

# JUDAISM IN THE THEOLOGY OF SIR ISAAC NEWTON

JUDAISM IN THE THEOLOGY OF SIR ISAAC NEWTON

by  
MATT GOLDISH

---

*Founding Directors:*

P. Dibon<sup>†</sup> (Paris) and R.H. Popkin (Washington University, St. Louis & UCLA)

*Director:*

Sarah Hutton (The University of Hertfordshire, United Kingdom)

*Co-Editors:* J.E. Force (Lexington); J.C. Laursen (Riverside)

*Editorial Board:* J.F. Battail (Paris); F. Duchesneau (Montreal); A. Gabbey (New York); T. Gregory (Rome); J.D. North (Groningen); M.J. Petry (Rotterdam); J. Popkin (Lexington);

G.A.J. Rogers (Keele); Th. Verbeek (Utrecht)

*Advisory Editorial Board:* J. Aubin (Paris); B. Copenhaver (Los Angeles); A. Crombie (Oxford);

H. Gadamer (Heidelberg); H. Gouhier (Paris); K. Hanada (Hokkaido University); W. Kirsop (Melbourne); P.O. Kristeller (Columbia University); E. Labrousse (Paris); A. Lossky (Los Angeles);

J. Malarczyk (Lublin); J. Orcibal (Paris); W. Röd (München); G. Rousseau (Los Angeles);

H. Rowen (Rutgers University, N.J.); J.P. Schobinger (Zürich); J. Tans (Groningen)

# JUDAISM IN THE THEOLOGY OF SIR ISAAC NEWTON

*by*

**MATT GOLDISH**

*University of Arizona,  
Tucson, Arizona, U.S.A.*



**SPRINGER-SCIENCE+BUSINESS MEDIA, B.V.**

A C.I.P. Catalogue record for this book is available from the Library of Congress.

ISBN 978-90-481-5013-7    ISBN 978-94-017-2014-4 (eBook)  
DOI 10.1007/978-94-017-2014-4

---

*Printed on acid-free paper*

All Rights Reserved  
© 1998 Springer Science+Business Media Dordrecht  
Originally published by Kluwer Academic Publishers in 1998  
No part of the material protected by this copyright notice may be reproduced or  
utilized in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical,  
including photocopying, recording or by any information storage and  
retrieval system, without written permission from the copyright owner.

I am dedicating this book to my family, who, through their critical financial support, valued moral support, patience and love of learning, have done more than anyone to make it possible.

ברוך ה' שהחינו וקיימנו והגיענו לאמן הזה

For

Betty

Raquel Michalle Tzivia

Elihu Dorothy and Judy Goldish

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| A Note on Texts   | ix  |
| Preface   | xi  |
| 1. Introduction   | 1   |
| 2. The Background of Newton's Jewish Studies                                | 17  |
| 3. Judaism in Newton's History of Early Religion                            | 39  |
| 4. Judaism in Newton's Study of Scriptural Prophecy                         | 57  |
| 5. The Temple of Jerusalem in Newton's Thought                              | 85  |
| 6. Judaism in Newton's Church History                                       | 109 |
| 7. Kabbalah and the Corruption of the Primitive Church                      | 141 |
| Conclusion  | 163 |
| Appendices  | 167 |
| A. From the <i>Irenicum</i> (Keynes, MS. 3)                                 |     |
| B. From <i>Of the Church</i> (Bodmer MS., Ch. 9/10)                         |     |
| C. From <i>Of the Church</i> (Bodmer MS., Ch. 3, 4, 5, 12/13)               |     |
| D. From <i>Of the Church</i> (Bodmer MS., "Additional Chapters," Ch. 1)     |     |
| E. From <i>Of the Church</i> (Bodmer MS., "Additional Chapters," fragments) |     |
| F. From <i>Of Prophecy</i> (Yahuda MS. 9.2)                                 |     |
| Bibliography  | 219 |
| Index   | 235 |

## A NOTE ON TEXTS

The quotations from manuscript works of Sir Isaac Newton have been prepared based on the original documents or the microfilm collection of Newton's manuscripts compiled by Chadwyck-Healy Publishers. It is my great pleasure to thank the Jewish National and University Library, Jerusalem; the Bodmer Foundation, Geneva; the Burndy Library at MIT (currently home to the Babson Collection); and King's College, Cambridge, for their kind permission to reproduce parts of the Newton manuscripts.

