



Second-Wave Jewish Feminism, 1971-1991: Foundational Theology and Sacral Discourse

Luke Devine

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This monograph is the unique and ultimate critical examination of historical and conceptual Second-Wave Jewish feminism and its fledgling theological project. For the first time in one volume the Jewish feminist corpus, its methods, forms, sacral reflections, its diverse God-language, its rich and varied theological discursive, and the foundational, personal-spiritual, and elaborated expositions of its scholars Judith Plaskow, Rachel Adler, Marcia Falk, Rebecca Alpert, Lynn Gottlieb, Rita Gross (now Buddhist), Naomi Janowitz, Maggie Wenig, Ellen Umansky, Jill Hammer (among many others) are critically examined within an analytical framework that asks: 1. Is the concept of a prescriptive Jewish feminist theology sustainable given the pluralism of modern/postmodern feminist discourse and its necessary rejection of normativity? 2. Can a feminist theology that has rejected hierarchy, supernaturalism, otherness, and the classical understanding of holiness, along with the eschatological elements of the tradition and its Sinaitic foundations, claim to be recognizably Jewish? 3. Is feminist exposition on the deity that rejects the aforesaid quintessential mechanics of the classical theology, and the definition of sacral discursive itself, actually theology at all? 4. Is the personal experience of the individual feminist constitutive of authentic Judaism, particularly if her subjective understanding of the tradition has substantially modified its inner-core, or if she has wholesale discarded three-thousand years of connective history? 5. If classical Jewish theology is radically monotheistic, rejects polytheism, and is underpinned by God's oneness, eschatology, and a series of covenants, when does the critique, and rejection, of these elements reach the point that what remains ceases to be Jewish? Or is it simply enough for the theologian to be Jewish? These questions are not easily answerable, but the answers will ultimately define the viability, and future, of Jewish feminist theology.

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