Maimonidean Medieval Rationalist Prejudices against belief in Folkloric superstition that destined little attention to the field by serious Enlightenment and Wissenschaft Des Judentums scholars

One of the strongest attributes of Maimonides as Norman Strickman has shown in his book, Without Red Strings or Holy Water, is his condemnation of magical folk beliefs and superstitions, customs, rituals, and traditions such as witchcraft, amulets, segullas, theurgic delusions of grandeur, and other folk beliefs which he viewed as a form of avodah zarah (idolatry). Rambam viewed these beliefs as a potential threat to true Torah understanding. Rambam was not willing to tolerate these “buba ma’ases” as the folk beliefs of naïve and foolish notions of ignorant simple minded people. Rambam studied works such as Ancient Nabatean Agriculture to gain insights into what Biblical idolatry was. However Rambam considered many magical practices of his own days as vestiges or relics of ancient day folk practices. He believed the resort to folk practices and beliefs occurs during intellectual and moral weakness in the area of the cognitive realm of reason to know natural scientific causes for the workings of the universe. Rambam holds that he believed the Torah was given to the Jews to abolish such bogus charlatan beliefs and superstitious customs, rituals, which are not less dangerous than false theological beliefs to which Judaism is opposed since there are a part of the same falsehoods. Maimonides held that the version of Judaism believed in and practiced by many pious Jews of his generation had been infected with pagan notions. In the Mishneh Torah, he aimed at cleansing Judaism from these non-Jewish practices and
beliefs and impressing upon readers that Jewish law and ritual are free from irrational and superstitious practices. Strickman’s book, Without Red Strings or Holy Water explores Maimonides’ views regarding God, the commandments, astrology, medicine, the evil eye, amulets, magic, theurgic practices, omens, communicating with the dead, the messianic era, midrashic literature, and the oral law. Maimonides insisted that all magical practices are, “false and deceptive.” He held that it is not proper for Israelites who are highly intelligent to allow themselves to be deluded by such inanities or to imagine that there is anything in them, as it says in Bamidbar, “For there is no enchantment with Jacob, neither is there any divination with Israel” (23:23). Ironically Yakov’s favorite son, Yosef in the environment of Egypt where magic practices were rampant, proclaims, “don’t you know that a person like me practices divination.” Perhaps the apple does fall far from the tree, as the injunction “notain emet li-Yakov” might suggest that Yakov as the model for the torah scholar who dwells in the tents of the Yeshivot of Shem ve-Ever, and who wished to exit his mother’s womb so as to go and learn there, possesses the type of character that focuses on strict halakakhah and the lomdish no nonsense or hocus pocus Brisker rigeur with regards to analysis of Talmudic texts. Such a portrait of such a Yakov is very distant from the Yosef model of character who takes on the persona of a wizard who knows magic, divinition, and methods of dream interpretation.

Maimonides taught that, “Whoever believes in these (magical practices) and similar things in his heart, holds them to be true and scientific and only forbidden by the Torah, is nothing but a fool, deficient in understanding.” According to Maimonides, our concept of reality should be based on the teachings of the Torah properly understood by reason. logic, mathematics, physics, metaphysics, and sense perception. All of these help us to understand the teachings of the Scripture. Any interpretation of the Torah that contradicts the latter is unacceptable. An apparent exception is a kamea menusah (an amulet that works) the Rambam says one may wear on Shabbos for its psychosomatic or psychological benefit. Likewise the Rambam acknowledges the psychosomatic aspect of healing in his medical writings. Thus Hezekiah davened to hashem and gained an extra 7 years of life. As my grandmother said, “davoning and reciting tehillim” were her “best medicine” implying the psychological benefit of such meditation which scientifically is shown to stabilize and reduce blood pressure. However in general the Rambam condemns superstitious practices when he writes, “What is divination? He who makes signs for himself: ‘If this happens I will do such a thing; if it does not happen, I will not do such a think, lik Eliezer, the servant of Abraham did. All these actions are forbidden.” (see Hullin 95b and Ta’anit 4a; divination is forbidden based on Vayikra 19:26 and Devarim 18:9).

The prohibition against sorcery is given in many verses of the Torah that prohibit such acts as idolatrous magic. Rambam in Introduction to Hilchot Avodat Kochavim, lists 11 negative commandments that relate to sorcery and witchcraft. The details of these prohibitions is listed in the gemarah, Sanhedrin 64a-b and in Rambam’s Hilchot Avodat Kochavim chapter 11. The Rambam was aware that one requirement to sit on the great Sanhedrin which Rambam predicts will be
reconstitute in the messianic age, is to be able to “identify” practices of witchcraft, sorcery, and wizardry and thus the Rambam according to Shlomo Pines read as many works as he could in what might be called today “history of comparative religions and anthropology” on the idolatrous practices in antiquity to shed light on present day objectionable superstitious beliefs. The Rambam was not only interested in performing mitzvot for the right reasons, but gave reasons to hukim and mishpatim that appear to lack obvious reasons. For example the Rambam comments that the issur on mixing milk and meat (lo tivshal gidei bihelev imo) was because idolatrous Canaanites mixed milk and meat at fertility idolatrous orgies where milk and meat was eaten together in conjunction with licentious practices, in order it was alleged to effect the fertility of crops. Rambam says that Baal worshipers also mixed milk and meat. This confirmed by Pritchard’s study of ancient Near Eastern texts and cognate semitic languages whereby the Rash Shamra texts include a ritual where the sacrifice of a calf cooked in its mother’s milk was offered to Baal as an offering. Rambam similarly gives the reason why Jews are forbidden to mix wool and linen (laws of shatnes) because the idolatrous Canaanite “priests” did just this. Anything adhered to for irrational or non-coherent beliefs and opinions based on superstition was not sufficient for the Rambam as constituting true knowledge (daas). For the Rambam opinions of superstitions are usually false, and if true only accidentally so, and their adherers are unable to reasonably justify these irrational behaviors before the tribunal of reason. Rambam in Hilchot Avodat Kochavim 11:16 states emphatically that the powers of sorcerers claim to have do not exist. He further states that anyone who believes that these powers exist, but the torah nevertheless prohibited partaking of them, “lacks intellect”.

On the other hand, (a) Ramban, Devarim 18:13, (b) Rabbeinu Nissim, (c) Derashot haRan no. 4 and (d) R. Yosef ibn Chabib (e) Nimmukei Yosef, Sanhedrin 16b, sv. Tanu Rabanan, all disagree with the Rambam and assume that such “powers” do exist in the world and the torah nevertheless prohibited partaking of them. Rambam did not deny that Moshe Rabbenu’s nevuhah derived from the Kochah tahor while that of Bilam and the necromancers of Egypt from the Koach ha-tumah. The point is that the Rambam’s intellectual honesty and integrity could not admit that Hashem created a world based on accident, circumstance, haphazard events. For Rambam Hashem is not a system. That would be idolatry to believe so, for nature could be altered by theurgic practices that cause chain reactions in different sub-systems of the G-dhead, and thus one would in effect have reduced G-d to a machine or object. That is the essence of idolatry found in other ancient cultures where one believes they can control the idol by feeding it, polishing it, or entreating it. For Rambam one must only pray to Hashem, who is transcendent and beyond mere human control etc.

**Importance of Jewish Folklore and its Definition**

Thus we ask: what is the place of an encyclopedia on Jewish Folklore? Why does folklore matter? Folklore is a crucial way of understanding, often interdisciplinary, and examining Jewish life and experience from a socio-cultural and anthropological perspective. But it serves much more also as a way of transmitting the culture of a people that was often not given its fair examination by the
Rabbinic elite interested mostly in halakhah, Jewish law, Talmudic and Midrashic texts, and Rabbinic exegesis. True the sheolot ve-teshuvot often deal with folk beliefs and how to deal with their practice. However focus on folklore proves that our understanding of Judaism across the ages is enriched and given depth historically when we consider texts and oral traditions associated with these grass roots folk beliefs. Folklore gives voice to often previously only orally transmitted traditions. It gives voice to the soul of a people, their longings, their life experiences, and counter cultural ways of dealing with the challenges and joys of life. Who cannot deny the “Yiddishe Hokmah’ in the parables, aphorisms, and maxims that are uniquely only conveyed in Yiddish proletariat folk humor?

This is the traditional understanding of the parameters and definition of Jewish folklore. The introduction notes, “In the past, folklore was defined as creative spiritual and cultural heritage, a collection of items and products (stories, sayings, music, poetry, art, customs, and so on), marked by an essential element of tradition, and passed on orally from generation to generation (Noy 1982, 7–9).” While this definition is accurate is is not all encompassing of the scope of the encyclopedia which embraces a larger vision of what Jewish folklore entails. The introduction notes, “This definition has long since been challenged by various scholars (Ben-Amos 1971, 3–15; Dundes 1980, 1–9). Contemporary folklore studies emphasize the communicative element and define folklore as one type of communication process. Oral transmission is no longer considered the only essential element defining folklore; today, written materials, too, are part of the field, including those transmitted by the digital culture of the twenty-first century.” The transmission of Jewish folklore operates between the poles of tradition and change as noted in the introduction when we read, “all research approaches agree that folklore expresses both the individual performer (folk narrators, folksingers, embroiderers, and so on) as well as the group within which they act, and includes the heritage of previous generations. This being the case, both tradition and change are part of the folklore process; they attest to its dynamic nature and express the collective and individual identity of those who create and transmit it.”


**Features of Jewish Folklore incorporated in the Encyclopedia**

The features of Jewish folklore stem from a number of factors and are a direct outcome of Jewish history: (a) dispersion of the Jewish people, (b) The multilingual character of Jewish folklore, (c) Written sources.
Yitzchak Baer’s historiographical essay Galut, identifies Jewish history largely taking place outside the land of Israel as Yakov’s dream of the angels going up and down the ladder often is interpreted as representing the longest galut after the Roman destruction of the Temple in 70 CE. The had gad ya of the Pesah seder is interpreted by the GRA as representing the major galut epochs of Jewish history including Egyptian bondage, Bavel, Persia, Greece (Yavan), Rome, Byzantine, Spain, the Turks, etc. Yet there is a sense that when Avraham left Ur of Chaldea to Haran and then Canaan, by iconoclastically rejecting the idol worship of his father’s generation, the language of the text indicates in Lech Lechah that Avraham went out from his soul from his homeland etc. Thus there is an exile in the soul in each neshama that needs to be overcome. That is why even in Eretz Yisrael today the pesah Seder still has deep spiritual meanings although the sedarim may take place outside of the geography of Egypt but in the land of the patriarchs. In this sense “exile” is a metaphor for the dynamic of the soul and the drama it strives for to overcome its own alienation and estrangement. With regards to folklore studies that means that there can be folklore and art of the new Israeli sort in a homeland of nationalistic fulfillment where Hebrew is the native tongue. Raphael Patai however recognized the local nature of Jewish dispersion and how syncretism with the host culture may color the folklore of a specific place. For instance the Jews of Kaifang adopted the custom of burning incense to their ancestors in the niche of the synagogues, as did the Confucian holy places provide for this practice. Patai writes:

Jewish folklore, because of the worldwide dispersion of the Jews, is a quasi-global phenomenon, comprised of many common elements, but also of separate local developments, which include features derived from, or related to, the local non-Jewish folklore. This means that a study of Jewish folklore must, in addition to the presentation of its general aspect, also include a study of its specific local manifestations.

The multilingual nature of the various languages in which Jewish folk beliefs and lore reside is a unique feature. For example Joseph Fitzmeyer pointed out the multilingual nature of Jewish society at the turn of the millennium 2000 years ago whereb y Hebrew was the language of the synagogue and liturgy, Aramaic the language of the marketplace, Latin the language of the government i.e. inscriptions of Pontius Pilate are found in Caesarea, and Greek was the language of the Hellenized and educated Sadducees as attested in a mishnah in yadayim that the Sadducees unlike the Pharisees held in high regard sifrei Homeros (the works of Homer). As Eckstein argues in his recent book on Jewish education, Hebrew was maintained as the price of continuity for men to perform the rituals inside the synagogue while the elite learned Aramaic in order to navigate the Babylonian Talmud. But Jews were also fluent in the vernacular of their non-Jewish neighbors, which they took over and modified into a Jewish language (notably Yiddish, Judeo-Spanish, and Judeo-Arabic). Of these three languages Yiddish, Judeo-Spanish, and Judeo Arabic there are numerous dialects and varieties.

There is a debate regarding if the Jews as described by the Koran are in essence a “people of the book.” Chaim Solovietchik and other scholars suggest that before the written book or scroll the Jews were the
people of the oral law known as torah she b’al peh. In Rabbinic theology the pusek “Moshe Kibel Torah miSinai” means a coterminous oral and written law was received because the text (in the mishnah of Avot from Sanhedrin) does not say “hatorah) which would signify only the written law (Tanakh) but also torah in general signifying oral law. Nonetheless scholars like Yakov Ellman have noted that the massive collections of Geonic works from Azharot, to takkanot, to the liggerot hai Gaon, and voluminous materials in Otzar ha-Geonim (anthologized in a brief 2 vols edition edited by Louis Ginzberg) demarcate the Jews as the people of the book or perhaps better restated as the “people of the books.” Schiffman has described the bookishness of Judaism as a later development in the shift from Torah to Tradition. Chaim Soloveitchik’s seminal essay on “RUPTURE AND RECONSTRUCTION: THE TRANSFORMATION OF CONTEMPORARY ORTHODOXY” [Tradition, Vol. 28, No. 4 (Summer 1994)] in part attempts to identify how, when, and why Judaism shifted to locating authority away from the oral tradition to written texts. It is because the Jewish people are identified as a people of the text or texts, that the Encyclopedia has entries on canonic Jewish texts, such as the various genres of rabbinic writings—the Talmud, midrashim; and of kabbalistic literature. In addition, many entries on specific topics refer to ancient Jewish texts, from the Hebrew Bible to the works of the talmudic era and the Middle Ages, as well as anthologies of Jewish folklore. ancient Jewish texts incorporate a wealth of folklore materials. These texts, too, are referenced in the Encyclopedia, with entries on the talmudic literature, midrash, medieval collections, and anthologies assembled in later periods. The vast majority of these texts are listed and glossed at the end of the Encyclopedia

Scope and Coverage

Noy classifies the 3 categories into which folklore is organized, although surely many examples of folklore can represent elements from each category. The introduction notes, “Categories proposed in the past, such as Dov Noy’s (2007) distinction between (a) verbal audio-oral folklore, (b) visual folklore, and (c) cogitative folklore, are what scholarship refers to as “ideal models,” since any particular item of folklore is apt to belong to more than one of them.”

