

Updated & Revised



A JEWISH
PHILOSOPHY
OF HISTORY

*Israel's Degradation
& Redemption*

PAUL EIDELBERG

**A JEWISH PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY:
ISRAEL'S DEGRADATION AND REDEMPTION**

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I also want to thank Professor Will Morrisey for reading parts of the manuscript and for helpful comments on Chapter 11 dealing with Christianity.

Abbreviated versions of Chapters 2 and 12, which discuss, respectively, Israel's "Arab Problem" and the clash of civilizations between Islam and the West, were previously published by the *Ariel Center for Policy Research*, whose dauntless director, Professor Arie Stav, has brought many of my controversial essays to public attention in Israel.

Of course, I alone am responsible for the views contained in this book as well as for its shortcomings.

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PROLOGUE

REFLECTING on *The Magic Mountain*, Thomas Mann writes: “Since it is certainly not customary for an author to discuss his own work, perhaps a word of apology, or at least of explanation, should occupy the first place.”

Almost every Friday morning for eighteen years I was privileged to sit at the table of an extraordinary Torah philosopher and Talmudist, the late Gaon Dr. Chaim Zimmerman. Rav Chaim was widely known for his prodigious memory. The Babylonian and Jerusalem Talmuds and literally thousands of other Hebrew tomes were stored in his memory as if his mind were a giant computer. But unlike a computer, his was a creative mind. He could interface Torah with science and philosophy as well as with politics and thereby illuminate the Torah as the paradigm of reason and of how man should live.

Pondering the magnificence of the Torah and greatness of the Sages of Israel illuminated by Dr. Zimmerman, I became all the more appalled by the lack of Jewish national pride among Israel’s political and intellectual elites. Something had to be done to correct this degraded state of affairs. And so, with Rav Chaim’s encouragement, I wrote *Jerusalem versus Athens: Toward a General Theory of Existence* (1983). The title of that book may remind some people of “Jerusalem and Athens,” an essay written by the renowned Professor Leo Strauss with whom I studied at the University of Chicago. *Jerusalem versus Athens* differs profoundly from “Jerusalem and Athens.”

While writing *Jerusalem versus Athens* I became aware of a Jewish philosophy of history. It seemed to me that developments in philosophy, science, and world politics since the destruction of the First Temple in 586 BCE were carrying out the world-historical goal of the Torah, namely, the elimination of idolatry on the one hand, and the universal recognition of ethical monotheism on the other. Evidence of a Jewish philosophy of history also appeared in two subsequent books of mine, *Beyond the Secular Mind: A Judaic Response to the Problems of Modernity* (1989), and *Judaic Man: Toward a Reconstruction of Western Civilization* (1996).

It so happened, however, that the existential threat confronting Israel prompted me to write two other books, one concerning the flawed mentality of Israel’s political and intellectual leaders, the other concerning Israel’s political system, whose fragmented character prevents the government from pursuing a coherent and resolute national strategy against Israel’s Arab foes. But now the time had come to weave the threads of that Jewish philosophy of history I had seen two decades ago, especially in view of Israel’s current degradation and the despair of so many Jews regarding Israel’s future. Time

the eternal Ideas and formed the heavens and the earth. But Plato's Demiurge is a craftsman, not a creator. He fashioned the visible universe from a preexisting, formless matter; he did not create that "matter." There is no *creatio ex nihilo* in Greek philosophy. Thanks to Einstein's theory of general relativity, however, *creatio ex nihilo* has become the reigning cosmology of science. This confirms the account of creation in Genesis 1:1 and lends credence to the idea that the Torah is the "DNA" of Nature and History.³ Obviously this idea also makes a Jewish philosophy of history possible—the subject of Part II of this book.

Chapter 8 sets forth the World-Historical Program of the Torah, the fulfillment of which requires the Chosen People. The concept of the Chosen People is clarified in terms of history, philosophy, and science. The chapter advances the iconoclastic idea that Jerusalem, not Athens, is the source of philosophy, that Judaism is a comprehensive and verifiable system of truth. This is a necessary precondition of fulfilling the goal of the Torah: to eliminate all forms of idolatry on the one hand, and to promote the universal recognition of ethical monotheism on the other. Suffice to say here that idolatry is the worship of *any* created thing, including the products of the human mind. Idolatry therefore includes (1) the postulation of any physical entity, law, or process as *autonomous* or *independent* of God; and (2) the belief that any scientific theory fully comprehends reality or that any political ideology or system of government formulated by man is wholly adequate for the physical and spiritual happiness of mankind. Obviously there are more or less primitive and more or less refined forms of idolatry.

