Buddhist-Jewish Relations throughout the Ages and in the Future[1]

By Nathan Katz

From King Solomon to the Dalai Lama, from Marco Polo to Chaim Potok, from medieval Kabbalists to contemporary JuBus,[2] there have been encounters between Buddhists and Jews for millennia. Ancient interactions are hinted at in sacred texts of both religions, and medieval links are often tantalizingly disguised. It has been only since the middle of the twentieth century—the era of the Holocaust and nuclear weapons—that the Buddhist-Jewish encounter has emerged from the shadows.

Ancient Times

There is no shortage of evidence of commercial and cultural links between India and Israel in even the most ancient strata of history. From the days of Sumer and the Indus Valley Civilization, both archaeological evidence and textual references provide evidence of links between these two civilizations.[3] Sanskrit and Tamil loan words are found in the Hebrew Bible,[4] obscure biblical place names have been identified in India,[5] and first-century Hellenized Jewish authors Josephus Flauvius and Philo of Alexandria wrote admiringly of Indian culture and religion.[6]

The evidence of ancient Indo-Israel links is clear. But what of specific Buddhist-Jewish materials? We can find one such connection.

A Buddhist Jataka story[7] connects the Buddha, the wisest man of India, with King Solomon, the wisest man of Israel. In the *Mahoshadha Jataka* a *yakshini*, or demoness, stole a baby from his mother, intending to eat him. The mother confronted the *yakshini*, but was rebuked by the demoness who claimed the baby as her own. They happened to pass by the judgment hall of the Maharaja of Benares, who was none other than the Buddha in a previous birth. The text reads:

> He heard the noise, sent for them, inquired into the matter, and asked them whether they would abide by his decision. And they agreed. Then he had a line drawn on the ground; and told the *yakshini* to take hold of the child's arms, and the mother to take hold of his legs; and said: "The child shall be hers who drags him over the line."
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> But soon as they pulled at him, the mother, seeing how he suffered, grieved as if her heart would break. And letting him go, she stood there weeping. Then the future Buddha asked the bystanders, "Whose hearts are tender to babes? those who have borne children, or those who have not?" And they answered, "O Sire! the hearts of mothers are tender." Then he said, "Whom do you think is the mother? she who has the child in her arms, or she who has let go?" And they answered, "She who has let go is the mother."

The tale concludes happily. The child is returned to its mother, and the remorseful *yakshini* vowed to follow the five fundamental ethical precepts of Buddhism.[8]

This legend of the Buddha is strikingly similar to the judgment tale of King Solomon.[9] It is impossible to say who is borrowing from whom, or whether both Jews and Buddhists were borrowing from a yet older, common source, or whether this striking similarity was simply coincidental.[10]

Medieval Times

One of the inherent difficulties in discerning Jewish-Buddhist relations in the ancient through medieval eras is terminological. In Indian literature, all foreigners are called "Yavanas," "Greeks." Mirroring this conflation, in Jewish literature all things Indian are called "Hindu'a."[11]

There is an inherent ambiguity in the term "Hindu," even today. The word retains its original geographic sense; the word "India" is itself a foreign imposition, as the land is known in Indian literature as "Bharata." It was the British who applied the term to some of the religious traditions of the subcontinent, basically those who derive authority from the Vedas but a few other sects as well, and sought to impose political order or an apparently chaotic subcontinent with the construction of Hinduism. Even now, the term *Hindutva* could be rendered in English as either "Hindu-ness" or "Indianness." The Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), a contemporary nationalist political movement, uses the term "Hindu" to mean all religions indigenous to the subcontinent, intending to include what we call "Buddhism," or "Jainism," or "Sikhism," as well as the variety of sects called "Hindu." At the same time, many of India's modern spiritual teachers eschew the term and call their teachings "sanantana Dharma" or "eternal Truth." This ambiguity can be creative or it can be deceptive, and our medieval texts' perceptions reflect not merely a lack of understanding of India, but in a way are more accurate than contemporary terminology.