(a) Verbal folklore: Genres in verbal folklore are many. In the domain of verbal folklore there are entries on folk narratives, classed by historical period—the Bible, talmudic literature, and medieval works—and entries on the various narrative genres, such as the wonder tale and the legend, as well as entries on distinctive types of Jewish folktales, such as the “Ma’aseh Yerushalmi” (the Story of the Jerusalemite). Also in the category of verbal folklore, in addition to folktales, are entries on short genres such as the Proverb, the Riddle, the Parable, the Joke, and the Qinah (Lament). Audio-oral folklore is represented by entries on Jewish and Israeli folk music and folksong

(b) Visual folklore, there is an entry on folk dance and numerous entries on what we refer to today as material culture and folk art—Costume, Food and Foodways, Mezuzah, Hanukkah Lamp, Torah Ornaments, Torah Ceremonial Objects, Tombstones, and so on. Foodways is a particularly recent celebrated topic as renewal of interest in cookbooks occurs. David Kramer has also
written on the topic of foodways as cultural phenomena. Since food plays such a fundamental role in our various traditions and rituals, it's surprising to learn that, until The Jewish Theological Seminary's own Dr. David Kraemer published his latest book, *Jewish Eating and Identity Through the Ages*, there was literally no historical analysis of Jewish eating practices available. This is not exactly true as even Rashi a Rishon notes that Cholent may derive its name from chol- lentement or hot slowly cooked (stew) although the earlier tanaic period attests to cholent as “ham” or hot stew that was eaten by the tanaim. The Rema comments on the uniqueness of the korban pesah in that it was roasted and not stewed for we are to imitate the wealthy Roman aristocrats who could afford to waste their cut of meat by roasting it whereby the fat drips off, while a stew like cholent preserves every part of the meat melted down.

(c) (c) Cognitive Folklore: Under the heading of cogitative folklore, there are entries on folk beliefs and the customs based on them, including Magic, the Afterlife, Amulets, Plants, Animals, and Folk Medicine.

Another rubric defining scope is the Jewish calendar and the cycle of hagim. Sacha Stern has written eloquently that in Judaism time is a process rather than the Greek notion that time is a fixed quantity that can be spent (chromos diatreiben) and used in a utilitarian manner. Judaism involves dwelling poetically in time by being in tune with the cycle of the luach. Eliezer Schweid has also written a philosophic book on _The Jewish Experience of Time_ which is marked by the punctuation of holidays in the lunar cyclical year bracketed off by the Jubilee (Yuvel) and 7 year Shemita (Sabbatical) that originated with Hillel’s institution of the practical pros bul to prevent people from lending money if all debts were to be forgiven in the seventh year. The encyclopedia of Jewish folklore also employs the Jewish calendar and its conception of time as an organizational scope and principle. Many beliefs, customs, folksongs, and folktale develop around the Jewish year cycle and life cycle. The year cycle is represented by the many encyclopedia entries on Jewish holidays and festivals. The life cycle has contributed entries on ceremonies associated with birth and circumcision, puberty and bar/bat mitzvah, marriage and wedding, death and burial, and consoling mourners.

Another organizational principle for the scope organizes entries around types of characters. The introduction notes, “Jewish folklore developed around characters, including supernatural figures, fictional characters, and historical personages. This topic is extensively covered in the Encyclopedia. The supernatural beings include angels and demons as a collective figure, as well as specific figures such as the Angel of Death, Asmodeus, Lilith, and others. Among the fictional characters there is, for example, an entry about the Wise Men of Chelm. The historical personages (or those considered to be historical by Jewish tradition) include characters from the Bible—the patriarchs and matriarchs, Elijah the Prophet, and various kings, as well as figures from later eras, such as Rabbi Meir Ba’al Ha’Nes, Bar Kochba, Shimeon bar Yohai, Rambam (Maimonides), Israel Ba’al Shem Tov, and many more.”

Besides types of characters the encyclopedia also includes in its scope various places where Jewish experience has occurred that has special significance in the are of folklore and folk beliefs. Thus places where Jews lived are mapped within the scope. Consequently, there are entries on the shtetl, representing the Jewish settlement space of Eastern Europe, and on towns in Israel considered to be
holy cities, including Jerusalem and the Temple, Safed, and Hebron. There are also entries on imaginary places, such as the Sambation and the supposed abode of the Ten Lost Tribes.

The scope of the encyclopedia also incorporates the reception of folkloric events in the work of Jewish poets and novelists. Many Jewish writers and poets drew on folklore as the basis of their work. These artists, too, are the subject of entries that examine their writing and their use of folklore materials. They include among many literati: I.L. Peretz, Sholem Aleichem, Mendele Moykher Sforim, S.Y. Agnon, Itzik Manger, and Isaac Bashevis-Singer.

Chronological time also serves as an organizing principle in determining the Encyclopedia’s scope. Thus there are also entries on important periods in history, such as Holocaust Folklore, and on the folklore of specific social settings like the kibbutz.

Three main areas the domain of the academic study of folklore: institutions, periodicals, and magazines also are incorporated into the encyclopedia’s scope. Folklore studies are represented by entries that fall into three main areas:

(a) Entries about Jewish folklore research institutions, such as the YIVO Ethnographic Commission and the Israel Folklore Archives (IFA);
(b) Entries about major periodicals in the field of folklore research, from the pioneering journals to contemporary publications;
(c) Biographies of major Jewish folklorists, with reference to their major contribution to the study of Jewish folklore, including the trailblazers like Max Grünwald, S. An-Ski, and Y.L. Cahan. Realizing that it could be a long while before the publication of another encyclopedia of Jewish folklore, the editors decided to include short entries on professors of folklore who are still active and have made major contributions to scholarship. One may recall Solomon Zeitlin’s initial shock regarding the Encyclopedia Judaica that certain current scholars at the time of the publication of the EJ were excluded while there was a long entry on Jewish gangsters that Zeitlin found so shocking and unbalanced etc. The Encyclopedia of Jewish Folklore does not make this mistake of which Zeitlin was critical.

A benefit of the online version is that the scope can be widened by new entries that can be added and old entries updated.

While the editors of the encyclopedia of Jewish folklore have chosen to organize entries alphabetically A-Z, other Books on minhagim often organize their scope around a religious conceptual matrix of the jew in the life of the synagogue. For example the Otzar Ta’améi ha-Minhagim and Chills The Minhagim in the table of contents reveal that the subjects have a very focused religious aspect.

**Conception of the Project of an Encyclopedia of Jewish Folklore by Raphael Patai**

Raphael Patai, the Encyclopedia’s founding editor, who unfortunately passed away when the project was still in its infancy drew up the list of entries which served as the basis for the final product. Patai’s
drafts of a number of entries were completed by other scholars and are published under their joint names. The goals of the encyclopedia were to (1) provide recent scholarship and (2) to offer, as much as possible, an accurate and objective presentation of Jewish folklore, while avoiding the trap of partiality and nostalgia that lurks for those who deal with folklore and tradition. Interdisciplinary collaboration was engaged as scholars in other fields, too, whose work touches on Jewish folk culture, contributed in addition to folklorists.

Patai’s pioneering efforts represent a relatively recent interest in research into the folklore of some Jewish communities, such as those of Germany, Poland, and Russia, began before the First World War and was conducted with greater vigor between the two world wars within the communities; therefore the history of folklore scholarship is included in the entries pertaining to them. Other communities lack this kind of research—sometimes scholarly research began only after virtually the entire community had left its country of origin—and therefore this topic is not mentioned in the entry.

**Intended Readership of the Encyclopedia**

Students and scholars of Jewish studies in general and of Jewish folklore in particular. Nevertheless, the Encyclopedia also targeted for its readership an educated general audience. That means that the editors have made sure that the entries are accessible for all readers. Terms that may require prior knowledge are explained in brackets or covered in the introduction or in the end matter. Some readers with even the most basic and rudimentary Jewish knowledge may find this type of most elementary explanation for those with no Judaica background very limiting and cumbersome. Such readers with even the most preliminary Jewish knowledge may stumble and be slowed down by the common knowledge paraphrases and parenthesis clarifications that it could be argued every 5 year old cheder child is familiar. Some readers may even feel that this rudimentary clarification and definition constitutes “a dumbing down of the Encyclopedia” for persons with no Judaica background whatsoever. While the bibliographies following entries in part distinguish the entries from Newspaperease, in no way are the bibliographies exhaustive or intended to be comprehensive.

To facilitate use of the Encyclopedia, there are blind entries on important topics, with cross-references to other entries that deal with them. In all cases, readers can consult the detailed index to find what they are looking for.

**Limits of the Encyclopedia**

Any work cannot be totally comprehensive. While the Encyclopedia attempts to be thorough it acknowledge that it is not the last word on the subject. The Introduction of the encyclopedia acknowledges that while there have been, “significant breakthrough in folklore research in recent decades, many branches of Jewish folklore remain inadequately studied. This applies to various Jewish communities whose history has been thoroughly researched but whose folklore has not been investigated in depth; it also applies to specific fields and topics of Jewish folklore for which it proved impossible to recruit qualified authors.”
Folklore is not new. However the academic study of it is relatively new when we consider the modern Enlightenment’s skepticism with regards to chronically folklore which due to Enlightenment prejudices were relegated to superstitious beliefs and practices. Thus as I have noted in my essay on the “Making of the JE and EJ” published in the Colorado AJL convention proceedings, the Enlightenment tendency of the 

Wissenschaft des Judentums beweigung, of which the Jewish Encyclopedia of 1901-1906 was an exemplar, was to devote little space to topics in the area of folklore. For instance Heinrich Graetz emporitized this enlightenment prejudice considering the topic of Jewish customs of Kabbalistic origin of associated with Hasidism and Sephardim, their history and practice, to warrant little attention. In fact that was a significant difference by the time of the 1972 Encyclopedia Judaica, where a long article by Gershom Scholem on Kabbalah and Jewish mysticism, represents a pioneering path made by Scholem as a scholar. In Scholem’s classic essay, ‘Wissenschaft des Judentums einst und jetzt” (in Judaica) Scholem refers to the censorship of the science of Judaism movement to ignore such areas as the par-anormal, Jewish folklore, and other aspects not necessarily the grist for traditional historians who focus on the rabbinic movement its “who/what/where/when/why etc. Scholem portrays Wissenschaft scholarship in terms of a pathetic juxtaposition. One the one hand there was the living organism of the Jewish peoplena don’t he other its scholarly cold rationalization in Wissenschaft methods. This is ironic because Scholem was a product of the Wissenschaft educational system. Yet his interests and focus were in areas of Kabbalah and Jewish mysticism that were outside respectable focus for Wissenschaft scholars like Geiger, Zunz, and Graetz. Scholem referred to wissenschaft scholars negelect of the censored past as arising out of fear and repression of “what happened in the cellar” (einst und jetzt, 157). Scholem referred to Wissenschaft as a movement (beweigung) that had a tendency to liquidate Judaism as a living organism.” Scholem’s argument culminated in citation the eminent German Jewish scholar Moritz Steinschneider (1816-1907): “The only taks lef tis to give the remains of Judaism a dignified funeral”. The reason for Scholem that those engaged in Wissenschaft des Judentums had mainly focused on apologetics was “that no purely academic institution existed addressing scholarly problems outside of any religious forum... resulting in an inability to undertake meaningful projects (that represented the grass roots folk elements in Jewish culture distinct from Jewish religion” (einst und jetzt, 151). For Scholem his salvation came in the form of Zionism, which once again approached Judaism as a living organism of a people or a “volk” rather than a cadaver to be given a museum rest and display as Wissenschaft tended towards. While Wissenschaft clearly has many positive benefits in methodologies and instistance on the study of archival sources to compare the girsa of differing religious manuscripts and is associated with an objectivity that established objective criteria putting aside one’s own particular prejudices and biases of one’s own personal religious choices, Scholem has a point. Obviously the ineffectuality of the Wissenschaft method and approach is not held by all and this form of scholarship continues with exemplars like Michael Meyer who edited a Brill edition of excellent essays from scholars influenced by Wissenschaft today. This Enlightenment prejudice was humorously conveyed when Dr. Saul Lieberman introduced Scholem’s lecture at the JTS on the subject of Jewish mysticism and traditions of ma’aseh merkavah in the context of Jewish Gnosticism by referring to “Kabbalah as
complete nonsense” but the “academic study of nonsense is scholarship.” Lieberman, in introducing Scholem before a lecture, remarked that Jewish mysticism is nonsense, but the academic study of nonsense is scholarship. Not just in the field of mysticism did scholars relatively turn their attention to what Lieberman humorously calls “nonsense” but even the analytic philosopher Wittgenstein gave serious consideration to the analysis of sense, nonsense, and what linguistically is beyond the limits of language and cognition. Recently Jacob Neusner has also characterized his scholarly work with Brill press on biographical legends of great tannaitic sages like Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai as being in the realm of legend per se and not necessarily historical fact.

