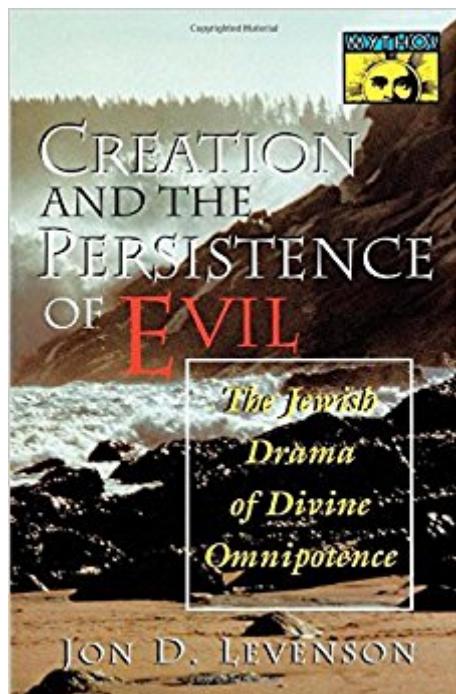


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Creation And The Persistence Of Evil



Synopsis

This paperback edition brings to a wide audience one of the most innovative and meaningful models of God for this post-Auschwitz era. In a thought-provoking return to the original Hebrew conception of God, which questions accepted conceptions of divine omnipotence, Jon Levenson defines God's authorship of the world as a consequence of his victory in his struggle with evil. He traces a flexible conception of God to the earliest Hebrew sources, arguing, for example, that Genesis 1 does not describe the banishment of evil but the attempt to contain the menace of evil in the world, a struggle that continues today.

Book Information

Series: Mythos: The Princeton/Bollingen Series in World Mythology

Paperback: 200 pages

Publisher: Princeton University Press; Reprint edition (November 29, 1994)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0691029504

ISBN-13: 978-0691029504

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 0.6 x 8.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 12.2 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 starsÂ See all reviewsÂ (15 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #377,651 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #166 inÂ Books > Religion & Spirituality > Judaism > Theology #170 inÂ Books > Textbooks > Humanities > Religious Studies > Judaism #318 inÂ Books > Religion & Spirituality > Judaism > Jewish Life

Customer Reviews

Jon Levenson, unable to hide behind God's goodness and omniscience has written an erudite and ponderous examination of theodicy in his work, *Creation and the Persistence of Evil*. He avoids a quick solution and bravely faces and retains both his belief in God's goodness and God's justice when both are juxtaposed with the "enormous suffering with which humanity seems forever cursed". Ultimately Levenson vindicates God by postulating the belief that God purposely limits His intervention and power to eradicate evil while showing that God continues His march towards the "reign of the perfect justice He so ardently desires". No small feat. At the core of Christian/Jewish Theology is the belief that God is the creator of all - absolutely all - and he continues to be in complete control of his creation. The firm belief in the absolute deity of God has given rise to Levenson's view of the universe. The problem confronting Levenson is the concealment or

hiddenness of God when Evil not only persists but prevails. Levenson, wrestles empirically with the questions "What kind of God is this God who fails to do what he is obligated by character to do?" and "Is a concealed God, a nonexistent God?". Because of the dreadful cognitive dissidence between faith and fatalism Levenson is forced to come up with an answer that at least adequately helps him and us get through our despair, pain and injustice and survive the respective nights of isolation. The Theology of the Limited God....Provocative in proposing that God fails, that God can be faulted and even goaded Levenson pushes his readers to consider the theological construct - the theology of the limited God.

I was delighted to see that Jon D. Levenson's "Creation and the Persistence of Evil: The Jewish Drama of Divine Omnipotence" had recently joined his earlier "Sinai & Zion: An Entrance Into the Jewish Bible" (Harper, 1985; corrected paperback, 1987; HarperOne digital edition, May 2013) in Kindle format. (They are also in Kobo and Nook.) "Creation and the Persistence of Evil" (Harper & Row, 1987) was one of the most recent books to be included in the distinguished MYTHOS series from Princeton University Press and the Bollingen Foundation (corrected, with a new Preface, Princeton University Press, paperback, 1994). It is the latter text that is the basis of the new HarperCollins EPub edition (October 1, 2013). This pleasure is partly due to the fact that an excellent book is getting a new lease on life, with, perhaps, a somewhat different market than that for scholarly monographs; but also to the fact that my copies of their paperback editions have been missing for some time, and this was a less expensive way to replace both "Sinai and Zion" and "Creation and the Persistence of Evil." Much academic writing is uninspiring, and much religious writing is more glib than precise. Levenson deals with weighty themes, with philological rigor, but his prose is exciting, and impressively quotable. Levenson even finds a place for humor: Referring to Psalm 104: 26, "Leviathan that You formed to sport with" -- "It is possible that the psalmist has here sanitized the old myth ... altogether, so that Leviathan appears ... as the plaything of YHWH (his 'rubber ducky,' as a student once put it).

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