As we move into medieval times, the documentation of links between Jews and India become increasingly clear.[12] Physical evidence places Jewish communities in India since the ninth century; Goitein's analysis of early medieval documents from the *genizah* at Fustart, Cairo, is replete with numerous letters of Jewish merchants who plied "the India trade";[13] and medieval travelers, from al-Beruni to Benjamin of Tudela to Marco Polo, have described Jewish presence in and interactions with Indian culture.[14]

Medieval cultural interactions between Jews and India have been detailed in two recent, significant studies,[15] but only two indications of a specifically Jewish-Buddhist medieval interaction are to be found. One is found in the travel diaries of "the greatest medieval Jewish traveler,"[16] Rabbi Benjamin of Tudela (twelfth century). Benjamin described a Jewish community of some 23,000 in twelfth-century Kandy, capital of Ceylon, which of course is predominantly a Buddhist country.[17] Benjamin's report is corroborated by the great Muslim geographer, Abu 'Abdallah Muhammad ibn Idris, known as Idrisi (1099-1154), who wrote: "The king of this island has sixteen ministers, of whom one-quarter are native to that nation, a quarter are Christians, a quarter Muslims, and a quarter Jews."[18] It is indeed suggestive of Buddhist-Jewish encounters of nearly a thousand years ago, but Benjamin's and Idrisi's accounts are not very reliable. There is no real evidence that Benjamin actually traveled beyond the Middle East and he mostly relied on traveler's tales, and Idrisi likely confused the Hindu-centered town of Chendamangalam, near Kochi, with Ceylon. In medieval times, the capital of the area around Kochi was known to Jewish and Arab travelers as Shingly, easily confused with one of the names of Ceylon, Singhala Dipa, or "Singoli" as Idrisi called it.[19]

A most suggestive discovery regarding the early history of Judaism in China was first reported in 1901 by the British-Jewish archaeologist, Sir Marc Auriel Stein (1862-1943). Excavating Dandan-Uiliq, near Khotan in Turkestan, he found a manuscript written in Judeo-Persian and dated 718 CE. Stein also excavated the "Cave of the Thousand Buddhas" at the Silk Road oasis of Tun-huang, Kansu Province, in which colleague, Paul Pelliot (1876-1945), found one page of a Hebrew penitential prayer book with verses from the Psalms and the Prophets, also from the eighth or perhaps ninth century.[20] One can only speculate about the implications of the fact that the oldest Hebrew fragment on paper ever discovered was found in a Chinese Buddhist library. Not so long after, Marco Polo (thirteenth century) described Jewish advisors to the Chinese Emperor.[21]

Perhaps in Ceylon or China at the turn of the millennium, traces of a Buddhist-Jewish encounter can be inferred.

Mysticism

Ideas, of course, travel east to west as much as from west to east, and in Tudela a century after Benjamin, the seminal kabbalist Abraham Abulafia (1240-1291) adapted Indian mystical practices, symbols, and ideas into his system.[22] While in residence at Jerusalem's Shalom Hartman Institute where Moshe Idel is a fixture, the Hebrew University professor described to me numerous kabbalistic manuscripts in his personal library that clearly demonstrate Indian mystical influences and direct borrowings: meditation techniques and even sacred diagrams known as mandalas, all Judaized and incorporated as part and parcel of Abulafia's "ecstatic Kabbalah."

Jewish mystical concepts of reincarnation (*gilgul*) and angelology seem to carry an Indian stamp, and centuries later a nineteenth-century kabbalist named Asher Halevi (1849-1912) left behind very difficult writings that discuss parallels between his Kabbalah and specifically Tibetan Tantra. In his "Book of Visions," for example, he discusses the Judaic *golem*, a teaching of Rabbi Judah Loew ben Bezalel (1525-1609), better known as the Maharal of Prague about constructing a zombie from body parts to serve as a defender of the beleaguered Jews. Significantly, he calls it not *golem*, but uses the Tibetan word *ro-langs*, a teaching for revivifying a corpse.[23] Asher was a cobbler and *mohel* who lived in Darjeeling, a Himalayan summer resort for heat-weary Calcuttans. He left behind at least three manuscripts, including an autobiography or book of visions, a treatise on the circumcision ritual, and an essay on the psychology of religion. His works await analysis.[24]

Modern Europe

Jews, like all European intellectuals, became enamored of "eastern" thought somewhere in the mid-eighteenth century. As a matter of fact, many of the pioneering German and British Orientalists were Jews, who may have been motivated in part by a search for non-Christian paradigms.

