CHAPTER SIX

*Kaddish and Resurrection: Isaac Bashevis Singer’s Holocaust Memorial*

Isaac Bashevis Singer did not experience the Holocaust directly, as did his family left behind in Poland. Yet the *Shoah* has strongly influenced his thought and is a recurrent theme in his fiction. Singer chronicles events heralding the catastrophe and explores the psychological and theological burdens of survival in Yiddish, the language of emigré-survivors and of Polish Jews who vanished in the Holocaust. Writing from the perspective of psychological rather than physical survival, Singer commemorates a way of life destroyed in the twelve-year Nazi reign of terror. Although he refrains from setting the fiction in the concentration-ary universe, he memorializes the Jews who perished in the ghettos and camps; he reminds the world of their suffering, and keeps their Yiddish language vibrant, their traditions and customs accessible. In his realistic outline of the onslaught and effects of Germany’s Final Solution to the “Jewish Problem” and in his metaphorical treatment of the Chmielnicki Massacre, a seventeenth-century Holocaust analogue, Singer’s sensitivity to the *Shoah* is at the core of his fiction and emerges as a major component of character
development. For the survivors particularly, “the Holocaust has imposed itself as the paradigm of all history . . . in the aftermath of the Holocaust, . . . [one exists] in a new epoch, whose essential conditions are defined by what happened in the Holocaust itself.”

Singer’s writing lacks the immediacy of Holocaust-era documentation and the dramatic tension of realistic flashback. Nonetheless, his work adds important historic and theological dimensions to American Holocaust fiction through its focus on the causal relationship of traditional Christian anti-Semitism to Nazism, its delin­
eation of the major catastrophes of the Jewish Diaspora as “so many announcements of the Holocaust, of which they are prototypes,” and its exploration of the theological implications of the Holocaust.

An early work, The Family Moskat (1950), which correlates family events with Jewish history, traces Polish-Jewry’s internal fragmentation resulting from the Haskalah, the Jewish Enlighten­ment, and the early stages of Jewry’s demise in the Final Solution. The narrative concludes with an unusually graphic rendition of the German bombardment of Warsaw. The protagonist, Asa Heshel awakes to the “roar of planes,” “the clatter of machine guns,” “the rattling of anti-aircraft guns,” and “the crash of bombs.” Powerful visual images reinforce the sounds of war. Homes, shops, and factories are ablaze; their contents are strewn wildly about the streets. Singer simultaneously suggests the cosmic and historic significance of the Holocaust by juxtaposing Asa’s thoughts of cataclysm—“of an eclipse of the sun, of Messianic expectation”—with another character’s realistic description of the sky, “filled with sulphur-yellow fumes” (FM, 603). The lengthier Yiddish language edition of the novel extends the graphic presentation and contains a vis­
ceral description of a dead family, including a child, whose “intestines poured out of his body as out of a pot.” The imagery empha­
sizes the abrupt shift from ordinary domestic life to the horrors of war. The burden of the description shifts from the loss of indi­
viduals to massive, collective losses in the city: “There had been so many deaths . . . that the corpses could not all be removed” (FM, 604).

Among the themes that will recur in Singer’s later Holocaust fiction are comparison of Hitler to historic enemies of the Jews and philosophic speculation on the nature of Hitler’s villainy, the nature of evil in God’s universe, and the nature of God in an evil universe. In a theological meditation accompanying his decision to
remain in Poland with his family rather than escape, Asa attributes malevolence to God:

according to Spinoza, Hitler was part of the Godhead, a mode of the Eternal Substance. Every act of his had been predetermined by eternal laws. . . . Every murderous act of Hitler's was a functional part of the cosmos. If one was logically consistent, then one had to concede that God was evil, or else that suffering and evil were good. *(FM, 594)*

The English version of the novel ends with a nihilistic pronouncement—"Death is the Messiah. That's the real truth" *(FM, 608).*

Contrary to the despairing conclusion of the English edition, the Yiddish edition's ending, which emphasizes the incongruity of the invasion coinciding with the holy Rosh Hashanah—Yom Kippur New Year season, represents the diversity of Jewish Holocaust responses. It includes protest against God's failure to uphold the covenant and petitions for Messianic deliverance. As Warsaw is besieged by the Nazis, the High Holy Day worshipers attend services, chant the traditional prayers, praise God, and weep for their dead. One worshiper, who had put his hopes in the Enlightenment's new ideas, realizes "Darwin could not help him, nor Spencer" *(YFM, 108).* Another responds to a prayer about God's gifts to the world with a bitter observation, "Everything was a deception: religion, evolution, progress, mankind itself" *(YFM, 108).* Throughout the second day of Rosh Hashanah, the Nazi airplanes continue to bomb the city's Jewish sections and the prayer house is full again. In a speech focused on the holiday themes of judgment and mercy, the rabbi comments on contemporary events and the nature of good and evil, explaining God's withdrawal from human affairs: "For the sake of free choice the Infinite made himself Finite. For the sake of free choice, the evil powers were created" *(YFM, 110).* As the worshipers listen to the sounding of the ram's horn, some think of the *shofar* of the Messiah, hoping that the end of Jewish suffering is at hand. Hopeful in the opening stages of the war that God will intervene and deliver the Jews from destruction as He had in the past, Singer's Jews recite the benediction over the wine and include the phrase, "Who hast chosen us among all the peoples." Although the Yiddish edition amply addresses the impending disaster, it also dramatizes in the dialogue of two Hasidim the religious hope that sustained Jews despite a history of persecu-
There is no such thing as despair. . . . Of course, things are bitter. Jews are in danger. . . . Heaven forbid, surrender before the Redemption. . . . If the devil wants sadness, then let him burst with frustration. We will be hopeful" (YFM, 112). Conversely, Asa sees the world as a murderous realm where might triumphs. He picks up the Bible to scorn the prophets, deriding their vision of grace and righteousness in light of current events. His initial impulse to hurl the Bible to the ground gives way to kissing it in recognition of the majesty of Jewish morality. He reads a lengthy passage that addresses the commandments to be holy and God’s promise to set the Jews apart as His chosen people, “to be a nation consecrated to the Lord.” As the bombs continue to explode, the Jew who sought non-Jewish wisdom returns to that of the fathers, reading the words that “the eternal Jew has flung at eternal evil” (YFM, 114). Singer then shifts the scene to a distant forest where Zionists are gathering to escape to Israel, and he implies that some will succeed. This glimpse of hope is substantiated by a Messianic pronouncement contradicting the English edition’s nihilistic ending. Rather than proclaiming Death as the Messiah, the Yiddish version is redemptive. Responding to the taunting citations of God’s silence and withdrawal in Israel’s time of trouble, the promise of Moses rings forth: “Rise up and fear not. Yours is the final victory. Unto you will come the Messiah” (YFM, 116).

In Enemies, A Love Story (1972), Singer’s first novel set in America, he guides the reader through the Holocaust labyrinth from geographic—if not psychological—sanctuary. Because he “did not have the privilege of going through the Hitler Holocaust,” Singer approaches the catastrophe indirectly. In this drama he sharply schematizes characters according to their survival traumas. Unlike Edward Wallant’s survivor-protagonist in The Pawnbroker and Susan Fromberg Schaeffer’s Anya who experienced the concentrationary condition directly, or Leslie Epstein’s characters who endure the hardships of the ghetto before resettlement in Auschwitz, Singer’s Herman Broder is a protected fugitive suffering deprivations and anxieties but avoiding the extremities of ghettos, camps, and crematoria that marked the fate of his fellow Polish Jews. Broder’s references, allusions, and summations come from public information and reports from acquaintances who suffered Nazi brutality first hand. Herman Broder, his wives, and a supporting emigre cast convey diverse philosophic, social, and psychological versions of survival, “as if they were now the central
bearers of Jewish fate, and as if the definition and resolution of the ultimate questions of philosophy, politics, and religion can never again be made without reference to their experience.  

That the Holocaust influences and complicates survivors' postwar public and private lives is axiomatic in Holocaust fiction. Holocaust knowledge sets the survivors apart from uninitiated American Jews. Broder's private life is complicated by the Holocaust; his public life haunted by it. Believing that his wife and children were killed by the Nazis, Broder expresses his gratitude to his wartime benefactor by marrying her. Herman alternately envisions their American home as a prewar paradise and a wartime shelter, and Yadwiga shares her husband's postwar obsession, reenacting her role as protector. When Broder leaves on a simple business trip, Yadwiga bids him farewell "as if the Nazis were ruling America and his life were in danger" (E, 16). They endure a childless marriage because Herman believes it is irrational to have children in a world where innocents are subject to Nazi brutality. Because Broder has nothing in common with this peasant who had been his family's servant, he becomes embroiled in an extramarital affair with Masha, a woman with whom he shared a romantic liaison in a displaced-persons camp. Broder's marriage is complicated by entrapment in a bigamous union with Masha, who feigns pregnancy, and the unexpected appearance of Tamara, his first wife, who escaped from a mass grave where she and her children were left for dead.

