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© Dr. Dan Mendelsohn Aviv (<http://thenextjew.com>)

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Is End of the Jews Near?

Throughout history, the Jewish people have confronted many grave challenges. In each instance, the Jewish response has been wildly inventive, versatile and robust. In response to each challenge, Jewish practice, belief and sense of self and nation were utterly transformed. And yet, Jewish tradition perceives itself as a continuous, uninterrupted chain extending back to Abraham and Moses. Though Jewish people continue to honour and venerate Moses, their tablet of choice today is an iPad. The present moment in Jewish history is one of tremendous challenge and change. The crisis is profound. The radical break has broken. The remake is live, wired and extraordinary.

Among a growing library of books on the current status of the Jewish people, this book is essential because:

- *End of the Jews* does not seek safe harbour in the claim that Jewish people are in yet another "period of transition."
- The Jewish community is deeply mired in crisis and are in it up to their pupiks.
- This mire, however, does not bespeak *the* end of the Jews, only *an* end for a particular way of being Jewish.
- Another way has already emerged. Fear not!
- The radical break is upon us, and this is the only book that explores the beginnings of the remake, dubbed by Mendelsohn Aviv as the Next Jew.

Author is available for appearances and interviews and can be reached through The Key Publicity, Heather Smith, e-mail: media@thekeypublish.com, Tel: 416-935-1790.



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Synopsis:

End of the Jews: Radical Breaks, Remakes and What Comes Next explores a pattern of crisis followed by a radical break and remake as a persistent phenomenon in Jewish history. The Jewish people have collectively braved many turning points over the past four millennia and, in each instance, did so by making a radical break from past forms of worship, notions of self and nation as well as sense of place in the world. In other words, the Jews have ended numerous times in their history, but not in the sense of "the end," but rather "an end." And yet, despite numerous "ends," the Jewish people have survived due to their ability to transform those radical breaks into seeming continuities which maintained and reinforced a sacred chain of tradition from Abraham through Moses and the march of centuries into the present moment. Each remake, though loyal to the "original," was fundamentally different. Many tend to shy away from declaring their moment as one of crisis and radical transformation. Usually, we are more reserved, claiming we live in a "period of transition." However, the evidence supporting this book's declaration is compelling. The radical break is upon us, and this book explores the beginnings of the remake, dubbed by Mendelsohn Aviv as the Next Jew.

About the Author:

Dr. Dan Mendelsohn Aviv has been engaged in Jewish learning as an educator, lecturer, professor and published scholar for almost twenty years. Having spent three years creating an alternative model for informal education, he recently returned to his greatest passion – classroom instruction at the Toronto Heschel School. Dan is also an itinerant blogger and loves his Macbook almost as much as he loves his darling Noa and his children Maayan, Heala and Tal.



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Author's Q & A

Q. What inspired you to write *End of the Jews: Radical Breaks, Remakes and What Comes Next*?

A. As an avid reader and consumer of Jewish news and opinion, I sensed the ground shifting under my feet. This book is an attempt to understand, track and navigate that drift.

Q. What surprised you most while researching information for this book?

A. Although I had been taught since childhood that Jewish history was filled with tragedy and tumult, I was most surprised by how profound each crisis was and how much Jewish life was radically transformed and renewed in each instance.

Q. What were the challenges (research, literary, and logistical) in bringing this book to life?

A. Working as a Jewish educator as well as parenting three small children in Toronto's Jewish community does not leave one with too much time for endless contemplation about Jewish history's great conundrums. However, being on the ground, motivated and very much in the trenches added an immediacy and authenticity to my writing and thinking about the Jewish present and future.

Q. What is your response to those who are surprised by your findings?

A. I do not think that many folks will be surprised by my findings. The dots are plainly visible - even from space. Perhaps the connections I make between them might enflame an already profound sense of concern for the future of the Jewish community. However, I am also confident about the next phase. The remake presents a world of new possibilities for the Jewish people.

Q. What is the most controversial issue in relation to Jewish position in the world currently?

A. Without a doubt, the increasing levels of disaffection towards Israel expressed by younger Jews rouse the greatest controversy within the North American Jewish community. We are at the point where even *talking about* talking about Israel is radioactive. As someone who cares very much about Israel, this is troubling as well as sad.



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Q. How did you organize the book?

A. The book is divided into three sections. The first part is straight-up Jewish history, exploring the age-old dynamic of crisis-break-remake. The second section explores the present crisis and radical break, and the concluding section highlights some trends which are providing the foundation for the next remake.

Q. What advice would you offer your readers so they can make the best of the information provided to them in the book?

A. The best advice I would offer is simply: Relax! Granted the title of the book is a bit provocative and some of the observations and assertions I make are somewhat controversial, but *End of the Jews* is not an obituary for the Jewish people. It is a rallying cry and a call of encouragement for the North American Jewish community. It is also meant to spark discussion, generate ideas and inspire action.