26 entries that perhaps should have been more detailed, extensive, and further enumerated

One weakness of the Encyclopedia of Jewish Folklore and custom is that it does not have separate entries in transliterated Hebrew as access points, and more extensive in depth longer articles for entries such as: (1) ruach rahי רוח רע as relating to mental illness and depression, (2) ayn ha-raה הת רות the evil eye developed in the more in depth context revealed when looking up this term in the Asplakaria [http://www.aspaklaria.info/] or as a key phrase in Bar Ilan, (3) Shaydeimﺶידים, (4) derosh el hamaytim דורש אל המתים (as a theurgic practice in necromancy predominant among Chabad Hasidim at the Ohel in Queens NY where the Friedicker Rebbe and the 7th Lubavitch Rebbe are buried, what Chaim Dalifin calls the Meron of America. Also the prevalent practice of sleeping at the kevrot of Tzadikim buried throughout Israel could deserve more attention, as well as the massive exodus of Bratslaver Hasidim to Uman for Yamim Noraim as an anthropological phenomena, (5) segulotסגולות for example davening for a friend to get married at one’s own wedding under the chupah, eating the etrog after Sukkot made into jams etc, or teveling in a mikvah in 9th month allows for easy pregnancy and after a pregnant women has done so, the second women can get pregnant more easily (6) linchosh nichushלוחש ניחוש (forms of divination, such as that practiced when Yosef says, “Don’t you know that a man like me practices divination” or when the witch of Endor conjures up the ghost of Shmuel for Shaul plagued by depression, which the Redak notes was that in fact she fooled Shaul with ventriloquism, (7) mazikimמזיקים (damaging demons for instance the folk belief that breaking a glass at a wedding not only serves to remember the Hurban, but also serves to tangle and ward off evil demons, (8) Shomair pitaeimשומר פתאים (G-d’s providence over fools and simpletons, (9) hishtanot tevaהישנותطب (changing nature i.e. the ability of certain Mikubalim to actually cause weather pattern disturbances, block out the sun with clouds, and effect storms etc., (10) a much longer essay on amuletsקמיע (kameot) as revealed in the plethora of rabbinic texts referenced under this term in the Asplakaria and searches in Bar Ilan.

(10) Also perhaps separate entries on Hasidic davening techniques such as “bitul ha-yesh” (see: Louis Jacobs, Hasidic Prayer). A humorous ma’aseh surrounds this concept of negating the ego in the true story about a Talmud Hakham who spent his whole life in yeshivah and as an old man was to be honored by the Yeshivah with a chicken and kugel dinner. All the guests where looking
forward to a brilliant davar torah when the honoree was to step up to the podium. Instead the old zakan with a long white beard who knew nothing in life except learning, living over 50 years on “yeshivah lane’ got up to the podium, banged his hand on the podium saying 3x: ikh bin a gornisht ikh bin a gornisht, ikh bin a gornisht .... And sat down. In this humorous anecdote we see the extreme ego negation via the bitul ha-yesh amplifying Pirke Avot’s notation of Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai that great humility and sheful ruach accompanies great learning. Much comic play is made of this regarding a rabbi who on YK upon seeing the many coming to the shul for the first time all year, dramatically threw himself down and said “I am a nothing” just before Kol nidrei. The cantor not to be “outdone” just before beginning to lead Kol Nidrei also dramatically threw himself on the floor and said “I am a nothing.” Upon witnessing this theatricality the President of the shul also threw himself hysterically down on the floor crying “I am a nothing.” The cantor looked up at the rabbi from the floor and comments: “Look who thinks himself a nothing!”

(11) Also a separate entry would have been welcome on the related concepts of (a) Yesh mi-ayin, (b) “Asifa”, (c) ayn-sof and (d) imkei ha-ayin which in the sefirot is said to be located even above and beyond Keter. See footnote by David B. Levy in the Montreal AJL Conference Proceedings on “Asifa” as related to the Kabbalistic notion that Hashem, engaged in ma’aseh bereshit by negating an “absence or void” in Himself, to create “yesh miayin”, the depths of the ayin residing correlatively in “asifa”. The Greek term: Meontology as it relates to nothingness touched upon the doctrine of creation ex nihilo or yesh mi-ayin which intrigued medieval Kabbalists. A Kabbalistic interpretation of Bereshit is that God is said to have created not out of chaos/void (tohu abuhu) but "out of the nothing." Scholem in Kabbalah and Its Symbolism writes:

"The chaos that had been eliminated in the theology of the creation out of nothing reappeared in a new form. This nothing had always been present in God, it was not outside Him, and not called forth by Him. It is this abyss, within G-d, co-existing with His infinite fullness, that was overcome in the Creation, and the Kabbalistic doctrine of the God who dwells 'in the depths of nothingness,' current since the thirteenth century, expresses this feeling in an image which is all the more remarkable in that it developed from so abstract a concept.”[see: Gershom Scholem, Kabbalah and Its Symbolism (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), p. 102.]

For the Kabbalists, nothing is taken as God’s innermost mode of being. God being ayin (nothingness) created the world out of Himself. In this sense God being unrepresentable in image can be described as a circle whose center is everywhere, but whose circumference is nowhere, as Nicholas of Cusanus held. Like Spinoza’s substance (ousia), it is causa sui, nothing except more of the same can generate out of it. This Kabbalistic view is opposed to the Greek notion of there always being something eternal that was always there, a dilemma whose ontological and eschatological status bids to be resolved. Commentators have noted that keter (crown) was that sefirot of the Kabbalistic system of pleromatic emanation that is the origin of being, the place where something comes to be
out of nothing. Keter is a figure signifying zero. The mystical "O" of the Kabbalah may refer to the "Hollow Crown" of keter.

Ein-Sof as ayin or afisah involves the negation of a boundary/peras/gevul/grenzen. So, grammatically in Greek if one wants to state that "the soul of human being is immortal" one posits, "Psuche ton anthrapos a-thanatos." The mystical alpha negates the boundaries of mortality. Likewise it is with the mystical aleph with which the Maharal put the golem out of commission spelling met from the emet written across its forehead, a word containing the first, middle, and last letters of the twenty-two otiot. The mystical aleph in Hebrew can negate the limits of what it means to be alive while in Greek the mystical alpha negates the limits (peras) of death. The nothingness of which the Kabbalists speak therefore can be negated too. Essentially, this nothingness is the barrier confronting the human intellectual faculty when it reaches the limits of its capacity. Nothingness for Kabbalists can separate the world that is articulate and the world of apparent nonsense. Thus ben Zoma, when he returned from Pardes, is recorded in the gemarah to be speaking what appears to the untrained as nonsense, but in reality it is a language encoded with Kabbalistic significance. Nothing may separate the realm of linguistic cogency from linguistic nonsense. Wittgenstein may gesture towards this realm in the Tractatus when, in his seventh proposition, he writes, "Wovon Man nicht sprechen kann, Daruber muB Man schweigen." Ein-Sof which turns toward creation manifests itself as ayin ha-gamur (complete nothingness) or God who is called Ein-Sof in respect of Himself is called Ayin in respect of His first self-revelation. Some Kabbalists allowed no interruption in the stream of Atzilut from the first Sefirah to its consolidation in the worlds familiar to medieval cosmology. Creatio ex nihilo may be interpreted as creation from within God Himself. Ramban speaks of free creation of the primeval matter from which everything was made. Ramban's use of the word ayin in this Perush al sefer Iyov 28:12 and allusions in his comments on Bereshit that the meaning of the text is the emergence of all things from the absolute nothingness of God. The commentary to Sefer Yezirah by R. Yosef Ashkenazi (attributed in the printed editions to Abraham b. David) defined the first Sefirah as the first effect--the leap from Ein-Sof to ayin. R. David b. Abraham ha-Lavan, in Masoret ha-Berit (at the end of the thirteen century), defined the ayin as having more being than any other being in the world, but since it is simple, and all other simple things are complex when compared with its simplicity, so in comparison it is called nothing.

A separate entry access point might have been listed for "imkei ha-ayin”. In Kabbalah the term imkei ha-ayin (the depths of nothingness) is operative. It is said, that if all the powers returned to nothingness, the Primeval One who is the cause of all would remain in equal oneness in the depths of nothingness. The encyclopedia does not develop fully the concept of nothingness in Kabbalah as it relates to meontology.

(12) More extensive entries should be given to angels and angelology. For example absent is mention of Amtulta associated with the scales of justice who Mikubalim pronounce this name “Amtulta bat Karnivo to tip the scales of justice in one’s favor, often pronouncing formulas with her
name while holding a sefer torah or a mezuzah with parchment. Mikubalim invoke a myriad of angels. One of whom is called Amtulta who dwells in the darkness of nothingness according to the Targum on Sefer Iyov also associate with powers of the scales of justice etc. The question regarding the name of amtulta [bat Karnivo] is brought down to come from the root a mtul meaning "for the protection of" or "for the sake of", on account of. see Targum Yonatan Lev. IX, 7; a. fr. v. mitul and preced. w. Amtulta (feminine form) is brought down in Targam Yonatan Lev. IX, 7 and Targum Iyov I, 10 around him protecting him. Targ. Psalms VII, 8; a.e. Keth. 67th Amtultah for his sake Also see Amtitah implying balances, scale. Pesk. B'shall. p. 82; Amiyliyah Tosef Maasr. III, 6 ed. Zuck., V. Hamtaliah Al pi Kabbalah the se terms are associated with a Malakh who protects. In general the entry on angels leaves out many important ideas.

Little mention is made of angels in the Second Temple period as noted in the makloket between Saducees and Pharisees. Unlike the Sadducees denial of the existence of angels (Acts 23:8), the Essenes like the Pharisees believed in angels. Fragments from I Enoch and Jubilees have been found and these works are sources of angelology. The Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice (4Q400-407, 11Q17, Mas1k) is fully developed angelology. Temple Scroll (11Q19) on the other hand does not mention angels at all. A few pesharim use an angelic lexicon (Q174, 4Q177, 4Q182, 11Q13) whereas others do not. Allusion to the Nephilim in Bereshit 6:4 is made in the Damascus Document when reference is made to “the watchers of heaven who fell”. The allusion to the misadventures of the sons of G-d in Gen. 6:2 becomes the locus classicus for belief in evil angels. In the Book of Enoch the specific names of angels are given. This may beg comparison with Maseket Hagigah 12b-14b where angels such as the barakim, hashmalim (see Ps. 104:4), etc. are described. Jewish texts of the Greco-Roman time add detail to the traditions of angels found in the Tanakh (Jubilees 2:2; Ben Sira 16:26-30). In Enoch III angels have a hierarchical serving order in relation to G-d, each designated with a sphere of authority. Mention is made of Uriel, Raphael, Peniel, Metratron (not to be pronounced), and many others (I Enoch; Tobit; IV Ezra). Exceptional persons like Enoch, Elijah, and Serach bat Asher are elevated to angelic status (I Enoch; Zohar : 100a, 129b; T.Z. Hakdamah 16b). For the Qumran sect angels are divided into two camps in accordance with their proclivity to dualism. Angels of light and angles of darkness are illuminated in The War Scroll and The Manual of Discipline. The concept of fallen angels appears in the pseudepigraphic writings (I Enoch 6, from the section called, Book of the Watchers). It can be argued that this theological dualism of the concept of fallen angels becomes a major motif in Christianity. Starting in late antiquity including Beit Sheni inter-testamental period, angels are increasingly related to and seen as part of everyday life of persons and the functioning of the world. Thus the Dead Sea Scroll sect evokes the protective properties of specific angels. This later plays itself out perhaps in the appearance of amulets, magical inscriptions, and formulaic equations.

Josephus notes the Essene practice of keeping angelic names secret (The Jewish War 2:142). Angels in Qumran texts serve functions of ruling over nature, serving G-d, watching over the tree of knowledge, etc. Dead Sea Scroll texts are rich in angelic terms derived from combinations with the
words El (G-d) or Elim; for example the War Scroll (1QMx.8). The phrase “holy ones” are also employed who appear at G-d’s side to destroy the sons of darkness (IQM i.16). Holy ones takes on double meanings as does ruah. “And a perverted spirit you purified from great violation, so that it might stand in rank with the host of holy ones, and so that it might come together with the congregation of the son’s of heaven. And you cast for man an eternal lot with the spirits of knowledge (1QHa ix [i]). Spirit like holy one can designate in the same context angels and human beings. Some scrolls refer to angels as “spirits of knowledge” (Elei da’at). The Dead Sea Scrolls also use the term “prince” or commander (sar). We must however be wary of systemization of Dead Sea Scroll angelology, for the “Prince of light” in the Rule of the Community from Qumran Cave 1 need not be the archangel Michael or Uriel. The Melchizedek scroll (11Q13) places Melchizedek in opposition to Bellial (the evil one) and his angels. Melchizedek is a savior figure for the end of time. The Genesis Apocryphon (1QapGen) speculates whether the appearance of the newborn Noah is a sign that his parents are indeed the watchers (angels who descended according to 1 Enoch). The three angels at Mamre hosted by Avraham as seen as angels in the Ages of Creation (4Q180). The dualism of the Sectarians influences their communion with angels. The sons of light and the sons of darkness are allotted to the principal angelic Princes of Light and Princes of Darkness. The dualistic division of humankind is formulated in the Treatise on the Two Spirits now part of 1QRule of the Community (1QS iii.13-iv.26). A future battle of the prince of light with the sons of light against the forces of darkness is a dualistic impulse. The War Scroll develops the eschatological battle against Belial and his angels (1QM i.10-11, ix. 14-16, xii. 1-9). We are told that for the ultimate battle the names of the archangels will be written on the shields of the towers (1QM ix. 14-16). Certain people are banned from the camp because “for the angles of holiness are in the camp, together with their hosts (1QM vii.6 ).” The communion of the members of the Qumran commune with the angels is an explanation for the function of the Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice (4Q400-407). Angels are not only involved with the fulfillment of liturgical and eschatological tasks but struggle for the future of individuals as in the Visions of Amram (4QS43 3, 6; 4QS44 3.12-14, 6.2-3). It is a matter of debate whether the sectarians saw the transformation of the just into angels based on the War Scroll (4Q491) which speaks of a figure enthroned in heaven. In Hodayot there is a certain critique against some of the angels (1QH xviii.34-35 [x.32-33]). G-d is in dispute with angels and seeks justice among them. In this text the angels’ knowledge of G-d is limited and they are unable to stand before his wrath. Punishing angels or demons are mentioned also.

