

POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY AND THE JEWISH POLITICAL TRADITION: CAN THEY BE INTEGRATED?

Harold M. Waller

The maturation of the field of Jewish political studies has produced a substantial literature on several topics, among them Jewish political thought. Yet conventional teaching of political philosophy in Western universities tends to ignore this literature. The questions of why this should be the case and how material from the Jewish political tradition might be integrated into the teaching of political philosophy are addressed. Several themes that appear in the field of political philosophy are discussed with suggestions as to how Jewish political thought might apply to them. These themes include: the ideal polity, the achievement and maintenance of legitimacy, the nature of the political community, the obligations of individual citizens, the rights of citizens, balancing rights and obligations, the basis for political authority, equality, the significance of the state in the political system, the creation of the just society, the exercise of power, and the ethical dimensions of war and peace.

The reawakening of interest in Jewish political studies during the past twenty years has encouraged those involved in the field to think about the relationship between what they are doing and the general enterprise of the social sciences and humanities. The advent of Jewish studies programs on campuses throughout the world has in a sense legitimated the pursuit of knowledge about Jews and Judaism in the academy. Nevertheless, an important question remains: Has material drawn from the Jewish experience been integrated into research and teaching in history, political science, philosophy, and sociology or has it been consigned to a defined sector known as Jewish studies? Now that Jewish studies is well-entrenched as an academic field, the answer to that question becomes a high priority.

Broader questions of integration are beyond the scope of a single article, though one hopes that the cumulative effect of the work being done in the field will begin to provide an answer. The focus of this article is relatively narrow, dealing with only one discipline, political science, and particularly with a single field, political philosophy. (Admittedly political philosophy as a field is also part of the philosophy discipline, but no claim is made here for expertise in that discipline.) The purpose of this effort is to examine factors that inhibit

Jewish Political Studies Review 1:3-4 (Fall 1989)

the integration of Jewish materials into the study of political philosophy and to suggest specific ways to further such integration.

The Problem of Political Philosophy

It is quite clear that the prevalent understanding of the field by most practitioners incorporates few elements of the Jewish experience, either philosophical or empirical.¹ On the empirical side that is understandable in a discipline in which the nation-state is the frequent unit of analysis. In fact, now that the State of Israel is a going concern, political scientists have begun to examine it in comparison to other political systems, as well as on its own merits. But on the philosophical side the situation is more problematic. The scope of political philosophy is well-established and appears resistant to certain kinds of change. Surveys of the history of political thought usually commence with the Greeks, seldom mentioning the Hebrews, and proceed through the Romans, Christian thinkers, the medieval period, and then cover European philosophers down to the nineteenth century. Non-Western political thought is normally ignored. Commonly the survey will end with Marx, although the shorthand description of such undertakings has been labelled "From Plato to NATO." There is also a certain amount of interest in the development of Marxist thought after Marx, as well as in democratic theory. But there is no doubt that the standard fare of the political philosophers (or the political theorists, as they prefer to style themselves) is well-defined and covers a limited number of thinkers in the Western tradition that started in Athens, continued through Christianity, and reached its fulfillment in Western Europe.

How does Jewish thought fit into this picture? In simple terms, it usually does not. Despite frequent reference to the Judeo-Christian tradition, most non-Jewish political philosophers would seem to assume that Christianity incorporated Judaism and that the study of Christian thought is implicitly a study of the heritage of both religions. The notion that Jewish political thought can stand on its own merits as an alternative formulation is simply not entertained. If Judaism made any contribution to the development of Western civilization, it was mainly during the pre-Christian (mainly biblical) era and therefore subsumed in the Christian tradition. The development of Judaism and Jewish thought after the end of Jewish political independence in Eretz Israel is simply ignored.

There are several explanations for ignoring Jewish political ideas in the study of Western civilization and particularly political philosophy. Clearly lack of knowledge and competence with the source materials creates a severe handicap for the vast majority of political philosophers. For them, the Jewish political tradition has been about

as accessible as Asian political thought. As Jewish material in English becomes more abundant, inaccessibility will no longer serve as an excuse, but that does not necessarily mean that one can be sanguine about the prospects for a solution to the problem. The inability or unwillingness or hostility toward utilizing Jewish materials is ingrained by the time a political philosopher has reached intellectual maturity. The long training involved, with its heavy emphasis on the analysis of classical Western texts, makes perfectly clear just what the boundaries of the field are.

