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For the Enrichment of Jewish Thought

When Bad Things Happen to Anyone: Venturing East of Uz

1998 Brown Lecture

The following article is excerpted from the lecture presented by Dr. Cliff Edwards for the Selma and Jacob Brown Lecture held last March. The annual lecture is sponsored by the Center for Judaic Studies and the Friends of the Library of Virginia Commonwealth University. Dr. Edwards is professor of religious studies at VCU.

A Terrifying Book

On March 26, 1959, 100 persons in formal attire met at the Waldorf-Astoria to celebrate with Robert Frost his 85th birthday. Lionel Trilling of Columbia University was there to give a polite speech of appreciation for the poet, but he shocked his audience by declaring that the friendly farmer-poet espousing American virtues was, in fact, a fraud. Rather, he said, Robert Frost was a "terrifying poet" inviting his readers to look into the darkest corners of human experience, advising his readers to grow up and see the darkness for what it is.

Where is Lionel Trilling when we need him? Who will tell us in this age of pop Bible-study books that behind their sweet anecdotes for tension-reduction, that behind those bowls of chicken soup for the soul, the real Bible looms dark and terrifying, inviting us to peer into the hidden corners of the soul?

Torah has hardly begun when brother crushes the head of brother. All too soon God sees that humans "fashion nothing but wickedness all day long." Sick and tired of us, the God of the Bible begins planning to "blot man from the face of the earth." But our focus will not be on Torah but on that glimpse into the darkest corner of the human soul, the Book of Job.

In Praise of Job

Listen to the high praise of several literary figures responding to Job in modern times. The eloquent Chateaubriand, last century, observed that "no one...has carried the sadness of the soul to such a pitch," as Job, "emblem of suffering humanity." Thomas Carlyle claimed "there is nothing written...in the Bible or out of it of equal merit." Lamartine described Job as "that lyric Plato of the desert," the "greatest poet who ever articulated human speech." More recently, D.H. Lawrence advised, "If you want a story of your own soul, it is perfectly done in the Book of Job." Thomas Wolfe described the Book of Job as "woven entire, more than any single piece of writing I can recall, from the senuous, flashing, infinitely various and gloriously palpable material of great poetry." Other artists of language have expressed their awe in the presence of Job by engaging in the story itself. So we have Archibald MacLeish's *J.B.*, Robert Frost's *Masque of Reason*, H.G. Wells *Undying Fire* and many more.

Measuring the Mystery of Job

Let us try our hand at measuring the depth of the mystery of Job. We meet first the prose prologue of chapters one and two, the wisdom literature folktale of an Eastern desert-dweller, hardly Hebrew, named Job of Uz. This popular folktale of ages past invites us to satisfy one of the persistent wishes of humanity: a glimpse into the secret recesses of heaven, access to the privileged conversation between God and his heavenly court. What more could a mortal ask than to be privy to heaven's plan, the "big picture" as it reflects on our personal fate?

The author of Job must now be smiling a most satirical smile. What does God talk about in heaven? God obsesses about...me, Job, his favorite human. "Have you considered my servant Job? These is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man." Amazingly, God and I have the same high opinion of me. But then from some dark recess in me, and so in God, comes a second opinion. The folkloric peek into heaven has a surprise in store for the reader: heaven is divided. God is of two minds concerning human nature. On the right hand, God proudly reflects on our best representative's blameless and upright ways. On the hand sinister, God's busy examiner, Satan, sees our innermost motives as base. Heaven finds us at our very best, as Job, to be a deep mystery.

The theme of the prologue's prose folktale appears to have less to do with "why bad things happen to good people" than with God's confusion regarding the nature of human beings. God is sometimes sorry that he got into the human being business. We are a mystery to God, and so Job must be pinned down and dissected through suffering in God's laboratory.

But the mystery of human nature is met by an equal and opposite mystery in the next section of the Book of Job. Prose folk story becomes potent poetry as Job and his friends begin an increasingly angry exchange of speeches. Now we find that heaven's two minds regarding human nature are matched by humanity's two minds regarding the Divine Nature. Job's friends are certain God is always just; Job is just as certain that God often treats widows, orphans, the poor and himself unjustly.

Eliphaz asks Job:

> Think now, who that was innocent ever perished?
> Or where were the upright cut off?
> As I have seen, those who plow iniquity
> And sow trouble reap the same. (Job 4:7)

Bildad adds:

> Behold, God will not reject a blameless man
> Nor take the hand of evildoers. (Job 8:20).

But Job asserts:

> ...he destroys both the blameless and the wicked.
> When disaster brings sudden death,
> he mocks the calamity of the innocent.
> (Job 9:22-23)

The dialogues in poetry comprise over 90 percent of the Book of Job and try the full range of human emotions. The friends voice every religious orthodoxy regarding suffering; you have hidden sins, your children sinned, all human flesh is sinful and weak in

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God's eyes, you should be honored that God considered you worthy of chastising. Job voices his sense of depression, fear and outrage; defends his integrity; longs for the days before his was alienated from family, friends and community; and insists on a hearing in a court of law to determine his innocence. This central poetic section seems to have no knowledge of a Satan but, even stranger, seems not to picture Job's children as having been killed or his property all destroyed. Surely the author knows that we'll notice his erasure of our childish, egotistic wish to peek in on a God we are sure is as fascinated by us as we are. Is this erasure of destroyed children and property part of the intended collapse of the silly charade or, is Satan right, humans only care about their own skins? It is his alienation, pain and sense of injustice that are the burden of Job's complaint. The speeches of a fourth visitor, Elihu, for all their power, involve a comical interlude as he promises to say little because he is so young and timid, then proceeds to give the longest speech in the entire book.

"Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind" (Job 38:1). Having presented us with merging mysteries, God puzzling regarding human nature and humans puzzling regarding God's nature, an even more baffling mystery suddenly presents itself. God responds to Job but certainly doesn't appear to answer Job's question, "Why am I suffering though I am a good person?" God speaks of the origins of rain, hail and snow; the pregnancy of mountain goats, wild donkeys; and the peculiarities of ostriches. One is tempted to paraphrase God as saying, "I may not be good at psycholoy and human relationships but I'm great at meteorology and zoology." My students might translate God's words as "I majored in the sciences, not the humanities."

Venturing East of Uz

But there is far more to the puzzle of God's avoiding Job's question entirely and speaking of the wonderful diversity of nature. Job is from the East and this suggests to my mind, as a student of Asian culture and philosophy, that refusing a question and responding with descriptions of nature has a history of its own. Job was written around the time the Buddha wandered India telling his parables. Without positing any direct borrowing, we might find in the Orientalisms of the world's wisdom tradition the very tradition that gave birth to Job, a theme that has dominated much Asian philosohy and practice. Taking Zen Buddhism as our example, note that questions are seldom answered in the manner they are posed. Consider these very famous Zen koan:

Student's Question: What is the meaning of life?

