



Sharing the Burden: Rabbi Simhah Zissel Ziv and the Path of Musar (Suny Series in Contemporary Jewish Thought)

Geoffrey D. Claussen

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Examines a fascinating and important figure in the history of modern Jewish ethics.

Sharing the Burden analyzes the rich moral traditions of the nineteenth-century Musar movement, an Eastern European Jewish movement focused on the development of moral character. Geoffrey D. Claussen focuses on that movement's leading moral theorist, Rabbi Sim'ah Zissel Ziv (1824-1898), the founder of the first Musar movement yeshiva and the first traditionalist institution in Eastern Europe that included general studies in its curriculum. Sim'ah Zissel offered a unique and compelling voice within the Musar movement, joining traditionalism with a program for contemplative practice and an interest in non-Jewish philosophy. His thought was also distinguished by its demanding moral vision, oriented around an ideal of compassionately loving one's fellow as oneself and an acknowledgment of the difficulties of moral change. Drawing on Sim'ah Zissel's writings and bringing his approach into dialogue with other models of ethics, Claussen explores Sim'ah Zissel's Jewish virtue ethics and evaluates its strengths and weaknesses. The result is a volume that will expose readers to a fascinating and important voice in the history of modern Jewish ethics and spirituality.

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