Angels may be invoked and employed by humans diviners appears in the Testament of Solomon and later ma’asei Merkavah texts. Rabbinic texts minimize the importance of angels when compared with their role in the priestly Qumran, apocalyptic, and mystical traditions. In Shabbat 88b and Gen. R. 48:11 angels are said to have no free will, differing from the Qumran notions. Rabbis however conceded that angels do have intellect and inner life and are capable of errors (Sanh. 38b; Midrash Psalms 18:13). For the Rabbis most angels exist to do a single task (B.M. 86b; Gen. R. 50:2) and as exalted as they may be are subordinate to the Tzadikim (Gen. R. 21; Sanh. 93a; Ned. 32a; Deut. R.1). Rabbis see many divine actions in the Tanakh as ascribed to angels (Deut. R. 9;
Gen R. 31:8; Sanh. 105b). The Pesah Haggadah is an exception to these opinions. It denies that angels played an important role in the yitziat mimitzrayim (see Magid).

The pusek, Na-aseh Adam betzelmenu kidemuteinu is seen as the heavenly host. Gabriel is seen as the angel who guards the gates of Gan Eden with the sword that flashes every which way. Three malakhim are hosted by Avraham and Sarah at Mamre, one being Raphael to cure Avraham of the brit milah. At the Akedah (Gen. 22) Sforno names the malakh who stops Avraham from shechting Yitzak as, Michael, when he says, “al tishlac h yadchah al ha-naar.” Rashi names the unnamed man as an angel who instructs Yosef that his brothers are sheparding their flocks at Dothan. An angel is said to be with the children of Israel in the desert. In Haftorah Yetro the seraphim, ofanim, and hayot hakodesh is the subject of great exegesis in the Rabbinic imagination. These angels appear to be winged parts of Hashem’s throne (Isa. 6) or of the divine chariot (Ezek.1). That all angels (and not just seraphim and cherubim have wings is mentioned in Chag. 16a; PdRE4). Al Kanfeh Shekhinah (under the wings of the Shekhinah) also evokes wing imagery. In Homer we find the phrase “winged words” but in Rabbinic parlance angels have wings and move at different speeds depending upon their mission (Ber. 4b). G-d’s speed is often given in parasangs, a Persian measurement. The idea of seraphim being associated with fire may find correlaries with the Islamic ifrit, or from the oxymoranic (opposites uniting) unifications of fire and water (Sefer Yetzirah 1:7; S of S R. 10; J.R.H. 58; Gedulat Moshe; Rashi on the hail as fire and water). In post-modern science we are interestingly told of a real state where water exists as a gas, liquid, and ice, known as the triple point!

The rationalistic philosophic tradition of Rambam and Ralbag however holds that angels are immaterial, incorporeal disembodied intellects. Rambam spurns the notion that “angels eat” and even Rashi concedes that the 3 angels at Mamre hosted by Avraham, from the midrash, only “appear to be eating.” This is a controversy in rabbinic texts (see Judg. 13; Gen. R.48:14; B.M. 86b; Zohar I: 102b). The strong philosophic rationalism of the Rambam and Ralbag intellectualizes angelology within an Aristotelian modality. Rambam expounds on angels in Hilchot Yisodei Ha-Torah (Laws of the Foundations of the Torah). His expertise in classification is applied not only in halakhah but in this esoteric area. Rambam classifies angelic ranking into ten levels. In the Moreh Nevukhim further elaboration is given equating angels with Aristotelian “intelligences.” These “intelligences” mediate between the spheres. They possess the attribute of consciousness and govern the spheres in their motion. Influenced from Aristotle, Rambam holds that they are forms (eidos) of natural causation rather than supernatural beings, has vehalilah with bodies. As forms of causation they are thus absolutely incorporeal without bodies. Rambam in the Aristotelian mode remarks on the libidinous impulse of the “angel of lust.” As remarked before the Rambam holds that the “sense of touch is a shame to us” a remark also found in Aristotle, but not to be understood in the Christological sense of shame, but rather for those who have experienced the life of the mind totally as pure spirit (not Hegelian necessarily) or the experience of the sekel hapoal as transcendent even of time itself. To enter into the perfection of the tautology of what it is to think
thinking itself as sui generis, is beyond all body and gashmius. Rambam denies that angels ever take corporeal form. They are extensions of the faculty of the human and divine intellects. As such the encounters in the Tanakh according to Rambam of angels are only the dream visions of the Avot, and Matriarchs. Moses is the chief of the prophets in that his prophecy was completely vibrant and clear not in dreams but while awake. To Moses, night appears as day (see Moreh Nevukhim). By contrast other Rabbinic traditions like the German Pietist such as Eleazar of Worms, adhere unapologetically to supernatural angelology. Rituals for summoning angels, especially angels who can reveal secrets of Torah (sitrei Torah), like the Sar ha-Torah and Sar ha-Panim (The prince of the Torah and Prince of the Presence of Haderat Panim), are sighted, cited, and sited! The Hasidic tradition also departs from the strict Maimonidean rationalism in this regard and regards texts such as Sefer ha-Razim catalogs of hundreds of angels, along with how to influence them and employ their names in constructing protective amulets, throwing curses, and gaining spiritual power as a mode of practical Kabbalah. The Zohar is sighted with its tradition of angelic taxonomy, ranking angels to the four worlds of emanation (I. 11-40), as well as assigning angels feminine and masculine attributes (I: 119b).

In Rabbinic tradition little children are told to recite the formula before going to sleep that Gabriel is at the left, Michael at the right, Oriel in front, and Raphael behind one.

For the rabbis an angel is a spiritual entity in the service of Hashem with no will other than Hashem’s. Angels can be classified into the following types: Malach, Irin, Cheruv, Saraf, Ofan, Cahyyah, Sar, Memuneh, Ben Elokim, Kodesh. The malach (messenger) is one variety. Distinguished from malakhim are the Irinim (Watchers/High angels). Sarim (Princes), Serafim (Fiery ones), Chayyot (Holy Creatures), and Ofanim (Wheels) are different types. They are alluded to in collective designations that include: Tzeva (Host), B’nai ha-Elokim, or B’nai Elim (sons of G-d), and Kedoshim (Holy ones). Their divine assembly is sometimes called Adat Kel (Ps. 82, Job 1). Their forms are unspecified as in Judg. 6:11-14 and Zech. 4). They appear humanoid in most biblical testimonies (Num. 22) and are therefore indistinguishable from human form (Gen. 18, 32: 10-13; Josh. 5:13-15; Judg. 13:1-5). Sometimes they manifest in pillars of fire and cloud, or the firey bushes that are not consumed (Ex. 14:3). On the Aron ha-Kodesh (Ex. 25) cherubim were artistically represented and the shekhinah was felt to dwell there. The idea that angels envy humanity is found in pseudepigraphic texts and in rabbinic and medieval texts (Sanh. 88b-89a; 109a; Gen. R. 118:6; ChdM).

The function of Biblical angels can convey knowledge to mortals (Zech.1-4), shielding (Ex. 14), rescuing (Gen. 21), and smiting Israel’s enemies. They have responsibility but no authority except in the Book of Daniel. Daniel holds that all the nations of the world have their own angelic prince, arranged hierarchically, with limited spheres of control over mortal realms (also see Deut. 32). Angels have prominent roles especially in biblical roles written by Kohanim who were prophets including Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Zechariah. In Zechariah the host of heaven is differentiated into
groupings of angels governing and serving different levels of heaven. Zechariah makes reference to the seven eyes of G-d (4:10), referring to seven arch angels, or the seven angel hosts in the seven heavens. This has parallels with Enoch 61 and Testament of the Patriarchs, Levi.

The Jewish concept of personal angel, of malach sharet, mazal, or memuneh, “ministering” or “guarding angel” and an angelic “deputy” also is apparent in texts such as Rashi on Meg. 3a; Mid. Prov. 11:27 and Sch 129, 633, 1162. The rabbis expand in commentary to a great extent on angels forming choirs of singing praises to G-d (i.e. Gen. R. 78:1) and yet G-d is “beyond” even the greatest of praises (lailah liailah) which is invoked during the Yamim Noraim.

Gershom Scholem has recently brought to light the motif of angelology as a component of ma’aseh merkavah mysticism within the academic discourses. These texts describe how the practitioner to the Pardes in this world, or the pilgrim disembodied soul in the next life, wishing to ascend through the palaces of the heavens and achieve a vision of the divine glory needs to know “passwords” to get past the archons (gatekeepers) at each level (III Enoch). For how this archetype relates to Kafka’s parable Vor Dem Gesetz (Before the Law) and the Jewish mystical subtexts in texts ranging from Hechalot Rabbati and Zutrat to Orhot Tzadikim, see: http://student.ccbcmd.edu/~dlevy11/Kafka.pdf The second half of this paper has been retracted from the reshut harabim on Rabbinic advise that this material should not be made public! Angels can be conjured to be summoned and brought down to earth to serve the human practitioner. Many rituals and practices devoted to this end are preserved in Hechalot writings.

The rabbis offer the opinions on the origins of angels. Some hold that angels did not pre-exist Creation, but were formed as part of the heavens on the second day (Gen. R. 1:3, 3). Another rabbinic opinion posits their origin on the second day (Gen. R. 1:3, 3). A third opinion holds on the fifth day along with the winged and gliding beings (bird and fish) creations. In Chag. 14b; PdRE 4 speculation is asserted reconciling Midrash Rabbah that different kinds of angels came into being at different stages of Creation. The Zohar teaches that all angels result from specific manifestations of sefirot. For examples angels of love emanate from hesed while punishing angels emanate from gevurah, each type coming into existence coinciding with the manifestation of the sefirah that is its source (I: 46a-b). Chag 14a and Gen. R. 78:1 reveal the distinction between angels which are enduring and anonymous ephemeral angels, which are constantly coming in and going out of existence (kiyamut). According to Rabbi Chaim Vital, the Talmud Mivuhak of HaAri HaKodesh, and other Chasidic masters, the ephemeral angels are the direct result of human actions. Goodly deeds create good angels while destructive behavior creates destructive angels, etc. Thus some angels are the products of “gathering the sparks.” The power of the word “amen” itself can create multitudes of angels. Human actions thus become the cause of angelic and demonic forces (kelipot). Human action and decision have infinite consequences. As Louis Jacob’s book Their Heads in Heaven (see review by David B. Levy) alludes... man stands upon the earth and his head reaches to the heavens, and the angels of the Eternal ascend and descend with him (Ben Porat Yosef 42a). Rabbi Elimelekh
of Lizansk thus brings down the interpretation that the ladder that Yakov dreams, with angels going up and down, has the gematria of mammon (correlating to Tzedakah), kol (voice correlating to prayer), and tzum (fasting). Thus Chasidic masters emphasize the value of seeking the help of angels. The Rambam as rationalist however views such intermediary worship as avodah zarah and insists that one must only davon to Hashem. The most comprehensive Chasidic meditation on angelology is Sichat Malachei ha-Shareit (Meditation on the Guardian Angels) by Tzadok ha-kohen Rabinowitz.

The Essenes also have their own system (makreket) for hierarchical designation of the angels (angelos, or messengers.) The priests who contributed to the Dead Sea Scrolls believed in a transitory fusion with angels when they performed their mystical liturgy. The Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice illustrate this. Ma’asei Merkavah mystics who descend to the chariot to ascend to the palaces, also engaged in corollary kinds of angelic experiences through their techniques of ascent. A Midrash holds that in the 9 months of pregnancy a malakh teaches the developing fetus all the torah, and our job in life is to remember and recollect what the malakh taught. Michael, the angelic prince over Israel, serves as Kohen Gadol in Yerushalyim shel malah, (Chag. 12b). L’havdil this is different than Plato’s notion of recollection of the truth (aleithea/wahrheit) before being born. Aletheia is not the equivalent of the Hebrew Emet. In Jewish law Emet is trumped in the scenario for example if someone is hiding Jews from the Nazis, and the Nazis demand, “Are you hiding Jews?” Torah law dictates lying to save the Jews.

A great interest in folk traditions surrounding Elijah have seen light in recent years. Legends concerning this prophet turned angel (Ber. 4b) is a motif in many maseh (tales) of the Hasidim. Elijah frequently appears among mortals, bearing revelations of childbirth, parnassah, miracles, and heavenly news, as well as resolving kashes of difficult problems.

(13) Chaim Soloveitchik has recently released volume one of an intended three volume set of his previous published essays. In volume one he includes an appendix on the subjects of: (1) differences between Ashkenazi and Sephardim on the eating of “Kitnius” on Pesah, and (2) the differing minhag between Hasidim and Mitnagdim on whether one should eat in the Sukkah on the 8th day of Sukkot, Shemini Atzerot. The encyclopedia does not reference Soloveitchik’s work. Neither does the encyclopedia reference Soloveitchik’s teacher’s work, the historian Yakov Katz, who has written some very interesting articles on “Halakhah and Kabbalah As Competing Disciplines of Study”, “Post-Zoharic Relations between Halakhah and Kabbalah”, and “Controversy Over Mezizah” all of which have some interdisciplinary relationships with folklore and minhag (see Divine Law in Human Hands: Case Studies in Halakhic Flexibility, Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1998).

