

## The Codification of Jewish Law on the Cusp of Modernity

For more than four centuries, Jewish life has been based on a code of law written by Joseph Caro, his *Shulhan `aruk* [“set table”]. The work was an immediate bestseller because it presented the law in a clear and concise format. Caro’s work, however, was methodologically problematic and was widely criticized in the first generations after its publication. In this volume, Edward Fram examines Caro’s methods as well as those of two of his contemporaries, Moses Isserles and Solomon Luria. He highlights criticisms of Caro’s legal thought and brings alternative methodologies to the fore. He also compares these three jurists while placing their methods and cases in their historical, intellectual, and religious contexts. Fram’s volume ultimately explains why Caro’s methodologically problematic work won the day, while more sophisticated approaches remained points of legal reference but fell short of achieving the acceptance that their authors hoped for.

Edward Fram is Associate Professor of Jewish History and Solly Yellin Chair in Lithuanian and Eastern European Jewish Culture at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev. His research focuses on the history of Jewish law in the early modern period. He is the author of several award-winning books including *Ideals Face Reality* (1997) and *A Window on their World: The Rabbinic Court Diary of Rabbi Hayyim Gundersheim, Frankfurt am Main, 1773–1794* (2012).

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Edward Fram  
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EDWARD FRAM

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For Yoni  
You fill our world with joy, hope, and love.

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## Abbreviations and Rules of Style

- B.T. Babylonian Talmud  
J.T. Jerusalem Talmud  
YSS *Yam shel Shelomoh*

Books of the bible are abbreviated according to the guidelines of *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 17th ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017). Hebrew words included in the *Oxford English Dictionary* ([www.oed.com](http://www.oed.com)) and/or the Merriam-Webster Dictionary ([www.m-w.com](http://www.m-w.com)) have been given in Roman characters (e.g., kashrut, shofar).

Biblical names follow English form, thus Joseph, rather than Yosef, and Solomon, not Shelomoh. Place names have generally been spelled according to current English usage. Therefore, “Kraków” is written as “Krakow.” However, historical context has been maintained, and Constantinople has not been changed to Istanbul. Transliteration of Hebrew terms follows the rules found in *The Jewish Encyclopedia* (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1907) with two adjustments: the *vav* is represented as a *v* rather than a *w*, and the *quf* is shown as a *q* and not a *k*. Small changes have been made to the transliteration of some place names to ease in identification.



Map of Centers of Jewish Life Mentioned in this book



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