

## NONFICTION

Ariel, David S. ***Kabbalah: The Mystic Quest in Judaism.*** Rowman & Littlefield, 2006. The revised edition of Ariel’s excellent introduction to Kabbalah is timely since the topic is a hot one in popular and religious culture.

Chotzinoff, Robin. ***Holy Unexpected: My New Life as a Jew.*** PublicAffairs, 2006. The author tells a humorous and surprisingly emotional tale of her mid-life conversion from “born-again atheist” to observant Jew.

Cohen, Rich. ***Sweet and Low: A Family Story.*** Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2006. Written by the disinherited grandson of the inventor of Sweet ’N Low, Cohen’s funny memoir has it all: New York history, diet fads, Jewish gangsters, and family scandals.

Ellenson, Ruth Andrew, ed. ***The Modern Jewish Girl’s Guide to Guilt.*** Dutton, 2005. This National Jewish Book Award winner is a treasure trove of essays on what it means to be a Jewish woman in today’s world.

Finkelstein, Israel and Neil Asher Silberman. ***David and Solomon: In Search of the Bible’s Sacred Kings and the Roots of the Western Tradition.*** Free Press, 2006. Two prominent archaeologists present recent finds that interpret the history of David and Solomon.

Goldstein, Eric L. ***The Price of Whiteness: Jews, Race, and American Identity.*** Princeton University Press, 2006. This well-researched and engaging study explores the changing concepts of race, tribe, and religion and the Jewish search for an American identity from 1875 to the present.

Goldstein, Niles Elliott. ***Gonzo Judaism: A Bold Path for Renewing an Ancient Faith.*** St. Martin’s Press, 2006. In easy conversational style, Rabbi Goldstein offers new ways to explore the basics of Judaism, and includes an extensive resource list of congregations, organizations, and recommended reading.

Goldstein, Rebecca. ***Betraying Spinoza: The Renegade Jew Who Gave Us Modernity*** (Jewish Encounters). Schocken, 2006. The life and thought of the seventeenth-century philosopher who became the most famous Jewish heretic in history is reconstructed in this slim readable volume by a noted professor and author.

Gordis, Daniel. ***Coming Together, Coming Apart: A Memoir of Heartbreak and Promise in Israel.*** Wiley, 2006. More than just a memoir of life in Israel, Gordis’ book is a poignant love story about one family’s choice to make Israel their home in the face of terror and war.

Gorenberg, Gershom. ***The Accidental Empire: Israel and the Birth of the Settlements, 1967-1977.*** Times Books, 2006. A careful historical treatment that explores Israel’s policy of evicting peaceful Bedouins and acquiescing to the militant fervor of young religious Israelis by building settlements and thus, ironically, awakening latent Arab militant nationalism.

Harmon, Adam. ***Lonely Soldier: The Memoir of an American in the Israeli Army.*** Presidio Press, 2006. Harmon’s memoir traces his decision to move to Israel after college, and provides a detailed look at life inside the Israeli army by one of the few non-Israelis to become an elite paratrooper.

Harshav, Benjamin. ***Marc Chagall and the Lost Jewish World: The Nature of Chagall’s Art and Iconography.*** Rizzoli, 2006. Offering insight into Chagall’s Jewish roots and analyzing the images in his works, this book is an important addition to the plethora of books about the artist.

Harshav, Benjamin, ed. ***Sing, Stranger: A Century of American Yiddish Poetry: A Historical Anthology.*** Translated by Barbara Harshav and Benjamin Harshav. Stanford University Press, 2006.

Karpin, Michael. ***The Bomb in the Basement: How Israel Went Nuclear and What That Means for the World.*** Simon & Schuster, 2006. Veteran Israeli journalist Karpin relates the history and politics of Israel’s nuclear capabilities.

Kurzweil, Arthur. ***On the Road with Rabbi Steinsaltz: 25 Years of Pre-Dawn Car Trips, Mind-Blowing Encounters, and Inspiring Conversations with a Man of Wisdom.*** Jossey-Bass, 2006.

Kushner, Harold S. ***Overcoming Life’s Disappointments.*** Knopf, 2006. Kushner’s latest book of spiritual wisdom draws its lessons of strength and faith from the experience of Moses.

Langer, Lawrence L. ***Using and Abusing the Holocaust.*** (Jewish Literature and Culture) Indiana University Press, 2006. A series of intriguing scholarly essays explore the treatment of Holocaust themes in recent popular movies, books, and art.

Laqueur, Walter. ***The Changing Face of Antisemitism: From Ancient Times to the Present Day.*** Oxford University Press, 2006. Analyzing the nature of antisemitism from its origins in religious thought, through the racist theories of the Nazis and its current appearance in Muslim and left-wing circles, this slim book provides a thorough history of the topic.

