

COPY FYI

34 Soundview Street  
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May 25, 2000

Dear Dr. Lamm,

Your resplendent book has arrived — *The Religious Thought of Hasidism* — and one can see at once how invaluable and indispensable it is (and how, because it supplies both text and context, it utterly and richly overshadows in ambition and substance Martin Buber's *Tales*, which are, anyhow, according to Gershom Scholem, partly Buber's own romanticized constructions). I am hugely grateful for, and deeply delighted by, this marvelous gift, the fruit of consummate scholarship.

I recall my father mentioning that the hasidim used to call the Litvak mitnagdim "tseylemkep," on the ground that rationalism leads to skepticism, and skepticism to apostasy. My first dip into your book (which came only three hours ago) was in Chapter 3, "Faith," R. Avraham Katz of Kalisk, "The Dangers of Intellectual Speculation," where I read: "Many have been lost and turned heretic from overattention to matters of intellect." This is hard for a born Litvak to take! On the other hand, the reductive Litvish view of hasidism took the form of my having initially misread the title of this selection as "Dancers" (instead of "Dangers"!).

Please know how tremendously happy I am to have this volume, with its bottomless interest and learning, from your own hand, and so generously inscribed; and I look forward to plunging on into its impassioned פ'.  
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Cynthia Ozick

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May 29, a footnote: How thrilling it was to read of the standing ovation for Deborah Lipstadt in the *New York Times*'s account of YU's Commencement! But the *Times* had a lot to atone for in this regard. As you surely observed, there was a near-total media blackout during the entire ten weeks of the London trial, and the *Times* in particular, given both its history and its constituency, was amazingly derelict. The *Times*'s argument (as I learned during a confrontation with one of the editors) was that it would be unwise to give a platform to Irving's lies and derogations. (Abraham Foxman of ADL was in complete accord with this view.) Hence it was not possible to read *one word* in the newspaper of record about the proceedings of one of the most important trials of our age. During the period of the *Times* blackout, I wrote a small *J'Accuse* in a fairly untrodden venue, a magazine called *Brill's Content*. I thought perhaps, in the jubilation over Dr. Lipstadt's victory, you might be interested to see it; it's enclosed herewith.

Dr. R. Lamm / JBU / B. Schacter