Master's Answer: Look at that oak tree in the garden.

Question: What is the Buddha?

Answer: Five pounds of flax.

So Job asks, "Why do good people suffer?" And God answers (Job 38):

Has the rain a father,
Or who has begotten the drops of dew?
From whose womb did the ice come forth
And who has given birth to the hoarfrost of heaven?

Job asks, "Isn't the Judge of all the world just?" And God answers:

Do you know when the mountain goats bring forth?
Do you observe the calving of the hinds?
Can you number the months that they fulfill,
And do you know the time when they deliver their young?

Job's own responses are now transformed: " I clap my hand to my mouth." And again, "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now my eyes see thee." Silence and the experimental way mark Job's new path. This is significant and quite Eastern. The play of speech and silence in the Book of Job is worthy a study of its own. God is silent and humans babble. God speaks and Job silences himself.

But let us return to God's descriptions of nature. They may begin as questions demonstrating Job's limited knowledge of the Creator's universe but soon the wonders of nature seem to become the very focus of the soaring poetry of God. Further, those descriptions of nature celebrate a particular series of experiences humans share with all the universe. Descriptions speak of the father of rain, the sea bursting from the womb and being wrapped in swaddling bands, the womb from which ice comes forth, the calving of mountain goats and hinds, the care the eagle must take to feed its young. It is birthing and parenting in nature that God describes to the sufferer Job.

The diversity and complexity of governing such a wonder-filled creation, including even the powerful behemoth and leviathan, may put Job's own difficulties into cosmic perspective. But even more, nature itself witnesses to the wonder of the life force that takes the challenge of existence over and over again. It is as if Job's alienation in suffering, his speeches that grow narrower and narrower in focus, are suddenly opened to space and light as he hears of the struggles of an entire universe in its diversity sharing the difficulties and wonders of existence. Job is not alone in the great experiment of birthing and nurturing. All nature shares with him in his struggle.

Perhaps considering the Book of Job under the rubric of Theodicy, "Why bad things happen to good people," has led us to miss the central intent of the book. Is it in fact a poem on the "two ways," the way of death and the way of life? Does it dramatize for us the narrowing way of self-centeredness, even anthropocentrism, twisting the human psyche into the restricted chambers of some nautilus shell? Does it laugh at our assumption that God's work is to verify our high opinion of ourselves? Over against this is the wonderful diversity of a nature that shares with us the concerns of birthing and parenting, the very concerns that lead us out of the narrow ways of death to the community of shared life.

But the author of Job is not quite finished. She/he has one more surprise. The book ends with Job's fathering sons and daughters. Against the entire tradition of Hebrew scripture, the seven sons are left unnamed but the names of the three daughters are carefully listed: Jemimah, Keziah and Keren-happuch. Further, they are to share the family inheritance. Job is a maverick to the very end. Sensitive to birthing and mothering, the Book of Job may well be looking toward some future generation when daughters will receive their proper share of earth's gifts and when women will live to hear their own names celebrated.

The Meandering Muse

Twilight of a Golden Age: Selected Poems of Abraham Ibn Ezra
edited by Leon J. Weinberger
Tuscalooso, AL: University of Alabama Press

A *Review* Essay
by Steven M. Glazer

Historians frequently refer to 11th- to 12th-century Spain as the "Golden Age" of Hebrew poetry, underscoring the quality and quantity of both secular and religious pieces composed during that period. Most prominant among "Golden Age" scholar/poets are Samuel (Hanagid) Ibn Nagrela, Solomon Ibn Gabirol, Moses Ibn Ezra and Judah Halevi, men with broad interests and far-reaching intellects. A fifth individual, Abraham Ibn Ezra, best known for his commentary on the Pentateuch, rounds out the group. Author of more than 100 works in such fields as Talmud, linguistics, philosophy, astromony, mathematics and medicine, Ibn Ezra witnessed the decline of Andalusian society and influenced the emerging cultural centers in both Italy and France. He lived and wrote in Spain, North Africa, Italy, Provence, Nothern France and England, a vagabond sage, dependent on the goodwill of his hosts and patrons.

Heretofore, with sporadic exceptions, Ibn Ezra's poetry has been unavailable to those not fluent in Hebrew. A recent volume, *Twilight of a Golden Age: Selected Poems of Abraham Ibn Ezra*, edited and translated with an introduction and notes by Leon J. Weinberger, includes 65 secular and liturgical pieces and fills this vacuum. In this, and his earlier (1973) volume, *A Jewish*

Prince in Moslem Spain: Selected Poems by Samuel Ibn Nagrela, Weinberger offers the reader a rare opportunity to become intimately acquainted with the earliest and latest members of the accomplished quintet.

In his extended introduction, Weinberger liberally intersperses Ibn Ezra's own words to illustrate both biographical data and recurring poetic themes. The selections themselves, which comprise the second part of the volume and are divided into "secular" and "sacred" sections, are arranged thematically in a sequence that closely parallels the introduction.

Abraham Ibn Ezra's secular poetry marks a departure from the exalted themes of his predecessors, and reflects the decline of Andalusian Jewry as well as the author's itinerant life. While at times praising his hosts, the poet often chastises them for being unresponsive:

> Early I set out for the patron's home;
> They say: "He is off riding;"
> I return toward evening,
> They say, "He is already sleeping;"
> He either mounts a horse or climbs into bed;
> Woe to the wretched man who is unlucky!

Ibn Ezra also laments his fate as he "grows weary of counting the holes" in his tattered cloak. He complains about the flies who "run races on my eyes and eyelids" and who "tyrannize me with a vengeance." This sarcastic tone recurs as the poet bemoans his lot in life:

> Were I a merchant of candles, the sun would not set until I died!...
> Were I to trade in shrouds, men would not die in my lifetime!...
> Were I to seek on a rainy day some water from the sea, it would not dry up!...
> Were I to sell armaments, all enemies would be reconciled and not make war!

As difficult as his life may have been, Ibn Ezra apparently found time for some "small" pleasures, notably chess. The game was popular in medieval Jewish circles; and is mentioned by Rashi, Judah Halevi and Maimonides, among others. Three of Ibn Ezra's poems on "the war of wits" are extant, though it is presumed he composed others. Possibly the oldest such works by a European, they both instruct the novice as to the rules of the game, "Straight is the path of the rook down the length and breadth of the field," and offer political commentary, "Now the Christians have the advantage; the Moors and their kings are weakened from combat." The poet may very well be advocating chess, in which "these mortally wounded will rise again, And once more they will do battle," as a substitute for war.