(14) A more extensive entry should be given on Tashlich performed around Rosh Hashanah, exploring what the mitzvah of throwing bread or other food into a body of water, to be eaten by fish or ducks, symbolically indicates, theurgically it is believed reciting the final 3 verses of Michah
(7:18-20) that are in essence a summary of the 13 divine attributes, while over the years other prayers such as those composed by the Chida are added for extra believed effect. Early sources such as that of the Maharil (1365-1427, Germany) should be referenced whereby Rabbi Moelin notes that the ceremony is in commemoration of Akediat Yitzchak. In the Yalkut Shemoni (Vayera 99) the story is told that when Avraham and Yitzchak were on the way to perform the Akeidah, they were confronted by Satan, who attempted to block their path by assuming the form of a river. Avraham plunged in and the waters reached his neck. He then recited Ps. 69:2 to which G-d responded and dried up the river. Taschlich therefore recalls zekut avot of the Akedat Yitzchak. Tachlish is mentioned by the Rema (OC 583:2) since the Arizal approved of the practice, a kabbalistic component was added and it spread to Sephardic communities and Yemen. The Rema in Darkei Moshe (OC 583) offers an explanation based on the Sefer Minhagim of Rabbi Tirna that the appearance of live fish represents the berachah that Bnei Yisrael should proliferate like fish who are immune to the ayn ha-rah. The Rema clarifies that one when goes to a river or sea and observes the majesty of G-d’s creation and is struck by the glory of G-d as the Creator of worlds, this will cause the person to regret any misdeeds, and G-d will forgive his sins, which will symbolically be “thrown into the depths of the sea.” Rabbi Mordechai Jaffe (the Levush, 1530-1612) a student of the Rema adds further that the fish remind us on RH (Levush haTechelelet, no.596), fish an at any moment get trapped in a net and thus show the precariousness of lives for judgment as evoked in Unетеneh Tokef. King David (Melakhim 1:33, 38) instructs his son Shlomo be brought to the Gihon spring to be coronated and from here the Talmud learns (Horiyot 12a) that all kings are anointed at a body of water. This symbolizes that the new king’s reign should have continuity, just as a spring of water flows continually. After Shlomo’s anointing, Tzadok ha-kenen blew a shofar (Melakhim Aleph 1:34:39) and similarly on RH we coronate G-d as King by a body of water and blow the shofar. (see Kitzur Shulchan Arukh 129:21, 5). The Rashban (OC 201) also associates malchut with water by noting that Ezra gathered the people at the water gate, the nearest gate to the water source on RH for a public reading of the Torah (Nech 8:1). Jacob Lauterbach tapping into Philo’s remark that on Hoshanah rabbah the Jews said a tefillah at a body of water, noes that there is an early belief traceable to Bereishit 1:2 (G-d’s spirit hovered over the surface of the water) that G-d can be found near sources of water. Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Ehrenreich notes that water symbolizes humility in that it always flows to the lowest level and thus the custom of Tachlish is an attempt to relate our humility to that of the Avot and Moshe Rebeinu who is referred to being not merely humble but very humble. A Kabbalistic tradition holds that the mystery of the tetragramaton not be related except once ever 7 years, to only the most meritorious students, at a body of water, preferably with a water fall (cateract). The practice of Tashlich was not performed by the GRA, his star pupil Rabbi Chaim of Volozhin, and the Chayei Adam does not record the custom. Furthermore the Aruch haShulchan advises women not to go to tashlich so as not to create a mixed scene and if they do go men should stay home.

(15) A more extensive entry should also be given to the segulah of Shiluach ha-kan (sending away the mother bird to warrant long life). As Milton Steinberg’s historic-fictional novel, As a Driven Leaf,
notes Aher, Elisha ben Avahu witnessed someone trying to fulfill this mitzvah and fell out of the tree and was not given long life but instead was killed.

A number of midrashim should have been cited in the entry which state that the fulfillment of this mitzvah is a segulah for having children. Derived from the words “V’es habanim tikach lach” Mirdrah Rabbah Ki Setzei 6:6 Yalkut Shimoni 930. This segulah is cited in the Sefer ha-Chinuch (545) as well. The Chinuch and Ksav Sofer al ha-torah explain how this is a function of midah k’neged midah. and a segulah for getting married and for acquiring a new house since the parsha is followed by ki yivneh ish bayis and ki yikach ish issha (Tanchuma Ki Setzei 1; Kli Yakar Dvarim 22:7). The Yalkut Shim’oni (Devarim 930) notes, “Hashem said, `if you fulfill the mitzvah of shiluach hakan, then even if you are infertile and physically incapable of having children, I swear by your life that I will give you children.’ As it says in the Torah: You shall surely send away the mother bird and if you have don son, then “the young take for yourself etc.” Midrash Rabbah (Ki Seitzei 6:6 ) notes: There are some mitzvos whose reward is wealth, and there are other mitzvos whose reward is honor. But what reward is granted for this mitzvah of shiluach ha-kan? That if one who fulfills this mitzvah has not children. I Hashem will grant him children. How do we know this? For the verse states You shall surely send away the mother bird. And what reward do you receive if you fulfill this commandment? The young take for yourself. “ Further Midrash Tanchumah (Ki Seitzei 2) remarks, “How do we know the principle that one mitzvah leads to another mitzvah? For it is written: Should a bird’s nest chance before you... you shall surely send away.... So that it will be good for you and you will lengthen your days.... And what is written afterward? If a man marries a wife i.e. as a result of fulfilling shiluach ha-kan, you will merit to fulfill additional mitzvos by marrying and having children.”

Statement of some of the basic halakhic aspects of this folk belief sould be more extensive. The mishna states that kan mezuman (a prepared nest) is exempt from fulfilling the mitzvah derived from the pasuk stating “ki yik arei- when you happen upon a nest. (Chulin 138b, Shulchan Aruch YD 292:2). This means that the mother bird and her offspring must be ownerless. Since the halacha states that a chatzer, private property, acquires objects on behalf of its owner even without the owner’s knowledge, a nest in on’e yard would generally be ineligible for this mitzvah. However a minority position is that before the eggs are laid, one may have in mind that he does not want his property to acquire on his behalf (Sefer Shalayach Teshalach, p.66; see Chasam Sofer Chulin 141b, and Igros Moshe Y.D. 4:45). Also according to Rav Chaim Pinchas Scheinberg one may declare in fornt of 3 people that the eggs or chicks on his property are hefker and proceed with the mitzvah. Without the declaration of hefker the nest and offspring would automatically belong to the owner. I the nest is on private property it may be necessaryfor the owner to be mafkir. Therefore some authorities hold that one could fulfill the mitzvah only with nests in public places (a karmalite), such as a park. (Birchei Yosef 292:3; Rav Shlomo Salman Auerbah (Michas Shlomo 2:97:26), Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv, quoted in Kovets Torani Mekav shel Torah, ch. 106. See Chochmas Adam 105:3. )
After one has taken the eggs or chicks, they may be declared hefker by the one who acquired them by hazaka (lifting them three tefachim) and then returned to the nest.

Classic mephorshim and their kabbalistic derivatives, should be more extensively referenced in such an entry. The Ramban states that compassion for the mother bird herself is not a motive alone for this mitzvah, since human needs override those of animals. Rather the Torah wishes us to act compassionately so that we instill this trait in ourselves. He also references a profound Kabbalistic reason (sod) for this mitzvah. Rebbein Bachya states that taking the mother and her offspring at the same time is analogous to destroying the same species. Rashi comments that Shiluach haKan is a relatively easy mitzvah to carry out, involving little hardship or cost. One earns the tremendous reward of long life through the performance. We can therefore only imagine how great the reward will be for more difficult mitzvos. Like the mitzvah of honoring parents, the mitzvah of Shiluach ha-kan is said to warrant long life, which means having children. The Zohar (Zohar Chadash Rus pg. 94, Tikunei Zohar 6 pg. 23a, cited in Rabbainu Bachya) explains the reason behind the vast rewards of this mitzvah as the bird’s distress elicits Hashem’s compassion, and He showers His mercy on Klal Yisroel and individuals in need so that in turn as part of the chain reaction, Hashem then rewards the person who brought this about.

(15) A more extensive entry should be given on the Mezuzah. Martin L. Gordon wrote an excellent article on the question of the mezuzah as “protective amulet or religious symbol” in Tradition that could have been cited more in depth. Further not referenced in the entry on mezuzah is the famous letter from the Lubavitcher Rebbe in 1976 to the Akeres habayis who are the “foundations of the home” to ensure “protection and guardianship” in accord with the promise “I will dwell among them” by making sure the mitzvah of mezuzah is not only done, but that the mezuzot are checked to protect the home which “embraces member of the household when they go out of their houses as written, “G-d will guard your going and coming from now and forever.” The Rebbe notes that the divine name (shin-dalet-Yud) spells out the words, “Shomer Dalsos Yisroel” (Guardian of Jewish doors). The Rebbe adds that each additional mezuzah affixed to all doorposts of the house, although the bathroom is referred to the room without a mezuzah, “adds to the protection of all our people everywhere.” The affixing of mezuzot on the doorposts the Rebbe notes will bring “Hatzlocho” and inspire others to do likewise, and the Zechus Horabim (the merit you brought to the many) will further stand you in good stead before the King of king’s throne! (see Iggerot Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rosh Chodes Elul, 5736).

(16) The entry on Kaparot should be much more extensive beyond the famous remark of Rabbi Yosef Karo codifying the opinion of the Rashba, that the practice constitute darkei ha-Emori (OC 605:1) vs. the Rema who brings it down in the tablecloth (Mah pah) to the Shulchan Arukh that the practice is beneficial as based on the opinions of many Ashkenazi Rishonim including Rabbeinu Asher, Yoma 8:23, Mordechai, Yoma no. 723, and Tashbetz Katan no. 125). This minhag of waving a chicken over the head and reciting a statement that transfers his iniquities onto the chicken, and
then slaughters the chicken, which is given to the poor, is recorded in the Teshuvot HaGeonim, Sha’arei Teshuva n. 299, although much controversy surrounds its origin and expediency for theurgic effect. Long before Rabbi Yosef Karo the Ramban (cited in Orchos Cahim, Hilchot Erev Yom HaKippurim no. 1) rules that kaparot is a violation of darchei ha-Emori (Vayikra 18:3). Rashba, Teshuvot HaRashba 1:395 notes that he did not allow kaparot in his kehillah. According to the Mahari Veil, the purpose of kaparot is not necessarily to transfer one’s iniquities onto the chicken, vicarious atonement, but rather to elicit thoughts of repentance. R. Moseh M. Karp (HilchotChag b’Chag, Yamim Nora’im, p. 276) suggest that the dispute between the Ramban and the Ashkenazi Rishonim is the subject of a dispute between Rema (Yoreh Deah 178:1) and the GRA ad loc. Rema (based on Maharik no. 8) maintains that there is no violation of darhei ha-emori if there is some practical purpose to the activity in question. However the GRA (based on Tosafot Sanh. 52b, s.v. Ela) asserts that any activity which is practiced by idolaters may not be practiced by Jews, even if there is a practical purpose to it. R. Karp suggests that since there is a practical purpose to kaparot to provide atonement, it is justifiable according to the Rema. However according to the GRA kaparot would constitute darchei ha-Emori since the ritual had previously been practiced by idol worshipers. Also Rabbi Eliezer of Metz (Sefer Yere’im no. 313) rules that the prohibition of darchei ha-Emori is limited to cases listed in Tosefta (Shabbat ch. 7 and 8). Any activity that is not listed in the Tosefta is not included in the prohibition of darchei ha-Emori. The entry in the encyclopedia does not reference the recent opinions of Rav Ovadia Yosef in depth who in (Yechave Da’at 2:71) notes that because of the pressure on the shochet to slaughter many chickens in a short amount of time some of the chickens may not undertake a valid slaughter and their invalidity goes unnoticed etc. Rav Obadia Yosef also feared that workers might use dull blades to slaughter chickens and called for caution with Kappaort as reported in Haaretz Newspaper. R. Efraim Z. Marguiles (Beit Efraim, Yoreh De’ah no.26) notes that due to the large number of people who perform kaparot on erev YK there is an unusually long waiting time between waiving the chickens and their slaughter. As a result, many chickens are not handled properly and this is a violation of tza’ar ba’alei chaim (cruelty to animals). Magen Avraham (605:2) cites the ruling of Arizal that a pregnant women should perform tow additional sets of kaparot. The GRA (Biur HaGRA, OC 605:1) explains that the dispute between he Rema and Arizal is based on a Talmudic dispute regarding the status of a fetus. The gemara in numerous places (i.e. Yevamot 78a) queries whether a fetus is considered a limb of a mother (obar yereh imo) or wheter it is considered its own entity (obar lav yerech imo). The GRA explains that Rema follows the opinion that the fetus is considered a limb of the mother. Ergo an additional set of kaparot, is only necessary if the fetus is a male. The Arizal follows the opinion that a fetus is considered its own entity and ergo one would perform two additional sets of kaparot (one male and one female) in order to account for either gender of the fetus.

(17) There should be a separate entry on the development of the minhag of a pre-wedding fast. Daniel Feldman in Tradition (35:1, 2001) has written and excellent article on this minhag.
There might have been an update on the medicinal properties of the Etrog, as confirmed by modern science found at many sites such as: http://ww.bionity.com/en/encycloepdia/citron.html or theworldwidegourmet.com/.../lemon-

There should be separate entries or a more in depth essay on animals in folklore in general as many excellent rabbinic studies exist on dimensions of this topic such as: (1) Alfred S. Cohen’s “Animal Experimentation” (the Journal of Halacha and Contemporary Society) (2) Sidney B. Hoenig’s The Sport of Hunting: A Humane game?” (Traditon), (3) Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach’s famous comments about giving brachot upon seeing animals at the Biblical zoo and Aquarium based on for instance OC: 225:8 and Aleihu Lo Yibol OC 168). Rav Auerbach and other poskim of course differentiate the zoo from the condemned Roman “circus” because according to Rashi the problem with the arena or circus is that a form of entertainment is made out of aspects of brutality to animals, (4) voluminous commentary on Rebecca’s act of ‘watering the camels of Eliezer’ which is seen as a a good midah of rahamim (Bereshit 24:14) which has recently been treated in an article by Andrew Schein (Tradition 31:4, 1997).