How can this formidable barrier be overcome? That is a question that we have begun to confront. Emil Fackenheim has made this a high priority of his work during recent years and is eminently qualified to seek to bring together Jewish philosophy and academic philosophy. Daniel Elazar and several colleagues, notably Stuart Cohen, have produced a formulation of the Jewish political tradition that enables us to envision bridging the gap in political science.² At the 1987 Workshop on Jewish Political Studies in Jerusalem, Harvey Shulman began to look at some of the specific aspects of integration in terms of teaching materials.³ Moreover, the use of biblical materials at least has begun to creep into mainstream political science through recent works by Aaron Wildavsky⁴ and Michael Walzer.⁵ However, further demonstrations of the feasibility and utility of using Jewish materials are still required.

There are several questions that should be addressed before looking at integration in specific terms. One of these is whether the Jewish texts that are sources of the Jewish political tradition are in some way of a different nature than those used in the Greek, Roman, Christian, or European political traditions. The main difference that would appear to exist is that the Jewish texts, especially those from the biblical and talmudic periods, are generally more diffuse than, say, the writings of the Greek philosophers. Generally the purpose of the Jewish works was much different than philosophical speculation. In fact, the orientation of the classical texts is distinctly legal. Philosophical ideas and principles can certainly be gleaned from legal writings, but someone has to do that. An example of this is a study of the relationship between individual Jews and their community in the Middle Ages. Gerald Blidstein develops a method to examine questions of political theory by looking at specific rabbinical case decisions that deal with realities, not abstractions.⁶ Interestingly, the most important work of American political philosophy, *The Federalist*, can be understood as a commentary or exposition of a legal document, the Constitution. Obviously Hamilton and Jay, and Madison in particular, added their own theoretical gloss to the Constitution, but the important thing to remember is that their work cannot be understood independently of the actual document.

It was only well after the talmudic period that works of Jewish

philosophy *per se* began to appear, with the high point probably reached in the medieval period. Given the realities of Jewish existence at the time, it is hardly surprising that political philosophy was not a dominant theme of such efforts.⁷ But it should be remembered that not all the giants of conventional histories of political thought concentrated on political philosophy either. Aristotle, Aquinas, and Hegel are good examples. Why then, we must ask, have scholars of the caliber of Maimonides or Abravanel, not to mention philosophers of lesser accomplishment, been neglected by writers and teachers in the Western tradition?⁸ Perhaps the answer is found in the religious nature of the writings. After all, serious Jewish writing prior to the Emancipation period was generally religious or perhaps literary in nature. The notion of a separate secular subject matter had not yet emerged. In a sense there was great continuity in Jewish writing over a period of many centuries precisely because of the necessity to focus on the sacred texts as a starting point.

Arguably the same thing could be said about the Christian world, although admittedly the time frame was somewhat different and there was greater interest in the work of the Greek philosophers. Could philosophy have been conceptualized independent of religion in 1200 or even 1400? So there is a basic parallelism, even if the time frame difference may prove to be significant. Is there also another difference between Christian and Jewish philosophical thought? Despite the presence of a legal tradition in the Roman Catholic Church, the idea of law occupies a much different position in Christianity than it does in Judaism. Thus the Christian thinkers, even when confined to basically religious themes, were freer to explore more widely than comparable Jewish writers.

At least part of the explanation for the contemporary status of earlier political philosophers may be found in developments subsequent to their lives. The polities that emerged in Western Europe may have separated themselves from the Church eventually, either through the Reformation or through evolution, but even today the strict separation of church and state as envisioned in American constitutional theory is not generally meaningful in European political systems. Hence there was a direct connection between medieval Christian thinkers and the political systems that emerged later on. Consequently in looking backward to understand the heritage of the civilization, the examination of the Christian thinkers was quite to be expected. And of course they had established a link between their own work and that of the Greeks. The progression that the contemporary student of political philosophy perceives is easily understandable. In contrast, Jews deemphasized the political during two millennia of dispersion, a period of political subordination. Hence other aspects of the Jewish tradition were stressed in the literature.