Ibn Ezra's liturgical poetry reflects the many genres and themes favored by his contemporaries. He composed *zulatot*, *ge'ullot*, *selichot* and *reshuyot*, complete with Biblical and rabbinical references. God's relationship with Israel is paradoxical and enigmatic. At the same time immanent, "I find You near at hand," and transcendent, "eternal in the heavens," the Almighty remains silent as His beloved is continually oppressed by others. The poet pleads: "Why do You let them tread upon her until she dies in exile? If she be your...daughter, let her live!" Not content to merely entreat, Ibn Ezra delivers an ultimatum:

> Generations come and go,
> But the pain of God's people endures;
> For a thousand years their decline was
> A source of amazement; in their agony,
> They cried, "If You intend to redeem us, do it, and
> If You will not, tell us!"

Ibn Ezra, however, was far from pessimistic, holding that "wisdom," combined with faith, could enable one's soul to transcend the phenomenal world:

> O my soul, return to God and be saved
> From Time's snare...
> Take hold of Wisdom and turn to intellect...
> Fortify yourself with His love—and you will find peace
> Forever in His holy heights, there rejoicing.

"Wisdom" is acquired through the study of Torah and the observance of God's commandments as the following *reshut* for *Simchat Torah* illustrates:

> I live by adhering to God's Torah,
> And am hopeful that the Master will pay my wages,
> In her garden paradise I want to be,
> Her river will satisfy my thirst.
> I have found You with my mind's eye and again
> With Your Torah's help, O Glorious in Power.
> Give me wisdom to do the right;
> When I exalt You, I gain esteem with Your help.
> Neither heaven nor earth can contain
> Your majesty, much less my feeble effort.
> All my life my soul longs for Your shelter,
> And when I fall, the mention of Your name lifts me up.

Of the illustrious scholar/poets of the "Golden Age," Ibn Ezra alone achieved the status of folk-hero. Legends, of the type often associated with Elijah, portray him as rescuer of the Jews, possessor of the Divine Name, and able to miraculously appear and disappear. Also, he is pictured as a matchmaker, no small matter given that, in the Midrash God Himself "sits and makes matches" since the time of Creation. A prominant theme in *piyyutim* (liturgical poems) for *Shavuot*, which commemorates the Sinaitic Revelation, is God's attempt to find a proper mate for his Torah. How interesting that Ibn Ezra, *payytan* (liturgical poet) par excellence, is envisioned as engaged in the same most worthwhile endeavor!

Abraham Ibn Ezra also was known and admired in the non-Jewish world; and has been immortalized in Robert Browning's "Rabbi Ben Ezra." Weinberger is to be commended for making his poetry available in English, and for authoring a most valuable introduction to Ibn Ezra's life and work.

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A New Jewry: Promise or Threat?

A New Jewry? America Since the Second World War in *Studies in Contemporary Jewry, VIII* sponsored by the Institute of Contemporary Jewry at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem New York: Oxford University Press

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A *Review* Essay
by Frank E. Eakin Jr.

Peter Medding has brought together an instructive compilation of eight papers focused on how American Jewry recreated itself following the horrors of World War II. The topics discussed include the re-creation of community and the modes of affiliation, the role of Jews in American culture with the inevitable isolation-assimilation tension, the revised criteria for the understanding of community, the individual's and the community's relationship to the newly re-established State of Israel, the literary product of this ever old but always new people, and a renewed evaluation of what it means to be Jewish. Medding states:

> "The thrust of these essays is that after the Second World War, overwhelmingly American Jews actively chose to express their Jewishness in new and varied ways, some of which related only to Jews while others became part of the shared literary, cultural, social and political consciousness and heritage of American society as a whole. Individual and group Jewish identity and pride developed to such an extent that very few exercised the choice not to be Jewish (p. viii)."

This sociologically oriented volume provides helpful tools in assessing the contemporary American Jewish scene, acknowledging that Judaism as a "way of life" requires an investigation considerably more diverse than those issues characteristically judged religious. This the editor has helped to accomplish through five essays historically and educationally oriented (pp. 153-233); two review essays written around "The Jewish Impact on the Economic Transformation of Modern Germany" and "Jordan and the Middle East Conflict" (pp. 237-250); a grouping of subject-arranged book reviews (pp. 253-399), again demonstrating

the broad focus of this volume ("Anti-Semitism, Holocaust and Genocide;" "Jewish Communal and Social History;" "Language, Art and Literature;" "Religion, Thought and Education;" "Social Sciences and Politics;" and "Zionism, Israel and the Middle East"); and a helpful listing of 116 doctoral dissertations oriented toward subject areas addressed in the volume and completed between 1987 and 1991 (derived from schools in Israel, England, Canada and the United States). Both the both reviews and the listing of dissertations are helpful research tools for scholars and students.

The volume raises positive factors, such as the meaningful integration of American Jews into post-World War II cultural, social, economic and political life. On the other hand, some red flags for the future of the American Jewish community are raised, such as the increasingly high intermarriage rate, the conflicts between and within Jewish denominational life and the continuing questions raised about the future nature of the Jewish community in the United States **if** such an identifiable community continues to exist!

Questions regarding the future are important for both Jews and Christians. Granted, these are pivotal, existential issues that Jews must confront—the role of assimilation, the phenomenon of mixed marriages, and educational opportunities for both males and females coupled with both the inevitable deferment of children within families and an inevitable birth rate among American Jewish families that will neither sustain nor enhance numerically the American Jewish community. All of these issues speak to the question of whether Jews can/will participate fully and openly in the American experience. Can a Jewish "way of life" be practiced in an environment lacking parameters without damaging the community?

Christians do become involved in this question, however, because obviously the non-Jewish partner is usually Christian. Christians should study this issue along with Jews because Christians need to be able to affirm, without equivocation, the Jewish partners in such mixed marriages. Whether in the United States or on a world-wide scale, Christians must get beyond the idea that everyone **must** be Christian, and this transformation in Christian thinking will be meaningful **only** if it impacts academicians, clergy and laypersons. This is the only thing that will prevent overt or more subtle pressures from being exerted on the Jewish partners. In a sense, given the fact that mixed marriages are a reality to be confronted in our American pluralistic way of life, it is possible that Christians can take steps to help preserve Judaism not available to the Jews. And, we should make no mistake about it, Christian affirmation of Jewish partners and, therefore, of Judaism is not simply an altruistic act. For Jews of Nazareth to be understood and for the roots of Christianity to have meaning, Christianity needs Judaism. We need desperately to work together to discover mechanisms whereby we can make mutually meaningful discoveries through our mixed marriages and to devise understandings and programs that will prevent the children produced by such marriages from becoming the ones most hurt in the struggle that follows as nuclear families engage in argumentation from ignorance! The "New Jewry" offers every opportunity of **promise** for Jews **and** Christians but the end result is totally dependent on human, **not** divine, action.