Herman Broder lives in New York, but remains psychologically trapped in his Polish hayloft, his survival marred by memories of suffering. "A ghost who writes," Broder earns his living preparing scholarly articles and sermons for an American rabbi, but he is religiously ambivalent. The paradigmatic, disoriented refugee awakens in the morning confused about his whereabouts, uncertain whether he is hiding in the hayloft, is in a displaced persons camp, or is free and safe in America. He suffers recurrent bouts of terror approximating those he experienced evading Nazi bayonets as they pierced his haystack and he suffers the anxieties associated with fear of detection. Recollections of hunger and thirst, numbness in his hands and feet, high fevers induced by insect and rodent bites, and lengthy deprivation of daylight—elements that characterized his three-year confinement in the hayloft—still haunt the survivor. Guilty for escaping the degradation and brutalization fellow Jews suffered in the ghettos and concentration
camps, Broder designs a postwar lifestyle that is "a moral equivalent for the war: he creates situations so absurdly painful, so anxiety-ridden, so oppressive, that vicariously he experiences in New York what he has missed in Europe."\(^8\)

Wartime fugitive tensions generate postwar apprehension manifested as fear of capture by Nazis and perpetual search for sanctuary. Broder studies urban streets "as if America were destined for the same destruction as Poland" (E, 133), even though he understands "Jews were allowed to live freely here!" (E, 17). Despite rational evidence of Jewish safety and vitality in American society, Broder plots a survival strategy in the event of a Nazi invasion. He concludes that his Coney Island bathroom would be a superior hideout to his Polish hayloft because the toilet will double as chair and bathtub as bed. Here he will enjoy light and air, keep writing paper and books. Reflective of the enormity of Broder's Holocaust-wrought insecurity and loss is his observation that even the "stars gleamed like memorial candles in some cosmic synagogue" (E, 133).

Among the writers who explore the emotional trauma of survivors, Singer is one of the very few whose protagonists indulge in revenge fantasies. Broder, a former Talmudist, has been so transformed by the Holocaust that his concealment fantasies coalesce with those of violent resistance. In the eventuality of a Nazi invasion, he plans to have a loaded revolver or machine gun in his hiding place to kill the tyrants, to "welcome them with a volley of bullets and leave one bullet for himself" (E, 10). He "often thought of positions from which it would be possible to shoot" (E, 17), and "discovered methods of destroying whole armies, for ruining industries" (E, 132). Unlike Wallant's Sol Nazerman who dreads sleep with its persecution nightmares, Herman Broder enjoys pre-sleep reverie in which he "waged his usual war with the Nazis, bombed them with atomic bombs, blasted their armies with mysterious missiles, lifted their fleet out of the ocean and placed it on land near Hitler's villa in Berchtesgaden" (E, 123). By expressing the victims' resentment, writers like Singer, Wallant, and Elman articulate the psychic condition that self-righteous moralists without Holocaust experience often condemn. Innocent Americans, like Elman's lawyer and Wallant's social worker, deny the right of victims to harbor resentment against their oppressors. In Broder's world no such opposition arises. Although Broder and Masha acknowledge the practical inefficacy of bitterness, they accept it as an
integral part of postwar existence. In his less violent imaginary vagaries, Broder brings “to trial all those who had been involved in the annihilation of the Jews” (E, 132).

When memories of personal loss subside, external influences, such as a newspaper description of a survivor’s recollection of German concentration and Russian slave-labor camps, catapult Broder back to the Holocaust universe. According to Broder, the Holocaust is a continuation and culmination of an historic persecution pattern: “The pogrom of Kishinev never ceases. Jews are forever being burned in Auschwitz” (E, 30). Furthermore, as a detainee in a displaced persons camp, Broder was privy to news of postwar anti-Jewish actions. That the crimes of the Holocaust did not deter postwar violent anti-Semitism is clear from the murderous reception Jewish survivors received from their Polish countrymen when they tried to return to their homes. No sooner had the surviving remnant tried to reclaim life than their countrymen became their new persecutors. Compounding the violent postwar European anti-Semitism was the political anti-Semitism responsible for detaining Jews in European and Cyprus detention camps to prevent their emigration to Palestine. Finally, Broder’s postwar rehabilitation is marred by Germany’s resurrection as a postwar industrial power, the rise of neo-Nazism and concomitant whitewash of past atrocities. Holocaust agony intensifies with the realization that “in the Munich taverns, murderers who had played with the skulls of children, sipped beer from tall steins and sang hymns in church” (E, 248). Broder rages against a world that fails to bring Nazi war criminals to justice, awarding amnesty to “three-quarters of a million ‘small Nazis’” (E, 19), a world impervious to Jewish pain while generously rebuilding Germany and rewarding its war criminals. He condemns short-lived, international post-Holocaust sympathy for Jewish victims coupled with weakening Holocaust remembrance; he bitterly rejects reconciliation with Germany, convinced that German reparations cannot compensate for Nazi crimes. In Broder’s voice one hears Singer’s lament that the surviving remnant continues to suffer, ignored by the nations that acquiesced to earlier persecution, while the architects and technicians of the gas chambers and the industrialists who worked millions of slave laborers to death continue to profit from their crimes. Broder’s anguish stems not only from Holocaust-era outrage but from evidence that mankind has adopted rather than repudiated the Nazi model. Beyond personal and particular Jewish loss,
Broder laments the tragedy Nazism has unleashed on the world as the primer for twentieth-century, politically motivated mass murder; Nazism was the training ground for Uganda, Biafra, Vietnam, and Cambodia. He laments that violence has become an acceptable tool of governments. That Nazi genocide was not an aberration but a model others have emulated is a source of grave concern to Singer and “blasphemy on the ashes of the tormented” (E, 19).

Like Bellow, Schaeffer, and Wallant, Singer broadens the novel's Holocaust exposition and the spectrum of Holocaust response by reinforcing his protagonist’s views with those of a survivor chorus. The choral message of Singer’s perpetual victims and mourners is “that the Holocaust will affect the Jews more, rather than less, with the passage of time.” Masha, Broder’s Holocaust soulmate, is among the most severely psychologically damaged survivors. Enduring years in ghetto and concentration camps, she weighted only seventy-two pounds at liberation. Her bayonet inflicted facial scar is emblematic of her battered psyche. Emotionally incapacitated and existentially directed by Holocaust experience, Masha attributes her postwar physical lethargy and psychological paralysis to concentration camp conditioning, claiming that since the Nazis forced her to do things for so long, she is unable to act on her own volition. Even her love-making with Broder is Holocaust besmirched. Masha plays Scheherazade, enhancing their erotic trysts with stories from ghetto, camp, and postwar Polish ruins to satiate Herman’s psychtic need for vicarious Holocaust suffering.

Singer uses the character of Broder’s first wife to introduce the peculiar horror Jewish parents suffered witnessing their children’s deaths prior to their own. Just as her husband’s trauma is marked by daydreams reflecting his wartime hiding, so Tamara’s postwar hallucinations of communing with her dead parents and children reflect her agony of separation from her loved ones. Left for dead herself with a bullet lodged in her body, she escaped and found sanctuary in a gentile household. Whereas Broder worries about international indifference to Jewish suffering and Allied failure to punish war criminals, Tamara addresses victimization and diversity of Holocaust behavior. She cites instances of degradation and benevolence, contrasting Nazi transformation of Jews into police functionaries, who cleared Jewish homes, dragged victims from hiding places, and herded them into the death transports, with the altruism of starving Jews offering food rations to victims
they consider more needy than themselves. Despite all her own efforts to bear witness, Tamara Broder believes that histories, memoirs, and documentaries are inadequate to Holocaust enormity, because the victims themselves have repressed or forgotten all but a fraction of their suffering.

With the cameo portrait of Shifrah Puah, Singer contrasts Holocaust-induced negative behavior and psychic trauma with Holocaust-wrought piety and reverence for life. Masha's mother, Shifrah Puah, perpetually dresses in mourning for her relatives exterminated in ghettos and camps and responds to life's burden with religious fervor. Unlike Broder who is excited by abundant food, Shifrah Puah is abstemious in honor of those who starved in the camps, where one "would have risked his life for a piece of bread, a potato" (E, 49). In addition to reading the Yiddish press for survivor notices, she uses food money for books about Maidanek, Treblinka, and Auschwitz.

In addition to physical and psychological trauma of survivors, Singer explores the varieties of religious Jewish Holocaust responses. His survivors echo the theological reactions promulgated by Richard Rubenstein, Emil Fackenheim, and Eliezar Berkovits. Like the theologians, the fictional survivors categorically reject any attempt to explain the Holocaust as just retribution for sin. In their various stages of despair and hope, Singer's characters express the gamut of emotions: from Rubenstein's judgment that the only response to the death camps is rejection of God,10 to Emil Fackenheim's insistence on reaffirming God and Judaism,11 to Eliezar Berkovits' acceptance of the hester panim thesis (hiding of the face of God)12 and his assertion that the Holocaust is unique in the magnitude of its destruction, but not unique in the theological dilemma it presents to religious faith.13

Masha and Broder occasionally echo Rubenstein's recognition of the meaninglessness of existence in a universe where there is neither a divine plan nor divine concern and the recognition that the human condition reflects no transcendental purpose. Neither, however, seems to follow Rubenstein's path of "the death of God" thesis nor his concomitant call to replace devotion to God with devotion to the community of Israel in order to create meaning. Masha, who shares none of the compunctions of the orthodox, bluntly indicts God as a Nazi collaborator, a butcher God. Rejecting theories of retributive and regenerative powers of suffering, she argues that even if it had been God's purpose to strengthen Jewish
devotion through suffering, the Nazi scourge was immoral and ineffective, for “the religious Jews had been practically wiped out. The worldly Jews who managed to escape had, with few exceptions, learned nothing from all the terror” (E, 45). Like Broder, Masha believes that history is a cycle of persecution, but unlike Broder, she denounces God for normalizing such history. Consequently, she blasphemes by desecrating a mezuzah, the oblong container placed on the doorposts of Jewish homes containing a roll of parchment on which is written the Shema, the Judaic prayer proclaiming the oneness of God, and two biblical passages about love for God and His precepts (Deuteronomy 6:4–9; 11:13–21).

