phasized the universal ethical and spiritual principles of the Prophetic tradition and sought to end the notion of Jews as "a people apart."

Isaac Mayer Wise and his contemporaries were, in many ways, similar to those who led the Reformation in Christianity. They recognized very clearly the conflict between the Prophetic and universal interpretation of Judaism and the desire of many Jews to maintain the separatistic and nationalist content in the lives of Jews and to use Judaism to serve that narrow purpose.

Wise believed that, "The idea of the Jews returning to Palestine is no part of our creed. We, rather, believe it is God's will that the habitable world become one holy land, the human family one chosen people." Judaism, he declared, was a world-wide religion: "The Jew's nationality is not endemic; it is not conditioned by space, land or water. The Jew's nationality...is not in his blood...It is all intellectual and moral, without any reference to soil, climate, or any other circumstance. The Jewish nationality...has been made portable."

Theological Approach

It is important to understand the theological approach which led the 19th century reformers to the conclusions they reached about the universal Prophetic Judaism in which they believed.

The reformers took their inspiration from the Prophets who proclaimed that God is not only the God of this people, Israel, but is a universal God—the one God of mankind and that the values they proclaimed were applicable to all people.

The sacred myth that holds the Jews to be God's chosen people has been central to Judaism from the beginning of ethical monotheism. According to this myth, God chose the Jews as His special people. He made a covenant with them whereby they were to worship Him and Him only. They were to obey His commandments, and in return, God would protect His Chosen People.

The idea of God evolved from that of a tribal deity to that of universal God. The Book of Deuteronomy features a tribal deity, who is the God of the Exodus, and of the wilderness, depicted in a series of speeches given by Moses in Moab that God has a special purpose in mind for His people: "But the Lord has taken you, and brought you forth out of the iron furnace, out of Egypt, to be a people of his own possession, as at this day." (Deut. 4:20).

God's Partiality

God's partiality to His people is a constant refrain. The tribal warrior God will stand by the Chosen People in their holy wars against other nations: "You shall not be in dread of them; for the Lord God is in the midst of you, a great and terrible God. The Lord your God will clear away these nations before you little by little. But the Lord your God will give them over to you, and throw them into great confusion until they are destroyed. And he will 'give their kings into your hands, and you shall make their name perish from under heaven; not a man shall be able to stand against you, until you have destroyed them." (Deut. 6:21-24).

Ferocity, not tolerance, in His name will be rewarded: "And if you obey the voice of the Lord your God, being careful to do all his commandments which I command you this day, the Lord your God will set you high above all nations of the earth." (Deut. 28:7).

Chosenness in Deuteronomy causes the national deity to exalt the superiority of His followers. Moses' God commands the Chosen People to celebrate the superiority of Israel and exclude all other nations from God's love: "When the Lord your God brings you into the Land which you are entering to take possession of it, and clears away many nations before you, then you must utterly destroy them; you shall make no covenant with them; and show no mercy to them...But thus shall you deal with them: you shall break down their altars and dash in pieces their pillars, and hew down their Ahserin and burn their graven images with fire." (Deut. 7:1).

By the 8th and 7th centuries B.C.E., a spiritual revival which stressed compassion over ritual began to take place. The era of the Prophets slowly began.

Mission Of Justice

Beginning with Amos in 760 B.C.E., Hosea in 750 B.C.E. and Isaiah in 740 B.C.E., chosenness began to be associated with God's mission of justice and righteousness. "You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities." (Amos 3:1-2). "I despise your feasts, and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies. Even though you offer me your burnt offerings and cereal offerings, I will not accept them, and the peace offerings of your fatted beasts I will not look upon. Take thou away from Me the noise of your songs; to the melody of your harps I will not listen. But let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like an everflowing stream." (Amos 5:21-24).

Isaiah begins the description of the vision which led him to prophesy by depicting a world permeated by God's divinity: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts; the whole earth is full of glory." (Isaiah 6:3).

It is precisely this sense of holiness of which the people were deprived. During the seventh century Temple rituals all but excluded any but the priests from any role but that of observer in the sacrifices and worship. The prophets argued that everyone is allowed to worship God directly without mediation of the priests. This concept of holiness is important for the development of Judaism away from an attachment to a particular place as God's domicile. Isaiah depicts a universal God who has chosen the Israelites to enact this concept of holiness, to carry out the mission of justice and mercy to others.

With the help of the Prophets, the Chosen People realized that their obligation might be weightier than their privileges. This change in the concept of chosenness coincided with the transformation of the tribal God of the armies to a universal, transcendent God who symbolizes compassion. Amos was the first of the prophets to emphasize social justice and compassion. He informed the Chosen People that the covenant represented responsibility, not privileges "Hate evil and love good, and establish justice in the gate; it may be that the Lord, the God of hosts, will be gracious to the remnant of Joseph." (Amos 5:15).