From the other side, ever since Aristotle Jews have been viewed as Orientals, an ascription alternately welcomed and disdained by Jews. This ambivalence was manifested in two of the twentieth century's most influential European Jewish theologians: Franz Rosenzweig (1886-1926), who disdained "eastern" thought,[25] and Martin Buber (1878-1965), who relished it.[26]

Specifically Buddhist ideas entered into secular Yiddish culture with the publication of a translation of the *Dhammapada*.[27] As was the nature of the era, this phase of the Buddhist-Jewish encounter remained textual.

The Buddhist-Jewish encounter was also a subtext of a remarkable novel by Chaim Potok (b. 1929), *The Book of Lights*.[28] Potok, one of the century's leading Jewish novelists, juxtaposes Gershon Loran, a rabbinical student who becomes an army chaplain during the Korean War, with Arthur Leiden, son of one of the developers of the atomic bomb. Laron seeks meaning in studying Kabbalah, the Zohar's theology of lights in particular, while Leiden tries to find solace for the destruction wrought by his father's invention by taking up residence in Kyoto, flirting with Buddhism. The two types of lights—the Zohar's lights of mysticism and Hiroshima's lights of destruction—make for a richly symbolic encounter between Jewish and Buddhist consciousness.

The same Jewish ambivalence about things eastern also found its way into the Zionist movement. Mainstream Zionist leaders sought to establish a European-style socialist utopia in Palestine, while others such as Moshe Sharett (1894-1905), who became foreign minister of Israel, envisioned a Jewish return to their Asian, oriental home,

removing themselves from the destruction that was Europe. Israel's first prime minister, David Ben-Gurion (1886-1973), although firmly secular as a Jew was more than a dabbler in Buddhism. He developed an especially close personal bond with the prime minister of newly independent Burma, U Nu (1907-1995) and spent time learning *vispassana* meditation in Burma's monasteries. U Nu was the first Asian leader to visit Israel.[29] Even the generally unsentimental Foreign Ministry of Israel characterized early Burmese-Israeli relations as having a "chemistry of mutual affection,"[30] no doubt reflecting the closeness of the leaders of the two new nations.

Asian Nationalism and the Jews

While Jews and Judaism played a significant role in the discourse known as "the Hindu Renaissance" in India, there was only scant parallel in the language of "the Buddhist Revival."

The Hindu Renaissance began in mid-eighteenth-century Bengal. To characterize it very broadly, it was an attempt to counteract the supposed supremacy of British culture and the Christian religion, as well as to "reform" Hinduism. In this discourse, Jews were seen, on one hand, as an Asian people like themselves. What's more, Judaism is nonmissionizing, like Hinduism. Also like Hindus, Jews have a history of oppression. One Tamil leader, Arumuga Navallar, used the "Old Testament" to counter the arguments of the missionaries.[31] And for good measure, Jesus the Jew was spiritual, like Hindus, who recognized him as the Jewish *avatara* (incarnation of G-d). But on the other hand, Judaism was seen as the source of the very western civilization that they claimed to detest, the mother of the despised Christianity and Islam, the very source of monotheistic intolerance and exclusivism. Borrowing from a well-known Christian characterization, Judaism was reviled as "materialistic," contrasted against Hinduism, which of course was "spiritual."[32]

Although there had been very small Jewish communities in such Buddhist countries as Thailand and Sri Lanka, they are absent in the discourse of the "Buddhist Revival." To be sure, the Anagarika Dharmapala was scathing in his comments about the G-d of the "Old Testament." For example, reflecting on the story of Abraham's readiness to sacrifice his son Isaac, he wrote that "Every savage race has its own totem deity."[33] As his essay demonstrates, Buddhist polemicists could employ harsh language in their encounters with Christian missionaries, also at the famous Panadura debates,[34] but their real targets were not actually Jews. In this, they mimicked Hindu Renaissance rhetoric in the style of Swami Dayanand Saraswati.

Two mid-twentieth-century Buddhist pamphlets—one in Thai and one in Tibetan—did focus on Jews. The king of Thailand wrote the first. He understood Jews as a parasitic commercial class, self-satisfied and disloyal, a fifth column to be extirpated from his Thailand. In fact, in his work "Jews" was a code word for "Chinese," who tended to dominate Bangkok's commercial and economic life.[35]

In a very similar vein, just two years ago I was channel surfing in my hotel in New Delhi when I heard someone comparing Jews with Brahmins. I smiled, thinking this was a reflection of Aristotle, and expected to hear how Jews, like Brahmins, live a life of special purity, pray in an ancient, sacred language, and serve as priests to the world. It was jarring as I focused on the speaker's words to hear sentiments similar to the King of Thailand's: I heard that the Brahmins were like the Jews, unscrupulous bloodsuckers and usurers who sought to enslave the Dalits ("the oppressed").

