

This is not the Way: Jews, Judaism and Israel by David J. Goldberg.  
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This Is Not The Way may well be the book that David Goldberg has been dying to write for years, but professional savvy and natural common sense made him wait, wisely, until he was retired.

This Is Not The Way has something of a valedictory feel to it, an aura of finality that suggests that a fine intellect is preparing to retire from the cut-throat world of intra-Jewish debate having lobbed one final grenade into the midst of the community: having said that, for those familiar with Rabbi Goldberg's views, there is little here that shocks or surprises. It is rather an opportunity to revel in the prose of a fine wordsmith, and enjoy the logic of his arguments on a range of subjects within the Jewish world, including Israel and Zionism, anti-Semitism, God, Jewish status and what being Jewish is, or should be , all about.

The constant thread in the book, in spite of an early disclaimer, is the State of Israel and its impact both positive and negative, in the author's view, on modern Jewish life. David Goldberg is a trenchant critic of Israel, with many years of honourable outreach to Palestinians, but it seems obvious that his criticisms are *yissurin shel ahavah*, born out of love rather than loathing.

An aspect of This Is Not The Way which may annoy some readers, is David Goldberg's apparent intellectual snobbery, only surpassed by his verbal dexterity. But those of us who know the man are aware of his inclination to irony and can assure those who are not to ignore this trait, the reality of which is much less strong than might otherwise appear to be the case.

One finishes This Is Not The Way with a sense of privilege: privilege at having been able to share the inner thoughts of a fine mind, and privilege at having been taken through some finely honed argument. But there is also deep sadness, for me at least, in the inescapable conclusion that with the right breaks David Goldberg might have been lost to the rabbinate and become a writer, of fact and possibly fiction, who could have enjoyed a deserved international reputation.

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