Exploration might be made on how non-Jewish idolatrous ideas about animals might have influenced Jewish folk beliefs surrounding animals. In the ancient world divination was associated in some way with the animals of rats, birds and fish. (a) rats: Isaiah 66:17 may allude to myomancy, a method of theriomantic divination by rats and mice whose cries of distress was seen as a prognostication for oncoming evil etc. (b) birds: the augur was a “priest” and official in the classical period in ancient Rome and Greece whose role was to interpret the future by studying the flights and behavior of birds- whether they are flying in groups or alone, what noises they make as they fly, the direction of flight and what kind of birds they are, and the appearance of their livers after caught and sacrificed? This was known as “taking the auspices”. The ceremony and function of the augur was central to any major undertaking in Roman and Greek society often including matters of war, commerce, and religion. The flight patterns of birds and augury is a major theme in well known classics from Homer’s Iliad and Odyssey to the Roman Cicero’s tractate “de divinatia” (on divination). (c) Fish: Paul the Octopus hatched Jan. 2008 was a common octopus from Weymouth England, who lived in a tank at a commercial attraction, the Sea Life Centre in Oberhausen Germany. Paul became famous after his feeding behavior which allegedly was used to predict the winner of each of Germany’s seven matches in the 2010 world Cup as well as the outcome of the “final ” match.

In general the entries on superstitions could be more extensive and in depth. An article by Yitchok Gutterman titled, “Segulot, Supersitions, and Darchei Emori” (Journal of halakchah and contemporary society). Gutterman shows how idolatrous superstitious that appear apparently innocuous have crept into Jewish homes such as: not walking over a small child, not walking under a ladder, the practice of blowing out candles, on a birthday cake and making a wish, etc. All of these practices although perhaps rooted in some logical justification had their origin most likely in
superstitions which in general the Torah forbids. For example my mother (zl) told over that her grandmother Keila Leiba Gluskin Helfgot (zl) indicated that from eastern Europe it was a general superstition not to put a “hat on a bed”. My mother justified this practice by reasoning that “in Eastern Europe the people often had lice and thus the lice could be transferred from bed to hat or hat to bed, but this may not have been the reason given by the grandmother who may have associated mystical theurgic magical significance to the situation.”

(21) There might have been a more extensive entry on Safed, the center of mystical activity in the 15th and 16th centuries. For example what is the coincidence that many superstitious practices are recounted there according to Rabbi Chaim Vital, the talmid mevuhak of HaAri HaKodesh regarding, in Sefer HaHezyanot records the prevalence of palmology (palm reading), placing oil drops on water and prognosticating from their formations, etc. at the time of luminaries such as Rabbi Moshe Cordevero, Rabbi Moshe Alschek, HaAri HaKodesh, Rabbi Yosef Karo etc.

(22) The entry on dreams, is not extensive enough. Significant more space should have been devoted to the autobiographical work of Rabbi Yosef Karo titled haMaggid Mesharim. In this work the Mehaver recorded his dream life where a malakh gave over sitrei torah in the form of the shekhina as an embodiment of the Mishnah.

(23) The Talmudic practice of curing blood disorders by placing a pigeon on the belly button to draw heat should be a separate entry

(24) the entry on exorcism should be more extensive taking up the occurrence to precedent day Mikubalim in Boro Park and Meah Sharim who perform exercises for those possessed by a dybuk. This should also be analyzed more fully from the point of view of Ansky’s drama and the film interpretation.

(25) The Talmudic practice of casting of an ayn ha-rah by melting lead, sacrificing a chicken, and then interpreting the congealed lead formations upon cooling should be taken up to the present day as this practice is performed by numerous Mikubalim from Statan Island to Jerusalem.

(26) The entry on Minhag should be expanded to include the immense body of beliefs found in Rav Avraham’s multivolume set on the subject and anthologized recently by Rabbi Chill in The Minaghim and other popular texts such as _Rite and Reason: 1050 Jewish customs and their sources_ from Otzar tamai Haminhagim. Recently Joseph Kalir has written a good essay that explores the difference in Jewish religious practices between custom/minhag and halakhic legislation. The authority wielded by mere custom poses special problems for a religious system that derives its sanction and validity from revelation. Kalir explores the fundamental issues involving the nature of the minhagim. Interesting controversies arise over minhag such as the divergence in practice between on the one hand “the manner in which finger and toe nails are
to be cut and groomed? And what is to be done with the nails after they are cut”? Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi for instance in Shulchan Arukh ha-Rav brings down the custom of cutting nails (all agree never on Shabbos) every other finger, because the rites of tahara administered to a meit, involve cutting the nails in sequential order. The Baal Hatanya in his halakhic work, shulchan Arukh ha-rav advises that the nails be burnt after they are cut. The Hasidic minhag of the upsheerin, and the significance of hair in general al pi Kabbalah (see Joel Hecker, “Down to Where It Stops by Itself: The Paradigm of Embodiment, Hair, and Identity in the Writings of R. Yosef of Hamadan” presented at the 33rd annual AJS Conference) is an interesting area of folklore and superstition and warrents more space and attention.

Books on minhagim in general are many in the area of academic Jewish scholarship and take on mostly a religious focus rather than a folk grass roots scope of folklore in general. Many learned rabbis have sought to classify the minhagim that are particulary relevant for synagogue life and the religious life a Jew. For instance this is revealed in the table of contents of two well known books on religious minhag: (1) Otzar Ta’amei ha-Minhagim and (2) Chills’ book, The Minhagim. The editors of the encyclopedia of Jewish folklore have chosen to organize entries alphabetically A-Z, which rightly includes entries outside the ken of the religious rabbincally guided life of a Jew. Books on minhagim often organize their scope around a conceptual religious matrix. For example the Otzar Ta’amei ha-Minhagim uses the following ten chapter rubrics to define its scope and organize its materials:

I. Prayer
   a. Preparation and Conduct
   b. Tzitzis
   c. Tefillin
   d. Reading the Shema
   e. Shacharis
   f. Birkat Kohanim
   g. Tachanun
   h. Minchah and ma’ariv
II. Divine Dwellings
    a. Mezuzah
    b. The shul
    c. Kriat Torah
    d. Haftarah
    e. Torah study
III. Blessings
     a. Birkas ha-Mazon
     b. Sefiras ha-Omer
     c. Birkas ha-Gomel
Chill’s abridged anthology on the Minhagim is organized with the following scope:

I. Synagogue
   a. Mishkan

IV. Shabbos
   a. Preparing for Shabbos
   b. Shabbos Evening prayer
   c. Schaharit
   d. Minchah
   e. Shelosh Seudoth
   f. Motza’ei shabbos
   g. Shabbos ha-Gadol
   h. Special Sabbaths

V. Hagim

VI. Yamim Noraim
   a. Elul and yemai ha-teshvah
   b. Rosh Hashanah
   c. Yom Kippur
   d. Between YK and Sukkot

VII. Fasts and Days of Mourning
   a. Before Tishah b’Av
   b. Tishah b’Av
   c. Public fast days
   d. Other fasts

VIII. Time to Rejoice
   a. Bris Milah
   b. Naming a child
   c. Pidyon ha-Ben
   d. Bar Mitzvah
   e. Chasan and Kallah

IX. Time to Mourn
   a. Burial
   b. Shivah
   c. Sheloshim
   d. Year (11 months) of mourning
   e. Yahrtzeit

X. Miscellany: Aphorisms and Addenda and Minhagim
b. Beth HaMikdash

c. Great Synagogue

d. Mishmarot and Ma’amadot

e. Bet Kenesset, Shule, Bet ha-Midrash

II. Tallit and Tzitzit

a. Tallit gado and tallit katan

b. Attaching the tzitzit to the talit

c. Which garment needs tzizit

d. Borrowed Tallit

e. Threading tzitzit into tallit

f. Tzizit as remembrance via knots of TARYAG ha-mitzvot

g. Blue threat

h. The attarrah

i. How to wear Tallit

j. Wearing tallit after getting married according to Ashkenaz

III. Tefillin

a. Tefillah shel Yad

b. Tefillah shel Rosh

c. Making tefillin

d. Two types of Shins amongst Ashkenaz vs. Sephardim, LiShekar ayn raglayim!

e. Parchment in the bayit

f. Retzuot

g. Rabbeinu Tam tefilllin

h. Which is more important: tefillin, tallit, mezuzah

i. Blessing over tefillin

j. Winding strap 7 times around arm, 3 times around middle finger

k. Removing tefillin

l. Correct time to wear tefillin and times not to be worn

IV. Keriat Shema

a. Why cover eyes when recite shema

b. Why does shema contain 248 words

c. Reciting shema in tongues other than Hebrew

d. Why benediction is not recited before reading of shema

V. Shemoneh Esreh

a. Ramban vs. Ramban controversy

b. Prohibition of eating and drinking before morning prayer

c. Why composed

d. Standing upright facing Jerusalem

e. The sequence

f. Why recited silently
g. Bending of knees
h. Taking 3 steps backward in presence of royalty
i. 3 daily prayers corresponding to 3 daily Korbanot and 3 patriarchs
j. Elokai Netzor
VI. Birkhat Kohanim
   a. Why remove shoes before ascend dukhan
   b. Disfigured kohanim disqualified
   c. Birkat Kohanim daily in Israel
   d. Raising of hands
   e. Dictating words of the Kohanim, what if reader is a kohen?
   f. What if congregation of all kohanim
   g. Prohibition to look at kohanim giving blessing
   h. Thanking the kohanim
VII. Tahanun
   a. Prostrate position (nefilat appayim)
   b. Head resting on arm: right or left/
   c. Not recited in Maarive
   d. Occasions when not recited
VIII. Kriat Torah
   a. Ezra ordinances
   b. Number of men called up
   c. Torah reading on Shabbos minchah
   d. Haftorah reading
   e. Armaic translation by miturkiman
   f. Rules concerning sefer torah, washing hands
   g. Order of being called up to torah, what if no kohen or levi present
   h. Relatives not be called up in succession
   i. 3 men at bima next to torah during keriat ha-torah
   j. Holding stave of torah scroll
   k. Blessing before and after each aliyah
   l. Hagbahah and Gelihah, differences between Ashkenazie and Sephardic
IX. Ein K-Elohenu
   a. Concluding morning service, why with reciting pit tum ha-ketoret proceeded by Ein K-Elohem, reason; why in Ashkenazi synagogues Ein K-Elohenu and Pittum ha-ketoret said only on Shabatot and Hagim
X. Meals
   a. Netilat Yadayim
   b. Ha-motzi
   c. Salt, bimalakh timalekh
   d. Mayim aharonim
e. Birkhat ha-Mazon, why tap table for instance?
f. Kos
g. Zimmer
h. Removing knives from the table
i. Reason leave bread or crumbs on table
j. Women and Birkat Ha-mazon
XI. Mezuzah
a. Production
b. Kabbalistic inscriptions on outside
c. Procedure of affixing
d. Ten conditions making its affixing obligatory
e. Examination of the mezuzah
XII. Shabbat
a. Forbidden categories of work
b. Sabbath siren
c. Hadlikat ha-nerot
d. Blessing children
e. Shir Hashirim
f. Kabbalat Shabbat
g. Lekhah dodi
h. Maariv, amidah of 7 benedictions instead of 19
i. Kiddush, minhag to hold cup in palm or stemmed cos?
j. Kiddush in synagogue
k. Shalom Alekhem
l. Lehem mishneh (2 loaves)
m. Why Shabbat loaf called hallah
n. Hallot between 2 clothes
o. 12 loaves of the Kabbalists
p. Eating fish, dag biyom dag
q. Shalosh Seudot
r. Havdalah, flame of a torch, besamim, departing of the neshamah eterah, mystical aspects
s. Glancing at fingernails by light of havadalah torch
t. Songs honoring eliyahu ha-navi
u. Malaveh malkah- King david’s meal
XIII. Rosh Hodesh
a. Lunar calendar
b. New moon testimony
c. Fixing the calendar
d. Announcing new moon
e. Erev Rosh Hodesh as YK katan
f. Rosh hodesh as women’s holiday

g. Half hallah

h. Extra month in leap year

i. Reappearance of moon as sign of attonement

j. Kiddush levanah symbolism

XIV. Pesah

a. Shemurah matzot vs. matzah Ashirah

b. Nissan as chief of months

c. Shabbat ha-Gadol

d. Bedikat hametz

e. 10 pieces of bread around house, candle-feather-wooden spoon

f. Burn hametz

g. Sell hametz

h. Mitzvah to eat matzah

i. Fast of first born

j. Siyum bekhorim

k. Seder, role of children

l. 4 cups

m. Reclining

n. 3 matzot

o. Wearing kittel

p. Seder plate symbolism

q. Why al ha-nissim not recited

r. Why Hasidim recite hallel in shul

s. Hag ha-matzot vs. hag ha peasah

t. Kiddush karpas Yahatz

u. Stealing afikoman

v. Maggid lift matzah

w. 4 questions

x. Spilling drops of wine when mention 10 plagues

y. Eating maror dipped n haroset

z. Korekh- Hillel sandwich f matzah and maror

aa. Eat eggs dipped in salt water

bb. Eating of afikoman

c. Opening of the door, cos eliyahu

dd. Completing Hallel

ee. Had gadya and other songs

XV. Shavuot

a. Anniversary of matan torah

b. Hag ha-Katzir vs. Hag ha-shavu’ot vs. hag ha-Bikkurim and Atzeret
c. Days of Sephira as period of mourning
d. Leg ba-Omer
e. Sifrat ha-omer
f. No sheheyanu is recited at commencement of sifrat ha-omer
g. Decorating homes and synagogues with foliage
h. Tikkun leilay shavuot
i. Akdamut
j. Megilat Ruth
k. Dairy foods
l. Throwing apples

