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JPS preserves the legacy of many of the twentieth century's greatest Jewish thinkers, including Abraham Joshua Heschel, Mordecai Kaplan, and Joseph Soloveitchik. To learn about how you can help in this effort by joining the JPS Heritage Circle while acquiring a personalized JPS Legacy Library, please contact director Rabbi Barry Schwartz at 215-832-0607 or bschwartz@jps.org.

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**Are you building a Jewish home library?**

Look for the yad symbol for JPS recommendations:
The Biblical Hero
Portraits in Nobility and Fallibility
ELLIOTT RABIN

What the Bible reveals about real heroes
Approaching the Bible in an original way—comparing biblical heroes to heroes in world literature—Elliott Rabin addresses a core biblical question: What is the Bible telling us about what it means to be a hero?

Focusing on the lives of six major biblical characters—Moses, Samson, David, Esther, Abraham, and Jacob—Rabin examines their resemblance to hero types found in (and perhaps drawn from) other literatures and analyzes why the Bible depicts its heroes less gloriously than do the texts of other cultures:

- Moses founds the nation of Israel—and is short-tempered and weak-armed.
- Samson, arrogant and unhinged, can kill a thousand enemies with his bare hands.
- David establishes a centralized, unified, triumphal government—through pretense and self-deception.
- Esther saves her people but marries a murderous, misogynist king.
- Abraham’s relationships are wracked with tension.
- Jacob fathers twelve tribes—and wins his inheritance through deceit.

In the end, is God the real hero? Or is God too removed from human constraints to even be called a “hero”?

Ultimately, Rabin excavates how the Bible’s unique perspective on heroism can address our own deep-seated need for human-scale heroes.

Elliott Rabin is the director of thought leadership at Prizmah: Center for Jewish Day Schools, where he edits HaYidion, the leading publication for Jewish day schools. He is the author of Understanding the Hebrew Bible: A Reader’s Guide.

“Elliott Rabin’s delightful and highly readable exploration of biblical narratives and their counterparts in ancient myths offers us fresh insights into Abraham, Samson, Esther, and other characters, and forever changes how we experience their triumphs and struggles. Ultimately, The Biblical Hero is a story about us: complex human characters who, in heroic fashion, struggle with our imperfections.”—Rabbi Elie Kaunfer, CEO, Hadar Institute

MARCH 2020
336 pp. • 2 indexes
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ALSO OF INTEREST
Path of the Prophets
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Rabbi Barry L. Schwartz
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“What a compelling piece of legitimate courtroom theater! I know the biblical story inside out. If challenged, I could possibly recite it by heart. And yet, as I read Cain v. Abel, it felt almost as though I hadn’t ever encountered it before—that’s how clever and interesting this way of reading the text struck me.”
—Rabbi Martin S. Cohen, Shelter Rock Jewish Center, Roslyn, New York

“How do you make an ancient story come to life? By making the human drama live. Bringing us the testimony and perspective of every participant, Rabbi Dan Ornstein offers us a riveting read and a chance to expand our own humanity at the same time.”
—Rabbi Bradley Shavit Artson, dean of the Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies, American Jewish University

“What a compelling piece of legitimate courtroom theater! I know the biblical story inside out. If challenged, I could possibly recite it by heart. And yet, as I read Cain v. Abel, it felt almost as though I hadn’t ever encountered it before—that’s how clever and interesting this way of reading the text struck me.”
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—Rabbi Bradley Shavit Artson, dean of the Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies, American Jewish University

“Cain v. Abel masterfully leads us to contemplate the essential question by which we live: ‘Am I my brother’s keeper?’”
—Rabbi Burton L. Visotzky, Appleman Professor of Midrash and Interreligious Studies, Jewish Theological Seminary

Cain v. Abel
A Jewish Courtroom Drama
RABBI DAN ORNSTEIN

Cain—and humanity—on trial
Enter the packed courtroom and take your seat as a juror on the Cain v. Abel trial. Soon, the prosecution and defense attorneys (angels from Jewish legend) will call Cain, Abel, Sin, Adam, Eve, and God to the witness stand to present their perspectives on the world’s first murder. Great Jewish commentators throughout the ages will also offer contradictory testimony on Cain’s emotional, societal, and spiritual influences. As jurors, when we mete out Cain’s punishment, must we factor in his family history, psychological makeup, and the human impulse to sin?

