

we now call informed choice and more about nostalgia or lack of understanding. Friedman closes her book with discussions of the significance of Freehof's responsa and of the trajectory of Reform responsa since Freehof.

Guidance Not Governance offers a valuable overview of and introduction to a central aspect of Reform Judaism. It is tempting to see the Reform Judaism of a certain period of our life as *the* authentic expression of Reform. Sometimes we struggle, or find ourselves responding to congregants who struggle, with changes in ritual practice, asking, "What happened to the Reform Judaism I knew?" This book reminds us that Reform Judaism has always grappled with the role of ritual and halachah. Solomon Freehof's contribution to Reform Judaism lay not in resolving this challenge, but in acknowledging it and working to bring halachic sources into conversation with contemporary sensibilities. Friedman has given us a gift in allowing us to see the thinking behind Freehof's responsa. I look forward to sharing her work—and Freehof's—with my students.

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The Other Peace Process: Interreligious Dialogue, a View from Jerusalem
 Ronald Kronish
 (Lanham, MD: Hamilton Books, 2017), 210pp.

A lot of the time, interreligious dialogue just doesn't work. It's boring. It consists mostly of exchanging platitudes. There is little real sharing or communication. Often, it ends in manufactured consensus or meaningless sentiments about the virtues of "mutual understanding." And frequently the participants walk away without truly getting to know their dialogue partners or learning what motivates them religiously.

Precisely for this reason, those who take interreligious dialogue seriously and help the rest of us to do it better deserve tremendous credit. Rabbi Ronald Kronish (NY73) is one of those people. He has devoted the last quarter century to the proposition that members

of the Abrahamic traditions can strengthen each other, inspire one another, and promote the values of love, justice, and peace that are common to each of our faiths. And not only that. He has done most of this work in the hardest place on earth to bring Jews, Muslims, and Christians together: Jerusalem, where the national conflict between Arabs and Israelis immeasurably complicates the already complex relations among the three religions.

In his new book, *The Other Peace Process*, Kronish shares with us his reflections on the very difficult task that he has set for himself. Roughly the first half of the volume provides background and context for interfaith work in Israel and the territories. Comprehensive but popularly written, this section offers a clear summary of early Zionist history and then moves to efforts by the United States and others to advance the peace process since 1991. Kronish takes the reader through the Oslo Accords, the agreement between Israel and the Vatican, the Camp David summit in 2000, and then what he calls “the war process” that followed Camp David and has lasted until today. For interested laypeople, it is an excellent review of the exhilarating hopes for peace that emerged in the 1990s and then collapsed in the years that followed.

But the heart of the book and its unique contribution are what Kronish has to say about how, even in the cauldron of the Middle East, interreligious dialogue can be effective. And his sensible and thoughtful advice can be applied to every interfaith setting.

His thoughts on what not to do are especially helpful. Don’t offer panels of experts to speak on interreligious matters; panels tend to be deadly, and experts invariably want to talk and not listen. Don’t offer a series of lectures given by academics; lectures have value, but they are not “dialogue.” Don’t do “one-off” events; a onetime program, no matter how well-planned, is quickly forgotten and of little consequence.

Most important of all is Kronish’s model for what is required to make interreligious dialogue work. Kronish favors smaller groups that meet regularly for three or four months at the very least, and he emphasizes the value of personal interaction, text-based learning, discussion of core conflicts, and a plan for moving from talking to action. Each of these elements is discussed at some length, with ample examples of how best to do them.

If the model sounds simple or obvious, it is not. Most interreligious dialogues that I have been a part of do the exact opposite:

They avoid painful and difficult conversations on tough issues. They aim for agreement even when none is to be had. They share values and speeches but not personal emotions and beliefs. They are content with achieving short-term good feelings rather than a plan for bringing about change to their communities.

In short, Kronish pushes would-be “dialoguers” to move beyond their comfort zones and, while building personal trust, to get at the heart of the conflicts and differences that separate them from each other.

And as hard and challenging as all this is, Kronish has nonetheless written a very hopeful book. It is filled with anecdotes about successes in the interreligious realm. He shares with us his role in the extraordinary revolution in Catholic-Jewish relations, which he rightly sees as a potential model for Jewish-Muslim ties. He tells us of the many Muslim leaders, scholars, and religious judges with whom he has worked in Israel who hold moderate views and are anxious to engage in serious exchanges with their Jewish counterparts. He talks of bringing young people to Northern Ireland and Ireland and helping them to learn from the example of Catholics and Protestants who overcame profound religious differences, deep hatred, and terror.

Rabbi Kronish does not overpromise. He is sober and honest, and makes clear that interreligious dialogue will not bring peace to the Middle East or solve the problems of the world. But, he argues, it can keep a flicker of hope alive, reduce hatred and violence in the short term, and do much to overcome the often overwhelming ignorance of even educated people about the religious traditions of their neighbors. And he tells us exactly how to proceed.

If you are interested in bringing Jews, Muslims, and Christians together, and helping the children of Abraham to reclaim their common heritage and find a common path, this book is an excellent place to start.

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