Leibovitz, Liel. ***Aliya: Three Generations of American-Jewish Immigration to Israel.*** St. Martin’s Press, 2006. The author, a ninth-generation Israeli who immigrated to the United States, tries to make sense of the phenomenon of *aliya* by focusing on the stories of three generations of American Jews who decided to make Israel their home.

Mendelsohn, Daniel. ***The Lost: A Search for Six of Six Million.*** HarperCollins, 2006. The author’s search for the fates of his relatives during the Holocaust leads him on a journey of heart-wrenching discoveries.

Ozick, Cynthia. ***The Din in the Head.*** Houghton Mifflin, 2006. Essays by the National Jewish Book Award winner explore the joys of literature and discuss, among others, Leo Tolstoy, Saul Bellow, Sylvia Plath, Helen Keller, and Susan Sontag.

Rabin, Elliott. ***Understanding the Hebrew Bible: A Reader's Guide.*** Ktav, 2006. Rabin’s interesting guide discusses each genre employed, with references to the relevant chapters of the text: storytelling, law, history, prophecy, wisdom, and poetry.

Reich, Howard. ***The First and Final Nightmare of Sonia Reich: A Son’s Memoir.*** PublicAffairs, 2006. Reich delivers an emotional tale of his mother’s late-onset post-traumatic stress disorder. In clear and readable prose, he details his efforts to find out all he can about his mother’s harrowing life during the Holocaust.

Rosen, Robert N. ***Saving the Jews: Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Holocaust.*** Thunder’s Mouth Press, 2006. In his well-documented and thoroughly-researched book, Rosen invites readers to view the events of the Holocaust as Roosevelt saw them, without the benefit of today’s hindsight and, in doing so, he puts to rest many unanswered questions about the role of FDR during World War II.

Schaffer, Dylan. ***Life, Death and Bialys: a Father/Son Baking Story.*** Bloomsbury, 2006. The author and his dying father come to terms with their relationship, past and present, while taking an intensive bread baking class at the French Culinary Institute in New York City.

Schor, Esther. ***Emma Lazarus*** (Jewish Encounters). Schocken, 2006. The fifth book in the Jewish Encounters series describes the poet as a strong-willed philanthropic woman, as well as a Zionist.

Schwartz, Shuly Rubin. ***The Rabbi’s Wife: The Rebbetzin in American Jewish Life.*** New York University Press, 2006. From her unique perspective as both a scholar and a rebbetzin, Schwartz examines the complex role of the rabbi’s wife in America during the last century.

Serotte, Brenda. ***The Fortune Teller’s Kiss*** (American Lives). University of Nebraska, 2006. From belly dancing to the evil eye, this colorful memoir traces the story of a young polio victim and her years growing up a Sephardic Jew among Ashkenazi in the Bronx.

Soltes, Ori Z. ***The Ashen Rainbow: Essays on the Arts and the Holocaust.*** Bartleby Press, 2006. The newest book by Soltes, now a curator in Washington, D.C. and formerly a very popular professor at Siegal College, follows on the heels of last year’s ***Our Sacred Signs: How Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Art Draw from the Same Source*** (Westview Press, 2005).

Stein, David E.S., ed. ***The Contemporary Torah: A Gender-Sensitive Adaptation of the JPS Translation.*** Jewish Publication Society, 2006.

Telushkin, Joseph. ***A Code of Jewish Ethics. Vol. 1: You Shall Be Holy.*** Harmony/Bell Tower, 2006. The author continues his mission of bringing the lessons of Judaism to the lay reader, in small digestible bites, with this compendium of stories and ethical lessons.

Tolan, Sandy. ***The Lemon Tree: An Arab, a Jew, and the Heart of the Middle East.*** Bloomsbury, 2006. The true story of two families, one Jewish and one Arab, provides a personal look at four decades of Israeli-Palestinian history.

Van Straten, Michael. ***The Healthy Jewish Cookbook: 100 Delicious Recipes from Around the World.*** Frog, Ltd., 2006.

## FICTION

Albert, Elisa. ***How This Night Is Different.*** Free Press, 2006. Albert’s debut collection of stories about traditional Jewish rituals is at times funny, sad, and irreverent.

Alderman, Naomi. ***Disobedience.*** Touchstone, 2006. Although predictable, this prize-winning British novel has more substance than the usual story about a disaffected Orthodox woman struggling to free herself from her stifling community.

Brett, Lily. ***You Gotta Have Balls.*** William Morrow, 2006. The follow-up to *Too Many Men* features the same larger-than-life characters, now in New York City running a fabulously successful meatball restaurant.