Orthodox foil characters who round out Singer’s multifaceted treatment of survivors’ religious responses reject both Masha’s contemptuous censure and Broder’s protest against God. Masha’s mother, Shifrah Puah, and Tamara’s uncle, Reb Nissen, remain religiously observant and community directed, escaping the isolation and purposelessness that drive Broder to despair and Masha to suicide. These pious Jews, cling even more tenaciously to Orthodox Judaism after Holocaust devastation. Reb Nissen, who traveled to America just before Hitler’s troops invaded Poland, observes ritual mourning one day a week for the family and other martyrs he left behind. He fasts and diligently performs the rites governing mourning ritual. Unlike the protestors who condemn God or question His judgment, Nissen struggles to find meaning in the Holocaust. He responds to Tamara’s catalogue of Nazi and Russian outrages with a line from Isaiah, “And man is bowed down and man is humbled.” When people stop believing in the Creator, anarchy prevails” (E, 79). Thus, he adheres to his belief in a just and merciful God because the alternative is unbearable. Shifrah Puah’s character illustrates the Berkovits resignation to God’s willful absence from history. Like Berkovits, Shifrah Puah does not exonerate God for the suffering of righteous and innocent Jews, but she derives some solace from the belief in their ultimate redemption; she prays for the martyrs and follows Fackenheim’s and Berkovits’ prescriptions to strengthen her faith through observance of the commandments. She observes Jewish law and ritual to honor Holocaust martyrs and to preserve their memories; her actions contrast vividly with her daughter’s similarly motivated sacrilege. To sanctify the Holocaust martyrs, the mother lights memorial candles for the dead, prays three times a day, and obeys the religious commandments more zealously than she had in
the prewar period. Believing that God had taken the blessed souls, the pious Jews to Himself, and allowed the others to exist, Shifrah Puah conducts her survival as an act of contrition, an apology for having “remained alive when so many men and women had been martyred” (E, 44). The pious old woman’s name is an appropriate fusion of the names of two biblical women renowned for their resistance to tyranny, tyranny specifically designed—as was the Nazi plan—to effect the destruction of Jewry. Shifrah and Puah were midwives who thwarted Pharaoh’s genocidal order to kill all male children born to Israelite women. Their moral courage, which extended beyond saving the children from assassination to nurturing and sustaining them with food and drink, is the ethical and emblematic lesson of Exodus 1:14–17 and the model for Singer’s fictional, virtuous mother figure.

Whereas Shifrah Puah and Reb Nissen reflect the unshaken faith of the older generation of Orthodox Jews, Tamara . . . begins in the Rubenstein camp and by novel’s end shows Fackenheimian resistance to Nazism by a commitment to the essential survival of Jewry through a commitment to the Jewish religion. Tamara represents the younger, assimilated Polish Jews whose Holocaust metamorphosis began in apostasy and secular assimilation and ended in spiritual return and religious regeneration. In her pre-Holocaust youth, Tamara sought to supplant Orthodox Judaism with secular social reform, to replace religious Messianism with Marxist Messianism. Disillusioned by Soviet anti-Semitism, Tamara returned to Judaism and embraced Zionism as the only practical political movement supportive of Jewry. Tamara’s metamorphosis parallels public events:

In the late thirties, when the Nazi leaders had visited Poland and nationalist students beat up Jews and forced Jewish students to stand during the lectures at the university, Tamara . . . turned to religion. She began to light candles on Friday night and to keep a kosher household. (E, 64)

As the Holocaust progressed in its murderous path, she adopts a Rubenstein-like radical denial of God, “If God was able to watch all this horror and remain silent, then He’s no God . . . Souls exist; it’s God who doesn’t” (E, 82–83). Through Tamara’s religious metamorphosis, Singer notes the two extremes of Jewish theological Holocaust response: the Rubenstein assertion of the death of God
and the Fackenheim return to Judaism. Her post-Holocaust return and commitment to Orthodox Judaism is derived from the failure of Communism and Socialism to value, protect, and preserve their Jewish adherents, and a Fackenheimian conviction that only through the practice of Judaism will Jews deny Hitler a posthumous victory. Tamara's Jewish regeneration foreshadows the spiritual return of Singer's protagonist in *The Penitent* (1983), who renounces Western secularism for Judaism.

Despite his character's accommodations, divine silence in the face of the Holocaust slaughter gives Singer no rest. In authorial voice, he admits:

> I feel a deep resentment against the Almighty. My religion goes hand in hand with a profound feeling of protest. Once in a while, the old Jewish hope for the coming of the Messiah awakens in me. There must come an end to our blindness. There must come the time for some revelation! My feeling of religion is a feeling of rebellion. . . . I often say to myself that God wants us to protest. He has had enough of those who praise Him all the time and bless Him for all his cruelties to man and animals.¹⁴

This anguished cry appears in an unpublished, and as yet untranslated, book, *Rebellion and Prayer or the True Protestor*, that Singer wrote at the time of the Holocaust.¹⁵

Like many Jewish writers who protest God's Holocaust-era silence, Singer's rebellion has its roots in the prophets and the biblical patriarchs. Abraham, Job, Moses, and Jeremiah articulate their anguish with God's passivity in the face of injustice. Singer's protest echoes Jeremiah's complaint:

> Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper?  
> Thou hast planted them, yea, they have taken root;  
> They grow, yea, they bring forth fruit;  
> Thou art near in their mouths,  
> And far from their reins. (Jeremiah 12:1–2)

Hasidic literature, too, which is a vital part of Singer's heritage, is replete with tales in which God is accused of trangressing His covenantal obligation toward the Jewish people. Like Elie Wiesel, Singer does not pronounce the death of God as has the American radical theologian Richard Rubenstein. Wiesel and Singer acknowledge God's sovereignty, while denouncing His failure to save the
Jewish people from slaughter. Neither God nor humankind are absolved of Holocaust guilt. Like Elie Wiesel's young autobiographical protagonist in *Night* who cries out "How I sympathized with Job! I did not deny God's existence, but I doubted His absolute justice," Singer's survivors cannot reconcile the just and merciful God with the Holocaust. Wiesel resolves the problem by acknowledging the presence of evil in God. Although Singer explores, through Broder's voice, the thesis that God is in league with the devil and with Hitler, he rejects it in the authorial voice and contends that a human being will say this only in moments of great despair. He argues that God is unjust and that man has the moral obligation to protest God's injustice. Because he believes, with Eliezer Berkovits, that God tolerates human evil to insure the principle of free will, he argues that man must protest human and divine injustice. Just as Elie Wiesel's criticism is in accord with Kabbalistic philosophy, so Singer's protest reflects traditional Jewish thinking. Both writers refrain from repudiating God, but assert that God has sinned against humanity. In spite of God's Holocaust shortcoming, Wiesel and Singer maintain that the Jew must continue to honor Israel's covenant with God. God has faltered, but it remains the duty of the observant Jew to faithfully honor Torahic law.

The paradox of the protesting believer is manifested most dramatically in Broder's character. Both in the Holocaust and its aftermath, Broder lost faith in the human race and its religious and political systems. He believed: "Religions lied. Philosophy was bankrupt from the beginning. The idle promises of progress were no more than a spit in the face of the martyrs of all generations" (*E*, 30). Although he stops short of Masha's denunciation of God as a Nazi collaborator, Broder correlates divine impotence with human impotence, "if a God of mercy did exist in the heavenly hierarchy, then He was only a helpless godlet, a kind of heavenly Jew among the heavenly Nazis" (*E*, 123). Singer explains that his rebellious characters believe in God and although they know that His wisdom is great and His mercy may be great, they also protest His injustice when they witness the suffering of the righteous. Since Singer believes that protest is a part of religion, his characters' remonstrances are not evidence of irreconcilable conflict with God, but ongoing protest and petition. Thus, Broder expresses his protest by modifying his conformity to Orthodox practice. On Yom Kippur he fasts, but he refrains from communal synagogue prayer.
and on other occasions desists from uttering prescribed prayers of praise.

Although Broder faults God's Holocaust silence, he remains steadfast to the ethical values of Judaism. Like Asa Heshel, the lapsed Jew in The Family Moskat who recanted his apostasy, Broder, too, concludes that apostasy from Judaism is a dismal error: "If a Jew departed so much as one step from the Shulcan Aruch, he found himself spiritually in the sphere of everything base—Fascism, Bolshevism, murder, adultery, drunkenness" (E, 170). Broder considers the modern alternatives to Judaism ineffectual and rejects the secular philosophers on the grounds that one could simultaneously be a devotee of their thought and a Nazi; one could be a paragon of European culture and perpetrate or implement atrocities. He condemns Christianity on the same basis, as "a faith which had, in the name of God, organized inquisitions, crusades, bloody wars" (E, 170).

Anticipating the redeemed protagonist in The Penitent, Broder attributes his moral fall to his departure from Judaic law and plans to free himself from the "licentiousness into which he had sunk when he had strayed from God, the Torah, and Judaism" (E, 169). Because the civilized and cultured West spawned and tolerated Nazism, Broder and other outspoken Singerian survivors condemn the moral failure of the religious and secular West. In his final analysis, Broder finds the only real antithesis to Nazism is Judaism. He argues, "If we don't want to become like the Nazis, we must be Jews!" (E, 171). He concludes that there is only one appropriate path for him, "to go back to the Torah, the Germara, the Jewish books... Since he was suffocating without God and the Torah, he must serve God and study the Torah" (E, 170–71).

Emblematic of Broder's spiritual return to God through Judaism is his decision to live by the commandments, to father a child, to abandon ghost writing, and to teach. In America, a land he believes barren of the once vibrant Judaism that flourished in Eastern Europe before the faithful were murdered by Hitler and Stalin, Broder's resolution weakens. In contrast to the successful repentance and redemption quests of Singer's Old-World, Orthodox Jews, which succeeded because they "lived in a world where Jews still had a culture and a language and an inner world of their own, one which could sustain waverers," Broder's "spiritual aspirations [may] die for want of a nourishing atmosphere." Because the ghetto Jew's identity was a coherent, organic whole, because he
belonged to a people and to God, his spiritual return was potentially successful, whereas the assimilated Jew is lost, afloat in a spiritual wasteland. Singer implies Broder will attain spiritual renewal if he translates intellectual conviction into action and leads an integrated Jewish life. Unlike the Christian presentation of Jew as archetypal outsider and symbol of contemporary alienation, I. B. Singer "sees the true experience of alienation and exile not in the ghetto Jew, but in the emancipated and enlightened Jew." Although the ending is ambivalent, Tamara’s speculation that Broder has found his hayloft, strongly suggests the possibility of spiritual return. Although withdrawal from community is not the conventional Jewish approach to redemption, Singer’s Jews frequently stray from traditional Jewish means and values to arrive at similar ends. Just as Yasha Mazur, an earlier reformed apostate with whom Broder shares many sins, repented alone in a brick cell, so Broder may have withdrawn from assimilated society to a figurative hayloft, free of distracting temptation, to work out his return to God and Jewish law.