At least one other question needs to be addressed. In the above discussion of the differences between Christian and Jewish religious writings, there is an implicit suggestion that despite surface similarities perhaps there is some fundamental divide between Christian and Jewish thought that makes them what a Kuhnian might refer to as "incommensurable paradigms." Strictly speaking, the metaphor is not entirely apt since we are not considering scientific communities here. On the other hand, we have to allow the possibility that the analogy to Kuhnian analysis might be of some value. If Christians and Jews are really talking about different things in their classical texts, then it surely is difficult if not impossible to make meaningful comparisons. Acknowledging that modern political philosophy is a product of a tradition with significant Christian content, it would be understandable that political philosophers today would find Jewish thought to be indeed foreign.

The problem is that the case is not persuasive. Jewish thinkers and writers, as well as the classical texts themselves, are full of material that deals with the conventional issues of political thought: sovereignty, the ideal polity, justice, rights, obligations, leadership, hierarchy, authority, order, etc., as Elazar and Cohen have shown so clearly. Whether such material was noticed by readers is another question. For example, despite the undeniably Jewish influences in conceptualizing the reborn polity of Israel in 1948 and the years following, it appears that the major models for Ben-Gurion and the other state builders were derived primarily from the European experience. It was only several years after the founding of the state that some Israelis began to look to the tradition as a source of positive law for the Knesset. Even now that movement has severe limits. So it is no surprise if non-Jewish analysts failed to grasp the political significance of the Jewish tradition.

If Jewish thinkers have been concerned with many of the same philosophical issues as non-Jews, might it still be possible that they have dealt with those issues in a manner that is fundamentally different? Are Jews operating conceptually within such a different system as to preclude intellectual interaction with Christian or secular thinkers? That is not likely the case now, although it might have been a problem at times in the past. But there have been Jewish thinkers who have been sufficiently conversant with both Jewish knowledge and the general culture to bridge the gap. Whether non-Jews have been qualified to do so is more problematical, but surely not an impossibility. Moreover, scholars in the field of political-philosophy have demonstrated an ability to move between democratic and non-democratic systems with facility. Are the challenges of confronting the Jewish system any greater?

While the above discussion has not been exhaustive, it has dealt

with a number of possible reasons for the inability of the political philosophy field to come to grips with Jewish political thought. The difficulties are not trivial, but neither are they unsurmountable. The root of the problem is most likely that certain ways of doing things have evolved over very long periods. In order to change the way that political philosophers conceive of their subject matter it will be necessary to make a concerted effort over a long period of time. Those who possess the requisite knowledge and skills to move between the world of Jewish philosophy and the world of mainstream Western philosophy face a long and demanding process of educating their colleagues. But over a period of time it should be possible to make them aware of the relationship of Jewish political ideas to their traditional intellectual concerns.

It is likely that the period of time required will be fairly lengthy. It is not enough that the Jewish material be available, even in translation. The need is to interpret and expound the ideas of the Jewish political tradition within the normal professional environment, i.e., in books, journals, at meetings, and in the classroom. The objective here is to force colleagues to take the matter seriously and to come to grips with the issues intellectually. This is easier said than done because there is a tendency to promote these ideas within a fairly narrow circle. What is needed is to persuade practicing political philosophers of the relevance of this to their work so that they will begin to incorporate the materials. Those who are versed in the Jewish political tradition cannot do this themselves, but they can promote the process indirectly by providing an environment where scholars without exposure to the Jewish materials can become acquainted with them and begin to see the relevance of the Jewish political tradition to their own work. Toward that end there is a need to concentrate on developing specific projects that will treat the traditional materials in a fashion that will be meaningful to the professionals in the field. They have to be met on their own ground. One could reasonably argue that enough research has now been completed so that this next step of reaching out can begin. An obvious way to proceed would be to hold conferences to which leading political philosophers are invited where the presentations are by people who have been working with the materials of Jewish political philosophy. To a certain extent, that is what the annual Workshops on Jewish Political Studies are designed to accomplish. However, at some point it will be necessary to consolidate what has already been accomplished and begin to present it to the practitioners. Publication of books such as *The Jewish Polity* certainly go a long way toward meeting this need, but they do not go far enough. We have to demonstrate to teachers and researchers in political philosophy that there is something that they need in the Jewish political tradition that will make their own work more complete. Implicitly this is a sug-

gestion for a sort of promotional campaign, but one that is based solidly on research.

