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March 1 1991

Professor David Roskies  
JTS  
3080 Broadway  
New York, NY 10027

Dear David,

I am sorry that the events of the past six weeks have kept me from writing and acknowledging your essay. My wife was in Tel Aviv visiting my daughter whose son appeared on January 13th. On January 23rd they finally made it to America. At the moment I am a patriarch.

Shapes of Memory could benefit from your essay. But would you be willing to modify it somewhat? What the volume needs most is pages 4-9, very instructive for a general audience, and it is in those pages that the historical and notional point is fleshed out. Pages 1-4 as you yourself suggest are about mourning, at least mainly so. I would suggest that you begin with a version of the dramatic statement about Peretz on page 4. I would also suggest that the ending, powerful as it is, should become, for a general and mainly secular audience, less rhetorical. Of course there should be a good paragraph on the notion of Sheymes. But it could easily be developed after your last paragraph on page 8. A good strong essay of fourteen or fifteen double-spaced pages would be perfect. Please also, if explanations of Hebrew or Yiddish terms are not made clear in the text (the preferable way), add a short explanatory note.

With many thanks for your patience,

Yours,

  
Geoffrey Hartman

624-8611