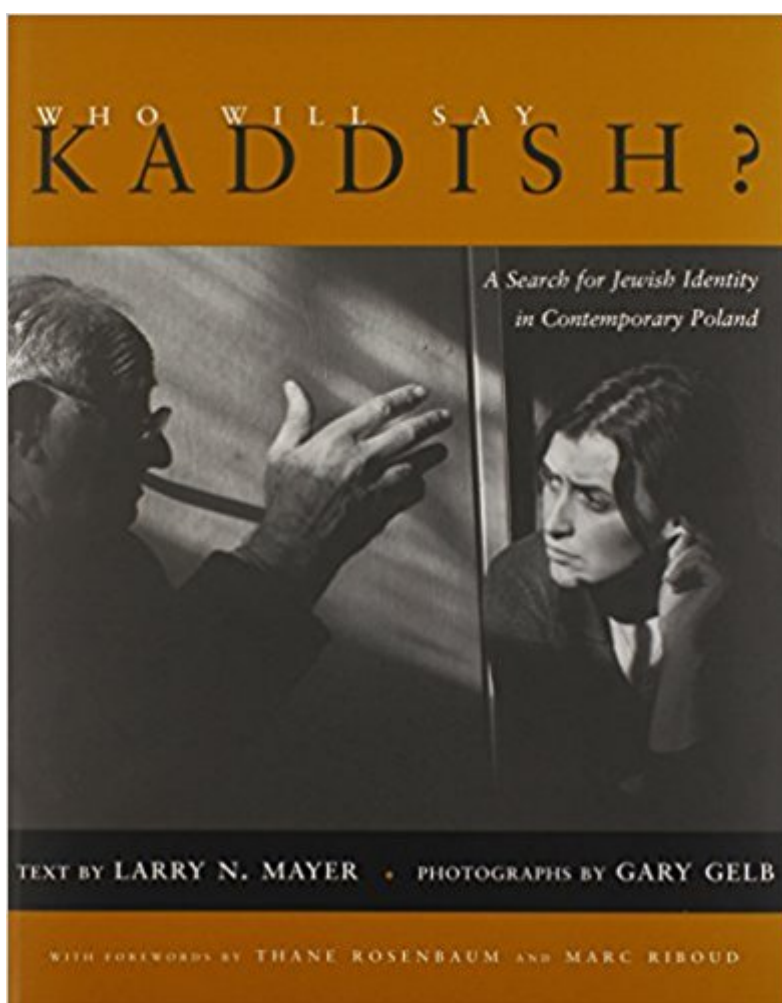


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Who Will Say Kaddish?: A Search For Jewish Identity In Contemporary Poland (Religion, Theology And The Holocaust)



Synopsis

By the eve of the Holocaust, Poland was home to the second largest Jewish population in the world. By war's end, its Jews had been decimated and their culture all but destroyed. The authors of this work revisit their roots to research a rumour that Jewish life is being rekindled in modern Poland.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Larry N. Mayer's portrayal of modern day Jews negotiating the complexities of their history in Poland interweaves his personal quest for understanding the meaning of "Jewishness" in this late age, and yet resists that victim/victor dichotomy that so often accompanies the sanctified tale of Jewishness in the 20th century. Mayer, the child of two Holocaust survivors, initially sets about his work to tell their tale, to speak the silence, the "absent-presence" of the Holocaust. And yet, throughout his journeys among the Jews in Poland, his text begins to tell a new tale altogether. Indeed, this is a text about individuals; those who are possessed by "a feeling," be that religious, cultural, familial, or otherwise, that living their Jewishness is a life affirming activity. While this "feeling" takes many forms, Mayer's work is not intended to resolve the inconsistencies between them. Rather, this is a book that ultimately celebrates the diversity of Jewishness in the present, and unhinges stereotypical (and even archetypal) representations of what "Jew" means. Among the incredible individual portrayals included in the book are those who continue to testify, in their own ways, to both the Nazi horror, but also to the horrors of living under the Communist regime in Poland. Shmuel Roth, the "last observant Jew east of Krakow" is called "a living relic," by the text,

and after the purging of the Jews in 1968 he was one of the few who remained. While the synagogue is closed down, Shmuel Roth set up a synagogue in his small apartment. In one of the most moving affirmations of the book, Roth speaks about how he must stay alive because if he dies, "what will be left?"

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