Of course, being educated according to missionary and British standards, most Asian elites knew Jews through their syllabi rather than through normal social interactions. They learned that Jews killed Christ and demanded their "pound of flesh" as repayment for a loan. These same elites also imbibed Marx's screed "On the Jewish Question" (1844). So

from their point of view, Jews were simply paradigms for whatever group whom they saw as their oppressors—whether the Chinese of Thailand or the Brahmins of Tamil Nadu.

Jamyang Norbu, their fiery president of the highly politicized Tibetan Youth Congress and editor of *Rangzen*, "Independence," wrote the other pamphlet of note. Published in 1973 on the purported 2100th anniversary of the Tibetan state, "An Outline of the History of Israel" draws inspiration from Jewish experience. His central narrative is Jewish steadfastness in the face of two millennia of oppression and a sense of unity that led to the re-establishment of the State of Israel in 1948. He is lavish in praising Jewish morality, intelligence, industry, and bravery. It is interesting to note that among Zionist groups, he has the highest regard for the most militant, the "Lehi" party, whom the British called "the Stern Gang."[36]

The perception of Jews in Asian nationalist discourses is diverse: a mixed perception among Hindu nationalists, an absence in the Buddhist Revival, a negative image is portrayed in the king's Thai nationalism, and an idealized one in Norbu's Tibetan treatise.

The Holocust Era and the Genesis of the JuBu

Paradoxically, it was the Holocaust era when the first significant nonmediated—which is to say not merely textual—encounters between Western Jews and Buddhists took place.

The first important figure of the era was Sigmund Feninger (1901-1994), a secular Jew from Hanau, Germany, who converted to Buddhism, took the Dharma-name Nyanaponika, and joined a monastery in Ceylon in 1936. Three years later, he brought his mother and other relatives to escape the Nazis. Ironically, since Nyanaponika was a German national, he was interred by the British as an "enemy alien" at Dehru Dun. In the same detention center were the eminent historian of Buddhist art and later professor at Halle, Dr. Heinz Mode,[37] and Lama Anagarika Govinda, prolific author and tantric adept.[38]

After the war, Nyanaponika returned to Ceylon, eventually taking up residence at the Forest Hermitage near Kandy, where he became very involved with the Buddhist Publication Society, which published a number of his authoritative scholarly works. A "monk's monk," Nyanaponika was revered by Theravada Buddhists around the world.

Nyanaponika never mentioned his Jewish background, and his analyses of the Buddha's teachings find the Dharma (or Dhamma) to be incompatible with a belief in G-d.[39]

To complete the circle, Nyanaponika's preeminent disciple is Ven. Bhikkhu Bodhi, né Jeffrey Block. Bodhi continued his teacher's scholarly interests, doing some of the finest translations ever of Pali texts, and heading the Buddhist Publication Society (BPS) until he returned to the United States about a decade ago.

As I wanted to review Nyanaponika's influential article about G-d, I unsuccessfully tried to find my copy of his pamphlet—it is "somewhere in my office." I searched and found that it had been reprinted in a recent book.[40] The book was edited by his disciple, Bhikkhu Bodhi. The eminent Swiss psychiatrist, another Jew, wrote the introduction, and the back cover featured testimonials by Sharon Salzberg, Sylvia Boorstein, and Joseph Goldstein—all highly regarded Jewish-Buddhist meditation teachers!

Another Holocaust refugee became one of the leaders of the contemporary Buddhist nuns' movement:[41] Ayyah Khema (1923-1997),[42] whose life became emblematic of the quest of contemporary Jews who pursue spirituality through Buddhism. Born in prewar Berlin into an upper-class, highly assimilated Jewish family, she attended the best schools and avidly enjoyed German culture. She grew up with servants and soirees, music and poetry, but very little Jewishness.

Her father had the perspicacity to get his family out of Germany while it was still possible. They found their way to Shanghai where they waited out Germany's madness and where he continued his business amidst a cosmopolitan Jewish community. It was here that

Ayyah Khema first encountered Jewish mysticism. One war followed another. Mao's revolution forced them out of China, and they made their circuitous way to California where she eventually married and raised children and grandchildren.