Because Singer believes that non-Jewish civilization is a slaughterhouse, a culture that laid the foundation for the Final Solution in its own religiously inspired pogroms, a culture whose adherents often willingly acquiesced to or openly supported the genocide of Jewry, he affirms the achievement of Holocaust restoration in Judaic civilization, in its religion, ethics, literature, and community. Thus, Singer entrusts the rearing of the next Jewish generation to Yadwiga, a righteous gentile who risked her own life to save a Jewish life during the Holocaust and then converted to Judaism, and Tamara, the Jewish mother whose children were murdered by the Nazis. He suggests Holocaust restoration is possible in the nurturing of the next Jewish generation according to Jewish law. Tamara sustains Yadwiga and Broder by acting as Jewish guardian to their child, establishing a Jewish home for Yadwiga and her baby in an apartment attached to the Jewish bookstore she operates. Singer thus implies that survival will flourish in the essential contexts that have sustained Jews through the centuries, Jewish home and study. The novel concludes with symbols of hope, birth, and regeneration, an apostate’s probable return to Judaism, and the birth of a new Jewish life to affirm and rebuild the people that lost so much in Germany’s crime.

The motifs of God’s Holocaust-era injustice coupled with human obligation to honor the covenant, and the Jew’s post-Holo-
caust obligation to sustain Judaism, found in *Enemies* will be echoed in *Shosha* and *The Penitent*. In each instance Singer presents this view in a way that honors the covenantal bond between God and the Jews. Singer's protest—like those of Abraham, Job, Moses, and Jeremiah—acknowledges the self-concealing and the self-revealing Divinity and thus bears witness to his faith.

*Shosha* (1978) is Singer's transition Holocaust novel, reiterating the Holocaust-eyes themes of *The Family Moskat*, extending the theological questions raised in *Enemies*, and incorporating an autobiographical narrator to transmit Holocaust history given him by survivors. *Shosha* is a projection of Singer's fate had he remained in Europe and is a memorial for the Jewish millions who perished there. Designed as a loosely structured memoir, *Shosha* records representative Jewish reactions to the outbreak of the Holocaust. Aaron Griedinger, a struggling writer, returns to Warsaw from a brief teaching stint in the rural provinces to sustain his beloved *Shosha* as the conflagration advances. Aaron's career resembles Singer's early period in Warsaw. While earning his meagre living as a Yiddish translator and journalist, he works on a novel about a false Messiah that will attain the critical recognition Singer received for *Satan in Goray*. Aaron's Warsaw circle consists of representative Jewish figures: orthodox pietists, secular intellectuals and litterati, all living "in a quiet despair, . . . just waiting and trying to forget, by making love, reading books, speaking about some non-existent hope," but doomed for the crematoria and lime pits of Poland.

Set in Poland during the late 1930s and early 1940s, *Shosha* captures the suffering of a beleaguered people, "people . . . on the edge of a volcano that has not yet erupted but may do so at any moment," people enduring the tripartite force of Polish, Russian, and German anti-Semitism. Singer debunks the thesis that a few madmen are alone guilty of genocide and posits the view that "a large part of the masses want to kill, plunder, rape, and do what Hitler, Stalin, and tyrants like them have always done." Whether the war had been won by the Nazis or the Communists, the author-narrator notes that their common goal was the annihilation of European Jewry. Whereas native American Jewish writers generally offer muted reference to Christian Holocaust culpability, the Polish immigrant writer forcefully and repeatedly articulates the congruent anti-Semitic goals of Christian and Nazi Europeans. In contrast to Edward Lewis Wallant's symbolic crucifixion scene linking Catholic and Nazi anti-Semitism, Singer boldly asserts the connection: "The Poles meant to get rid of us. They consider us a nation
within a nation, a strange and malignant body. They lack the courage to finish us off themselves, but they wouldn't shed tears if Hitler did it for them” (131). In a poignant Yom Kippur scene, the narrator, presumed by a barber to be a fellow Catholic, becomes the captive audience for a venomous anti-Jewish diatribe. With the razor at his throat, Aaron listens to the barber's harangue, dramatizing the commonalities of Christian and Nazi anti-Jewish prejudice.

They've taken over all Poland... The cities are lousy with them... they swarm like vermin everywhere... There's one consolation—Hitler will smoke them out like bedbugs.

I'll tell you something, dear sir. The modern Jews, those who shave, who speak a proper Polish, and who try to ape real Poles, are even worse than the old-fashioned Hebes with their long gaberdines, wild beards, and earlocks. They, at least, don't go where they aren't wanted. They sit in their stores in their long capotes and shake over their Talmud like bedouins. They babble away in their jargon, and when a Christian falls into their clutches, they swindle a few groschen out of him. But at least they don't go to the theater, the cafes, the opera. Those that shave and dress modern are the real danger. They sit in our Sejm and make treaties with our worst enemies, the Ruthenians, the White Russians, the Lithuanians. Every one of them is a secret Communist and a Soviet spy. They have one aim—to root out us Christians and hand over the power to the Bolsheviks, the Masons, and the radicals. You might find it hard to believe this, dear sir, but their millionaires have a secret pact with Hitler. The Rothschilds finance him and Roosevelt is the middleman. His real name isn't Roosevelt but Rosenfeld, a converted Jew. They supposedly assume the Jewish faith, but with one goal in mind—to bore from within and infect everything and everybody. (S, 162–63).

But Hitler will clean them out! He promises their millionaires that he'll protect their capital, but once the Nazis are armed he'll fix them all—ha, ha, ha! It's too bad that he'll attack our country, but since we haven't had the guts to sweep away this filth ourselves, we have to let the enemy do it for us. What will happen later, no one can know. The fault for it all lies with those traitors, the Protestants, who sold their souls to the devil. They're the Pope's deadliest enemies. Did you know, dear sir, that Luther was a secret Jew? (S, 163–64).

The speech reeks of canard and fallacy that characterize Christian anti-Semitism. Further, Singer's attribution of Nazi extermination
rhetoric to a preconcentrationary-era Pole, reared in Roman Catholic anti-Semitism, demonstrates the ease with which Europeans progressed from one mode of anti-Semitism to another. Singer parallels the barber's monologue, Polish press reports postulating Jewry as Poland's greatest enemy, and government reception of Hitler's representatives to show the similarity of individual and collective Polish anti-Semitism.

The mystery of faith in an age of atrocity is another recurrent Holocaust theme appearing in *Shosha*. The novel's Spinozan, Morris Feitelzohn, adamantly decries faith in a benevolent deity. In 1939, Feitelzohn argues that Jews deluded themselves and others by creating the illusion of a just and merciful God responsive to the human condition. In the epilogue, we learn that this debunker of Jewish illusions recanted during the darkest period of the Holocaust. While in hiding, he reconsiders the heritage of generations and supplants ridicule of the faithful with rage against the Deity—rage religiously expressed. Despite the unorthodox diction, Feitelzohn echoes the nonfictional authorial voice in his rebuke of the Almighty and in his advocacy of the kabbalistic belief in man's need to complete God's work in the world:

for all His sins since the Creation. He still maintained that the whole universe was a game, but he elevated this game until it became divine. . . . The essence of his words was that since God is eternally silent, we owe Him nothing. . . . True religion, Morris argued, was not to serve God but to spite Him. If He wanted evil, we had to aspire to the opposite. If He wanted wars, inquisitions, crucifixions, Hitlers, we must want righteousness, Hasidism, our own version of grace. (S, 171)

The protagonist's brother, Rabbi Moishe—modeled on and named for I. B. Singer's younger brother who perished—is Feitelzohn's theological foil. Faithful to his biblical namesake, the rabbi loyally discharges the laws and rituals of Orthodox Judaism. Like Moses, he trusts God's purpose and anticipates divine deliverance from the contemporary Pharaoh. While the world begins to crumble around him, he finds solace in God and in Judaism, convinced that religious observance signifies the continuation of the Jewish people. As the Moskats invoked the Passover theme of Jewish deliverance from Egyptian bondage, noting the contemporary relevance of the *Haggadah* history, so, too, does Rabbi Moishe draw
an appropriate analogy to Hitlerean oppression and its awaited end as he lights the Hannukah candles to commemorate Jewish victory over the Syrian despot and worshipers of Baal. The language of the Moskat Passover celebrants—"And it is this same promise which has been the support of our ancestors and of us, for in every generation our enemies have arisen to annihilate us, but the Most Holy, blessed be He, has delivered us out of their hands" (FM, 577)—is repeated by Rabbi Moishe almost verbatim: "In each generation our enemies rise up to destroy us, and the Holy One, blessed be He, is saving us from their hands" (S, 192). In each instance the worshipers remember historic examples of Jewish liberation from tyranny hoping that God will again intercede on their behalf. For the Orthodox, the oppression and slavery suffered under Syrian and Egyptian despots provides a model for facing the Hitler onslaught. No matter how bleak history is, Singer's Holocaust-era religious devotees are sustained by their faith in an interceding Deity. A pious Jew who believes the Messiah will come either when the world merits him because of its goodness or because of its terrible evil, the young rabbi accepts Hitler's war against the Jews as the possible "birth pains of the Messiah" and is ready to die kiddush ha-Shem, a martyr's death, sanctifying God's Holy Name. Singer's early Holocaust-era believers are often distinguished from their survivor counterparts by their single-minded belief in divine intercession. History has taught Moishe that "there have been many Hamans and they will all come to a bad end" (S, 188). As early Holocaust victims, it is natural that Moishe and the Moskats anticipate heroic human endeavor in the mode of the Maccabean Revolt or divine intercession as in the Passover exodus from Egyptian slavery. Their belief in the God of revelation is as convincing as is survivor knowledge of the hidden and silent God. Innocent of the technological implementation of genocide, the religious regarded Hitler as another in the catalogue of historic anti-Jewish tyrants—a Pharaoh, a Czar, a Chmielnicki, a Petluria. Thus, the Feitelzohn-Moishe juxtaposition dramatizes diverse Jewish theological responses to the Holocaust, from covenantal protest, to resignation, to divine mystery, matters that will receive increasing attention in the fiction of Jewishly educated American novelists—Cynthia Ozick, Arthur Cohen, and Chaim Potok.

