positions adopted toward Jews by various Enlightenment intellectuals in terms of the structures, rhetorical and otherwise, of their thought and arguments on politics, religion, reason, and toleration. He seeks further to trace continuities and discontinuities in these ideas across a range of figures and texts, relating various pronouncements on Jews and Judaism to the changing contexts in which they were made and the contemporary debates in which they were meant to intervene. The analysis in *Ju-*

daism and Enlightenment begins with pre-Enlightenment Christian thought, then moves to the early Enlightenment, focusing on texts published primarily in England, France, and Holland, and culminates with the aforementioned analysis of Voltaire's complex relationship to Jews and Judaism. The virtues of Sutcliffe's overall approach are multiple: first, it allows him to analyze the role that Jews, past and present, played in various competing dimensions of pre- and early Enlightenment thought–whether focused on the legacy of the Old Testament, the commitment to reason, or the advent of deism. At the same time, it provides a conceptual framework by which Sutcliffe is able to tease out ambiguities, ambivalences, contradictions, and paradoxes in the approaches adopted by different intellectuals, whether Christian Hebraists like Richard Simon, Jean Le Clerc, and Johann Buxtorf, or the conservative theologian and student of Jewish language and culture Johann Christoph Wagenseil, or whether Enlightenment-inflected Huguenot intellectuals like Jacques Basnage and Pierre Bayle, or the secular, excommunicated Spinoza and his adherents, the empiricist John Locke who wrote on religious toleration, or the theorist of deism John Toland, among others. But this approach also enables Sutcliffe to engage with problematic aspects of Enlightenment rationalism in ways that seek to take account of its twentieth-century critics, Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, as well as more recent postmodernists, while nonetheless arguing, with Juergen Habermas, that the virtue of rationalist thought is that it "contains within itself the possibility of overcoming its own limitations" (p. 4). Sutcliffe's own approach to the texts and figures he analyzes seems, indeed, meant to put this idea into practice, since it is intent on elucidating the structures of thought that allowed someone like John Locke to advocate toleration of Jews, while also promoting views that fed into anti-Jewish animus, representing Judaism as a religion "intrinsically inimical to personal conscience" and hence to toleration as he defined it (p. 219).

Judaism and Enlightenment is divided into three parts, each focusing on how a different aspect of the Enlightenment related to Jews, and carrying the respective titles: "The Crumbling of Old Certainties: Judaism, the Bible and the Meaning of History," "Judaism and the Formation of Enlightenment Radicalism," and "Judaism, Nationhood and the Politics of Enlightenment." As already suggested, Sutcliffe's close readings of texts and contexts does not lend itself to a linear historical narrative. Rather, as suggested by the section and chapter titles (too numerous to list here), Sutcliffe approaches various figures, texts, movements, and problems from a series of different angles. Thus, in the first chapter of part 1, "The Crisis and Decline of Christian Hebraism," Sutcliffe traces out the roles played by figures like Pierre Bayle and Henri Basnage de Beauval (the brother of Jacques Basnage), who edited pioneering (Francophone) Enlightenment journals published in the Dutch Republic from 1684 onwards. The kind of coverage of Christian Hebraic studies found in these journals, Sutcliffe argues, may point to a diminished status of the subject, but they also show the continual influence of Christian modes of thought in the early Enlightenment. But by the end of part 1, Sutcliffe discloses a rather different aspect of Pierre Bayle's thought–as well as that of Jacques Basnage. At that point, he explores these authors' historical and lexical-encyclopaedic works–Bayle's *Dictionaire Historique et Critique* (1697) and Basnage's *Histoire des Juifs* (1706-07)–arguing that these works, and especially Bayle's, depart from traditional Christian modes of thought, but at the same time show "the profound ensnarement of Judaism within the early Enlightenment confrontation of reason and faith" (p. 90).

Sutcliffe's approach often requires him to return to figures, texts, or ideas covered at earlier points in the book, and yet, the book is conceptually not at all repetitious. Rather, in returning to the same material from different angles, Sutcliffe is able to disclose different aspects of that material: hence, he shows various but related aspects of Spinoza in his role as a central figure of the early Enlightenment. There is Spinoza the thinker whose ideas on authority helped form early Enlightenment principles; there is also the image of Spinoza the man, whose principled adherence to reason and political critique, uncorrupted by self-interest, became a model for subsequent Enlightenment adherents; there is Spinoza the Jewish intellectual whose ex-communication was enlisted by Enlightenment intellectuals to confirm their notions of a particularly intolerant Jewish world; and, finally, there is the largely forgotten Jewish critical thought, partly related to Marrano Jewish culture, which formed Spinoza's cultural and intellectual background and from which Spinoza drew in promoting ideas that became central to an Enlightenment culture wholly unaware of or uninterested in the Jewish sources that helped shape it. If ambiguity, paradox, and conflict penetrate both the thought and the reception of Spinoza, Sutcliffe, as noted above, makes a similar, if less elaborate, argument about the way such attributes inflect the thought of John Locke.

Similarly, Sutcliffe also finds multiple and conflicting functions and meanings in the ways others in the En-

lightenment approached Jews and Judaism, from antiquity to the present. The conservative Wagenseil, for instance, adopted a traditional anti-Jewish stance consistent with conservative Church teachings, but nonetheless devoted considerable time and energy to the study and description of Jewish language, customs, and practices. And Locke's contemporary, John Toland, admired what he considered to be the core of Jewish law, which, following a certain tradition that viewed Moses as originally an Egyptian priest believed to be rooted in the law of ancient Egypt, and hence to contain the core of "rational religion" (p. 200). Toland, however, took a more negative and contemptuous view of Judaism, more generally, viewing Jewish custom and law as a system that had become progressively corrupted, and Jews themselves as a "mongrel race" (p. 200)–a point that, however, did not prevent him from claiming to associate with Jews, or like Locke, from advocating policies of inclusive tolerance toward Jews in England and Ireland.

It is the combination of its breadth and subtle complexity–to which a review cannot do justice–that makes *Judaism and Enlightenment* an excellent study in the history of ideas and of European relations to Jews and Judaism. One might have minor complaints here and there–the neglect of any reference, for instance, to studies of Yiddish that took place in Germany by Wagenseil and others, and the general neglect of the German context, not least in light of the enormous and complex output of an admittedly later Enlightenment figure like J. G. Herder on Jewish subjects, and of potential points of contact between his thought and that of a figure like John Toland. And Sutcliffe's conclusion, which touches on the subject of Zionism, eschews the kind of subtlety and complexity he brings to discussion even of the conservative figures dealt with in his book. My point is not to exonerate Zionism from critique; in light of the contemporary situation in Israel, as well as the large body of the (very critical) "new history" of Zionism and Israel, much of it coming from within Israel itself, such an exoneration would be naÃ¨ve at best. But as shown by the work of a historian like Derek Penslar, who attends, for instance, to anti-colonialist, colonialist, and postcolonialist aspects of Zionism, it is also possible to engage with Zionist history in ways that pay attention to the ambivalences, contradictions, and paradoxes of that movement.[1] It is thus unfortunate that so subtle a student of history as Sutcliffe chooses not to adopt the same subtlety in that case. That said, this book remains an excellent and stimulating analysis of the Enlightenment and its relationship to Jews and Judaism. It is important reading for anyone interested in that subject, and for those, more generally, with an interest in intellectual history and the study of culture and difference in modern Europe.

Note

[1]. Derek Penslar, "Zionism, Colonialism, and Postcolonialism," *Journal of Israeli History* 20, no. 2-3 (2004): pp. 84-98.

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