Whether from innate inclination or because of her remarkable experiences, Ayyah Khema's interest in mysticism grew. Having read Gershom Scholem's studies of Kabbalah, she wrote the professor in Jerusalem, asking for advice as to how to set about studying Kabbalah experientially. She now knows how naive that letter was. Some months later, she received a curt reply. "He told me to forget about it, that a woman—especially one who lacked extensive background in Torah and Talmud—was prohibited from ever approaching these mystical treasures of Jewish tradition," she said. "So I continued to read and study on my own."

Her readings were eclectic and included spiritual masterpieces from the east. She was especially impressed with Buddhist literature. Its directness, its freedom from metaphysical and ritual embellishment, was naturally attractive, especially considering her frustration at the traditional barriers safeguarding Jewish mysticism from the hoi polloi. More important than these theoretical concerns, however, was the openness of Buddhist teachers. One did not have to be of a certain age or ethnicity, or a male, or especially learned or observant, as prerequisite for mystical practices. She seized the opportunity. Her study of Buddhism and practice of meditation grew, and after the death of her husband she took ordination as a Buddhist nun in the early 1970s.

"Of course I'm still Jewish. What else could I be?" she replied to my unasked question. "Jewish is something you *are*, and I am proud of our heritage." Apparently she did not share Nyanaponika's diffidence, either about discussing her past, about her Jewishness, or even about G-d, an idea she found compatible with her own Buddhist practice. Our conversation was punctuated with words from both Yiddish and Pali. Her manner was suffused with Buddhist compassion and Jewish warmth. I reflected that it was too bad she had not been born twenty years later, at a time when Kabbalah could be approached without quite so many barriers. How contemporary Judaism needs powerful, spiritual, female teachers! I felt that the loss was Judaism's, not Ayyah Khema's, since it was evident that her life was so very rich, that her spirit had grown so strong.

Many leading Buddhist teachers are Jews: Zen teachers Philip Kaplau Roshi and Roshi Bernie Glassman; Jodo priest Rev. Alfred Bloom, Theravada teachers Sylvia Boorstein, Harvey Aronson, Sharon Salzberg, Joseph Goldstein, and Jack Kornfield; and Tibetan teachers Alexander Berzin, Lama Surya Das, Lama John Makransky, Geshe George Dreyfus, and the nun Ven. Thubten Chödron.[43]

When considering Jews who adopt Buddhist practice, it is useful to distinguish between two general types: those who, like Nyanaponika, sever ties with Jewish life, and those who, like Ayyah Khema (especially during the last years of her life), affirm their Jewishness. I would suggest that the term "JuBu" be reserved for the latter group; for the former we need no special term; they are simply Buddhists of Jewish background.

Some JuBus go so far as to seek to combine the practices of Buddhism and Judaism, attempting to affirm both. For example, Ven. Thubten Chödron has written about the influence of the JuBu's Jewish social consciousness in their roles in the Buddhist women's movement,[44] and journalist Goldberg has commented on Ayyah Khema's role in the nun's movement in Sri Lanka.[45] Roshi Bernie Glassman founded the Zen Peacemakers Sangha,[46] a prime example of socially engaged Buddhism that draws at least some inspiration from the Jewish background of its leaders. Glassman created the "Bearing Witness at Auschwitz Birkenau" annual retreat, which is described on his web page as:

> We will gather as a multi-faith assembly of practitioners of many cultures. . . in Oswiecim, Poland, on the grounds of Auschwitz-Birkenau, the place of personal and universal human tragedy during World War II. There, we will be offered many

> opportunities to bear witness to the diverse aspects of ourselves and others. The retreat will be guided by an experienced group of international leaders representing diverse cultures and religious traditions. Participants will spend most of the daylight hours each day at the Birkenau camp, practicing periods of silence and meditation, offering prayers, chanting the names of the dead, offering Kaddish (the Jewish Memorial Prayer) and religious services in many traditions.

There are many other examples of how JuBus have brought their social consciousness with them into the worlds of Buddhism.