Singer generally approaches and transcends the Holocaust abyss to avoid direct dramatization. Between the main body of the novel, which concludes as the Nazis are about to invade Poland,
and the epilogue, set thirteen years later in Israel, is Holocaust silence. Singer relies on the reader’s knowledge of the Holocaust to supply an essential part of the reading experience. In the epilogue, during a chance meeting in Israel, the narrator and another survivor enunciate the Holocaust fate of their group—Shosha’s death in flight from Warsaw, and the deaths of Aaron’s aged mother and Rabbi Moishe, who survived transit by cattle car only to succumb under the strain of hard labor and severe weather in Russia.

The social and political failure of the European Enlightenment, a minor theme in Shosha, is significant in the canon and attains dominance in The Penitent. The Holocaust exposed the moral failure of the Enlightenment’s political panaceas. Non-Jewish followers of the Enlightenment had no love for Jews, no desire to save them from genocide. In Singer’s world, among the greatest ironies of the Holocaust is the lapsed Jew’s discovery that the Judaism he abandoned is morally superior to the philosophies adopted in its stead. Similarly, Aaron castigates himself for having “thrown away four thousand years of Jewishness and exchanged it for meaningless literature, Yiddishism, Feitelzohnism” (S, 256). In the darkness of the Holocaust, even Feitelzohn saw that “The heritage of generations had wakened within him, and he hurled sulphur and brimstone against the Almighty; at the same time the words themselves blazed with a religious fire” (S, 271).

Singer does not presume to answer the Holocaust enigma. In the epilogue’s encounter between the narrator and the surviving Haiml in Israel, both express continued bafflement at the radical evil unleashed by Nazism. In their concluding discussion, Haiml compares himself to a “squashed fly,” alluding to Gloucester’s famous comment at the end of King Lear, “As flies to wanton boys are we to the gods” (King Lear, IV. i). Although Aaron rejects the view that malicious gods make us suffer for their sport, he offers no explanation for Holocaust suffering. There is no satisfactory explanation—not for the sufferer, not for the survivor, not for Singer. Jews will struggle to survive and wait for answers. While they wait they are obliged to uphold the covenant. Singer’s emphasis on covenantal responsibility is evident in the near verbatim repetition of Feitelzohn’s declaration: If God allows evil to flourish in His creation, the Jew’s job is to combat it. “If He wants war, inquisitions, crucifixions, Hitlers, we should desire honesty, Hasidism, our own version of grace” (S, 271).
Another innovative aspect of this traditional Holocaust work is Singer's introduction of an Israeli theme. Although Singer suggests no direct connection between the Holocaust and political establishment of the State of Israel, he sets the novel's epilogue in Israel to contrast Diasporan and Israeli attitudes toward Jewish self-defense in a hostile environment. As the cycle of violence and reprieve of Jewish history takes a new turn, with Arab states dedicated to Israel's destruction, Aaron and Haiml speak of post-Holocaust Jewish assertiveness. Haiml attributes the change to the Holocaust and to the acceptance of the Zionist call for Jews to abandon their historic military passivity in favor of armed resistance to force. Haiml proudly contrasts Israeli independence and power with historic Diasporan impotence: "here no one went like a sheep to the slaughter. Our lads from Warsaw, Lodz, Rawa Ruska, and Minsk suddenly turned into heroes like the fighters in the time of Masada" (S, 265). Haiml's jubilation in the Jewish state is tempered by recognition that its survival in the midst of five enemy states is highly dependent upon a world largely hostile or indifferent to its existence. Thus, Singer notes the importance of Israel to post-Holocaust regeneration and to Jewish confidence as a sign that the historic pattern of passive resistance to anti-Semitism is over and a new epoch in Jewish history has begun.

Singer's Israel is a land of survivors. Like the American survivors in Enemies, the Israeli survivors in Shosha continue to suffer physical and psychological Holocaust wounds. Haiml is certain that the souls of the perished have come to rest in Israel, and like Singer's other survivors, he lives with memories of those killed in the Holocaust. Haiml doubts that the generation of victims and its children will recover without scars and puts his hope in future generations: "Perhaps their grandchildren will be normal if the Almighty doesn't send a new catastrophe down upon us" (S, 274). A true Singerian, Haiml concludes that if the most violent collective disaster of the Jewish people was followed by rebirth of a Jewish nation, the Messianic dream may still be possible, one may hope "the dead will be resurrected" (S, 269). Hamil's position is not unlike those of Eliezar Berkovits and Emil Fackenheim who hold that if one may take the Holocaust as evidence of God's hiddenness, one may also interpret the ingathering of the Jews in Israel as evidence of God's presence in history and as an affirmation of the redemptive promise.29

In two short stories, "The Mentor," set in Israel in 1955, and
“Hanka,” Singer continues to use the author-narrator to explore the Holocaust survivor trauma. The stories dramatize the reunion of Polish Holocaust survivors and the narrator, an internationally celebrated author on a lecture tour in Israel and Argentina respectively. The reunion offers a backdrop for recollection and transmittal of Holocaust experiences. The scribal narrator, whose personal and professional similarity to Singer establishes an authentic voice, records the experiences of Holocaust survivors revealed to him directly or indirectly through a Jamesian confidant. As the author exchanges news with compatriots whom he hasn’t seen either since leaving his village in 1922 or since emigrating from Poland in 1935, they lament neighbors and families who “had perished in the ghettos and concentration camps or had died in Russia of hunger, typhoid fever, and scurvy.”

In “The Mentor,” Singer dramatizes the theme of Holocaust-induced loss of religious faith in an internal tale told by the narrator’s former student, Friedl, now an accomplished physician, writer, and Zionist. The Holocaust crucible has transformed her from faithful Jewish scholar to bitter agnostic. Friedl (meaning Joy), whose name ironically negates her existential despair, cites the Holocaust as the cause for rejecting her father’s belief in the “miracles God performed for the Jews” (TM, 102). Friedl’s protest against God’s Holocaust betrayal recalls Broder’s and Masha’s bitter accusations and echoes Richard Rubenstein’s death of God thesis. “After what happened to them,” Friedl argues, “one must be absolutely stupid and insensitive to believe in God and all that drivel. What’s more, to believe in a compassionate God is the worst betrayal of the victims” (TM, 102–103). That Singer holds Friedl’s view suspect is evident both in his narrator’s philosophic challenge and the Nazideutsch rhetoric he uses for her speech: “Nazis are enemies of the human race, and people must be allowed to exterminate them like bedbugs” (TM, 103). As Jew and physician, Friedl should revere life, but the Holocaust experience evoked such a bizarre metamorphosis that she appropriates Nazi rhetoric to express her contempt for the Nazi system. Deprived of family, faith, and language, Friedl is left with the Nazi legacy of hatred.

In another inversion, Friedl changes places with her mentor and offers to be his guide. She becomes mentor to the uninitiated narrator, who in turn will become the transmitter of her tale. Reversing the mentor-student relationship, she poses rhetorical questions, philosophical questions that have been implied throughout
the Holocaust oeuvre of Singer: “where shall we go from here?” (TM, 112) Where does the Holocaust road lead? What path shall mankind take from the Holocaust abyss? The story offers no resolution; it simply articulates the central questions.

In “Hanka,” which shares both theme and narrative method with “The Mentor,” the narrator encounters his cousin who is the lone survivor of her immediate family. Cast in the role of tour guide, Hanka operates as Holocaust mentor, charting the troubled course of her misguided parents, who reared their children “to be one-hundred-percent Poles” believing assimilation was the remedy for traditional Polish anti-Semitism. Just as Friedl remains psychologically and spiritually unhealed in the aftermath of the Holocaust, so Hanka, who was psychically and physically wounded by the Holocaust, remains a perpetual Holocaust victim, a member of an exterminated tribe. An ambulatory corpse, she argues against facile expectations of postwar rehabilitation. Acutely cognizant of Jewish history as a chronicle of suffering, her Argentinian sojourn is a reminder of fifteenth-century Spanish crimes against Jewry: “The men still dream of inquisitions and autos-da-fé” (H, 18).

Singer returns to the Israeli theme of Shosha’s epilogue in Hanka’s concern about the Arab promise of a second Holocaust. However, unlike Hamil, she even doubts Israeli dreams of regeneration: “We are surrounded there by hords of enemies whose aim is the same as Hitler’s—to exterminate us” (H, 14). Perhaps because Hanka emigrated to Argentina—home and haven to both escaped Nazi criminals and their victims—rather than to Israel, she shares none of Hamil’s confidence in the Israeli capacity to withstand Arab promises of genocide. Hanka remains incomprehensible to the narrator whose Holocaust innocence precludes thorough understanding of his cousin’s encounter with absolute evil. Both “Hanka” and “The Mentor” provide Singer’s strongest pronouncement on the inability of nonwitnesses, however well-intentioned, to comprehend Holocaust history completely.