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Synagogue and State

Apple of Gold: Constitutionalism in Israel and the United States
by Gary Jeffrey Jacobsohn
Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press

A *Review* Essay
by Melvin I. Urofsky

On a recent trip to Israel I visited the new Supreme Court building donated to the State by the Rothschilds. It is a magnificent building, full of light, but having about it somewhat the air of a country courthouse. Aside from the metal detectors at the entrance, there is an openness that is completely lacking in the U.S. Supreme Court, where visitors are carefully herded into the great chamber and get about 15 minutes to hear arguments or listen to decisions being handed down. In fact, the whole Israeli court system can be a puzzle to an American, yet there is a great deal about it that is familiar.

The Israeli Supreme Court is a cross between a local court and an American Circuit Court of Appeals. It rarely sits *en banc*; rather, its members sit in panels of three and hear not only appeals but, in some cases, original trials. In criminal proceedings, the defendant has the right to be present for appeals, a situation far different from the American system. People come to the court with their families; they can speak to the judges; and, while it may lack some of the panoply and ceremonial aspects of the American high court, there is no doubt this is a building in which justice is dispensed.

Yet this is also a court in which special police protection is provided to some of its members, who have been the objects of death threats from the fundamentalist right (threats that, after the Rabin assassination, are certainly not to be taken lightly). The threats have been directed in particular against Chief Justice Aharon Barak, a man of towering legal acumen and a grasp of the law that is the envy of his colleagues. Barak used to retrieve his mail in his slippers and drove around Jerusalem in a beat-up old Autobianchi. Now, he is accompanied everywhere by a bodyguard and is driven in a chauffeured Volvo that undoubtedly has been armor-plated.

Rabbi Yisrael Eichler, the editor of the ultra-orthodox *Hamahaneh Haharedi* expressed surprise that Barak used to go around without a guard. "Every Middle Eastern despot has bodyguards and that's what he is—a man who was not elected, who sends policemen on Shabbat to attack thousands of religious Jews." Another organ of the religious right, *Yated Ne' eman*, called Barak "a dangerous enemy of God-fearing Judaism...this hated, isolated man is conducting a one-man revolution and it seems no man can stop him."

The reason for this invective is that the High Court in July 1996, issued an injunction to keep Jerusalem's Bar-Ilan Street open on Saturday, despite Transportation Minister Yitzhak Levy's decision that it be shut during prayer times. Barak himself has earned a reputation as a fearless civil libertarian. In 1988, he wrote the decision establishing the right of women to serve on the local religious councils, which oversee kashrut, ritual baths and other services. In the landmark 1994 decision in *Bavli v. Religious Courts*, Barak infuriated the religious establishment by ruling that the state religious courts must follow civil law, not *halachah*, in dividing property following a divorce. In still another decision, Barak led the court to assert its authority to review legislation and overturn those laws that contravene central civil rights legislation.

The last decision will seem most familiar to Americans who are used to, even if they are not always happy with, the U.S. Supreme Court's exercise of judicial review. Ever since John Marshall's decision in *Marbury v. Madison* (1803), Americans have assumed that the judicial branch of the government is, under the Constitution, not only equal to the legislative and executive branches, but also the ultimate arbiter of what the Constitution means.

That assumption is at the core of Gary Jeffrey Jacobsohn's comparative study of Israeli and American constitutionalism. Our Constitution is well known to us, and we have had more than two centuries of experience in which to develop its meaning. One can be forgiven if one draws a blank on the Israeli constitution because, despite the mandate of the Declaration of Independence that the first Knesset draw up a constitution, it has never been done.

In many ways, as Jacobsohn shows, this may not have been a bad idea. The Ameri-

cans had a fairly straightforward judicial and constitutional history as colonies and the Philadelphia convention, while sorting through a variety of ideas, nonetheless stil operated within a set of constitutional ideas that were fairly well known and accepted among educated Americans.

The Israelis had a mixture of Turkish law, British imperial legislation, the mandates of the different Zionist agencies as well as traditional Jewish laws from which to try to design a system. When Justice Felix Frankfurter suggested that there should be no rush by the Israelis to draft a constitution, David Ben-Gurion quickly agreed. But, if it would have been difficult to draft a constitution acceptable to all strains of Israeli society in 1949, it is practically impossible now since the *haredi* will accept nothing less than total obedience to *halachah* as interpreted by rabbinic courts.

The nearest thing that the Israeli Supreme Court can use as a constitution is the Declaration of Independence, which does set out certain principles, and a set of Basic Laws, designed to embed those principles in statutory form until a full constitution can be written.

But, as Jacobsohn explains, there is another source of authority for the Israeli courts—the volumes of decisions of the U.S. Supreme Court with its notion of judicial review and of the court as the authoritative interpreter of American constitutional meaning. In some instances, Israeli decisions actually quote American opinions; in others, the rationale is there even if the exact words are not.

Jacobsohn is not totally comfortable with this and rightly so. He quotes approvingly the Indian scholar P.K. Tripathi that foreign precedents cannot lead a court and are, at best, mere ornaments to embellish an independently reached decision. The Israeli court has become more like the American court in its sense of authority but it will be strongest if it can establish that authority under its own steam.

That is where someone like Barak and justices such as Moshe Landau, Shimon Agranat and Haim Cohn have been strongest. One reason the *haredi* fear them is that they are conversant with traditional Jewish law as well as the legal systems of Israel, the United States and Great Britain. While I have no evidence of their trading *pilpulim* with the occupants of Mea Shearim, they could and, as Jacobsohn points out, many of the decisions that have upset the orthodox have been grounded on a liberal interpretation of Jewish law, an interpretation that may not be acceptable to the ultra-orthodox but makes perfectly good sense to a majority of Israelis, including the more moderate traditionalists.

The civil liberties record in Israel is far from laudable and one reason is that there is no constitutional basis, no Bill of Rights, to protect speech and press and privacy as we know it. The Supreme Court in Israel is trying to create some protections for individual liberties and, in doing so, they have the U.S. Supreme Court as a model. How they do it, however, must be in a completely Israeli fashion or it will have no standing with the people. That such a system of individual freedom is totally alien to a large block of Israelis makes that task more difficult and, in the case of Aharon Barak, more dangerous as well.

Jacobsohn has written a fine comparative study. It was finished before some of the more recent decisions were handed down but we can better understand them in light of his explanations. This is a good book for constitutional scholars and others interested in Israel to have on their shelves.

Melvin I. Urofsky is director of the Center Public Policy, Virginia Commonwealth University, and a contributing editor.

