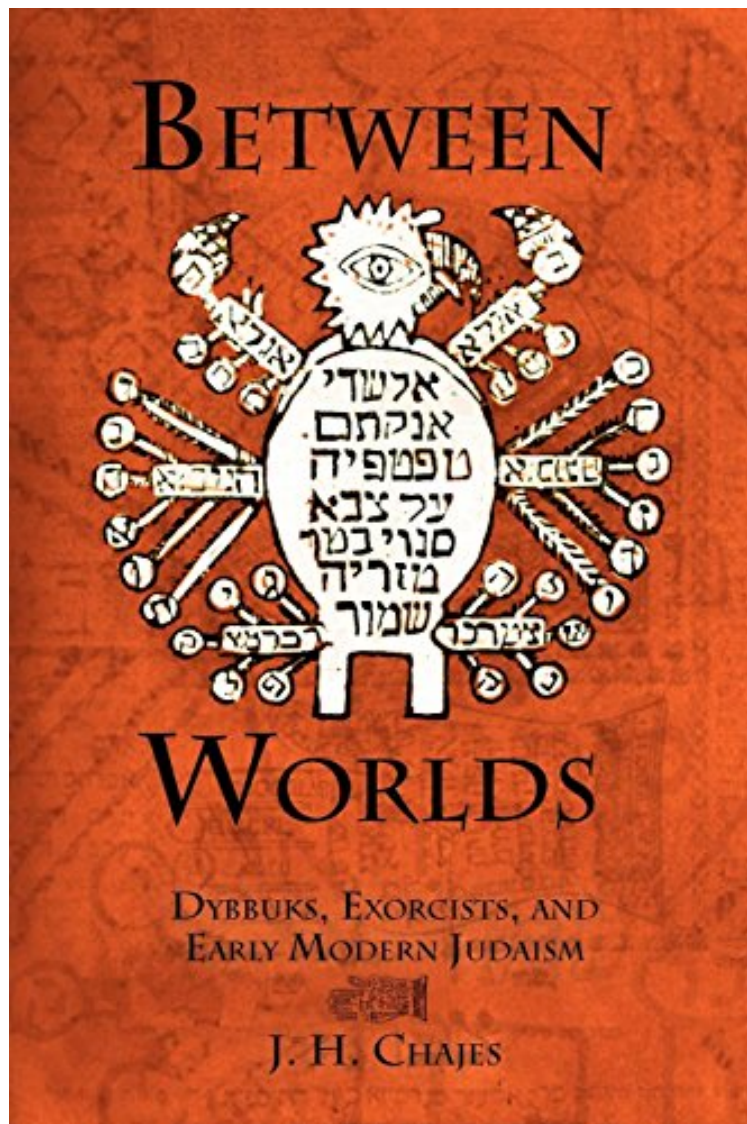


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## Between Worlds: Dybbuks, Exorcists, and Early Modern Judaism (Jewish Culture and Contexts)

J. H. Chajes

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#1228997 in Books J H Chajes 2011-08-31Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 9.02 x .65 x 5.98l, 1.00 #File Name: 0812221702288 pagesBetween Worlds Dybbuks Exorcists and Early Modern Judaism | File size: 77.Mb

**J. H. Chajes : Between Worlds: Dybbuks, Exorcists, and Early Modern Judaism (Jewish Culture and Contexts)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Between Worlds: Dybbuks, Exorcists, and Early Modern Judaism (Jewish Culture and Contexts):