Departing from unadulterated realism, Singer introduces in “A Wedding in Brownsville” and “The Cafeteria” a supernatural element to render Holocaust sensibility and experience. Like Edgar Allan Poe’s tales of the grotesque and arabesque, these stories fuse the real and surreal to create “the displacements of consciousness and sensibility... which more than anything else provide the distinctive literary and personal qualities defining him as a writer.” Singer seduces the reader into the supernatural realm.
through an extended sojourn in a realistic urban environment, which in turn solidifies the fantasy realm. In “A Wedding in Brownsville,” the passage from the real to the surreal is so carefully wrought that one is scarcely aware of the transition until the tale’s conclusion. In “The Cafeteria,” Singer fashions a grotesque imp—Hitler’s ghost who presides at a meeting of his henchmen.

“A Wedding in Brownsville,” one of the first Singer fictions set in America, combines Holocaust memoir with an elegy for Orthodox Judaism that has been severely diminished in its American metamorphosis. Dr. Margolin, the protagonist, is a pre-Holocaust immigrant who has successfully assimilated to American society. He maintains association with a fraternal society whose membership consists of his village countrymen; he provides free medical treatment for needy Jews and works for a Jewish publication. An Old World Jewish prodigy able to recite long passages from Bible, Talmud, and the commentaries, Margolin disdains de-racinated American Jewishness and Anglicized Yiddish. Although he remains theologically apart from American Judaism, he feels ethnically and emotionally connected to the Jewish people.

Like Singer, despite leaving Europe before the Holocaust, Margolin’s life was nevertheless fundamentally changed by the catastrophe. “His family there had been tortured, burned, gassed,” and his sweetheart killed. His wife, a German gentile, was caught between a Nazi brother who died in a Russian prison camp and a Communist brother who was shot by the Nazis. Perpetually lamenting the Nazi outrage, Mrs. Margolin, like Yadwiga of Enemies, “had become almost Jewish in New York” (WB, 230), befriending Jewish women and joining Hadassah, a Jewish women’s philanthropic organization.

Prompted by elegiac feelings for his murdered countrymen, Dr. Margolin sets out alone in inclement weather to attend the wedding of Senciminer descendants. During the journey, his taxi is involved in an accident; this incident provides the transition to his wedding fantasy. He is alternately actor and observer at a reception in which his deceased relatives and friends remember those who died, and they ponder God’s Holocaust passivity: “why did God . . . create a Hitler. . . . Why did He need world wars? . . . What had they been thinking of, those pious uncles of his, when they were digging their own graves?” (WB, 233–34). Eschewing the theological debates of the novels, Singer condenses the matter in an inversion of attributes, with Margolin assigning sins of commission
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to God and virtue to humanity, thereby condemning God’s failure to honor His covenantal obligation to the faithful guardians of His commandments.

The meditation is a thematic prologue to the wedding drama. Reflecting the ritual breaking of a glass at weddings to commemorate the destruction of the ancient Temple—characteristic of traditional Jewish remembrance of sorrow during times of joy—Singer deftly fuses marriage celebration and memorial service, wedding joy and Holocaust grief. Since most of the guests were inmates of Hitler’s camps, when they greet each other, they mourn the lost six million, their unborn progeny, and their loved ones:

“My father? He was killed. I’m the only one left of the entire family.”
... “Sorele? Shot. Together with her children.” ... Zilberstein?
They burned him in the synagogue with twenty others. A mound of charcoal was all that was left, coal and ash” ... They killed everyone, everyone. They took a whole people and wiped them out with German efficiency.” (WB, 237)

Throughout the wedding ceremony and reception conversations are Holocaust-directed: “How close we came ourselves! All of us are really dead, ... We were exterminated, wiped out. Even the survivors carry death in their hearts” (WB, 238). Paradoxically, as the wedding guests recite the death toll, they conclude with the Hebrew toast, Lechayim (to life).

The sociologically and culturally authentic immigrant wedding reception provides an appropriate background for the joyous reunion of Margolin with Raizel, his first love whom he thought had perished in the Holocaust. So moved by his love for Raizel is Margolin that he intends to divorce his wife and marry the girl. In the midst of his marriage proposal to Raizel, Margolin realizes that he is recovering his lost love in death. Having died in the taxi accident; Margolin is reunited with all the Sencimin Holocaust victims. The story concludes in Singerian fusion of natural and supernatural, suggesting that “time and space seem to be no more than categories of the mind. Dr. Margolin is killed, but he does not cease to exist; nor does Raizel and, by implication, neither does anyone else, including the six million victims.”

In “The Cafeteria” Singer adds a supernatural referent through the impressions a confidant offers the writer-narrator. He strengthens the narrator by transforming him from the detached
observer-recorder of "The Mentor" to participant. The narrator is a writer, like Singer, who frequents a New York City cafeteria to visit with Polish-Jewish countrymen who "talk about Yiddish literature, the Holocaust, the State of Israel." The Broadway cafeteria is a meeting place for retired teachers, rabbis, translators, writers, and Holocaust survivors, including an Auschwitz entrepreneur who is reported to have kept a store in his straw mattress: "a rotten potato, sometimes a piece of soap, a tin spoon, a little fat" (C, 87). Among the cafeteria regulars is Esther, a woman who looks much younger than the others and speaks of having read the narrator's work in prewar Poland, in Russian prison camps, and finally in German displaced persons camps. She prophetically declares the narrator to be her writer, and as the tale progresses, he does become the transmitter of her Holocaust history. In the Jamesian manner, Esther is the informing intelligence and the narrator the transmitting agent.

Survival trauma, a major theme in Enemies, emerges dramatically in the physical and emotional struggles of Esther and her invalid father. In conversations with the narrator-scribe, Boris Merkin reveals that he and Esther escaped to Russia in 1939, while his wife and the remaining children were trapped in Nazi-occupied Warsaw. Sharing the fate of many of Singer's Jewish Communists, Merkin was denounced as a Trotskyite and sent to Siberia where he was soon politically disillusioned and physically maimed. He tells an awesome tale of life in death, of the strategies prisoners devised to gain an extra portion of watery soup or an extra piece of bread, of their lice picking techniques, and their general degradation that paralleled the Nazi concentration camp environment.

While Merkin informs the narrator of his physical suffering, Esther's life illustrates survivors' psychological torment. She is a bereft and broken human being, robbed by the Holocaust of her family and husband, struggling to care for her ailing father, despite his death wish. Esther is another of Singer's walking corpses—alive only to psychic grief and physical pain resulting from wartime deprivation. For this survivor, the absurdities of peace parallel the horrors of war. Because Esther sustained her Holocaust injuries in Russian camps, she is ineligible for reparation payments unless she can convince German physicians of her emotional trauma, an indignity she rejects.

As in "A Wedding in Brownsville," Singer develops a densely patterned, realistic tableau in an urban American Jewish milieu to
substantiate the supernatural. Esther tells an incredulous narrator about witnessing a Poe-like imp of the perverse directing a meeting of men clad in white robes with swastika-inscribed sleeves. When she learns that the cafeteria has burned, she recants her original estimate of the improbability of this event and believes that the vision was real and the fire a direct result of her discovery. Following reports of Esther's holocaustal suicide by gas, the narrator sees her walking on Broadway with a man known to have died many years before. Just as Hitler's ghost haunted Esther's consciousness, so Esther's ghost now haunts the narrator, and he concludes that "If time and space are nothing more than forms of perception, as Kant argues, and quality, quantity, causality are only categories of thinking, why shouldn't Hitler confer with his Nazis in a cafeteria on Broadway?" (C, 95) Transformed by the experience into accepting the irrational as an omnipresent, if limited, component of the universe, the narrator finally believes Esther's report. The bond that links survivor and narrator is that forged by "mutual appreciation of the irrational way the universe conducts itself." 36

In his most recent Holocaust dominated work, The Penitent (1983), Singer resurrects and develops the sacred passion previously reserved for minor characters who held fast to the values of traditional rabbinic and Hasidic Judaism, despite Holocaust history. The title character of the The Penitent is Joseph Shapiro, a lapsed Jew who attains Holocaust restoration by asserting his Jewish identity and returning to Torah Judaism. Hand-in-hand with commitment to Judaism in The Penitent is commitment to the State of Israel. The penitent's spiritual return culminates in his emigration to Israel. Although Singer has set several works in Israel, implicitly suggesting a connection between his treatment of the Holocaust and its antithetical historic expression, it is not until The Penitent that he moves from the tentative suggestion of Shosha's epilogue that the survival of Israel is a negation of Hitler's plan to destroy Jewry to forthright assertion that commitment to the Jewish state is as central to Holocaust repair and restoration as is renewed commitment to Judaism.

Just as Coleridge's ancient mariner feels compelled to narrate his spiritual fall and resurrection to the wedding guest, so Singer's penitent recounts his spiritual redemption to an autobiographical narrator whom he meets at Judaism's sacred shrine, Jerusalem's Wailing Wall. At the remnant of the ancient Temple, Shapiro, a remnant of European Jewry, whose illustrious ancestors included
Rashi and King David, speaks of Holocaust motivated apostasy and spiritual return to Judaism. By fleeing to Russia when the Nazis invaded Poland, Joseph Shapiro escaped the fate of three million Polish Jews. At war's end, he smuggled himself out of Stalin's hell, married his prewar love in a German displaced persons camp, and emigrated in 1947 from Europe to begin life anew in America. Unlike many Singerian survivors who live in refugee enclaves where they suffer Holocaust-wrought insecurities, the Shapiros enjoy American society and postwar prosperity. Worldly success, however, leads to Shapiro's spiritual decline, and he soon regrets the corruption and contritely returns to Jewishness, "and not merely to some modern arbitrary Jewishness, but to the Jewishness of... [his] grandfathers and great-grandfathers." Singer adapts a classical journey motif to dramatize the penitent's spiritual quest, mapping each step from self-recognition to painful testing and eventual attainment of t'shuvah, spiritual return to God, law, and membership in a religiously observant community in the Jewish state.