Bukiet, Melvin Jules, and David G. Roskies, eds. ***Scribblers on the Roof: Contemporary American Jewish Fiction.*** Persea, 2006. A collection of short fiction from contemporary American Jewish writers, all drawn from the popular rooftop reading series at New York City’s Congregation Anshe Chesed.

Carmon, Haggai. ***The Red Syndrome.*** Steerforth Press, 2006. The second Dan Gordon intelligence thriller (*Triple Identity*) finds the ex-Mossad agent working for the U.S. Department of Justice in pursuit of a devastating bio-terror weapon.

Gilmore, Jennifer. ***Golden Country.*** Scribner’s, 2006. Gilmore’s powerful debut follows the intertwined lives of three immigrant families from early to mid 20<sup>th</sup> century as they confront the vices and virtues of American society.

Gur, Batya. ***Murder in Jerusalem.*** Translated by Evan Fallenberg. HarperCollins, 2006. Published after the author’s death, the last Michael Ohayon mystery finds the Israeli police superintendent once again faced with solving a murder inside a closed society; this time, the inner workings of the Israeli television network are investigated.

Gutfreund, Amir. ***Our Holocaust.*** Translated by Jessica Cohen. Toby Press, 2006. Amir and Effi, children of Holocaust survivors, seek answers about what happened “Over There” in this prize-winning coming-of-age tale set in Israel.

Horn, Dara. ***The World to Come.*** W.W. Norton, 2006. A stolen painting, a former child prodigy who now writes questions for a TV quiz show, and a Yiddish writer from 1920’s Russia all intertwine in this inspired and sometimes mystical novel.

Kaniuk, Yoram. ***The Last Jew.*** Translated by Barbara Harshav. Grove Press, 2006. Published in Hebrew in 1982 and finally translated into English, this important and difficult novel examines the effects of the Holocaust and the conflicts that arose in the creation of the state of Israel.

Kohn, Rebecca. ***Seven Days to the Sea: An Epic Novel of the Exodus.*** Rugged Land, 2006. In her second biblical novel, Kohn (*The Gilded Chamber*) takes on the story of Moses as told from the viewpoints of his sister and wife.

Kushner, Lawrence. ***Kabbalah: A Love Story.*** Morgan Road Books, 2006. Rabbi Kushner’s first novel, as multi-layered as the mystical *Zohar* itself, focuses on a mysterious letter found inside the binding of an ancient text.

Liebrecht, Savyon. ***A Good Place for the Night.*** Translated by Sondra Silverston. Persea Books, 2006. Very unsettling short stories by one of Israel’s most popular writers explore the dislocation and disorientation that disturb the individual Israeli.

Nayman, Shira. ***Awake in the Dark.*** Scribner, 2006. Nayman’s stories in her debut collection explore the lives of Holocaust victims and their children.

Nemirovsky, Irene. ***Suite Francaise.*** Translated by Sandra Smith. Knopf, 2006. The successful young author penned these two tales about escape from Nazi-occupied France, two thirds of a masterpiece that remained unfinished, shortly before her own death in Auschwitz.

Rosner, Elizabeth. ***Blue Nude.*** Ballantine, 2006. A sensual and intimate novel that moves back and forth in time and place, from postwar Germany to a kibbutz in Israel to present-day San

Francisco, where Israeli-born Merav models for Danzig, a German painter coming to terms with his past and present.

Sfar, Joann. *Klezmer: Tales of the Wild East*. First Second, 2006. The latest graphic novel by the author of last year's *The Rabbi's Cat* takes his readers on a wild tour of the snowy forests and shtetls of pre-World War II Eastern Europe as he follows a ragged band of klezmer musicians on their adventures.

Shteyngart, Gary. *Absurdistan*. Random House, 2006. In this exuberant comic novel, the author of *The Russian Debutante's Handbook* limns the politics of Jewish identity and satirizes the accumulation and loss of ill-gotten gains in post-Soviet Russia.

Silva, Daniel. *The Messenger*. Putnam, 2006. When terrorists target the Vatican, Israeli art restorer and spymaster Gabriel Allon is called back into service.

Smilevski, Goce. *Conversation with Spinoza: A Cobweb Novel* (Writings From an Unbound Europe). Translated by Filip Korzenski. Northwestern University Press, 2006. An award winning novel in the original Macedonian, this unusual dialogue probes Spinoza's imagined emotional and intellectual life.

Stavans, Ilan. *The Disappearance*. Triquarterly, 2006. Written by a noted author and scholar, these three intriguing stories focus on Jewish life in Mexico.