Theology, Justice and Memory After the Holocaust

After Auschwitz: History, Theology and Contemporary Judaism, 2nd Edition
by Richard L. Rubenstein
Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins Press

The Anatomy of the Nuremberg Trials
by Telford Taylor
New York: Alfred A Knopf

The Holocaust, the French and the Jews
by Susan Zuccotti
New York: Basic Books

Denying the Holocaust: The Growing Assault and Truth and Memory
by Deborah Lipstadt
New York: The Free Press

A *Review* Essay
by Herbert Hirsch

Whenever momentous historic events end interpreters appear to draw lessons and find reasons for what occurred. These four important books deal with diverse aspects of the aftermath of one of the most significant events of the 20th century—the extermination of the European Jews in the period from 1933 to 1945. Generally referred to as the Holocaust, or Ha-Shoah, this genocide has been appropriated by politicians and others eager to turn the aftermath of the horrible inhumanity to political, social and other purposes. A veritable industry has arisen devoted to ascertaining the lessons of the Holocaust. The books under review here are serious inquiries concerning what the Holocaust may teach us in the declining years of the 20th century. They deal with four separate categories: religion, law and justice, destructive and constructive behavior, and the preservation or destruction of memory.

In *After Auschwitz*, which is now in a second edition, Rubenstein attempts to assess the impact of the Holocaust on perceptions of God and Judaism. Essentially interested in the question of whether God had died in Auschwitz, to put it most succinctly, Rubenstein now argues that the Holocaust must be seen in the context of the conflict between Jews and Christians in the European world. Not a unique insight since most scholars of the Holocaust have placed it in that context. In this second edition, Rubenstein attempts to expand his analysis and to examine the overall phenomena of genocide in the historical context.

It is here that this book suffers its gravest problems. Rubenstein clearly has a limited interpretation of genocide; at one point, noting that it "is an expression of modern civilization as we know it" (p. 123). Depending on where one dates modernity, Rubenstein cannot mean to imply that the large scale destruction of human life was unknown in prior historical epochs.

Unfortunately, it has been around for as long as the human species. While this book is weak on political theory, especially where it attempts to analyze the Holocaust in a historical and cultural context, it is strongest in its analysis of Jewish theology after the Holocaust. For those interested in theology, this will be an interesting book.

Taylor's book on the Nuremberg trials is the definitive account of the attempt by the Allies to assign responsibility for the Holocaust and to attempt to insure that some form of justice was served. I do not have sufficient space to even begin to scratch the surface of these questions in this short review. Interested readers and scholars will have to consult Taylor's book. Not only is this a history of the trials but it places them within the context of international law and Laws of War. Taylor also is concerned with the apparent lack of enforcement since the Nuremberg trials. What Nuremberg specifically did was to institutionalize in international law the idea that an individual could be held responsible for crimes against humanity or for violating the laws of war. Before Nuremberg, individual responsibility was not generally recognized in international law. After the judgment at Nuremberg and the assimilation of the Nuremberg principles into international law, the precedent was established and an individual could no

longer argue that they were not responsible because they were following orders. Unfortunately, since Nuremberg the precedent has not really been applied. In fact, what has happened is that the notion of responsibility encoded at Nuremberg has undergone a subtle transformation. At Nuremberg, the highest ranking officials were put on trial and held responsible. Since Nuremberg those at the highest level of government have been, for the most part, able to escape international assignment of responsibility. Instead, the most recent trials have been of lower level participants and the leaders have not even been apprehended. Bosnia is the classic example where both Radovan Karakzic and Ratko Mladic were both condemned as war criminals but have not been apprehended. Anyone interested in understanding the true background on which these events are acted out in the contemporary world must consult Taylor's book.

In *The Holocaust, the French and the Jews*, Susan Zuccotti traces the history of the Holocaust in France. As in her previous book, *The Italians and the Holocaust*, she intersperses historical description with personal stories. This makes her book not only more interesting and readable but it brings the face of humanity to what is often a seemingly abstract enterprise—the writing of history. Zuccotti has a great ability to weave the stories of individuals and her historical accounts into a seamless web that will hold the readers interest and teach them more than they probably want to know concerning what happened in France during the Holocaust. The book is even-handed since Zuccotti points out that, while 76 percent of the French Jews survived, and she tells how that was possible, she also demonstrates how the Frence collaborated and helped exterminate the 24 percent who did not survive. The stories make this a fascinating and interesting book.

Finally, if I were going to pick one of these four and say that you must read this book, I would choose Deborah Lipstadt's *Denying the Holocaust* because she deals with contemporary attempts to change the memory of the Holocaust. Lipstadt has written the most readable and comprehensive treatment of the attempt to deny that the Holocaust happened. Amazingly, as she points out throughout this book, college professors, teachers and many others continue to attempt to prove that the Holocaust was either a plot of the Jews to justify the creation of Israel and that the Germans' actions were justified because they were fighting communism. There are many elements to these attempts to reconstruct history and wipe out memory and Lipstadt's book is important because she not only outlines the basic arguments of the deniers but refutes them with great thoroughness. Consequently, while the first three books are interesting, this one is indispensable because it is dealing with memory and the construction of history. If an event is not constantly in the news or if there are no books such as Lipstadt's to refute attempts to rewrite history, then memory may very easily be altered. History is reconstructed memory; states and individuals use and manipulate it to serve sometimes less than noble ends. The importance of history is a warning sign to teach us, and the generations that follow, what to avoid. While all these books are in that tradition, Lipstadt focuses more centrally on that important concern.

The British historian B.H. Liddell Hart once wrote that history is a "universal experience—infinitely longer, wider and more varied than any individual's experience." If we do not learn from the experience of others and act positively to prevent them, human destructiveness will continue unabated. Memory must serve as a foundation on which to build a humane, just and peaceful future to insure that the awful events of W.H. Auden's "Ballad" are finally stopped:

"O what is that sound which so thrills the ear
  Down in the valley drumming, drumming?
Only the scarlet soldiers, dear,
  The soldiers coming.

O what is that light I see flashing so clear
  Over the distance brightly, brightly?
Only the sun on their weapons, dear,
  As they step lightly.

O what are they doing with all that gear;
  What are they doing this morning, this morning?
Only the usual maneuvers, dear,
  Or perhaps a warning.

O why have they left the road down there;
  Why are they suddenly wheeling, wheeling?
Perhaps a change in the orders, dear;
  Why are you kneeling?

O haven't they stopped for the doctor's care;
  Haven't they reined their horses, their horses?
Why, they are none of them wounded, dear,
  None of these forces.

O is it the parson they want with white hair;
  Is it the parson, is it, is it?
No, they are passing his gateway, dear,
  Without a visit.

O it must be the farmer who lives so near;
  It must be the farmer so cunning, so cunning?
They have passed the farm already, dear,
  And now they are running.

O where are you going? stay with me here!
  Were the vows you swore me deceiving, deceiving?
No I promised to love you dear,
  But I must be leaving.

O it's broken the lock and splintered the door,
  O its the gate where they're turning, turning,
Their feet are heavy on the floor
  And their eyes are burning."

Herbert Hirsch is professor of political science at Virginia Commonwealth University and a contributing editor.

