

Wrestling With an Angel: Power, Morality, and Jewish Identity

Ehud Luz

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By regaining for the Jewish people the capacity to deploy force, Zionism posed moral dilemmas for the Jews that for many generations, living in exile, they had not had to confront. The return to full political life and the use of military force involved a profound revolution in the Jewish identity and aroused deep and painful misgivings. This thought-provoking book examines how the forging of a new moral stance on the use of force has affected Jewish identity in the land of Israel and throughout the world. Drawing on historiography, philosophy, social commentary, ideological tracts and belles lettres, Ehud Luz explores the ways that Zionist attitudes toward sovereignty were shaped by their Judaic heritage, in particular the prophetic literature and the halakhic (legal) tradition, which stressed the sanctity of human life and the strict prohibition against the shedding of innocent blood. Luz argues that despite secularization, Jewish tradition continues to influence the political life and national ethos of the Jews, and that the Jewish religious tradition is an important, sometimes even decisive factor in the way that political and cultural issues in Israel are resolved.



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