



## To Be a Jew: Joseph Chayim Brenner as a Jewish Existentialist (The Robert and Arlene Kogod Library of Judaic Studies)

By Avi Sagi

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### To Be a Jew: Joseph Chayim Brenner as a Jewish Existentialist (The Robert and Arlene Kogod Library of Judaic Studies) By Avi Sagi

To Be a Jew deals with the question of the meaning and rationale that the writer Joseph Chayim Brenner attributes to Jewish existence. Many of Brenner's readers assumed that Brenner completely negated Jewish existence and sought to form a new way of life completely disconnected from the traditional Jewish existence. **In contrast to this perception, Avi Sagi proves that not only did Brenner not reject the value of the Jewish existence, but the core of his creation was written out of a deep Jewish commitment.** Brenner's greatest innovation is found in his new conception of Jewish existence. To be a Jew, according to Brenner, involves the willingness to discover solidarity with actual Jews, to participate in a society in which Jews can live a free life and to fashion their culture as they wish. Sagi presents the idea that Brenner's is not a Utopian, but a realistic, conception of Jewish existence. Thus this unique conception of Jewish existence is founded on an infrastructure of existential thought.

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### Editorial Review

#### About the Author

Avi Sagi is Professor of Philosophy, and Founder and Director of the Interdisciplinary Graduate Program in Hermeneutics and Cultural Studies, at Bar-Ilan University, Israel. He is Senior Research Fellow at the Shalom Hartman Institute, Israel. He has written and edited numerous books and articles in Jewish and general philosophy, among them *Religion and Morality* (with Daniel Statman, <?xml:namespace prefix = st1 />New York: 1995) and the recently released *Judaism: Between Religion and Morality* (Tel Aviv: 1998) and *Albert Camus and the Philosophy of the Absurd* (New York: 2002).

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