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## Foreword to the Symposium: Jewish Law and American Law: A Comparative Study

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**SYMPOSIUM**  
**JEWISH LAW AND AMERICAN LAW: A COMPARATIVE**  
**STUDY**

**FOREWORD**

*Samuel J. Levine* \*

Over the past several years, the Jewish Law Institute has organized a number of conferences dedicated to exploring important issues of law and religion.<sup>1</sup> Consistent with the mission and activities of the Institute, the conferences have included discussions of the relevance of the Jewish legal tradition to American legal scholarship, American legal practice, and American legal education.<sup>2</sup>

Building on the success of these programs, on April 1, 2019, Touro Law Center, *Touro Law Review*, and the Jewish Law Institute hosted a national conference, “Jewish Law and American Law: A Comparative Study.” The conference proceedings included presentations by leading scholars from across the United States and Israel, addressing a variety of areas within the two legal systems, including bioethics and health policy in Jewish law and American society; philosophical and policy influences of Jewish law and American law; substantive aspects of Jewish law and other legal systems; legal scholarship and practice in Jewish law and American law; and equity considerations in Jewish law and American Law.<sup>3</sup>

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\*Professor of Law & Director of the Jewish Law Institute, Touro Law Center; Conference Organizer. I thank the faculty, staff, and students at Touro Law Center for their support, encouragement, and participation, and I thank the editors and staff of the *Touro Law Review* for their work in organizing the conference and the Symposium Issue.

<sup>1</sup> See <https://www.tourolaw.edu/Academics/1229>.

<sup>2</sup> See <https://www.tourolaw.edu/Academics/jewish-law-institute>.

<sup>3</sup> For the full conference schedule, see <https://www.tourolaw.edu/Academics/1229>. For a video recording of the conference proceedings, see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u7Loc8VxiSA>.

The articles in this Symposium Issue of the *Touro Law Review* are drawn primarily from the conference proceedings, with the addition of valuable contributions from a number of scholars on related areas of comparative Jewish law, offering a variety of innovative approaches to the examination of the Jewish legal system in a comparative context. Taken together, the articles in this issue of the *Touro Law Review* represent an important step forward in the activities of the Jewish Law Institute and, more generally, a significant development in the comparative study of Jewish law, providing thoughtful explorations and promising avenues of inquiry for future research and analysis.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> The timing of the conference was prompted, in large part, by the recent publication of a number of books exploring various aspects of Jewish law and tradition in the comparative context of modern and contemporary law and society. See, e.g., DAVID HOLLANDER, *LEGAL SCHOLARSHIP IN JEWISH LAW* (2017); FRANÇOIS-XAVIER LICARI, *AN INTRODUCTION TO JEWISH LAW* (2018); 1 SAMUEL J. LEVINE, *JEWISH LAW AND AMERICAN LAW: A COMPARATIVE STUDY* (2018); 2 SAMUEL J. LEVINE, *JEWISH LAW AND AMERICAN LAW: A COMPARATIVE STUDY* (2018); SAMUEL J. LEVINE, *WAS YOSEF ON THE SPECTRUM? UNDERSTANDING JOSEPH THROUGH TORAH, MIDRASH, AND CLASSICAL JEWISH SOURCES* (2019); CHAIM N. SAIMAN, *HALAKHAH: THE RABBINIC IDEA OF LAW* (2018). For a discussion of the significance and implications of these publications within the broader context of contemporary legal scholarship, see, e.g., Michael A. Helfand, *From Doctrine to Devotion: The Jewish Comparative Law Project*, 67 *AM. J. COMP. L.* 685 (2019); Jeffrey B. Meyers, *The Thought of Samuel J. Levine at the Intersection of the Talmudic and Constitutional Law*, 8 *GLOBAL J. COMP. L.* (2019).