The Confrontation of Political Philosophy

If the endeavor to integrate the Jewish political tradition (JPT) with the conventional treatment of Western political philosophy is to succeed, the correct strategic choice must be made. There are two basic approaches, both of which are needed, but in the proper sequence. The first is to define and elaborate the JPT on its own terms, as an essentially closed system based on the traditional Jewish sources. The internal logic of such an approach is dictated by the manner in which the Bible and the rabbis dealt with political questions and may vary significantly from conventional philosophical approaches, especially since the Jewish sources do not constitute philosophical treatises in the usual sense. The task is formidable and daunting precisely because of the nature of the material. Fortunately much of that work has now been completed, providing us with a reasonably cohesive set of concepts distilled from the sources.

The second approach, which must necessarily follow the first, and which is our main concern here, is to match the relevant aspects of the JPT with corresponding concepts in Western political philosophy. In other words, we must go beyond the internal logic of the Jewish sources and attempt to work within the internal logic of the non-Jewish sources. One can argue that the Jewish material will stand on its own merits. That is true, but is beside the point. The challenge is not simply to articulate a Jewish political philosophy, which is accomplished by the first approach, but rather to integrate it with Western political philosophy. Assuming that interpreters of the latter tradition are not likely to alter their basic orientation toward the definition of the key issues, it is necessary to meet them on their own ground.⁹ Consequently it is necessary to determine what the concerns of political philosophy are.

What then are the goals of political philosophy?¹⁰ Essentially there are two. First of all, the field helps us to understand the basis of our own or other societies. What are the fundamental principles upon which society rests? Why have political institutions and practices developed in a certain way? What are the values that inform the choices which the society must make? Secondly, political philosophy can help us to develop a basis for action today, so that the decisions that must be made are comprehended within an historical context that establishes continuity with past experience. Classical texts are used to confront contemporary problems. Examples of phenomena which might be

examined in such a context are racism, genocide, terrorism, and nuclear war.

There is little doubt that the JPT can contribute toward the realization of the goals of political philosophy. In fact, it should fit in quite well. Certainly in terms of the first goal, understanding the basis for our society, the JPT has a good deal to say about principles of political and social organization that antedate the great Greek philosophers. If the latter are still relevant, and arguably of supreme importance judging from the way in which political philosophy is taught, then surely the Bible can be relevant as well. Of course the later Jewish sources, especially the Talmud, are earlier or contemporaneous with medieval political philosophy and therefore have a claim on relevance too. As to the second goal, developing a basis for action today, it might be argued that the JPT is an awkward vehicle for such a purpose because of the relative neglect of political thinking during the period from the destruction of the Second Temple until the creation of the modern State of Israel. This might be a persuasive argument if Western political philosophy operated by understanding the classics through the medium of contemporary interpreters. But in reality just the opposite is the case. There is a great emphasis among serious professionals on dealing directly with the classical text, preferably in the original language. Even though interpretations are legion, the text remains the primary focus for many in the field. In the JPT, modern interpretations do exist, both within and without the religious context. But *a priori* they are no less worthy than modern interpretations of classical non-Jewish texts. So overall, it seems reasonable to argue that a parallelism exists between the ability of Jewish and non-Jewish sources to contribute to the realization of the goals of political philosophy.

There remains the problem of how to achieve the desired goals. It cannot be done on the basis of pairing philosophers. Traditionally students of political philosophy have organized their field by concentrating on the works of a selected number of great thinkers. The usual approach to teaching the material at the basic level is through a "history of political thought" or some such rubric. Even when themes are enunciated it is difficult to get away from responses of the form "X on justice" etc. Thus the individual thinker becomes one of the major units of analysis. However, such an approach is not really satisfactory because the JPT simply does not lend itself to that type of analysis. Instead it would appear to be desirable to redirect the study of political philosophy toward the study of themes or concepts and away from the historical or chronological approach. With regard to specific themes, both conventional Western and Jewish sources could be brought to bear on the issue. In that sense, Jewish sources could compete on an equal footing to be considered in terms of merit. The stress would be on the value of a specific contribution, rather than the value of a contribution

in terms of a thinker's total contribution to the intellectual development of Western civilization. It might be argued as well that an emphasis on themes rather than great thinkers would be beneficial conceptually to the field, independent of the Jewish angle. That remains a controversial issue among the professionals, although increasing numbers of courses now reflect such an approach. In summary, the JPT can contribute to the further development of the field of political philosophy if the correct sequence of approaches is used in order that teachers and researchers in the field can utilize the material.