Since the Holocaust was the pivotal event of Shapiro's life, his categorical imperative, he measures morality and spiritual lapses by Holocaust standards. Thus, he views his ethical failure as betrayal of "the Jews who had donned prayer shawls and phylacteries and gone off to the cemeteries to die martyrs' deaths" (P, 27). To be a descendant of observant Jews, to have studied and lived according to Judaic law, and to have exchanged that vision for a gentile life style, he reasons, is to betray "the whole of Jewish history" (P, 27). His guilt is manifest in troubled sleep, in nightmares about hiding from the Nazis in a cellar with his parents and other Jews and discovering that he is a Nazi among Jews "dressed... in a brown uniform and a swastika" (P, 27).

Although Singer's books are replete with characters who abandon orthodoxy for secularism, a concomitant disillusionment-spiritual return pattern emerges. Whereas the shift to secularism dominated the dramatic tension in the earlier fiction, with the spiritual return treated in a brief concluding coda, in The Penitent return to Judaism is the central theme and provides both the drama and resolution to the Jew's problem in the modern age. With The Penitent, Singer's work comes full circle. He has repeatedly told the story of the Jew who abandons orthodoxy of Torah and Talmud for Enlightenment freedom and found it a bitter disappointment. Like Asa Heschel, Yasha Mazur, and Herman Broder, Shapiro abandons assimilation for a return to God and
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Judaism. Whereas Singer concluded *The Magician of Lublin* and *The Family Moskal* with protagonists arriving at this decision, it is only in Shapiro's case that recognition is achieved early in the story and dramatic tension given to the attainment of spiritual restoration. To withstand the moral anarchy of modern secular life, Shapiro willingly accepts the yoke of the Torah.

A repentant sinner, Shapiro echoes Singer's disillusioned secularists who denounce both Eastern and Western utopian schemes that attracted assimilated and lapsed Jews. Disenchantment with Western philosophies, noted in *Shosha*'s epilogue, dominates *The Penitent*. Shapiro contends that the Jew's assimilation to Western Enlightenment catapulted him from Jewish piety to a quagmire of secular debauchery. He repudiates post-Enlightenment Europe and its German paradigm of high culture, seething with barbarism, licentiousness, and injustice, on the grounds that one "could be versed in all their philosophies and still be a Nazi" (P, 37). Contrasting the Jew with the practicing Christian who could simultaneously be a Nazi, Shapiro argues:

> The Talmud Jew doesn't kill. He doesn't take part in wild orgies. You don't have to fear him in the woods or on a lonely road. He doesn't carry a gun. He doesn't scheme to come to your house when you are away and sleep with your wife. He has no wish to dishonor your daughter. Although he didn't adopt Christianity, he's been turning his other cheek for two thousand years, while those who profess Christian love often plucked out his beard, along with a piece of the cheek. This Talmud Jew doesn't deal violently with any race, class, or group . . . even the worst among them don't murder, don't hunt, don't rape, don't justify killing, don't scheme to liquidate whole classes and races, don't transform family life into a joke. (P, 44-45)

Similarly, in agreement with *Shosha*'s Aaron, and Haiml, Shapiro judges the political and social panaceas that European secular Jews adopted as "inadequate to the moral life." He repudiates both the nineteenth-century Jewish revolutionaries, who justified the pogroms in Russia as an expression of popular rebellion against the Czar, and their twentieth-century Communist counterparts, who were duped by the illusions of modernity, social revolution, and atheism.

The moral failure of characters who have abandoned the religious laws of Moses and Maimonides for European and Ameri-
can secularism has been a recurrent theme of Singer's fiction. The novels repeatedly dramatize the shortcomings of secular messianism and a Diasporan experience fraught with inquisition, massacre, religious martyrdom, and genocide. For Singer, the Holocaust, more than any other atrocity, reflects the moral inefficacy of the political, social, and religious systems that willingly coexisted with Hitlerism. In the face of such moral bankruptcy, the penitent returns to the ethics and teachings of the fathers. Shapiro achieves redemption through dedication to Torah and integration in a Hasidic Israeli community.

To critics who have followed Singer's prolific career, The Penitent's criticism of Enlightenment secularism comes as no surprise, although for many the stridency of its orthodox polemics is unwelcome. From the beginning of his career, Singer parted company from mainstream modern Yiddish literature's celebration of the Haskalah, the Jewish Enlightenment that reached its full force in East-European Jewish life in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Many intellectuals applauded the Haskalah as a liberating, vitalizing force, delivering Jews out of the ghettos into modernity. It replaced Jewish pietism with secular Jewish intellectualism, promulgating a doctrine of separation of religion and culture. However, from his early days among the Warsaw litterati, Singer saw the danger of spiritual destruction in modern Yiddishists' adoption of "secular, rationalist, humanist, libertarian, meliorist" directions. Conversely, Singer's central theme has been the confrontation of God and man. Singer returns Shapiro to an enclave of pious Jews because he believes "the truth is that what the great religions preached, the Yiddish-speaking people of the ghettos practiced day in and day out." He affirms the moral life, because it is the answer to the slaughterhouse of history.

The penitent's return to orthodoxy is neither easy and direct nor free of the same nagging reservations related to Enlightenment failures. Just as Holocaust memory dissuades the penitent from Western civilization, so it is also the source of and challenge to his religious resolution. An inner voice mocks the spiritual seeker ridiculing his worship of a callous deity: "Where was He when the Jews of Poland dug their own graves? Where was He when the Nazis played with the skulls of Jewish children? If He does exist and He kept silent, He is as much a murderer as Hitler" (P, 47). This internal inquisitor echoes Shapiro's own prepenitent challenge to Jewish charity solicitors. Although he dutifully supported
the charities, he censored God's impotence in the face of Hitler's rule, asking "where was God when they burned His Torah and ordered those who studied it to dig their own graves?" (P, 20). The paradox of God's silent witness to the Holocaust remains the Jew's torment and Singer's recurrent theme.

Although Singer is anguished by God's enigmatic Holocaust passivity, he nevertheless creates protagonists who are pious Jews faithful to the silent and hidden God, despite, or because of, suffering in the Holocaust crucible. In The Penitent, one such Jew, a Hasidic rabbi who remained pious despite hard labor and beatings at the Maidanek concentration camp, enacts the role of Shapiro's spiritual mentor and leads the quester back to orthodoxy. Performance of a *mitzvah*, honoring the commandment to help fill a prayer quorum for public worship, constitutes Shapiro's first step toward redemption and is the occasion for his meeting with his survivor-mentor. An American Hasidic study house, reminiscent of that in his Warsaw past, is the setting for the penitent's transformation. While watching the rabbi pray fervently, "the soul just barely reposed in this saintly body" (P, 51), Shapiro prays wholeheartedly for the first time since the war. Shapiro is convinced by his new capacity for devotion that God has delivered him to this synagogue and to this rabbi for spiritual renewal. Having started the day in observance of the commandments and holy prayer, "with words about justice, sanctity, a God who had granted men understanding and who will revive the dead and reward the just" (P, 53), Shapiro easily undertakes a second redemptive act—*tsedakah* (charity), graciously giving his money to those who need it. Rejuvenated by sincere and ardent prayer in the company of pious, learned Jews, the penitent is ready to pursue traditional Judaism through intense study of the holy books to find "not the 'wisdom' dispensed by psychoanalysts, with their wild, unfounded theories and farfetched conclusions" (P, 59), but a plan for righteous living in reverence for God and His creation.

Whereas the first stage of Shapiro's repentance leads the quester from American business to Jewish synagogue and study hall, the second stage involves a journey from New York to Jerusalem. He flees moral abomination, escapes "from a civilization that is a slaughterhouse and a brothel" (P, 63) and embarks instead upon a journey to Israel, Judaism's spiritual center. On the airplane Shapiro is repeatedly buffeted between the forces of good and evil, embodied in an observant Hasid and an archetypal Lilith. The
penitent struggles against the seductive converters that succeed where auto-da-fé and inquisition failed, the assimilationist forces advocated by the Jewish temptress who occupies the seat beside him. Priscilla, an allegoric configuration, tries to confound Shapiro by raising questions about Existential rationalism during the flight and later in Israel. A lapsed American Jew whose immorality Singer attributes to apostasy, Priscilla echoes the disembodied "evil spirit," challenging God's existence and beneficence. As the daughter of an assimilated Jewish American family, she was sent to Sunday school "only because it was considered fashionable to be connected, no matter how superficially, with religion" (P, 77); she is ignorant of religious law and ethics and uninterested in cultural and ethnic Jewish identity. Despite recognizing this woman as an "Evil Spirit," the narrator succumbs to her sexual wiles and mentally defiles his repentance. Because the post-Holocaust world is deprived of the richly textured religious/cultural/social fabric of East-European Jewry, Shapiro fears that he will be unable to live purely and contemplates abandoning the quest and returning to New York. Ironically, Priscilla's contempt for the Hasid's ritual dress strengthens Shapiro's fidelity. Her mockery affords Shapiro the recognition that his failure to acknowledge his own piety openly and directly exposes him to temptation.

