**Subject:** RE: Zornberg / THE HIDDEN ORDER OF INTIMACY review in PW?

 The Hidden Order of Intimacy: Reflections on the Book of Leviticus

*Avivah Gottlieb Zornberg. Schocken, $32.50 (320p) ISBN 978-0-8052-4357-4*

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National Jewish Book Award winner Zornberg (*Moses: A Human Life*) follows her volumes on Genesis, Exodus, and the book of Numbers with a stirring examination of Leviticus. Excavating the moral meaning from the “largely legalistic text,” Zornberg identifies the narrative of the Golden Calf as the book’s underlying theme. In it, the Israelites’ worship of the Golden Calf while Moses received the Ten Commandments led to mass executions of the worshippers. Zornberg views this tragedy as illustrative of the book’s central moral insight: “periods of impoverishment [such] as the crisis of the Golden Calf... allow the people to encounter their own depths,” making room for spiritual reinvention out of the disorder of error. Zornberg’s nuanced interpretations reward close study, particularly her observation that “stumbling” is essential to the process of understanding God’s words and “failure is the process by which the Torah becomes real.” This outstanding exegesis builds on its penetrating analysis of the Golden Calf and a surprising roster of sources—including Aristotle, George Eliot, and Sigmund Freud—to arrive at an original and persuasive take on Leviticus. Admirers of Karen Armstrong’s *The Lost Art of Scripture: Rescuing the Sacred Texts* will be richly rewarded. *Agent: Sharon Friedman, Sharon Friedman Literary. (Mar.)*