Me a pilgrim? A born Bostonian Jew?
Not bloody likely!
Where in space and time would I be
searching? I am as I am,

a body on its way to genetic goals, its blood
its only soul, all its mind deluded
with tales it tells itself explains all

it can't hope to know, tell or understand.
Or do a thing about in the spill-off culture
calls the spirit, I call ghosts dreaming.

And if God is we'll never know for sure since
there or here's no point for view or leverage
upon our minds or bodies not just

as expilicable another way. And cannot
alter anything of how we have to live as if
God is. The subject's been

dead so long it's past all resurrection, or use.
Barely time to get on with what we call
our lives and let matters rest, and rot.

I suspect God needs centuries of slaves
to power miracles like Exodus,
and kalpas of ashes to compact a

Third Jerusalem Temple.
And if I guessed wrong,
God's memory's bad, knowledge poor,
and power weak;
which shouldn't surprise me, used

to having to live among hype that turns out
professors barely able to think one thing
at a time, and that not often.

I'd drug myself to the marrow to escape the
apin of watching fools and knaves elect their
peers to raise our hopes and smash them, to

solve unsolvables, were it not that
numbness peace would cut off also
those few joys that justify nothing but keep
off boredom.

In this roaring wind I'd rather snuggle with a
warm blanket and tea than go out
to the hottest love my lust could imagine.

—Richard Sherwin

BOOK LISTING

Editor's Note: The following is a list of books received from publishers but, as of this printing, have not been reviewed for Menorah Review.

Cooperatives. By Raymond Russell. State University of New York Press.

Philip Roth and the Jews. By Alan Cooper. State University of New York Press.

Education, Empowerment and Control: The Case of the Arabs in Israel. By Majid Al-Haj. State University of New York Press.

The Anatomy of Prejudices. By Elizabeth Young-Bruehl. Harvard University Press.

A Cynthia Ozick Reader. Edited by Elaine M. Kauvar. Indiana University Press.

Tradition and Trauma: Studies in the Fiction of S.J. Agnon. Edited By David Patterson and Glenda Abramson. Westview Press.

Judenrat: The Jewish Councils in Eastern Europe Under Nazi Occupation. By Isaiah Trunk. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

Leo Strauss and Judaism. Edited by David Novak. Rowman & Littlefield.

Make-Believe Town: Essays and Remembrances. By David Mamet. New York: Little, Brown and Company.

The Controversy of Zion: Jewish Nationalism, the Jewish State and the Unresolved Jewish Dilemma. By Geoffrey Wheatcroft. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co..

The Kiss of God: Spiritual and Mystical Death in Judaism. By Michael Fishbane. University of Washington Press.

The Jewish Book of Wisdom: The Talmud of the Well-Considered Life. By Jacob and Moam Neusner. New York: The Continuum Publishing Co.

Liberating the Gospels: Reading the Bible With Jewish Eyes. By John Shelby Spong. HarperCollins.

Reading the Rabbis: The Talmud as Literature. By David Kraemer. Oxford University Press.

The Golden Tradition: Jewish Life and Thought in Eastern Europe (paperback reprint). Edited by Lucy S. Dawidowicz. Syracuse University Press.

Greek Jewry in the Twentieth Century, 1913-1983: Patterns of Jewish Survival in the Greek Provinces Before and After the Holocaust. By Joshua Eli Plaut. Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Presses Inc.

Radio Priest: Charles Coughlin, The Father of Hate Radio. By Donald Warren. New York: The Free Press.

Jerusalem in the Twentieth Century. By Martin Gilbert. New York: John Wiley & Sons Inc.

Fragments: Memories of a Wartime Childhood. By Binjamin Wilkomirsky. New York: Schocken Books.

Roots of Radicalism: Jews, Christians and the Left. By Stanley Rothman and So. Robert Lichter. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers.

Haim Nahum: A Sephardic Chief Rabbi in Politics, 1892-1923. Edited by Esther Benbassa. University of Alabama Press.

Smart Jews: The Construction of the Image of Jewish Superior Intelligence. By Sander L. Gilman. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

Budapest Diary: In Search of the Motherbook. By Susan Rubin Suleiman. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

Mystical Union in Judaism, Christianity and Islam: An Ecumenical Dialogue. Edited by Moshe Ideland Bernard McGinn. New York: The Continuum Publishing Co.

Jewish Perspectives on Christianity. Edited by Fritz A. Rothschild. New York: The Continuum Publishing Co.

Early Judaism. By Martin S. Jaffee. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Jews Among Muslims: Communities in the Precolonial Middle East. Edited by Shlomo Deshen and Walter P. Zenner. New York University Press.

The Days and the Seasons: Memoirs. By Evyatar Friesel. Detroit: Wayne State University Press.

Auschwitz: 1270 to the Present. By Deborah Dwork and Robert Jan va Pelt. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.

Removing Anti-Judaism From the Pulpit. Edited by Howard Clark Kee and Irvin J. Borowsky. New York: The Continuum Publishing Co.

Thinking in Jewish. By Jonathan Boyarin. The University of Chicago Press.

Messianism, Zionism and Jewish Religious Radicalism. By Aviezer Ravitzky. The University of Chicago Press.

The Living God: Schleiermacher's Theology Appropriate of Spinoza. By Julia A. Lamm. University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press.

Jewish Power: Inside the American Jewish Establishment. By J.J. Goldberg. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co.

Feminist Perspectives on Jewish Studies. Edited by Lynn Davidman and Shelly Tenenbaum. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

The Holocaust and the Jews of Marseille: The Enforcement of Anti-Semitic Policies in Vichy France. By Donna F. Ryan. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

The Architecture of Memory: A Jewish-Muslim Household in Colonial Algeria, 1937-1962. New York: Cambridge University Press.

The Yishuv in the Shadow of the Holocaust: Zionist Politics and Rescue Aliya, 1933-1939. By Abraham J. Edelheit. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

The Selected Poetry of Yehuda Amichai (revised and expanded). Translated by Chana Bloch and Stephen Mitchell. Berkeley: University of California Press.

BOOK BRIEFINGS

Editor's Note: *Inclusion of a book in "Briefings" does not preclude its being reviewed in a future issue of* Menorah Review.

Isaac Babel 1920 Diary. *Edited by Carol J. Avins. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.* The great Russian writer Isaac Babel is best known for a cycle of stories called *Red Cavalry*, depicting the exploits of the Cossack cavalry during the Polish-Soviet war of 1920. The stories are based on Babel's own experiences riding with the Cossacks—he hid his identity as a Jew, and witnessed firsthand both the devastation of war and the cruelty of Pole and Cossack alike toward the Jewish population. The diary he kept during this time was thought to be lost for many years. A compelling look into a great literary mind of our century, now published for the first time.