In this highly eclectic and gripping compilation of insights by Jewish commentators on the Cain and Abel story, courtroom scenes are juxtaposed with the author’s commentary, advancing novel insights and introspection. As each of us grapples with Cain’s actions, we confront our own darkest traits. If Cain is a symbol for all humanity, what can we do to avoid becoming like him? Furthering this conversation, Rabbi Dan Ornstein includes a discussion and activity guide to promote open dialogue about human brokenness and healing, personal impulses, and societal responsibility.

Rabbi Dan Ornstein leads Congregation Ohav Shalom in Albany, New York. He blogs at the Times of Israel and Jewish Values Online, contributes essays at WAMC Northeast Public Radio, and wrote for the Mesorah Matrix book series on Judaism.

APRIL 2020
240 pp. • Discussion and activity guide
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ALSO OF INTEREST

Justice for All
How the Jewish Bible Revolutionized Ethics
Jeremiah Unterman
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Radiance
Creative Mitzvah Living
The Selected Prose and Poetry of Danny Siegel
DANNY SIEGEL
EDITED BY RABBI NEAL GOLD
FOREWORD BY RABBI JOSEPH TELUSHKIN

Career-spanning anthology by a driving Jewish force for a better world

This first anthology of the most important writings by Danny Siegel, spanning and renewing fifty years of his insights, Radiance intersperses soulful Jewish texts with innovative Mitzvah ideas to rouse individuals and communities to transform our lives, communities, neighborhoods, and world.

As a renowned teacher Siegel describes the creative—often startling—ways individuals from different walks of life have brought compassion into the world, recognizes them as Mitzvah heroes, and suggests how we can apply their life lessons. He also plumbs how giving enriches living and presents Jewishly informed best principles for doing more world repair (Tikkun Olam).

As a scholar of rabbinic literature Siegel offers translations and commentaries on Jewish texts illuminating Tzedakah, values, caring, and leadership. In addition, he tops off a half-century of his thought with five new essays reflecting on his visions for a better world. The selected poetry asks religious and theological questions in the face of oppression and war, gives voice to personal moments often neglected by ritual, and exults at the wonders of modern Israel and the revelation of love.

Both inspirational and pragmatic, this anthology offers practical guidance on using Siegel’s classic and novel works in personal living and in Jewish organizational settings. Ultimately, in exploring the dynamic interaction between heroes, texts, and ourselves, Siegel seeks to engage each of us in discovering our own radiant potential for creative Mitzvah living.

Danny Siegel is a well-known author, lecturer, and poet and has served as the Tzedakah resource person on the United Synagogue Youth Israel Pilgrimage for more than four decades. He is the author of nearly thirty books, including Where Heaven and Earth Touch: An Anthology of Midrash and Halachah.

“No one has inspired the Jewish community to perform acts of kindness more than Danny Siegel, and this comprehensive collection of his most radiant works sings out to us all. Radiance is a spiritual masterpiece!”—Rabbi David Ellenson, chancellor emeritus, Hebrew Union College–Jewish Institute of Religion

“In a classic comic book trope, a hitherto ordinary person is hit by a powerful, mysterious ray and becomes endowed with superpowers. If you allow yourself to be hit by this collection’s rays of love and life wisdom, you will emerge a Mitzvah superhero.”—Rabbi Yitz Greenberg, author of For the Sake of Heaven and Earth: The New Encounter between Judaism and Christianity

MAY 2020
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A Kabbalah and Jewish Mysticism Reader
Daniel M. Horwitz
$45.00 • paperback • 978-0-8276-1256-3
Unbinding Isaac
The Significance of the Akedah for Modern Jewish Thought
AARON KOLLER

An original reading of the Akedah for our times

Unbinding Isaac takes readers on a trek of discovery for our times into the binding of Isaac story. Nineteenth-century Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard viewed the story as teaching suspension of ethics for the sake of faith, and subsequent Jewish thinkers developed this idea as a cornerstone of their religious worldview. Aaron Koller examines and critiques Kierkegaard’s perspective—and later incarnations of it—on textual, religious, and ethical grounds. He also explores the current of criticism of Abraham in Jewish thought, from ancient poems and midrashim to contemporary Israel narratives, as well as Jewish responses to the Akedah over the generations.

Finally, bringing together all these multiple strands of thought—along with modern knowledge of human sacrifice in the Phoenician world—Koller offers an original reading of the Akedah. The biblical God would like to want child sacrifice—because it is in fact a remarkable display of devotion—but more than that, he does not want child sacrifice because it would violate the child’s autonomy. Thus, the high point in the drama is not the binding of Isaac but the moment when Abraham is told to release him. The Torah does not allow child sacrifice, though by contrast, some of Israel’s neighbors viewed it as a religiously inspiring act. The binding of Isaac teaches us that an authentically religious act cannot be done through the harm of another human being.

