

BOOK REVIEWS

The world of cyberspace is colliding with traditional institutions. Descriptions about PunkTorah, the Virtual Congregational Experience (i.e. the CyberSanctuary), Second Life, what Kaplan defines as Creative Expressions of Spirituality through Art, Music, and Dance, Storahtelling, as well as Gonzo Judaism, Adventure Religion, and Wilderness Judaism are addressed here.

One of the strengths of this volume is that it concentrates more on description than prescription. Nonetheless, Kaplan is clear that the Reform movement faces enormous challenges in the coming years, and that it “will need to develop new and convincing justifications for maintaining the Jewish people as a separate ethno-religious group in an era where boundaries and borders of all kinds are fading, if not disappearing (p. 313). In his view, this will necessitate creating a Judaism that will focus not on “loyalty to community” but how to “engage the individual in a search for existential meaning” (p. 315). Kaplan argues for a direction away from the “current focus on pluralism” and instead to build to a “committed core” by refocusing on ethical monotheism, “the idea that there is one and only one God, and that God demands ethical behavior” (p. 316). In short, Kaplan argues that Reform Judaism cannot be the limitless Big Tent that makes room for all ideas. As he states slightly earlier, “every religious movement has to have some set of boundaries, delineating what is acceptable and what is not” (p. 267).

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