XVI. Tisha' be'av
a. Four fast days
b. Ben ha-metzarim
c. Shabbat Hazon
d. Abstension from eating meat
e. Eat meat after siyum
f. Seudah ha-mafseket
g. Eikah
h. Kinot
i. Shacharit without tallit and tefillin
j. Nefilat Appayim omitted
k. Visiting the cemetery

XVII. Rosh Ha-Shanah
a. Shofar blasts
b. Selihot
c. Tishri
d. Why 2 days
e. Problem of sheheyanu
f. Special synagogue melodies
g. Halot in form of ladder or bird
h. Honey, apple, and good food omens
i. Why hallel not recited
j. Why shofar made of ram’s horn
k. Thirty plus seventy blasts
l. 10 reasons of Saadya Gaon
m. Circumcision before RH before blow shofar
n. Why shofar not blown on Shabbat, afraid someone care it
o. Shofar as symbol of akedah
p. Blow before and after amidah
q. Why teki’at shofar is delayed till Musaf
r. Malkhuyot, Zikhronot, Shoferot
s. Custom not to sleep on day of RH
t. Taslikh

XVIII. Yom Kippur
a. Ten days of penitence
b. Shabbat shuvah
c. Kapparot
d. Vidduy at mincha
e. Netirat nedarim
f. Seudah ham-Mafseket
g. Wing shaped bread
h. Holiday candles vs. memorial candles
i. Why white garments
j. 5 deprivations in mishnah yoma
k. Kol Nidre
l. Remove sifrei torah from aron hakodesh
m. Why “Blessed be the name of His Glorious majesty” recited
n. Schaharit
o. Why torah reading recounts death of nadav and avihu
p. Haftorah
q. Yizkor
r. Musaf
s. Prostrating 3x
t. Hay on synagogue floor
u. Torah reading of sex laws
v. Maftir yonah
w. Ne’ilah
x. Symbolism of gates
y. Ten confessions/3 verses of Epilogue
z. Ending YK with shofar blasts

XIX. Sukkot
a. Feast of tabernacles vs. feast of Ingathering of the fruits
b. Booths and heavenly clouds
c. Material of sukkah construction
d. Ushpizin
e. 4 species
f. Etrog, why not tied
g. Why benediction refer to lulav only
h. Simhat bet ha-sha’evah and nisukh ha-mayim
i. Hosha’na rabbah
j. Circling the bimah 7x
k. Flail the aravot
l. Shemin Atzeret
m. Simchat Torah
n. Haka"fot
o. Aliyah for every man
p. Kol ha-ne’arim
q. Circling with last pesukim of devarim and 1st pesukim of bereishit
r. Hatan Torah and Hatan Bereishit

XX. Hanukkah
a. Cruse of oil miracle
b. 8 days
c. Dreidel and hanukkah gelt
d. Pirsumei misa

e. Why the shammash
f. Procedure, time, and place of lighting menorah
g. Dispute of Hillel and Shamai of order of lighting candles
h. Candles or olive oil
i. Wine for Kiddush
j. Sabbath candles vs. havdalah candles
k. Full Hallel recited all 8 days
l. Custom of eating dairy and fried foods

XXI. Tu bi-shevat
a. 4 Rosh Hashanahs in mishnah RH
b. Year of trees
c. Significance in laws of tithing
d. Eat fruits grow in land of Israel
e. Kabbalistic significance
f. Planting trees in Israel

XXII. Purim
a. Ta’anis Esther
b. Megillah reading evening and morning
c. Pruim, Shushan Pruim, Purim in leap year, Megillah, Sefer, Igeret
d. Gragers
e. 3 benedictions before read megilah
f. Why hallel not recited
g. Megilah and tefillin
h. Mishloach manot
i. Mahatzt ha-shekel
j. Why purim celebrated in days of messiah and megillah will outlast all the prophets
XXIII. Marriage
a. Piru ve-revu
b. Erusin and kiddushin and Nissuin and huppah and yihud
c. Adam and Havah
d. Aufruf
e. Showering with nuts, almonds, raisons
f. Why fast on wedding day
g. Veiling the bride, bedekin
h. Why a minyan required at wedding
i. Why minyan required at wedding
j. Escorted to huppah with candles
k. Why groom enters huppah first
l. Why bride circles the groom
m. The tenaim
n. Birkhat Erusin
o. Act of betrothal harei at mikideshet li
p. Witnesses
q. Betrothal by a ring
r. Reading the ketubah
s. 7 benedictions of marriage- Birkat Nissuin
t. Break glass
u. Wear kittel under chupah
v. Henna for yeminite brides
w. Sheva berakhot
x. Bride presents groom with talit
y. Why benediction not recited over consummating marriage

XXIV. Birth
a. Berit milah and berito shel Avraham Avinu
b. Hatafat dam berit
c. Child born at twilight and counting 8 days
d. When circumcision endangers life
e. In Kabbalah
f. Shalom Zachar
g. Leaving scalpel under baby’s pillow
h. Wachnacht
i. Why minyan at berit milah
j. Kvater why say Barukh ah-ba
k. Why father wears tallit and tefillin at berit millah
l. Why mohel’s scalpel double edged
m. Sandek
n. Chair of Elijah
o. Periah, metzitzah
p. Sheheheyanu
q. Just as he entered the covenant of Abraham
r. Why removed foreskin placed in earth
s. Mohel’s prayer
t. In thy blood shall you live
u. Why mohel wets baby’s lips with wine
v. Baby receives name after the berit milah
w. Birth of a daughter, naming
x. Pidyon ha-ben, 4 key elements, which bekhorim are exempt from being redeemed, redeeming orphan bekhor, father-kohen dialogue, birkat kohanim, 2 answers to 1 question, adorning child with precious objects
XXV. Bar Mitzvah
a. Barukh she petarani
b. Receiving tefillin
XXVI. Death and mourning
a. Why no cremation or burial in vault
b. Lo’eg larash, sanctity of soul
c. Wash hands when leave cemetery
d. Closing the eyes
e. Candles lit besides body
f. Pur out water in front of house of deceased
g. Hevrah Kadisha
h. White linen shrouds and pine box
i. Wrap body in tallit
j. Ritual of keriah
k. Speedy burial
l. No jewelry
m. Stop 7 times when carrying the body to grave
n. Head towards west and feet toward east
o. Hands on casket
p. Shurah
q. Tearing up grass and throwing it over shoulder when leave cemetery
r. Why don’t dry hands when wash them
s. What happens when parent of bridegroom dies the day of the wedding
t. Seudat Havra’ah
u. Eggs symbol of mourning
v. Aninut, shiv’ah, sheloshim, 12 months
w. Cover mirrors
x. Kaddish for 11 months only
y. Why kaddish in Aramaic
z. Erecting a monument
aa. Yahrzeit in kabbalah
bb. Hillula Yizkor
cc. resurrection

A more recent book on Sabbath minhagim of Kabbalistic origin: Their history and practice (Academic Studies Press, 2013) is by Morris M. Faierstein. Faierstein’s table of contents reveal a subset of mystical interest in specific religious categories as sighted above in the previous two older books on religious minhagim around the context of the synagogue and the life of the Jew in it. Faierstein’s table of contents lists specific terms that are surrounded by many Kabbalistic beliefs and significance:

I. Talit and Tefillin
   Zizit and Talit
   Tying the Zizit
   The Talit
   The Talit and tefilin
   Kabbalistic innovation
   Customs related to donning the tefillin and tallit

II. Prayers and Blessings
   a. Berikh Shemie: A Tehinnah Recited when Taking out the Torah
   b. Birkhat ha-mazon
   c. Birkhat Kohanim
   d. Le-Shem Yihud
   e. Modeh Ani
   f. Psalms during the Yamim Noraim
   g. Reading the chapter of Nesi’im during the first 12 days of Nisan

III. Sabbath customs
   a. Eve of the Sabbath
      i. Preparations for the Sabbath
      ii. Additional prayers on the eve of the Sabbath
      iii. Hadlikat neirot
      iv. Kabbalat Shabbat
      v. Meal preparations
      vi. Kiddush
      vii. Friday night meal
      viii. End of the meal
IV. Sabbath day
   a. Morning light
   b. Minchah
   c. Seudah Shlishit
   d. Havdalah

V. Sukkot
   a. Lulav and etrog
   b. Ushpizin
   c. Hoshana Rabbah
   d. Hakafot on Simhat torah mimicking 7 plants orbits

VI. Minor Observances
   a. Tu B’shevat
   b. Sifrat Ha-Omer
   c. Lag ba-Omer

VII. Tikkunim
   a. Tikkun Leyl Shavuot
   b. Tikkun Hazot
   c. Tikkun for the night of the 7th day of Pesah
   d. Tikkun for Erev Rosh Hodesh
   e. Tikkun Leyl Hoshanah Rabbah

As we can see the Encyclopedia does make a unique contribution to the area of minhag by focusing not exclusively on religious aspects. This was the typical trend of scholarship in the past when addressing minhagim associated with the synagogue and the life cycle of the observant Jew.

Transliteration Issues

As is well known dialects of Yiddish employ various ways of transliteration. Paul Meyer for LC sought to standardize Romanization indicating for instance if Chanakah is spelled with a CH or an H i.e. Hanukkah, or in regards to name authority control if reference is made to Rabbi Moshe ben Maimon, Maimonides, or the Acronym Rambam. No one set of transliteration rules is accepted by all, which is why different contributors frequently employed variant spellings for the same term. In order to avoid blatant inconsistencies, we have used the standard YIVO system for Yiddish. The transliteration of Hebrew reflects a broad approach to transcription rather than a system developed for text-based or linguistic studies. The aim was to reflect the pronunciation of modern Hebrew as well as the use of conventions that are generally familiar to the English-speaking audience. Distinctions that are not relevant to pronunciation are not indicated, like, for example distinctions between tet and taf, alef and ayin. We retained the distinction between het and khaf by using h for het and kh for khaf.

As researchers of the Holocaust know it is important to know multiple spelling for place names often to locate the correct name of the town, shtetl, or city that they hope to identify their ancestors living in.
Place names are very problematic. Jews often used different names for towns and regions than did their non-Jewish neighbors. What is more, many places switched hands between countries, leading to a change in their name. We made an effort to overcome this problem by noting alternate names in parentheses wherever possible.

Folk literature has been helped with international classification indexes that are standard and used by everyone in the field. The most important, referred to in many entries, is that of Aarne and Thompson (AT), plus a number, which appears in the type index. The type index referred to is Antti Aarne and Stith Thompson, The Types of the Folktale: A Classification and Bibliography (1961), published in Helsinki by Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia. This index is itself an expansion by Stith Thompson of the original classification published by Antti Aarne in 1910. A new and enlarged edition was prepared by Hans-Jörg Uther and published in 2004.

As stated, this is the international type index. The classification of Jewish folktales according to this system is evidence of what they have in common with the folk narratives of other peoples.

Nevertheless, not all Jewish folk narratives can be included in the international classification. Many entries refer to a “Jewish oicotype,” meaning a story type that is unique to Jewish folk narratives as, for example, stories about deliverance from blood libels such as Shlomo Munks advocacy during the Damascus Affair. The Jewish oicotypes have been defined by the Israel Folklore Archives (IFA) and numbered to be compatible with the international index. They are also listed in Types of Oral Tales in Israel by Dr. Heda Jason, published in Jerusalem by the Israel Ethnographic Society, [1965]–1975.

The Israel Folklore Archives (IFA), named in honor of Dov Noy. the IFA has its own entry in the Encyclopedia.

The Israel Folklore Archives is located at the University of Haifa. Founded in the 1950s by Professor Dov Noy, its holdings include some 24,000 stories that have been transcribed, recorded, or filmed, as told by narrators in Israel who are members of various ethnic communities. This is the largest archive of Jewish folk narratives in the world. The stories are numbered and classified in various ways, the most important being the storyteller's country of origin. The IFA is the main institution in the world today for classifying and preserving Jewish Folklore and the Encyclopedia has drawn heavily on its treasures.

**Appendices**

The Appendices in general are very helpful to students. They include: Sources, Definitions, and Abbreviations of (1) The Hebrew Bible, 579-581, (2) Rabbinic Literature 581-583, (3) Medieval Compilations 583, and (4) list of Anthologies of Jewish Folklore. A brief paragraph summary is given of each entry. For example all 24 books of the Tanakh are listed with a paragraph précis regarding their contents.

The genres of Rabbinic texts are given with a brief explanation for entries such as: (1) Mishnah, (2) Tosefta (the electronic version DBL consulted actually misspelled Tosefta as Tosefa without the “t.”), (3)
Tannaitic works: (a) Mekhilta de’Rabbi Yishmael, Mekhilta de’Rabbi Shimeon Bar Yoḥa’ai; (b) Sifra (also known as Torat Cohanim), (c) Sifrei on Numbers, (d) Sifrei on Deuteronomy. It might have been helpful to note that items 3a-d are halakhic midrashim versus the more common genre of Aggadic Midrashim.

Amoraic works: Palestinian works: (a) Genesis Rabbah, (b) Leviticus Rabbah, (c) Lamentations Rabbah, (d) Pesiqta de’Rav Kahana (Cahana), (e) Esther Rabbah, (f) Ruth Rabbah, (g) Song of Songs Rabbah; (5) Amoraic Babylonian works: (a) Babylonian Talmud (Talmud Bavli), (b) Late and Post-Amoraic Works (a) Tanhu’ma (known also as Yelamdenu), (b) Ecclesiastes Rabbah, (c) Pirqe de’Rabbi Eliezer, (d) Deuteronomy Rabbah, (e) Pesiqta Rabbati, (f) Exodus Rabbah, (g) Midrash on Proverbs, (h) Numbers Rabbah

The section on Rabbinic genres and their chronological dating would have been enhanced by a schematic chart representing them on a bar graph. Such charts are readily available in for instance Israeli public school textbooks. A picture or chart often can say a million words, and thus a nice chart representing the periodization of Jewish history from 1st Temple, 2nd Temple, Great Synagogue, Zugot period, Tannaitic, Amoraic, Geonic, Savoraim, Rishonim, Aḥronim, Holocaust, Post-Holocaust or post-modern, as provided in David B Levy’s slide presentation at the AJL Houston conference would be most welcome.