Themes in Political Philosophy

There are a number of themes in the field of political philosophy which are already well-established. What follows is a brief consideration of several of these themes, including thoughts on how Jewish material might be integrated. Further work might then be concentrated on developing one or more themes systematically, using both Jewish and traditional Western materials.

1. *The ideal polity.* The question of what an ideal polity consists of has challenged political thinkers from Plato to Marx, if not down to the present day. It is one of the fundamental questions in the field. Some of the issues are raised in Plato's *Republic*, regarded by many professionals as the most famous and influential work of political philosophy. Matters such as leadership, political organization, the ends of politics, and the nature of authority are addressed by Plato. In a sense, virtually all political thinkers since Plato have attempted to confront the same issues. For example, Locke's writings on the character of what we would now call a liberal polity helped to inspire the designers of the American system, in addition to influencing the evolution of the British system. Marx departed radically from traditional ways of examining the question by creating new concepts and constructs. The Jewish thinking on the subject originates in the Bible and emphasizes the Torah as constitution. It might be useful to contrast that to Christian notions of the role of natural law.¹¹ But more importantly the idea of limitations on the power of the rulers as implied by the Torah as constitution is an early example of a concept that is central in modern politics. The literature on how that concept worked in application during the periods of Jewish sovereignty and how the concept was interpreted should prove to be a rich source for those concerned with the nature of the ideal polity.

2. *The achievement and maintenance of legitimacy.* At first blush this might appear to present difficulties with integration, since in the

JPT legitimacy is implied by the revealed source of principles concerning the organization of the polity. But surely Church thinkers such as Augustine and Aquinas dealt with such matters. A modern Jewish interpretation of the manner in which legitimacy is reaffirmed in practice has been developed by Gordon Freeman, relying on rabbinic thought.¹² Furthermore, the *consent* referred to by Elazar is another way to approach the question of legitimacy in the JPT.¹³ It would be fruitful to examine this idea in contrast to those of Burke or even Paine, for example. In the democratic state, legitimacy is renewed through consent.¹⁴ But what about other systems? Can a system which is not democratic be considered legitimate in a philosophical sense? That is a question that Christians and Marxists as well as liberal democrats could usefully analyze with the help of Jewish materials.

3. *The nature of the political community.* Despite the stress on individualism in the writing of many political thinkers, the idea of community has been a recurring issue. Certainly Aristotle addresses the question in the first instance, but varying responses have come from diverse writers in more recent times, including Burke, Rousseau, and Mill. In the JPT, different stages in the evolution of the community may be discerned, thereby demonstrating that the concept of community need not be fixed as to form, even though there may be continuity in the role of the community in relation to the political system.

4. *The obligations of individual citizens.* Obligation in traditional political philosophy can take many forms, depending on how one defines the relationship between the citizen and the polity. It is only during the last few hundred years that the notion of a government existing to serve the people gained currency, especially among contract theorists. The Jewish emphasis on covenant as mutual agreement between God and human beings, with obligations and responsibilities on both sides, may not appeal to theorists who do not share that religious perspective, but undeniably it is an early precedent for a more enlightened form of connection than was common at the time. In any event, the covenant concept adds a dimension to the study of obligation that may not be present among Church thinkers, liberal theorists, or Marxists.

5. *The rights of citizens.* Rights as a vital concept in political philosophy is a post-medieval addition to the debate. Writers like Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, and Mill advanced different approaches to the notion that there is a sanctity in the individual person and that some matters ought to be out of the range of the state.¹⁵ Jewish thought, especially that based on the religious sources, has not demonstrated a similar emphasis in explicit terms. Nevertheless one can argue that there is an implicit notion of individual rights in the JPT in the sense

that individuals are equal and the power of government is limited. Traditional Jewish political organization depended upon a shared sense of responsibility to prevent abuses of power. In practice this usually prevented autocratic abuses.¹⁶ Examination of how this was accomplished might be useful in terms of current debates concerning the utility of explicit charters of rights as opposed to reliance on the values embedded in the political culture. While Americans generally express a preference for charters because of their heritage, other patterns have also been successful. Canada recently experienced a significant national debate on this point. Another useful aspect of considering the Jewish perspective on individual rights is that rights are viewed as part of an entire system of relationships rather than in isolation. Charters lend themselves to viewing rights as absolutes, while judges must often pragmatically weigh the individual's claim against the welfare of the polity as a whole. In a sense that idea of weighing is implicitly in the JPT, although the stress would appear to be on the collective rather than the individual interest.

