

Guides For an Age of Confusion: Studies in the Thinking of Avraham Y. Kook and Mordecai M. Kaplan

Jack J. Cohen

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Guides for an Age of Confusion compares and contrasts the views of the two great Jewish philosophers Avraham Y. Kook and Mordecai M. Kaplan. Although these two thinkers stand at opposite ends of the spectrum of Jewish thought, they are united in their love for the Jewish people and in their belief in the need for Jewish unity. Following an introduction to both men, the author, a disciple of Kaplan's, explores their views regarding some of the most important issues confronting the Jewish people today. These include traditions such as Israel's chosenness; the status of the Halakhah, traditional Jewish law, in today's society; prayer and its revitalization; repentance (Teshuvah) leading to the return to God; and the role of Eretz Yisrael in the life of the Jewish people. Other topics covered are the idea of and the search for God, the position of women in Jewish society, and philosophies of education, along with an exploration of esthetics in Jewish life and the challenges of democracy. Each chapter provides an overview of the subject and then discusses the divergent views of the two thinkers, as well as their areas of agreement. Finally, the book endeavors to portray the future of Jewish life as envisaged through the eyes of these two great men. In the author's view, a dialogue must be established between the followers of both Kook and Kaplan. Only in this way can Jewish solidarity be maintained and the Jewish future secured. This book is an effort to open that dialogue.

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