Aaron Koller is a professor of Near Eastern studies at Yeshiva University and chair of the department of Jewish Studies at Yeshiva College. He is author of The Ancient Hebrew Semantic Field of Cutting Tools and Esther in Ancient Jewish Thought.

“Koller’s bold claim that ‘one person’s religious fulfillment cannot come through harm to another’ stands alone as a textually rooted, morally compelling vision for sincere faith in a modern world that too often finds form in false fundamentalisms. Unbinding Isaac should be required reading for all of us seeking the voice of the ethical imperative in religious community.” —Yehuda Kurtzer, president, Shalom Hartman Institute of North America

JULY 2020
282 pp. • 3 illustrations, index
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ALSO OF INTEREST
Joseph
Portraits through the Ages
Alan T. Levenson
$32.95 • hardcover • 978-0-8276-1250-1
Thinking about God
Jewish Views
RABBI KARI H. TULING

Highlights the interplay of compelling and contrasting God concepts over time

Who—or what—is God? Is God like a person? Does God have a gender? Does God have a special relationship with the Jewish people? Does God intervene in our lives? Is God good—and, if yes, why does evil persist in the world? In investigating how Jewish thinkers have approached these and other questions, Rabbi Kari H. Tuling elucidates many compelling—and contrasting—ways of thinking about God in Jewish tradition.

Thinking about God addresses the genuinely intertextual nature of evolving Jewish God concepts. Just as in Jewish thought the Bible and other historical texts are living documents, still present and relevant to the conversation unfolding now, and just as a Jewish theologian examining a core concept responds to the full tapestry of Jewish thought on the subject all at once, this book is organized topically, covers Jewish sources (including liturgy) from the biblical to the postmodern era, and highlights the interplay between texts over time, up through our own era.

A highly accessible resource for introductory students, Thinking about God also makes important yet challenging theological texts understandable. By breaking down each selected text into its core components, Tuling helps the reader absorb it both on its own terms and in the context of essential theological questions of the ages. Readers of all backgrounds will discover new ways to contemplate God.

Rabbi Kari H. Tuling currently serves Congregation Kol Haverim, Glastonbury, Connecticut. Previously, she served as rabbi at Temple Beth Israel, Plattsburgh, New York, and as an instructor at the State University of New York, Plattsburgh.

ALSO OF INTEREST

Thinking about the Torah
A Philosopher Reads the Bible
Kenneth Seeskin
$21.95 • paperback • 978-0-8276-1262-4

“In guiding the reader to think in different ways about God, Rabbi Kari H. Tuling proves herself a master pedagogue who engages the reader on every page. This is an important religious book!”—Rabbi David Ellenson, chancellor emeritus, Hebrew Union College–Jewish Institute of Religion

“What a comprehensive and exceptionally accessible complement to the Jewish studies classroom. Tuling’s analysis is delightfully methodical—thoughtful observations and comparisons about Jewish belief promulgated within traditional sources, subsequently challenged by modern emancipatory influences, and further disrupted by postmodern interrogations into the very necessity of God. At the same time, in leading the reader beyond conventional texts on Jewish thought, this work has much in common with the creative, groundbreaking theological reflections of Buber, Levinas, and Rosenzweig.”—Jonathan R. Slater, director, Jewish Studies Program, State University of New York, Plattsburgh

AUGUST 2020
440 pp. • index
$32.95 • paperback • 978-0-8276-1301-0
JPS Essential Judaism Series
Recently Released

A New Hasidism: Roots
EDITED BY ARTHUR GREEN AND ARIEL EVAN MAYSE

This groundbreaking work of Neo Hasidic philosophy draws together the writings of five great twentieth century European and American Jewish thinkers—Hillel Zeitlin, Martin Buber, Abraham Joshua Heschel, Shlomo Carlebach, Zalman Schachter Shalomi—plus a young Arthur Green, sharing each thinker’s reflections on the inner life of the individual and dreams of creating a Neo Hasidic spiritual community. The editors’ introductions and notes analyze each thinker’s unique contribution to Neo-Hasidic religious thought and influence on the movement.