6. *Balancing rights and obligations.* This is closely related to the previous point. Different societies will select different balances between rights and obligations. It is useful to conceptualize the balance point as lying on a continuum that ranges from maximum concern for individual rights to maximum emphasis on the individual's duty toward the state. Neither extreme represents a particularly useful solution to the problem, but there is a practical range from left to right that would encompass writers as diverse as Rousseau and Burke. The JPT probably lies closer to the side that stresses obligation and could certainly be viewed as an option within the continuum.

7. *The basis for political authority.* On this point there is a sharp divergence between the JPT and the Western political tradition because of the Jewish conception of authority derived from God. As Western political philosophy has developed, various alternatives to theologically-based theories have emerged. Even though students in the field often turn to such religious figures as Augustine, Aquinas, Calvin, Luther, and others, the insistence on the Divine source of authority is not as tight as within the JPT. In recent years the theocratic nature of Islamic society has become a topic for careful consideration. Thus it would be instructive to compare Jewish concepts of authority with those derived from the Christian and Islamic traditions. In addition, one would want to know how a theocratic polity works in practice compared to those based on humanistic values or other principles.

8. *Equality.* This concept has emerged during the past two centuries as one of the highest values and a prime motivator of political action.

Yet it is hardly a new idea in the JPT, even if it is not heavily emphasized. The key questions here would be the basis and desirability of equality as a goal for a political system and how it might be achieved. Later theorists, such as Marx, understood that equality did not just happen. If attained it would have to be the result of deliberate action. Less expansive views of equality than that of Marx remained problematical in societies with a long history but which had not experienced a major change in the social order. Both theorists and practitioners have been intrigued by the difficulties associated with the struggle for equality. Yet equality was implicit in the JPT from biblical times, at least for males. How was this situation maintained in the face of pressures to create a hierarchy based on various criteria?

9. *The significance of the state in the political system.* For hundreds of years the state has been one of the key units in theories of the political system. In the JPT there is no comparable concept, although obviously the notion of government is important. Precisely because of the role of God in Jewish political thought, there is no need for the development of a state concept. On the other hand, had Jews faced the necessity of grappling with the reality of political power during the period when the idea of the state emerged, Jewish thought might have been modified. Does the JPT offer an alternative to the conventional idea of a state, especially with respect to the concept of sovereignty? Such an analysis might suggest answers to the question of whether it is possible to conceive of a non-state-based system in the absence of the acceptance of Divine sovereignty.

10. *The creation of the just society.* Political thinkers have agonized over the question of justice since the time of Aristotle. In a certain sense justice can be interpreted as fairness, but the concept as used in the JPT suggests something more, perhaps an obligation to do what is right, to see to it that the benefits of society are distributed. Justice in the Jewish sense may imply collective action, but not necessarily by government. Thus it may well be a broader idea than what is commonly employed in Western writings. But it is certainly not discontinuous with Western notions. Consequently the comparison of Jewish and non-Jewish criteria for a just society seems feasible and likely to produce valuable conclusions.

11. *The exercise of power.* Students of politics have focused on power as the means to political ends since the time of Machiavelli. Much of the work on power has been done during the past century, so that the division between political philosophy and other fields of the discipline is not as rigid in this regard as with some of the other issues.¹⁷ In the JPT, however, power has not proved to be a highly salient

concept, in part because of the biblical presumption of the exercise of Divine power and in part because of the lack of power within the Jewish polity for such a lengthy period. It may be for the latter reason that bargaining is such a prevalent mode of decision-making in Jewish polities; for a long time there really was no other option. Lack of experience in dealing with power in the modern sense before the creation of the State of Israel would certainly inhibit attempts to apply the JPT to the issue of the exercise of power, although there are surely biblical examples of the limitations of the power of human beings when acting as rulers.