Nazi Justiz: Law of the Holocaust. *By Richard Lawrence Miller. Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers.* Death camps were the final expression of a destruction process that began in 1933 when the Nazi regime mobilized an entire society to destroy their neighbors. Miller documents how the German legal system transformed itself into a criminal organization. Germany in the 1930s demonstrates that a Holocaust can happen in any country. With a richness of detail evoking an immediacy normally found in novels, *Nazi Justiz* offers a chilling portrayal of essentially good persons who became oblivious to the horrors they caused.

Why Should Jews Survive? Looking Past the Holocaust Toward a Jewish Future. *By Michael Goldberg. New York: Oxford University Press.* In this book, Goldberg boldly attacks what he calls the "Holocaust cult," challenging Jews to return to a deeper, richer sense of purpose. Jews need positive reasons for remaining Jewish; they need to return to the Exodus as their master story. The Jews should survive, he argues, because they are the linchpin in God's redemption of the world. The author gives a powerfully argued challenge to the dominant theme of modern Jewish thought.

Uncertain Refuge: Italy and the Jews During the Holocaust. *By Nicola Caracciolo. Champaign: The University of Illinois Press.* Of the 50,000 Jews in pre-war Italy, 42,000 survived the World War II period. In a country allied with the Nazis, how did so many survive? Why did individuals and networks take such great risks to rescue them? The author interviewed more than 60 Jewish survivors and some of their rescuers. The results show that Italy never succumbed to the genocidal mania of its German ally and covertly opposed the "Final Solution." This book is a vivid and revealing story of what life was like for Jews in wartime Italy.

Memoirs of a Jewish Extremist: An American Story. *By Yossi Klein Halevi. Boston: Little, Brown and Company.* Halevi looks back on his youth with wry affection, reflecting on who he was, a follower of Meir Kahane, and why, and seeing his hotheaded and passionate fellow activists from the perspective of time. He writes of his life with great wit and style in this moving story of coming of age and of coming to an understanding of both past and present.

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BOOK BRIEFINGS

A Supplement to Menorah Review

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Songs of Love and Grief: A Bilingual Anthology in the Verse Forms of the Original. *By Heinrich Heine, translated by Walter W. Arndt. Evanston, Il: Northwestern University Press.* Although Heine's poems seem simple on the surface, the multiple allusions, word plays, and shifts and breaks in diction and tone make them almost impossible to translated. Arndt not only renders the meaning of the originals but preserves the poems' rhyme schemes as well as their moods and multiple cultural resonances. This bilingual edition is an illuminating introduction to the poetry of Heine.

The Wiles of Women, The Wiles of Men: Joseph and Potiphar's Wife in Ancient Near Eastern, Jewish and Islamic Folklore. *By Shalom Goldman. Albany: State University of New York Press.* One of the world's oldest recorded folktales tells the story of a handsome young man and the older woman in whose house he resides. The woman attempts to seduce him. When he turns her turns, she is enraged and to her husband she accuses the young man of attacking her. The husband has the young man punished, but it is the punishment that leads to the hero's vindication and rise to prominence. We know this tale as the story of Joseph and Potiphar's wife in the Hebrew Bible. Goldman shows that a similar story exists in the scriptures and folklore of many peoples and cultures. He compares and contrasts the treatment of this motif and its originality in the Hebrew narrative.

Out of the Shadow: A Russian Jewish Girlhood on the Lower East Side. *By Rose Cohen. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.* In this autobiography, Cohen looks back on her family's journey from Tsarist Russia to the Lower East Side. Her account of their struggles and of her own coming of age in a complex new world illustrates what was, for some, the American experience. First published in 1918, her narrative conveys a powerful sense of the aspirations and frustrations of an immigrant Jewish family in an alien culture.

Raoul Wallenberg *(rev. ed.). By Harvey Rosenfeld. New York: Holmes & Meier.* An international symbol of 20th-century humanitarianism, Wallenberg, the Swedish diplomat, issues countless "false" visas and other documents—virtual life certificates—that saved approximately 100,000 Jews from the Nazis in wartime Hungary. Then in 1945, as the war drew to a close, he disappeared after being taken into custody by Soviet military police. Today his fate is still unknown. The expanded version of this authoritative biography discusses previously sealed prison records and archives; reports of recent sightings of Wallenberg, the Wallenberg family's historical lawsuit against the former Soviet Union; and the worldwide activities in honor of this man who could not stand by idly.

The Binding [Aqedah] and Its Transformations in Judaism and Islam. *By Mishael Maswari Caspi and Sascha Benjamin Cohen. Lewiston, NY: Mellen Biblical Press.* What father would even consider killing his own son? What son would willingly submit to such seemingly preposterous demands? These questions are the focus of the authors with regard to the binding of Isaac and its parallels in Islamic and Christian traditions. Their approach is that of a religio-literary point of view. They describe how the story is interpreted in Judaism, Christianity and Islam. In all three traditions one shared theme is the presence of Abraham the father.

Sojourners: The Return of German Jews and the Question of Identity. *By John Borneman and Jeffrey M. Peck. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.* This absorbing book of interviews takes one to the heart of modern German Jewish history. The interviews provide an exceptionally varied and intimate portrait of Jewish experience in 20th-century Germany. There are first-hand accounts of the Weimar Republic, the Nazi era, the Holocaust and the divided Germany of the Cold War era. Also, there are vivid descriptions of the new united Germany with its alarming resurgence of xenophobia and anti-Semitism.

The People of the Dead Sea Scrolls: Their Writings, Beliefs and Practices. *By Florentino Garcia and Julio Trebolle Barrera. New York: E.J. Brill.* Written by two distinguished scholars, this authoritative volume provides reliable, up-to-date information on the literary heritage and social organization of the Qumran community, its relgious beliefs, and its link with early Christianity. The reader is given an opportunity to look behind the scenes, to gain an insight into the state of current research on the Dead Sea texts and to experience, first-hand, the ongoing scholarly debate on the origins of the Essene movement and the Qumran sect.

Events and Movements in Modern Judaism. *Edited by Raphael Patai and Emanuel Goldsmith. New York: Paragon House.* In the last century a series of revolutions have reshaped the nature of Jewish communities in the United States and Israel. Judaism, including the religious ideologies, institutions and orientations of Jews, has been transformed as a part of, and in response to, the revolutionary changes in the social contexts of the Jewish communities. The assaults of an American secular pluralistic society have produced radical changes on the fragile contemporary Jewish identity. The 17 essays included in this fascinating volume discuss the major events and trends in modern Jewish history as well as religious and secular movements that have responded to those trends and events. They elucidate the major events and responses that have illuminated current Jewish issues and led to the strengthening of modern Jewish life.