“For more than a hundred years, people in search of religious renewal who are not Hasidic have found inspiration in Hasidism. Now Arthur Green and Ariel Mayse, both scholars of Hasidism and committed spiritual seekers, have assembled critical texts for the fashioning of Neo-Hasidism in the twenty-first century. The result is a landmark contribution to Jewish spirituality.”—David Biale, Emanuel Ringelblum Distinguished Professor of Jewish History at the University of California, Davis, and editor in chief of Hasidism: A New History

432 pp. • 6 x 9
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A New Hasidism: Branches
EDITED BY ARTHUR GREEN AND ARIEL EVAN MAYSE

A New Hasidism: Branches represents a coming-of-age for an old-new approach to Judaism. Addressed to the contemporary seeker, the volume’s essays offer two opening Neo-Hasidic credos, followed by perspectives on many key issues: halakhah, leadership, interfaith, the role of women, ecology, meditation, and more. A concluding interview with the editors is refreshing in its honesty and openheartedness.

“In two sequential volumes, the diamonds of Hasidic spiritual teaching have been skillfully recut and set to offer seekers of all backgrounds entry into a challenging and soul-expanding opportunity. You are invited to enter a multigenerational conversation, deeply engage with the most inspiring teachings of Hasidic and contemporary teachers, build upon these insights, and carry them forward.”—Rabbi Marcia Prager, director and dean of the ALEPH Ordination Program and author of Path of Blessing: Experiencing the Abundance of the Divine

496 pp. • 6 x 9
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Arthur Green is rector of the Rabbinical School and Irving Brudnick Professor of Jewish Philosophy and Religion at Hebrew College. He is the author or editor of more than a dozen books, including The Heart of the Matter: Studies in Jewish Mysticism and Theology (JPS, 2015). Ariel Evan Mayse is an assistant professor of religious studies at Stanford University and editor of From the Depth of the Well: An Anthology of Jewish Mysticism.
Recently Released

The Jews Should Keep Quiet
Franklin D. Roosevelt, Rabbi Stephen S. Wise, and the Holocaust
RAFAEL MEDOFF

A new look at FDR’s response to the Holocaust

Based on recently discovered documents, The Jews Should Keep Quiet reassesses the hows and whys behind the Franklin D. Roosevelt administration’s fateful policies during the Holocaust. Rafael Medoff delves into difficult truths: With FDR’s consent, the administration deliberately suppressed European immigration far below the limits set by U.S. law. His administration also refused to admit Jewish refugees to the U.S. Virgin Islands, dismissed proposals to use empty Liberty ships returning from Europe to carry refugees, and rejected pleas to drop bombs on the railways leading to Auschwitz, even while American planes were bombing targets only a few miles away—actions that would not have conflicted with the larger goal of winning the war.

What motivated FDR? Medoff explores the sensitive question of the president’s private sentiments toward Jews. Unmasking strong parallels between Roosevelt’s statements regarding Jews and Asians, he connects the administration’s policies of excluding Jewish refugees and interning Japanese Americans.

The Jews Should Keep Quiet further reveals how FDR’s personal relationship with Rabbi Stephen S. Wise, American Jewry’s foremost leader in the 1930s and 1940s, swayed the U.S. response to the Holocaust. Documenting how Roosevelt and others pressured Wise to stifle American Jewish criticism of FDR’s policies, Medoff chronicles how and why the American Jewish community largely fell in line with Wise. Ultimately Medoff weighs the administration’s realistic options for rescue action, which, if taken, would have saved many lives.

Rafael Medoff is founding director of the David S. Wyman Institute for Holocaust Studies and coeditor of the institute’s online Encyclopedia of America’s Response to the Holocaust. He has taught history at Ohio State University, the State University of New York at Purchase, and elsewhere, and has written nineteen books about American Jewish history, the Holocaust, and related topics, including Too Little, and Almost Too Late: The War Refugee Board and America’s Response to the Holocaust.

“Highly original. . . . Expanding on David S. Wyman’s pathbreaking work on America’s response to the Holocaust, using new archival materials and interviews with persons then on the scene, Medoff provides the best assessment to date of the relationship between America’s foremost Jewish leader, Rabbi Stephen S. Wise, and President Franklin D. Roosevelt.”—Professor Stephen H. Norwood, author of The Third Reich in the Ivory Tower and coeditor of Encyclopedia of American Jewish History

“Reveals in troubling detail how FDR manipulated American Jewish leaders to suppress criticism of his abandonment of Europe’s Jews during the Holocaust. . . . We need to learn from Rafael Medoff’s disturbing but necessary and enlightening study of moral failure and its consequences.”—Rudy Boschwitz, U.S. senator (1978–91)

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Mark Glickman
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Recently Released

**Abraham Joshua Heschel**
Mind, Heart, Soul
A One-Volume Biography
EDWARD K. KAPLAN

In this first one-volume biography of Abraham Joshua Heschel in English, Edward K. Kaplan tells the engrossing, behind-the-scenes story of the life, philosophy, struggles, yearnings, writings, and activism of one of the twentieth-century’s most outstanding Jewish thinkers.