The medieval compilations section is excellent. It more explicitly moves into texts that are folkloric in nature rather than the previous Biblical and Rabbinic texts that contain folkloric sections and elements. The order of the Medieval compilations is as following:

(7) medieval compilations: (a) Midrash of the Ten Commandments (Midrash Aseret ha’Dibberot); (b) Alphabet of Ben-Sira (Alfa Beta de’Ben Sira), (c) The Book of Josippon (Sefer Yosiffon), (d) A Beautiful Composition of Salvation (Sefer Ma’asiyot ha’Ḥakhamim vehu H’ibbur Yafeh mela’yeshu’ah), (e) The Book of Genealogy (Sefer Yoḥasim), known as The Chronicle of Ahim’aspat (Megilat Ahim’aspat), (f) The Exempla of the Rabbis (Sefer Ma’asiyot), (g) Book of the Pious (Sefer Ḥasidim); (h) The Book of Tradition (Sefer ha’Kabbalah); (h) The Book of Delight (Sefer Sha’ashuim); (i) Fox Fables (Mishle Shu’alim), (j) The King’s Son and the Ascetic (Ben Ham’elekh Ve’ha’nazir), (k) The Book of Deeds (Sefer ha’Ma’asim); (l) The Fable of the Ancient (Mashal ha’Qadmoni); (m) Kalilah wa’Dinnah (Kalila ve’Dimna, also: The Fables of Bidpai);

The Anthologies section is the strongest in the bibliographic appendices for enumeration. It is organized as follows: (8) Early Anthologies. Tenth Century to 1814; (9) Late Anthologies. Middle of the Nineteenth Century to the Present (a) National Anthologies, (b) Hasidic Folktale Anthologies, (c) The Israel Folktale Archives Anthologies: (1) general, (2) Annual Harvest of Tales, (3) local anthologies, (4) ethnic Anthologies, (5) Narrators’ Anthologies, (6) Thematic Anthologies, (7) Translated or Retold Folktales, (8) Sephardic Folktale Anthologies, (9) Ashkenazic Folktale Anthologies, (10) Anthologies of Tales from Countries of Islam, (11)

While the Folksong Anthologies section is very good there undoubtedly will be some collections that will fall through the net that is cast. For example Dr. Rabbi Chaim Dalfin has collected and recorded thousands of Hasidic nignim. None of these are represented in the anthologies that are listed and I
imagine there are other “non-official” insiders personal collections, surely a labor of love, that fall outside the net that is cast by the published materials included in the Encyclopedias bibliographic list. The bibliographies on folksong anthologies are organized into (9) Folksong Anthologies, (a) Sephardic Folksong Anthologies, (b) Ashkenazic Folk Song Anthologies, (c) Anthologies of Songs from Countries of Islam.

The Humor bibliographic lists might be expanded to include more works. Granted humor often is not recorded and goes the way of oral transmission and is hard to take a pulse of. Yet the varieties of humor are so diverse (from sophisticated Jewish Wre humor to Yiddish hokmah) that more works should have been included as well as interviews with Jewish comedians or non-Jewish comedians who tap into Jewish humor. Humor Anthologies. One also might have wished to include Jewish humor as represented in cartoons.

The (13) Anthologies for Holidays and Festivals are perhaps the most commonly known types of folkloric stories. This area is vast with materials. The Bibliography provided is selective but has represented some of the best anthologies.

The last bibliographic appendice includes: (14) Miscellaneous and Ethnic Anthologies. This is an extremely important section in that it subdivides Anthologies by different Jewish ethnic groups. Rather than submit to the myth of Nazi propaganda that the Jews are one type of “racial breed” this section documents that Jewish ethnic groups include as diverse populations as Chinese Jews, Indian Jews, Ethiopian Jews, and other “exotic” location Jews. As the joke goes, “they found life on Mars. They found a Chabad house there.” Yet in all seriousness the different Jewish ethnic groups developed along a non-monolithic type of culture(s) as for example the Jews of China took on the syncranism of burning incense in the nitches of their synagogues adopting similar practices of their Confucian neighbors.

In summary these bibliographic lists in the appendices are most welcome. They show that the field is much more immense than perhaps represented on a small synagogue library shelf of Jewish Folklore which might include well known classic works in the field such as: (1) Dan Ben-Amos’, Folktales of the Jews, vol. 1 Tales form the Sephardic Dispersion, vol. 2 Tales from Eastern Europe, (2) Trachtenberg, Joshua, Jewish Magic and Superstition, Behrman’s Publishers, 1939, (3) Yassif, Eli, The Hebrew Folktale, Indiana University Press, 1999, (4) Ausubel, Nathan, A Treasury of Jewish Folklore, Crown Publishers, 1948, (5) Schwartz, Howard, Elijah’s Violin, JPS, 1983, (6) H.M. Hahmad, A Portion in Paradise, Norton & Co., 1970, (7) Koen-Sarano, Matilda, King Solomon and the Golden Fish, Wayne State Press, 2004, (8) Gaster, Theodor, Customs and Folkways of Jewish Life, Sloane Publishers, (original title: The Holy and the Profane), 1955), (9) Zimmels excellent study on differences in minhag between Sephardim and Ashkenazim, (10) etc. These 10 representative titles are just the first step in getting into Jewish Folklore a field that is vast and growing as we move into the 21st century.

Although the bibliographies are excellent some readers might liked to have seen a section devoted to “Women in folklore” and feminist and gender issue studies in Jewish folklore given a separate section. For example books like Aliza Lavie’s Minhag nashim: masa’ nashi shel minhagim, tekasim, tefilot ve-sipurim (Tel Aviv, Yedi’ot aharonot: Sifrei Hamed, 2012) represents an important trend in Jewish
womens’ studies, and particularly as it relates to the area of folklore and minhagim specifically related to women in general. Lavie gives a wonderful bibliography in her book on pages 33-345 that can be consulted for further interest in these areas.

With regard to the Encyclopedia of Jewish Folklore’s index, the only critique might be that it should have divided the larger set of entries into three types of subsets of indexes: (1) Name index, (2) Topic or subject index, and (3) place index. This break down might facilitate easier access to pages from terms listed in three separate indexes rather than including all names, subjects, and places in one larger index.

**Color Plates**

It should be recalled that a definite plus of the Encyclopedia Judaica (1972) over the Jewish Encyclopedia (1901-1904) was the technology had allowed for the inclusion of colored photographs in the later encyclopedia. This is not to say the the JE’s wonderful black and white etchings and drawings are not invaluable as they attest to a previous generation in Europe before the Holocaust. Nonetheless due to the technological feasibility of duplicating color plates the Encyclopedia of Jewish Folklore and Traditions also is wonderfully able to include the following color plates:

**Volume 1** (following page 142):

- Aaron as High Priest, from The North French Hebrew Miscellany (folio 113b), written and illustrated in northern France, ca. 1278.
- Balaam and the angel. Manuscript illustration from the Rutland Psalter, ca. 1260.
- Cain and Abel, from the Sarajevo Haggadah.
- Traditional image of Jerusalem embroidered with polychrome wool on punched paper. Jerusalem, ca. 1900.
- David with the head of Goliath. Detail from “Three Rabbis of Old / Dayyeinu” (Łódź, 1935). From the Szyk Haggadah.
- Memorial plaque. Poland, ca. 1867–1880.
- Illustration of the four questions to be asked at the Passover Seder. From the Szyk Haggadah.

**Volume 2** (following page 458):

- Ashrei, the first word in Psalms 1:1, Italy, fifteenth century.
- Painted papercut, by Moshe ben Aharon. Poland, ca. 1875.
- Embroidered Sabbath tablecloth showing the Western Wall. Jerusalem, 1928.
- New Year card with a Taslich scene. Likely Polish, 1910s.
- Adar poster. Paper cutout from Germany.
- Farewells of Abou Zayd and Al Harith before the return to Mecca. Illustration by Al-Wasiti, from
al-Hariri’s M qa yat (Assemblies or Entertaining Dialogues), Baghdad, ca. 1240.
“Moses Receives the Torah from Sinai.” Illustration to the first chapter of “Avot,” Italy.
Ornamental plate showing Samson tearing down the pillars of the Temple. Ceramics painted with gold rim, Hebrew inscription, from Bohemia.
King Solomon judges two harlots who claim the same child. From The North French Hebrew Miscellany (folio 518a), written and illustrated in northern France, ca. 1278.

These choices for color plates are carefully chosen to balance the cost effectiveness of the expense of displaying color plates (ideally there might have been more color plates if cost were not a factor) and determining which plates best enhance the Encyclopedia.

Editors and Contributors

As mentioned before Raphael Patai was the founding editor. Haya Bar-Itzhak, became the Chief Editor, and is from University of Haifa, [Israel].

One of the differences between the JE (Jewish Encyclopedia) and the EJ (Encyclopedia Judaica) as noted in my essay, “the making of the JE and EJ” is that the JE employed a truly international scope of scholars from all over Europe, America, and Israel etc. This is to be expected as the JE was published 1901-1904 before the Holocaust when the bastions of academic Wissenschaft Scholars were still located in Europe. By the time of the EJ (1972), after the founding of Israel in 1948, we noted a shift to the majority of scholars being from either the U.S. and Israel (majority from Israel). By the time of the 2012 Encyclopedia of Jewish Folklore and Traditions we note the majority of scholarly contributors is clearly, decisively, and overwhelmingly from Israel as representing the trend of academic scholarship becoming more established in Eretz Yisrael and the location of the Israel Folklore Archives located at the University of Haifa- founded in the 1950s by Professor Dov Noy, its holdings include some 24,000 stories. Another different and unique feature is that the Encyclopedia of Folklore includes some contributors listed as “Independent scholars” including David Clark and Monica Bratulescu. The advent of digitization is allowing scholars anywhere in the world with an internet connection to access archival primary source previously unpublished documents that allows for more original historical research to make a positive contribution as noted in the library guide at: http://libguides.tourolib.org/jewisharchives There the guide notes:

“Digitization is allowing greater access to archival documents that have not been published before for scholars, independent and affiliated, who may not be able to geographically travel to the location of the archival repository, or afford to reside nearby the archive for research or receive a grant to do so. This revolutionary technology of digitization is therefore leveling the playing field allowing for scholars out of the blue, many independent and unaffiliated with institutions or from far away geographical home locations, to publish seminal work using unpublished archival documents. Archival documents are primary resources and allow for more original scholarship than only relying on published materials.”

Especially in the area of folklore “field work” which is the characteristic of both anthropology and archeology is essential to the field and independent scholars can make even greater contributions than
those “lucky” academics who have acquired by a career path a “shtel” at a major University.
Nonetheless the editors and contributors hail from distinguished institutions and possess a career of erudite publications to their names. The names of the editorial board include

Tamar Alexander [Ben-Gurion University, Israel]
Dan Ben-Amos [University of Pennsylvania]
Simon Bronner [Penn State University]
Galit Hasan-Rokem [The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel]
Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett [New York University]
Dov Noy [The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel]
Elliot Oring [California State University, Los Angeles]
Daphne Patai [University of Massachusetts]
Aliza Shenhar [Yezreel Valley College, Israel]
Eli Yassif [Tel Aviv University, Israel]

Contributors include the elite scholars from America and Israel including:

Dror Abend-David [University of Florida]
Ilana Abramovitch [Borough of Manhattan Community College/CUNY
Golda Akhiezer [The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel]
Tamar Alexander [Ben-Gurion University, Israel]
Zohar Amar [Bar-Ilan University, Israel]
Nili Aryeh-Sapir [Tel Aviv University/Levinsky College of Education, Israel]
Yitzhak Avishur [University of Haifa, Israel]
Amir Banbaji [Ben-Gurion University, Israel]
Meir Bar-Ilan [Bar-Ilan University, Israel]
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These editors and contributors are certainly world-class scholars and have a most positive contribution to make to this Encyclopedia.

**Conclusion:**

The Encyclopedia of Jewish Folklore certainly makes a positive contribution to any reference collection. It represents a growing trend in interest in Jewish folklore that has occurred after the Wissenschaft des Judentum beweigung characterized by Heinrich Graetz scant treatment and allocation of space to the phenomena in his Geschichte Der Jueden. From an anthropological and cultural-sociological perspective interest in Jewish folklore and related topics may represent an academic trend in focusing as a grass roots effort on the counter-cultures and practices often not the focus of strictly halakhic examination on canonized rabbinic genres, amongst the rabbinic elite prone to Maimonidean rationalism. As well as placing the academic study of Jewish folklore in its historical context - this review has sought to evaluate from a library science perspective the “access points” of the encyclopedia, features of Jewish folklore incorporated into the Encyclopedia, scope and coverage, the Inception and conception of the making of an encyclopedia of Jewish folklore under the vision and direction of Raphael Patai and later Dov Noy, Intended Readership, the Limits of the encyclopedia suggesting a needed expansion of entries in on 26 topics, and transliteration issues. While this work is a much welcome reference work it is not the last step in research on Jewish folklore. However as a first step and spring-board for directing students to some of the basics and sources provided in the bibliography for further pursuit, it will prove helpful and a good introduction to various aspects of the discipline of Jewish folklore. Undoubtedly the more advanced scholar will be led to archival research of unpublished “texts” in all formats at the Israel Folklore Archives is located at the University of Haifa. Founded in the 1950s by Professor Dov Noy, its holdings include some 24,000 stories that have been transcribed, recorded, or filmed, as told by narrators in Israel who are members of various ethnic communities.