Of course, the relationship is reciprocal, and many practicing Jews have brought their Buddhist meditation with them as they returned to their synagogues. A prime example is the so-called "Zen Rabbi" of San Francisco, Alan Lew.[47]

It is not surprising that many in the Jewish Renewal Movement (JRM) have a background in Dharma centers and/ or Hindu ashrams. In a nutshell, JRM is a mixture of the neo-Hasidism of Rabbi Zalman M. Schachter-Shalomi, eastern practices of yoga and meditation, the new left social consciousness of Rabbi Arthur O. Waskow, feminism, environmentalism, and the "paradigm shift" of the new age movements.[48] What is less well documented, but none the less vibrant, is a Buddhist influence on the Ba'al Teshuva Movement (BTM), the "return" to Orthodox Jewish practice of secular Jews, many via Dharma centers and ashrams. This phenomenon has also led rabbis and Jewish thinkers to engage Buddhists and Buddhism dialogically, perhaps for the first time.[49]

In short, the other hand of the export of Jewish social consciousness into the worlds of Buddhism is the transfer of Buddhist (and Hindu) practice into Judaism via JRM and BTM, and by now from there into mainstream Conservative and Reform Judaisms in America and elsewhere.[50]

It is not easy to interpret today's globalized spirituality that allows for such easy movement between and among religious worlds. At times I have mused that there is a mysterious hand behind it:

One day I was discussing all of these mysterious matters with. . . one of the world's greater Kabbalists. I had just told him about Ayyah Khema, the Buddhist nun who wanted to study Jewish esotericism but was rebuffed by Professor Scholem. I had commented that it was her loss. "Maybe not," he replied. "Maybe this is what was best for her." I backtracked. Perhaps it was not her loss, but surely her adopting Buddhism was a loss to the Jewish people. "Maybe not," he replied again. "From what you have told me about these Jews who have gone east, I suspect they may be participating in some very deep *tikkun*. They are mending the fissure between East and West, but this is deeper than politics. They may be mending the souls of the Jewish people."[51]

Perhaps.

The Contemporary Buddhist-Jewish Encounter

The first time that a group of Jews met for a formal dialogue with a group of Buddhists was in 1990, when a delegation of eight rabbis and scholars accepted an invitation from His Holiness the Dalai Lama to be his guests for an intensive series of dialogues with himself, Tibetan religious and secular leaders, educators, and—yes—JuBus residing in Dharamsala. The Dalai Lama's manifest question was that he wanted to know the "Jewish secret" about how a people can preserve their religion and culture while living in exile, a question of obvious existential import to Tibetans. The historically significant event was the subject of a very popular and excellent book[52] and a number of articles, including my own reflections.[53]

Each of the delegates presented a partial response to the Dalai Lama's question. As these responses have been described fully in print, below is a tabular summary. It

identifies each speaker, her or his topic, the Tibetans' level of interest in the topic, whether the topic points to Buddhist-Judaic similarities or to Judaic uniqueness, and the impact of this topic for the Tibetans.

Name	Topic	Interest	Similarity/ Uniqueness	Impact
Nathan Katz	Historical background	Moderate	Similarities (historical contacts)	Little
Rabbi Zalman M. Schachter-Shalomi	Mystical theology, Kabbalah	High	Similarities	Little
Rabbi Irving Greenberg	Implications of destruction of Second Temple and development of rabbinic Judaism	Moderate	Unique to Judaism	Little
Paul Mendes-Flohr	Jewish modernism and secularism	High	Uniqueness	Some, especially Jewish summer youth camps
Rabbi Jonathan Omer-Man	Jewish meditation	High	Similarity	Little
Moshe Waldoks	Jewish hermeneutics	Moderate	Similarity	Little
Rebbetzin Blu Greenberg	Home-centered nature of Diasporic Judaism	High	Uniqueness	Highest
Rabbi Joy Levitt	Jewish communal institutions in America	High	Uniqueness	High

Assuming that the reader is familiar with the content of the presentations from other sources, it can readily be seen that several issues were of great interest to the Tibetans. Foremost among these is the role of the Jewish home in transmitting the religion. In Jewish practice, especially traditional Judaism, the home is more central than the synagogue, which follows the Talmudic paradigm that the dining table in the home replaced the altar in the destroyed Temple.[54] For a monastery-centered faith as most of Buddhism is, Rebbetzin Greenberg's presentation was startling. As I noted at the time, "Perhaps this is the most fruitful of all exchanges, especially from a Tibetan point of view. The Dalai Lama's fascination with our home-centered observances makes me appreciate the singularity of Jewish traditions."[55]

Also of high interest were Rabbi Levitt's description of Jewish communal organizations, from free loan societies that assist Jewish immigrants to get started in a