

Acknowledgments

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I was first introduced to the writings of Rabbi Simḥah Zissel Ziv in classes with Rabbi Ira Stone at the Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS) in New York. Ira introduced me to the study of the Musar movement and pointed me to the great value of the literature produced by that movement and especially by Simḥah Zissel. He encouraged me to take Simḥah Zissel seriously and to embark on this project, and I have been deeply grateful for his inspiration, guidance, and friendship as I have worked on it.

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While I was studying at JTS, Professor Neil Gillman also provided much advice and encouragement to pursue this project. Professor

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While I began this project in New York, much of my research for this volume took place in Charlottesville, Virginia. I was privileged to spend the 2009–2010 academic year as a doctoral fellow at the University of Virginia's Institute for Advanced Studies in Culture, a wonderful interdisciplinary center directed by Professor James Hunter. I am deeply grateful for the Institute's support, and I thank all those who helped arrange my fellowship there. I am especially grateful to Professor James Hunter and Dr. Ashley Rogers Berner, and also to Professors Josh Yates, Stephen Garfinkel, and Bruce Nielsen; and I am grateful for additional funding provided by the Jewish Theological Seminary Graduate School. During my time in Charlottesville, I was able to participate in the Institute's Love and Justice working group and to share my work on Simḥah Zissel with that group, as well as with the broader Institute community. I benefited from feedback from, among others, Professors Nicholas Wolterstorff, Jennifer Geddes, Regina Schwartz, Talbot Brewer, Daniel Philpott, Charles Mathewes, Murray Milner, Joseph Davis, Karen Guth, and Rev. Greg Thompson. When I presented chapter 1 of this book at the Institute, Professor James Loeffler responded to my paper and offered a good deal of

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Significant work on this project took place after I moved from Charlottesville to Cleveland Heights, Ohio, and to a new position at Oberlin College. I am especially grateful to Eric Cohen of the Tikvah Fund, to Professors Abraham Socher, David Kamitsuka, and Shulamit Magnus, and to Dean Joyce Babyak (as well as Peter and Vanessa Ochs, Emily Filler, and Daniel H. Weiss) for their help in making it possible to dedicate the fall 2010 semester to writing. Friends at Beth El—The Heights Synagogue provided incredible support, and David Hanlon and Lindsay Wise provided a good deal of inspiration and joy at a pivotal moment in my writing. My work on this project in Ohio was also made possible thanks to grants from the Tikvah Fund, the Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture, and Targum Shlishi (a Raquel and Aryeh Rubin Foundation), as well as continued support from the Institute for Advanced Studies in Culture.

I presented material from this book at meetings of the Association for Jewish Studies and the Society of Jewish Ethics. At the SJE meeting, I was especially grateful for a response to my paper offered by Professor Diana Fritz Cates of the Society of Christian Ethics, a response that brought Simḥah Zissel into dialogue with Thomas Aquinas. Professors Jonathan Schofer, Jonathan Crane, Laurie Zoloth, and Louis Newman also offered helpful questions and comments, and Mary Jo Iozzio edited the paper. That paper was printed as "Sharing the Burden: Rabbi Simḥah Zissel Ziv on Love and Empathy," in the *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics* 30, no. 2 (2010), pp. 151–169, published by Georgetown University Press. Portions of that paper are included in this book, reprinted by permission of the JSCE.

I have completed this book after moving from Ohio to Greensboro, North Carolina, and to my position at Elon University. I am grateful to many friends in Greensboro who have supported my family's move here, and especially to our communities at Beth David Synagogue and B'nai Shalom Day School. I owe special thanks to Rabbi Harry Sky for reading Simḥah Zissel's writings with me; to Beth Socol, Lia Sater, Rabbi Eli Havivi, and Muriel and George Hoff,

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My mother, Eileen Claussen, has supported and loved me at every step along the way. She taught me to love learning, literature, and language, and she provided me with the best educational opportunities imaginable. Her generosity, her integrity, her thoughtfulness, and her deep concern for justice have consistently inspired me and have shaped this book in many respects. My debt to her is incalculable.

Among the other family members who helped guide me on the path to writing this book, two are no longer living, and I dedicate this work to their memories. My grandmother, Elsie Lerner, provided me with a strong connection to the Jewish tradition, and especially with a connection to the world of Eastern European Jewry in which I have come to immerse myself. Above all, both through her stories and her actions, my grandmother taught me about the Jewish ideal of *menschlichkeit*, an ideal which I treasured deeply in my childhood. This was the very ideal that many in the Musar movement sought to cultivate, and in some of my final conversations with my grandmother before her death, we discussed my aspirations to study and learn from their vision of what it might mean to be a *mensch*. I treasured her excitement about my work, and I know that she would have been so proud to see this book come to fruition. Her spirit fills its pages.

My father, Paul Claussen, also died just as I was developing my vision for this project. It reflects his influence in many ways. He was a historian who very much encouraged my study of history, and he was thrilled that I was following in his footsteps in pursuing a PhD. His love of researching, taking copious notes, and writing late at night also rubbed off on me. My father aspired to engage in writing that might help to make the world a better place, and I seek to do the same with this project. I wish that he, too, could have lived to see me complete this project.

My beloved daughters, Eliana and Talya, entered the world as I worked on this project, adding new joy and wonder to my life, cheering me on while I wrote, and teaching me much about the meaning of love and care. And so has their mother, my dear wife, Katy. Katy's love, kindness, and intelligence have sustained me over the past sixteen years in ways that words cannot begin to describe. She has been my partner in the work of *musar*, and she has taught me to be more aware, more compassionate, and more loving. She has been an incredible teacher, full of creativity and curiosity, and she has supported me in countless ways. Katy discussed the Musar movement with me daily, and she read this manuscript with great care and thoughtfulness, offering insightful comments and questions throughout. I am grateful beyond words for her partnership, for her support, for her friendship, and for her love.