We start in Chapter 9 with the pre-Socratic philosophers, some of whom flourished at the time of the destruction of the First Temple and were apparently influenced by Jews. The pre-Socratics undermined belief in the Homeric gods by depersonalizing the "forces" of nature. As a consequence, they left nature lifeless and human life meaningless. Enter Plato and Aristotle, two of the greatest legislators of the human mind. As will be seen in Chapter 10, Plato and Aristotle deified human reason and developed an organic and teleological conception of nature that provided norms of how man should live. The demise of Zeus and the Greek pantheon followed. But it took Christianity—"a spark from Zion"—to apply the *coup de grace* to Greek and Roman polytheism. This is discussed in Chapter 11, where we show that Christian antinomianism and the separation of Church and State planted the seed for the eventual ascendancy of secularism in the modern world.

Chapter 12 reveals the world-historical function of Islam as well as that of the United States and how both are unwittingly contributing to Israel's demise *as a secular democratic state, but therefore the ultimate ascendancy of Hebraic Civilization*. This chapter also demonstrates that Islam and the

to show that this degradation is but a necessary stage of Israel's Final Redemption.

Accordingly, Part I of this book is addressed to an analysis of Israel's malaise and what must be done to overcome it. Chapter 1 discusses Israel's degradation resulting from three basic failings: first and foremost, the government's Secular Zionism, which formed the intellectual foundation of Israel's rebirth in May 1948; second, the government's failure to exploit the victory of the Israel Defense Forces in the Six-Day War of June 1967; third, the government's signing the Oslo or Israel-PLO Declaration of Principles of September 1993.

Chapter 2 discusses the "Arab problem." It sets forth a national strategy addressed to two interrelated dangers: (1) the danger posed by Israel's Arab citizens who identify with their kinsmen, the so-called Palestinians, and (2) the danger of an Arab Palestinian state, whose inhabitants are openly dedicated to Israel's extermination. The chapter shows how these two dangers can be overcome by a rigorous application of democratic as well as Jewish principles.

Chapter 3 discusses the *political* dimensions of the "Jewish problem." It shows that Israel's basic dilemmas—including the threat to its existence—are largely the result of its flawed legislative, executive, and judicial institutions. The chapter offers a program of institutional and other reforms that will simultaneously make Israel more Jewish, more democratic, and more capable of overcoming its internal and external dangers.¹

Chapters 4, 5, and 6 discuss the *psychological* dimensions of the "Jewish problem." Chapter 4 shows that Israel's ruling elites suffer from a pathological syndrome which I call "demophrenia."² This syndrome glues them to the suicidal policy of "territory for peace," a policy that entails the establishment of a Palestinian state in which an entire generation of Arab children exalts homicide bombers. Underlying this syndrome is the doctrine of moral relativism, which renders all "lifestyles" equal. Relativism, which permeates all levels of education in the democratic world, has eroded Jewish national pride and makes Israel's political elites incapable of dealing effectively with the country's internal and external enemies. Chapter 5 refutes this doctrine. It thus provides the basis for refuting, in Chapter 6, modern psychology. Virtually every school of modern psychology posits the primacy of the *emotions* in opposition to Judaism, which affirms the primacy of *reason*.

Chapter 7 discusses the Convergence of Science and Torah and reveals Judaism as the *religion of reason*. We read in the Midrash: "God looked at the letters and words of the Torah and created the world." This reminds us of Plato's cosmological dialogue the *Timeaus*, where the "Demiurge" looked at

West are involved in a clash of civilizations, the former based on a decadent religious absolutism, the latter based on a decadent secularism.

As will be seen later, the arch-priest of secularism is Machiavelli, the father of “Modernity”—the subject of Chapter 13. This chapter shows how Machiavelli’s new political science subverted the Greco-Christian tradition and left man without any morality. Two movements emerged from Machiavelli—nurtured, of course, by his philosophical successors: the undisguised egoism of *Individualism* and the covert egoism of *Statism*. Armed by an ethically-neutral science, these two isms clashed in the two World Wars of the twentieth century. Those wars, which revealed the moral bankruptcy of Western civilization, led to the fulfillment of biblical prophecy, the rebirth of Israel.

This fact, together with the decadence of the West and Islam, calls out silently for a renaissance of Hebraic Civilization, the essence of which is discussed in the concluding chapter.

An Appendix contains my edited version of an essay written by Dr. Zimmerman showing that Israel’s rebirth is the result of providential laws of history pointing to Israel’s Final Redemption.

¹ See Paul Eidelberg, *Jewish Statesmanship: Lest Israel Fall*.

² See Paul Eidelberg, *Demophrenia: Israel and the Malaise of Democracy*.

³ See Akiva Tatz, *Worldmask*, pp. 13-15.