12. *The ethical dimensions of war and peace.* This is a very recent subject for examination by students of political philosophy, although the concept of a just war is hardly novel. Events of the current century have accentuated the ethical issues of mass war, killing of non-combatants both incidentally and as a matter of deliberate policy, the use of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, and genocide. While Judaism is certainly not lacking in ethical principles that might be applied to such issues, the JPT did not have to confront them. Thus the current ability of Jewish thinkers to apply classical Jewish concepts to these modern problems might be seen as a major test of the ability of the JPT to be adapted to the contemporary era.¹⁸ A very contemporary example of this effort deals with the moral implications of Israel's policies vis-a-vis the Arabs, as well as more general considerations of the dilemmas faced by the moral decision-maker.¹⁹

Conclusion

The elaboration of the Jewish political tradition during recent years has opened the possibility of integrating such material with materials drawn from the general tradition of Western political philosophy.²⁰ Although there are some problems in doing so caused by gaps in the JPT, and perhaps by a perception that the JPT is parochial while Western political philosophy is universal, there is sufficient overlap between the two traditions in terms of identification of key concepts and themes to warrant close comparisons. This is a necessary step towards making the JPT part of the universe of materials from which students of Western political philosophy will draw. Full integration may be a distant goal, but we are now at the point where a serious attempt can be initiated.

Notes

1. Bernard Susser and Eliezer Don-Yehiya, "Prolegomena to Jewish Political Theory," in Daniel J. Elazar (ed.), *Kinship and Consent: The Jewish Political Tradition and Its Contemporary Uses* (Ramat Gan: Tortledove Publishing, 1981), pp. 91-111.
2. Daniel J. Elazar and Stuart A. Cohen, *The Jewish Polity: Jewish Political Organization from Biblical Times to the Present* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985).
3. Harvey Shulman, "On the Problems of Introducing Bible in Western Civilization Courses," paper presented to the International Center for the University Teaching of Jewish Civilization, Jerusalem, July 9-22, 1987.
4. Aaron Wildavsky, *The Nursing Father: Moses as a Political Leader* (University, Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1984).
5. Michael Walzer, *Exodus and Revolution* (New York: Basic Books, 1985).
6. Gerald Blidstein, "Individual and Community in the Middle Ages," in Elazar, pp. 217-256.
7. For a discussion on why philosophy was not a prominent activity among Jews in the rabbinical period, see Gordon Freeman, *The Heavenly Kingdom: Aspects of Political Thought in the Talmud and Midrash* (Lanham, Md. and Jerusalem: University Press of America and the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, 1986), pp. 151-157.
8. On Abravanel's political philosophy, see B. Netanyahu, *Don Isaac Abravanel* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1972).
9. It might be controversial to argue that such outreach is necessary, but it is unlikely that the goal will be achieved otherwise.
10. A cogent discussion of "The Purposes and Relevance of Political Theory" is found in Thomas A. Spragens, Jr., *Understanding Political Theory* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1976), pp. 4-8.
11. A recent attempt to connect rabbinic law and the natural law tradition is Bernard M. Zlotowitz, "The Biblical and Rabbinic Underpinnings of the Constitution," *Judaism*, Vol. 37, No. 3 (Summer 1988), 328-334.
12. Freeman, *The Heavenly Kingdom*.
13. Daniel J. Elazar, "The Covenant as the Basis of the Jewish Political Tradition," in Elazar, pp. 30-37.
14. There are a number of ways of confirming legitimacy, but regular voting in a free society is the most common.
15. See Leo Strauss, *Natural Right and History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953), especially Chapters V and VI.
16. Elazar and Cohen, p. 6.

17. See, for example, Glenn Tinder, *Political Thinking: The Perennial Questions*, 2nd ed. (Boston: Little, Brown, 1974), Chapters 4-6.
18. For a theoretical treatment of some of the relevant Jewish ethical principles, see David Hartman, *A Living Covenant: The Innovative Spirit of Traditional Judaism* (New York: The Free Press, 1985), Chapter 4.
19. Daniel J. Elazar (ed.), *Morality and Power: Contemporary Jewish Views* (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1989).
20. An example of how the Jewish materials have been segregated rather than integrated is William A. Irwin, "The Hebrews," in Henri Frankfort *et al.*, *The Intellectual Adventure of Ancient Man: An Essay on Speculative Thought in the Ancient Near East* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1946), pp. 223-362.