Ideology of Death: Why the Holocaust Happened in Germany. *By John Weiss. Chicago: Ivan R. Dee Inc., Publisher.* Despite the vast literature about anti-Semitism and the Holocaust, we do not understand why the destruction of the Jews was conceived and implemented by the Germans. Weiss supplies this understanding in a stunning narrative history. He rejects the notion that the Holocaust was a product of Nazi fanaticism, showing instead how racist ideas ingrained in German culture led to the unthinkable. He refuses to absolve the Germans of responsibility. He does not seek their collective guilt, but aims to bury the notion "No Hitler, no Holocaust." He demonstrates that the causes of the Holocaust are not located chiefly in the deep recesses of deviant psyches.

Sinai and Olympus: A Comparative Study. *By Joseph P. Schultz and Lois Spatz. Lanham, MD: University Press of America Inc.* This volume concentrates primarily on th myth and philosophy of archaic and classical Greece and the Biblical-rabbinic legacy of classical Israel. In the process of forming their distinct identities, Hebrew and Greek thinkers approached and answered a nest of fundamental questions common to both cultures. The authors show how the responses to various questions within each culture are often interdependent. Hebrew monotheism provided the basic framework for examining fundamental questions whereas polytheism, which the Greeks retained, condition them toward pluralistic approaches to these issues. There are clear differences; but there are similaritiies because the Greeks endeavored to find a unifying concept and to develop ethical standards based on it.

Sage, Priest, Prophet: Religious and Intellectual Leadership in Ancient Israel. *By Joseph Blenkinsopp. Louisville, KY: Westminister/John Knox Press.* The author investigates three forms of Biblical Israel's intellectual and religious leadership: sage, priest and prophet. The people who occupied these roles were directly responsible for what has appeared in the Old Testament texts. Blenkinsopp looks at the development and character of these roles and how they functioned in their particular time and place. This book gives us a keener understanding of the literature of the Hebrew Bible and the society in which it evolved. It also sheds light on how certain religious traditions originated and how they developed.

The Lesser of Two Evils: Eastern European Jewry Under Soviet Rule, 1939-1941. *By Dov Levin. Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society.* This is the only study that deals comprehensively with the economic, social, religious, cultural and political consequences of a crucial episode in modern history; the fate of two million Jews following the infamous Ribbentrop-Molotov pact of August 1939, which divided the regions of eastern Poland, the Baltics and eastern Romania between Germany and the Soviet Union. The events that occurred during this period in Jewish history led directly to the destruction of the Jewish populations of these regions in the Holocaust.

Community and Polity: The Organizational Dynamics of American Jewry *(revised and updated). By Daniel J. Elazar. Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society.* This revised and updated edition is designed to serve two purposes: to provide a basic survey of the structure and the functions of the American Jewish community and to suggest how that community should be understood as a body politic, a polity that is not a state but is no less real from a political perspective. Elazer examines transformations taking place in the federation movement, shifts in the forms and organization of Jewish education, changes taking place in synagogue movements, and the problems of Jewish unity generated by intermovement competition.

Portrait of American Jews: The Last Half of the 20th Century. *By Samuel C. Heilman. Seattle: University of Washington Press.* Has America been a place that has preserved and protected Jewish life? Is it a place in which a Jewish future is ensured? Heilman grapples with these questions from a sociological perspective. The second half of the 20th century has been a time of assimilation, of swelling rates of intermarriage and of large numbers ignoring their Jewishness completely. Taking a long view of American Jewry, this is one of very few books that build on specific data but get beyond the detail. All who want to know what it means and has meant to be an American Jew will find this volume of great interest.

Rabin of Israel: Warrior For Peace. *By Robert Slater. New York: HarperCollins Publishers.* Written with Rabin's cooperation, this book is based on years of research and extensive interviews with colleagues, friends, immediate family members and Rabin himself. It provides painstakingly detailed up-to-the-minute narrative of the prime minister's last few hours including his final words, the aftermath of his assassination and reactions from leading participants in the events surrounding his death. Slater follows the career of a crusader brave enough to challenge Mideast history and courageous enough to face the consequences of his words and deeds.

Jews on the Move: Implications for Jewish Identity. *By Sidney and Alice Goldstein. Albany: State University of New York Press.* Based on data from the 1990 National Jewish Population Survey, the authors examine the high level of mobility among American Jews and their increasing dispersion throughout the United States and how this presents new challenges to the national Jewish community. They argue that fuller attention to the role of migration in the redistribution of Jewish Americans is a key to understanding the dynamics underlying changes in the structure of the Jewish American community and in levels of individual identity.

Ruth's Journey: A Survivor's Memoir. *By Ruth Glasberg Gold. Gainesville: University Press of Florida.* "On March 6, 1944, about 2,000 orphans were rescued from Romanian concentration camps in Transnistria-Ukraine. I was one of them." So begins Ruth Gold's memoir, a story that illuminates and transcends survival. Combining historical events with intensely personal narrative, Ruth Gold has created a memorial to the Jews of Transnistria. Moreover, the courageous spirit of her life, despite her shattering psychological and phsical traumas, conveys a message of those who comtemplate "meaning" in the Holocaust. Readers are compelled forward to the final page.

A Lie and a Libel: The History of the Protocols of the Elders of Zion. *By Binjamin W. Segel. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.* A bizarre and repugnant mystery of the 20th century is the durability of the *Protocols*, a clumsy forgery purporting to be evidence of the supposed Jewish plot to rule the world. In 1924 Germany, the Jewish author and journalist Binjamin Segel wrote a major historical expose of the fraud and later edited his work into a shorter form. Translator Richard S. Levy provides an extensive introduction on the circumstances of Segel's work and the story of the *Protocols* up to the 1990s, including an explanation of its continuing psychological appeal and political function.

Israel in Comparative Perspective: Challenging the Conventional Wisdom. *Edited by Michael N. Barnett. Albany: State University of New York Press.* Because Israel is unique in many dimensions, many social scientists consider it a historical peculiarity. This book of original essays challenges the image of Israeli uniqueness and the status of the Israeli case and, at the same time, corrects some common misperceptions about the comparative method in general and case selection in particular. At the same time, it compares Israeli and Arab experiences and addresses critical issues in Middle Eastern studies. The authors demonstrate how our understanding of the region can be enriched by using models and theories developed in other regions to reexamine Israeli history.

Shakespeare and the Jews. *By James Shapiro. New York: Columbia University Press.* Drawing on Elizabethan diaries, travel narratives, confessions of faith, sermons, political tracts and parliamentary debates, Shapiro explores questions about Jews that preoccupied Shakespeare's England. He shows how Elizabethans imagined Jews to be utterly different from themselves—in religion, race, nationality and even sexuality. He looks into the crisis of cultural identity in that post-Reformation world. In this formidably researched book, the author sheds fascinating light on the work of Shakespeare and his contemporaries, opening new questions about culture and identity in Elizabethan England.