From prodigiously documented stories Heschel himself emerges—mind, heart, and soul. Kaplan elucidates how Heschel remained forever torn between faith and anguish; between love of God and abhorrence of human apathy, moral weakness, and deliberate evil; between the compassion of the Baal Shem Tov of Medzibozh and the Kotzker rebbe’s cruel demands for truth. “My heart,” Heschel acknowledged, is “in Medzibozh, my mind in Kotzk.”

“Edward K. Kaplan’s magisterial biography of the greatest Jewish prophetic figure of the barbaric twentieth century is a masterpiece! It is also incredibly timely. We need the wisdom, courage, and compassion of the inimitable Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel. The very future of our world depends, in part, on the legacy of Heschel’s prophetic witness.”

—Cornel West, Professor of the Practice of Public Philosophy, Harvard University

488 pp. • 6 x 9 • 13 photographs, index
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**In This Hour**
Heschel’s Writings in Nazi Germany and London Exile
ABRAHAM JOSHUA HESCHEL
FOREWORD BY SUSANNAH HESCHEL
EDITED AND ANNOTATED BY HELEN PLOTKIN
TRANSLATIONS BY STEPHEN LEHMANN AND MARION FABER

This first English publication of selected German writings by Abraham Joshua Heschel includes his vision for Jewish education; personalities in Jewish history; Don Yitzhak Abravanel; the power of repentance; a short story on Jewish exile; and meditations on suffering, prayer, and spirituality. Written primarily for Berlin Jewry’s official news organ during Heschel’s years in Nazi Germany, these newly translated essays fill a significant void in Heschel’s bibliography as they reveal his profound insights on the redemptive role of Jewish learning in the past and the future.

“These essays represent an act of consolation through history, contemporary comment through deflection, and an affirmation of the Jewish propensity for recovery. . . . [They also strengthen] the idea that Heschel’s politico-spiritual action of the 1960s is best understood in the context of these stirrings of spiritual resistance in the 1930s.”—Michael Marmur, Jewish Review of Books

240 pp. • 6 x 9 • 3 illustrations
$29.95 • hardcover • 978-0-8276-1322-5
Typically Jewish

NANCY KALIKOW MAXWELL

A warm, funny, and candid guide to being Jewish

Is laughter essential to Jewish identity? Do Jews possess special radar for recognizing members of the tribe? Since Jews live longer and make love more often, why don’t more people join the tribe? “More deli than deity” writer Nancy Kalikow Maxwell poses many such questions in eight chapters—“Worrying,” “Kvelling,” “Dying,” “Noshing,” “Laughing,” “Detecting,” “Dwelling,” and “Joining”—exploring what it means to be “typically Jewish.” While unearthing answers from rabbis, researchers, and her assembled Jury on Jewishness (Jewish friends she roped into conversation), she—and we—make a variety of discoveries. For example:

• Jews worry about continuity, even though Rabbi Mordechai of Lechovitz prohibited even that: “All worrying is forbidden, except to worry that one is worried.”

• Kvell-worthy fact: About 75 percent of American Jews give to charity versus 63 percent of Americans as a whole.

• Since reciting Kaddish brought secular Jews to synagogue, the rabbis, aware of their captive audience, moved the prayer to the end of the service.

• Who’s Jewish? About a quarter of Nobel Prize winners, an estimated 80 percent of comedians at one point, and the winner of Nazi Germany’s Most Perfect Aryan Child Contest.

Readers will enjoy learning about how Jews feel, think, act, love, and live. They’ll also schmooze as they use the book’s “Typically Jewish, Atypically Fun” discussion guide.

Nancy Kalikow Maxwell is a librarian, an award-winning writer, and a frequent contributor to Jewish media. She is the author of six books and the creator of funny cards for Hallmark’s Tree of Life Jewish card line.

“Typically Jewish provides an original, down-to-earth, earnest look at pressing questions about identity and culture faced by the Jewish community, looking at the way Jews live their lives.”—Jewish News

“As Maxwell takes readers on a humorous safari to observe Jews in their natural habitat, even Jews who have never set foot in a synagogue or JCC will recognize themselves with wondrous insight. And Jews who love learning—in other words, all of us—will delight in learning a lot from Typically Jewish. I definitely did.”—Maggie Anton, author of Rashi’s Daughters and Fifty Shades of Talmud

“I can’t imagine a more accessible or fun book for a Jewish book club to discuss than this one.”—Jordana Horn, Lilith

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Blu Greenberg
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(See pages 14–15)

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