Vapnyar, Lara. *Memoirs of a Muse*. Pantheon, 2006. Vapnyar's very funny first novel is a meditation on artistic inspiration, feminine potential and, incidentally, the struggles of moving from one language to another.

Weber, Kathleen. *Triangle*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2006. Delving into her grandmother's memoirs of the 1911 Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire, Rebecca solves a mystery and learns of the real sufferings of factory life. More than a historical re-creation, this elegant novel weaves together themes of love, loss, and sacrifice.

Yehoshua, A.B. *A Woman in Jerusalem*. Translated by Hillel Halkin. Harcourt, 2006. The heroine of the title is a corpse, and the human relations manager of the company that forgot her existence ultimately must atone for human failures of compassion in this small masterpiece.

Zusak, Markus. *The Book Thief*. Random House, 2006. Death is the narrator in this enthralling tale about the power of books and words in the life of a young German girl during World War II. Appropriate for older teen readers as well as adults.

## VIDEOS/DVDS

*Everything is Illuminated*. Warner Home Video, 2005, DVD, 105 minutes. Based on the novel of the same title by Jonathan Safran Foer, this funny and poignant film tells the story of a young American man who goes to the Ukraine to find the woman who saved his grandfather from the Nazis.

*The Forgotten Refugees*. The David Project, 2005, DVD, 49 minutes. An exceptional exploration of the history and destruction of Middle Eastern Jewish communities in Egypt, Yemen, Libya, and Iraq, complete with testimonies of refugees, archival footage, and contemporary analyses. Important as a corrective to the false impression that only Palestinian Arabs suffered as a result of Israel's independence.

*The Tribe: Barbie's 5,000 Year History*. [www.tribethefilm.com](http://www.tribethefilm.com), 2005, DVD, 16 minutes. What can the most successful doll on the planet show us about Jewish identity? This fast-paced film uses archival footage, graphics, animation, Barbie dioramas, and slam poetry to take viewers on a ride through Jewish history and culture.

*Ushpizin*. Picturehouse, 2006, DVD, Hebrew with English subtitles, 92 minutes. Big-hearted Moshe is down on his luck, so he and his wife, Malli, pray for a miracle. Their prayers are answered in the form of a huge sum of money, but when the great "gift" leads to the arrival of two uninvited *ushpizin*, Moshe and Malli are left wondering: have they found God's favor or is this just a test of their devotion?

*Voyages*. New Yorker Video, 2005, DVD, French, Hebrew and Russian with English subtitles, 115 minutes. From Poland to Paris and Tel Aviv, *Voyages* is an intimate and personal story of the quests of three women whose lives and destinies intertwine to create a moving story of survival.

*Wall*. Life Size Entertainment, 2005, DVD, Hebrew and Arabic with English subtitles, 97 minutes. The emotional, cultural, and political divides represented by Israel's security fence are explored in this film by filmmaker Simone Bitton, who calls herself "Jewish Arab."

*Watermarks*. Kino, 2004, DVD, 77 minutes. This film about the champion women swimmers of the Vienna sports club Hakoah, founded in 1909, focuses on the club's surviving members, while also recounting a period where anti-Semitism and violence forced the women into exile.

## WEBSITES

*Guilt and Pleasure* [www.guiltandpleasure.com](http://www.guiltandpleasure.com) Recent issues of this quarterly print magazine feature stories by Shalom Auslander and Lara Vapnyar, excerpts from new Jewish graphic novels, an article about an ultra-Orthodox sect in Israel, and an essay that examines the classic book *Godwrestling*. The publisher encourages readers of both the print and online formats to start salons in their area in order to achieve the magazine's goal of "making Jews talk more."

*JBooks* [www.jbooks.com](http://www.jbooks.com) Billing itself as the *Online Jewish Book Community*, *JBooks* is a web magazine for Jewish book reviews, news, excerpts, and more.

*Sh'ma: an Online Journal of Jewish Responsibility* [www.shma.com](http://www.shma.com) A publication of Jewish Family & Life, *Sh'ma* contains thoughtful articles on topics such as private versus public prayer, Jewish museums, and Israeli settlements.

## COMPILED BY

Merrily Hart, *Aaron Garber Library, Siegal College*  
Marcia Klein, *Beachwood Branch, Cuyahoga County Public Library*  
Bonnie Shapiro, *The Jewish Education Center of Cleveland*  
Wendy Wasman, *The Temple – Tifereth Israel & Anshe Chesed Fairmount Temple*



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# IN CELEBRATION OF JEWISH BOOK MONTH 2006



## A SELECTED LIST OF RECENT BOOKS, VIDEOS/DVDS, AND WEBSITES FOR ADULTS

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