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Malkin, Yaakov. *Epicurus & Apikorsim*. Jerusalem: The Library of Secular Judaism and Milan Press, 2007. 173 p. \$25.00 (ISBN 978-9-65911-511-2).

Epicurus, the founder of one of the four schools of Greek philosophy, taught that pleasure was the end of life. Malkin explores the potentially fascinating subject of Epicurus' influence upon the Jews. He also discusses the heretics known as apikorsim, which is a Hebrew word derived from the name Epicurus, though not all those so labeled were his followers. The book is something of a defense of secular Judaism. Unfortunately, it is quite repetitive and reads like a number of overlapping essays strung together. Some of the assertions in it are incorrect or misleading (e.g., that in his *Guide for the Perplexed*, Maimonides rejected animal sacrifice). Also, the strangeness of Epicurus is not conveyed. For example, one would never guess from this book that the philosopher said, "a man never gets any good from sexual passion, and he is fortunate if he does not receive harm." It is difficult to define the intended audience for this poorly conceived and executed book. While there is a bibliography, there are no footnotes, which makes it of limited use to scholars. Yet the subject seems rather abstruse for a general audience. If one wants an explication of secular Judaism, the author's earlier book, *Secular Judaism: Faith, Values, and Spirituality* is a better choice. Not recommended.

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