The following conventions have been applied in citations. Crossed-out passages have been included only in cases where I felt them to be particularly useful in understanding an aspect of Newton's thought. When additions or corrections have been made between lines by Newton, I have usually not given any indication to differentiate them from the rest of the text. My goal has been to remain as close to the original form of the text as possible without losing clarity.

Crossed-out passages appear between pointed brackets: < >. Newton occasionally uses square brackets, which appear here as such: [ ]. Newton's marginal and interlineal notations appear in curved brackets: { }. My interpolations, including page numbers, missing letters and comments, appear in double square brackets: [[ ]]. Newton often underlines texts as a way of indicating that they are quotations; I have preserved these underlinings.

## PREFACE

This book is based on my doctoral dissertation from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (1996) of the same title. As a master's student, working on an entirely different project, I was well aware that many of Newton's theological manuscripts were located in our own Jewish National and University Library, but I was under the mistaken assumption that scores of highly qualified scholars must be assiduously scouring them and publishing their results. It never occurred to me to look at them at all until, having finished my master's, I spoke to Professor David Katz at Tel-Aviv University about an idea I had for doctoral research. Professor Katz informed me that the project I had suggested was one which he himself had just finished, but that I might be interested in working on the famous Newton manuscripts in the context of a project being organized by him, Richard Popkin, James Force, and the late Betty Jo Teeter Dobbs, to study and publish Newton's theological material. I asked him whether he was not sending me into the shark-infested waters of highly competitive scholarship, and learned that in fact there were only a handful of scholars in the world who actively studied and published on Newton's theology. At the time the group consisted mainly of Popkin, Force, Dobbs, Frank Manuel, Kenneth Knoespel, and David Castillejo. I would later discover that others were beginning to work on this material at roughly the same time I was: Rob Iliffe, Matti Kochavi, José Faur, Scott Mandelbrote, and Sarah Hutton. Force and Popkin have continued to lead the field, both by furthering their own work in this area, and by organizing conferences and publishing projects which feature Newton research.

It is my great pleasure at this time to thank those people who have supported me and helped in the creation of the present volume. My advisors, Professors Michael Heyd and Yosef Kaplan of the Hebrew University, despite early misgivings they certainly had about my ability to carry through this project, gave selflessly of their time and wisdom to help me. In particular, they tried hard to impart to me the methodological rigor for which they are both known. Their success may have been limited, but it undoubtedly saved me from more and greater errors than those which remain in this book. The anonymous readers of my typescript for Kluwer made valuable suggestions, and I thank them for supporting the publication of this monograph. Throughout the period in which I worked on Newton, I was constantly in touch with Professors Richard Popkin, James Force, and David Ruderman, all of whom contributed invaluable ideas, criticism and moral support.

Chadwyck-Healy Publishers could not have picked a better time to publish their brilliant microfilm collection of Newton manuscripts, edited by Peter Jones, which did a great deal to allow the speedy completion of my research. I am deeply indebted

to the staff of the Jewish National and University Library, particularly the manuscripts librarians and my colleagues at the Edelstein reading room, for their patience and help. I also owe much to the kindness of the Bodmer Foundation, the Jewish National and University Library in Jerusalem, the Provost and Fellows of King's College, Cambridge, and the trustees of the Babson Collection at MIT for allowing me to publish portions of their Newton manuscripts. Generous support from the William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, the National Foundation for Jewish Culture, the Center for Jewish Studies at the Hebrew University, and the trustees of the Warburg Prize, were critical to my success in finishing this project. Amy S. Ruskin has done an outstanding job editing this work, and Maja de Keijzer of Kluwer Academic Publishers has been friendly and supportive at all times.