Essence Of Judaism

It was the Babylonian experience that distilled the essence of Judaism. The belief in God had become strong enough to survive the exile. In fact, the Israelites' discovery that they could live in any land and still worship God marked the birth of their sense of being Jews. The loss of Jerusalem marked the end of the national tribal God as well as the temple

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Germany, Denmark and the Holocaust: Different Histories, Different Lessons

by Solveig Eggerz

In recent years, interest in the Holocaust has dramatically increased in the American society, among men and women of all religious faiths and backgrounds.

In his recent book, *The Holocaust In American Life,* Professor Peter Novick, a University of Chicago historian, notes that for two full decades after World War II, the Holocaust was ignored in America by Jews and non-Jews alike. Today, however, it has become a pervasive presence, filling book shelves and movie and t.v. screens, even mandated by law as a subject for study in public schools.

Dr. Novick argues that in recent decades the Holocaust "has moved from the margins to the center of how American Jews understand themselves and how they represent themselves to others."

There are many individuals and groups who seek to learn "lessons" from the Holocaust. Dr. Novick is critical of those who abuse the Holocaust for their own narrow purposes. He laments the fact that many American Jews have learned to embrace and perhaps even to exploit their historical persecution.

Importance of Holocaust

Among the findings in the American Jewish Committee's 1999 survey of American Jewish opinion, it was discovered that 98 percent of respondents said "remembering the Holocaust" was "important" to their identity, while only 15 percent said the same of religious observance.

Rabbi Arthur Hertzberg, humanities professor at New York University, said that he "deplored" the survey results. Pamela Nadell, director of the Jewish Studies Program at American University, said of the stress on the Holocaust that, "I don't think it's healthy. Jews can't hang their identity on that forever."

One "lesson" which seems to have been learned from the Holocaust is that anti-Semitism is endemic to the Western world and that, as a result, Jews need a country of their own. This, of course, is the essential insight of Zionism and goes back to a period even before the Holocaust.

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In 1894, Theodor Herzl, the founder of political Zionism, was a journalist based in Paris representing a liberal Vienna newspaper. He had little interest in religion and associated himself with the literary and cultural groups of his time. He was far more concerned with general than Jewish matters.

Dreyfus Case

Captain Alfred Dreyfus, an Alsatian Jew attached to the French general staff, was arrested when it was discovered that military secrets were being sold to the German government. Accused of the crime, Dreyfus was condemned by a court martial for high treason and sentenced to life imprisonment. The proceedings were obviously prejudiced and anti-Semitism was a key element. Herzl felt the matter keenly and came to the conclusion that if France, one of the most advanced nations of the modern world, could do this to a Jew, the Jew was not at home anywhere but in his own land. He felt that there was no hope for Jews in the modern world, that anti-Semitism was inevitable and growing and that the only salvation was a Jewish homeland. He dedicated the rest of his life to this Zionist ideal.

Yet the Dreyfus case was far more complex than Herzl's emotional response could encompass. In his book, *Not By Power,* Rabbi Allan Tarshish draws a far different conclusion: "An impartial investigation revealed that the culprit was really a Major Esterhazy, part of the clique of the French officer group which wanted to keep the stigma away from their group. This clique was also opposed to the French Republic, favoring a monarchy, and was anxious to fasten guilt on someone identified with the Republic, a Jew who had been granted equal rights by the French Revolution. And so it was Capt. Dreyfus who was singled out...Clemenceau, Anatole France, Emile Zola and other great leaders of France attacked the conviction of Dreyfus and sought a new trial. The whole matter became a 'cause celebre' of France and the entire modern world of the time."

In the end, Dreyfus was pardoned by the President of France and a year later the Court of Cassation quashed the verdict and pronounced him innocent. Dreyfus remained a fervent French patriot to his death. Rabbi Tarshish notes that, "Herzl could have come to an opposite conclusion from the same facts as others did, including Captain Dreyfus himself. It was of course true that Dreyfus was wrongly condemned, but it was also true that he was released and acquitted by the united forces of progress and decency....So the Dreyfus case was in reality a victory for the forces of democracy and enlightenment for Dreyfus was finally vindicated."

Just as Herzl saw in the Dreyfus case a reason to lose hope in liberal democracy and for the integration of Jews into European society, so many found in the Holocaust exactly the same lesson, concluding that a separate Jewish state was the only appropriate response.

Posthumous Victory For Hitler

In his book *A Partisan History of Judaism,* Rabbi Elmer Berger expresses the view that many Jews tended to give Hitler a posthumous victory by accepting the anti-Semitic idea that it was foolish to believe in Emancipation and in all of the liberal ideas for Jews which the 19th century Jewish reformers believed in so deeply. He writes: "Germany, they argued, 'was one of the most enlightened nations in the world and look what happened to Jews there.' And the shattering impact of the tragedy mounted as Hitler paralyzed and stultified other Jews. They