Against secular corruption, easy virtue, and lapsed faith, Singer posits the virtues of Orthodox Judaism. Book One ends with the penitent's arrival in Israel; he concludes that the Orthodox are Jewry's greatest asset because

they have isolated themselves from worldliness more than any other Jews in our history. They were exactly that which Moses demanded: a holy people, guarded by a thousand restraints, a people which "shall dwell alone and shall not be reckoned among the nations." True, they are no more than a small minority, but great ideals have never become mass movements. (P, 93–4)

Book Two is Singer's most insistent dramatization of Emil Fackenheim's thesis that post-Holocaust Jews must lead Jewish lives or grant Hitler a posthumous victory. Shapiro's nightmares illuminate the correspondence of Holocaust destruction and Jewish self-inflicted diminishment through assimilation. In a tone of righteous indignation reminiscent of Amos and Jeremiah, Shapiro rebukes Israeli secularists for failing to honor Torah and Talmud, for em-
bracing and installing non-Jewish culture in Israel. Secularism in Tel Aviv—mirroring that in New York, Paris, Madrid, or Rome—suggests that “the Enlightened have attained their goal. We are a people like all other peoples. We feed our souls the same dung as they do” (P, 99). Thus, Shapiro condemns worldly Israeli Jews as he had earlier condemned lapsed Diasporan Jews, Jewish Freidians, and Jewish leftists.41

Despite his pronouncements in favor of Orthodox discipline and ritual, the quester suffers Holocaust-induced religious doubt. His sleep is plagued by nightmares of Jews driven by whips as they dig their own graves, nightmares of Nazis torturing Jews or leading them to the ovens. Unable to pray wholeheartedly as he had in the New York Hasidic study house, Shapiro now prays mechanically and ineffectually, thoroughly disheartened by God’s Holocaust-era silence and contemporary failure to intercede in the face of an Arab threat of a second Holocaust. He despairs that each benediction seemed a lie. Not even the slightest proof existed that God would resurrect the dead, heal the sick, punish the wicked, reward the just. Six million Jews had been burned, tortured, obliterated. Tens of millions of enemies lurked over the State of Israel ready to lay waste that which Hitler had left untouched. Former Nazis in Germany drank beer and spoke openly about new massacres. (P, 104–5)

In another instance, while Shapiro is in the midst of prayer, the evil spirit tries to dissuade him with accusations of God’s Holocaust complicity: “What did God do for us Jews that we should love Him so? Where is His love for us? Where was His love when the Nazis tortured Jewish children?” (P, 132). The only convincing argument the “voice of evil” presents opposing Orthodox Judaism is its faith in God, who abandoned the pious during the Holocaust. When this technique fails, the “voice of evil” adopts a Zionist guise urging Shapiro to put his idealism to national rather than theological service. Israel needs soldiers, engineers, and technicians to keep the country going, patriots rather than pietists who will simply pray while the Arabs slaughter them. Shapiro remains undaunted. Just as Singer emphasized the causal connections between Christian and Nazi anti-Semitism in Shosha’s epilogue, so he focuses in The Penitent more insistently on the example set by Nazi Germany for the Arab genocidal intent toward the Jews of Israel. Just as
Haiml worries about an Arab devised Holocaust, so Shapiro is concerned for Israeli survival in a land mass surrounded by five nations as fanatically dedicated to its destruction as Hitler was to the Final Solution.

That the Holocaust has crystallized Shapiro's commitment to Judaism is unequivocally stated in his final dispute with Priscilla, who condemns Holocaust-motivated rejection of Germany as a Jewish self-indulgent grudge. Conversely, Shapiro interprets the catastrophe as the logical culmination of historic Christian anti-Semitism. Because he sees an intimate connection between Christian and Nazi anti-Semitism, he believes that Western religion and philosophy are morally bankrupt and so he justifies his rejection of those systems in favor of a spiritual return to Orthodox Judaism in Hebraic rather than contemporary Western terms. Reiterating his Jewish affirmation that concluded Book One and the first day's narration, he seeks redemption in his commitment to Jewish law.

With greater knowledge of the implications of his decision than Philip Roth's Eli Peck, Shapiro, too, dons the Hasidic gabardine as a shield against worldly temptation. As a person who understands the Jewish emphasis on righteous deeds, Shapiro knows he “must act in a Jewish way” (P, 161) to achieve the restoration he seeks. Although the God of the Exodus and of Sinai failed at Auschwitz and Bergen-Belsen, Singer's Jews are not absolved of their part in the covenant; they must honor Mosaic law through righteous living. Shapiro affirms the hidden, silent God and accepts the Torah and the Talmud as the primary ethical codes for human decency.

In his zealous effort to counter Priscilla's facile dismissal of Jewish grief and her pardon of German crime, the penitent offers the most pessimistic interpretation of the Holocaust as retribution for Jewish assimilationist lapses:

God chose us out of all the peoples and wanted us to avoid their abominations, but we often do the same as our persecutors. He keeps punishing and we keep sinning. . . . Within our time we were dealt the worst blow a people can receive, yet we learned nothing from it. (P, 153)

*Mi penei hata'einu* (“because of our sins we were punished”) was the classical Jewish theological doctrine developed as an explanation for earlier national calamities, but one that Jews generally dismiss as an explanation for the Holocaust. Recognizing that the punish-
ment dictum is an unacceptable Holocaust thesis, Shapiro abandons searching for a reason and posits the Fackenheim thesis for a Jewish return to religion and dedication to community as an appropriate response to the Shoah. Like most Jewish Holocaust thinkers, Singer rejects outright the possibility that the purpose of the death camps and crematoria was for divine instruction. The Holocaust remains, finally, an absolute evil and injustice with no acceptable explanation.

Shapiro's quest for the antithesis of Hitlerism and Stalinism repeatedly leads to Orthodox Judaism and to Jerusalem, where he discovers peace at the prayer house of Sandzer Hasidim, because here he finds precisely what Hitler tried to destroy in Europe and the element he believes absent from modern American Jewry—Yiddishkayt ("love for Jewishness, love for a fellow Jew") [P, 115]. Here Shapiro is able to study and pray fervently among the pious, who shun the Enlightenment dictum of being a man in town and a Jew at home and living integrated public and private Jewish lives.

Among the Hasidim, Shapiro's despairing retribution utterance gives way to the dominant affirmative position in Jewish thought. His Holocaust regeneration is cast in the mode of Jewish mysticism's Lurianic kabbalists. These mystics respond to God's withdrawal from history by exerting even greater effort to usher in the messianic age. Within the kabbalist's cosmological system, there is an unbroken interconnection between the metaphysical world and the material world. Evil may be obliterated by the triumph of human morality. Kabbalists regard prayer as the medium that unites people with God, and they advocate tikkun, a continuous act of repair and restoration, to hasten the advent of the Messiah. Jewish mysticism stresses both God's manifestation and hiddenness and man's obligation to honor the Sinai convenant regardless of God's self-restrictions. Messianic and mystical interpretation of historic disaster as a demonstration of increasing divine withdrawal from history in turn demands greater human effort in the restorative process—that is, undertaking a holy mission to usher in the messianic age. Shapiro shares the kabbalist's belief that through the study of the Torah and observance of its precepts in conjunction with fervent prayer Israel will make its contribution to cosmic fulfillment. The classical orthodox and the mystical paths to redemption both involve the triad of God, Torah, and ahavat Yisrael, commitment to and love of the Jewish people. Shapiro's return to Torah Judaism within a Hasidic Israeli community is a viable
means of achieving Holocaust restoration through renewal of Judaism and Jewry. Had he remained in America, he might have achieved piety; in Israel, however, he is part of a larger movement of collective regeneration that gives testimony to the failure of collective destruction that the Holocaust was designed to achieve. Shapiro achieves that which his fellow Holocaust survivor, Herman Broder, sought—"to go back to the Torah, the Gemara, the Jewish books" (E,56).

Lest the reader assume that I. B. Singer has abandoned his protest against God's Holocaust-era passivity, the author explains that while Joseph Shapiro may have made peace with man's inhumanity to man and a hidden God, he has not; he continues to be shocked by life's miseries and brutalities. In an authorial note to The Penitent, Singer argues "there is no basic difference between rebellion and prayer." Singer believes in the morality of protesting divine and human injustice. He explains:

I had even related my philosophy of protest to Jewishness. The Jew personified the protest against the injustices of nature and even those of the Creator. Nature wanted death, but the Jew opted for life; nature wanted licentiousness, but the Jew asked for restraint; nature wanted war, but the Jew, . . . sought peace.

That the Holocaust cloud covers much of I.B. Singer's fiction is clearly evident from the early commemorative works to the later narratives set in America and Israel. He consistently avoids realistic descriptions of ghettos and death camps in favor of focusing on the lives destroyed in those camps, the living lost and the maimed. Like Elie Wiesel, Singer has brought to the forefront of Holocaust literature the theological and metaphysical implications of the catastrophe. In the short stories, Enemies, Shosha, and The Penitent, believers and skeptics alike decry God's passive acceptance of radical evil. The Holocaust-wrought religious crises and restorations of Singer's protagonists parallel those of Eli Wiesel's characters. At the conclusion of the autobiographical Night, Wiesel sees himself as a corpse, and by the end of Dawn, Elisha has been transformed from victim to executioner and is caught in his own reflection. The Accident ends with Eliezer engrossed in self-assessment. By the end of The Town Beyond the Wall, Wiesel's protagonist is looking into the face of another person, prepared to recommit to the human bond and begin the Holocaust healing process. Similarly, Holocaust trau-
Kaddish and Resurrection

RNA is most damaging in Broder's obsessive fears—social withdrawal, and self-condemnation—and Holocaust regeneration is achieved in Tamara, Haiml, and Shapiro's rejection of secular movements and their affirmation of Jewish religious and political activism, manifested in their contribution to Jewish learning and the State of Israel. In Wiesel's progression toward reconfirmation of God and Judaism despite Holocaust injustice, Gavriel of *The Gates of the Forest*, who has found his way back to Hasidism, recites the *Kaddish* for his dead friend. Similarly, Shapiro is a spiritual quester whose odyssey has taken him from the gates of Holocaust hell to a spirituality found with the guidance of Hasidic Holocaust survivors. Holocaust restoration according to Wiesel and Singer, both sons of Hasidic rabbis, lies in a return to God, a revival of Judaism, and a reestablishment of a safe Jewish homeland in Israel.