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Warning: Scholarly work ahead. Keep a dictionary and the internet handy. Proceed with caution. By Warlock5555 *Between Worlds* is dense with knowledge on the history of exorcisms and demon possession especially as it pertains to Judaism and kabbalah. It is one of the only books I am aware of that attempts to put in historical perspective the phenomenon. The vast array of source texts he has consulted is impressive and it is admirable the way he compares differing theory of thought and draws parallels to the Christian phenomenon of demonic possession. There is much knowledge and insight here. That being said, Chajes does not write for the average reader. His sentence structure and word choice is convoluted with a heavy leaning to the academic that does not serve well disseminating this information. I encourage anyone who plans to tackle this book to do so with a dictionary in one hand and keep Google prepped and ready to search on concepts/people/ideas with which you may not be familiar. One reviewer here has admitted throwing in the towel because of the writing style of the author. There may be some major decoding that you have to do to get to the meat of this book, but the knowledge you will gain is worth it if you truly want the lowdown on the what and whys of dybbukim. Four stars for the vast information. Minus one for writing style. 10 of 10 people found the following review helpful. Jewish exorcisms revealed By Zahara Solomon An amazingly informative read, *Between Worlds* offers a rare glance into the writings of Early Modern Jews dealing with spirit possession, exorcism, and prevailing attitudes of the times, both Jewish and non-Jewish. It was fascinating to read about Luria and his contemporaries dealings with dybbuks, possessed women, and to have the comparison with Christian and Islamic practises and writings of the period. The possession accounts are captivating, and Chajes is excellent at breaking the information down to guide the reader through all the twists and turns that an exorcist would follow. I especially enjoyed the chapters on women and their use of possession to call for change, and heavily influence powerful men at times. While academic in style, it is none the less a great read for anyone remotely interested in Jewish spirit possession, exorcism, women's religiosity, and Medieval/Early Modern Kabbalistic attitudes of these issues. 9 of 9 people found the following review helpful. Scholarly and informative. By A concerned scholar of religion This is the most scholarly work on the subject of Jewish exorcisms in English. I recommend it to the student and religious practitioner alike. If nothing else, the appendix and bibliography are invaluable to anyone interested in the subject. I feel that not enough attention was paid to non-dybbuk forms of possession. Demonic possession, though not as prevalent in Talmudic Judaism, does appear throughout Jewish history. Also, more information on 'good' forms of spirit possession would have been helpful, specifically those forms which exhibit themselves in Chasidism. My only real negative criticism on the text itself is that the translations leave the average reader quite sated but only whet the appetite of a serious scholar. Chajes should consider providing the original Hebrew and Aramaic texts in an additional appendix.

After a nearly two-thousand-year interlude, and just as Christian Europe was in the throes of the great Witch Hunt and what historians have referred to as "The Age of the Demonic," accounts of spirit possession began to proliferate in the Jewish world. Concentrated at first in the Near East but spreading rapidly westward, spirit possession, both benevolent and malevolent, emerged as perhaps the most characteristic form of religiosity in early modern Jewish society. Adopting a comparative historical approach, J. H. Chajes uncovers this strain of Jewish belief to which scant attention has been paid. Informed by recent research in historical anthropology, *Between Worlds* provides fascinating descriptions of the cases of possession as well as analysis of the magical techniques deployed by rabbinic exorcists to expel the ghostly intruders. Seeking to understand the phenomenon of spirit possession in its full complexity, Chajes delves into its ideational framework chiefly the doctrine of reincarnation while exploring its relation to contemporary Christian and Islamic analogues. Regarding spirit possession as a form of religious expression open to and even dominated by women, Chajes initiates a major reassessment of women in the history of Jewish mysticism. In a concluding section he examines the reception history of the great Hebrew accounts of spirit possession, focusing on the deployment of these "ghost stories" in the battle against incipient skepticism in the turbulent Jewish community of seventeenth-century Amsterdam. Exploring a phenomenon that bridged learned and ignorant, rich and poor, men and women, Jews and Gentiles, *Between Worlds* maps for the first time a prominent feature of the early modern Jewish religious landscape, as quotidian as it was portentous: the nexus of the living and the dead.

"This is a major contribution, not only to early modern Jewish studies but to the subject of spirit possession broadly conceived in the Christian world." Edward Peters, University of Pennsylvania "Chajes's excellent new book . . . succeeds in demystifying the subject of Jewish spirit (i.e., "dybbuk") possession by placing it within a broader cross-cultural and historical context, a sophisticated methodological approach he calls a 'historical anthropology of spirit possession.' . . . His work is both a history and a phenomenology of Jewish spirit possession during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries." Choice "An exciting, persuasive, and well-written study and another key addition to a subject central to early modern religions." Jewish Quarterly About the Author J. H. Chajes teaches Jewish history at the University of Haifa.