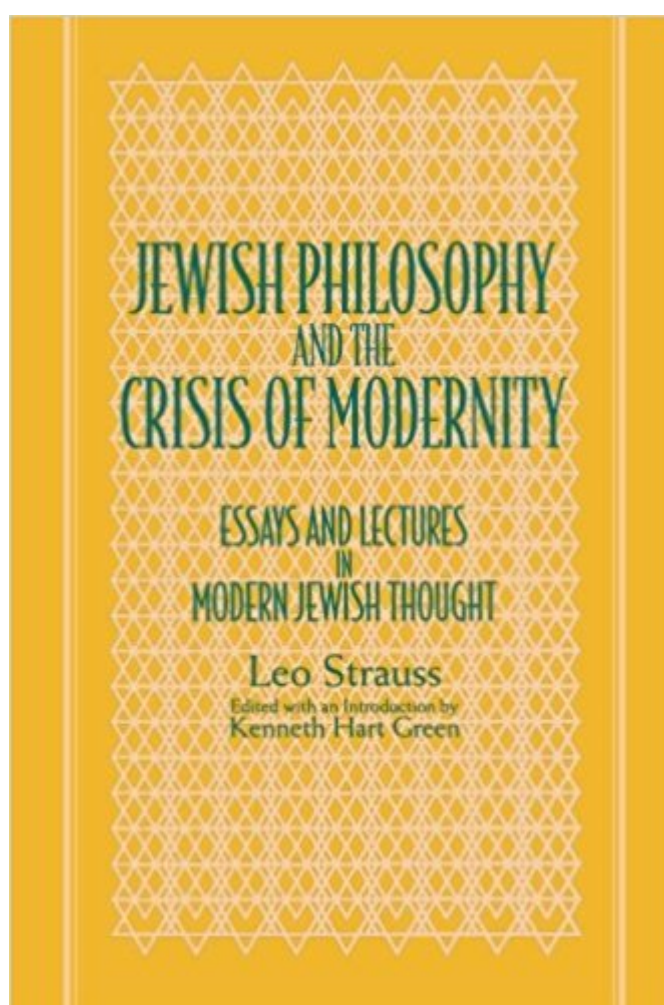


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# Jewish Philosophy And The Crisis Of Modernity: Essays And Lectures In Modern Jewish Thought (Suny Series, Jewish Writings Of Strauss)



## Synopsis

Explores the impact on Jews and Judaism of the crisis of modernity, analyzing modern Jewish dilemmas and providing a prescription for their resolution. This is the first book to bring together the major essays and lectures of Leo Strauss in the field of modern Jewish thought. It contains some of his most famous published writings, as well as significant writings which were previously unpublished. Spanning almost 30 years of continuously deepening reflection, the book presents the full range of Strauss's contributions as a modern Jewish thinker. These essays and lectures also offer Strauss's mature considerations of some of the great figures in modern Jewish thought, such as Baruch Spinoza, Hermann Cohen, Franz Rosenzweig, Martin Buber, Theodor Herzl, and Sigmund Freud. They also encompass his incisive analyses and original explorations of modern Judaism (which he viewed as caught in the grip of the "theological-political crisis"): from German Jewry, anti-semitism, and the Holocaust to Zionism and the State of Israel; from the question of assimilation to the meaning and value of Jewish history. In addition Strauss's two sustained interpretations of the Hebrew Bible are also reprinted. These essays and lectures cumulatively point toward the "postcritical" reconstruction of Judaism which Strauss envisioned, suggesting it rebuild along Maimonidean lines. Thus, the book lends credence to the view that Strauss was able to uncover and probe the crisis at the heart of modern Jewish thought and history, perhaps with greater profundity than any other contemporary Jewish thinker.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

...The wealth of material, the immediacy of Strauss's manner embodied in these papers, their philosophic range, make of this a formidable witness. The editor's introduction on a modern Jewish thinker is finely judged. It places Strauss in the vital context of Maimonides, Moses Mendelssohn, Hermann Cohen, Franz Rosenzweig and the theological-political dilemmas posed by Zionism. It makes clear by implication why the very few contemporaries whom Strauss regarded as his intellectual-scholarly peers included Jacob Klein, the historian of Greek mathematics and logic, and Gershom Scholem. Times Literary Supplement".".The wealth of material, the immediacy of Strauss's manner embodied in these papers, their philosophic range, make of this a formidable witness. The editor's introduction on 'a modern Jewish thinker' is finely judged. It places Strauss in the vital context of Maimonides, Moses Mendelssohn, Hermann Cohen, Franz Rosenzweig and the theological-political dilemmas posed by Zionism. It makes clear by implication why the very few contemporaries whom Strauss regarded as his intellectual-scholarly peers included Jacob Klein, the historian of Greek mathematics and logic, and Gershom Scholem." -- Times Literary Supplement

This is the first book to bring together the major essays and lectures of Leo Strauss in the field of modern Jewish thought. It contains some of his most famous published writings, as well as significant writings which were previously unpublished.

This reader bought the book after previewing some of it on Google Books. It interested me as someone who is interested in Jewish thought. What I have learned from Kenneth Hart Green's work so far is that Leo Strauss viewed reason as having failed to refute the possibility of revelation, and likewise revelation as having failed to refute the pursuit of reason. Since this is a book about Leo Strauss' Jewish thought, the focus is on challenging thinkers who assumed they had refuted revelation. In particular, one of two essays on Baruch Spinoza argues that his work presumed the impossibility of revelation without proving it was actually impossible, and was therefore an argument based on a dogmatic assumption. The introductory essay itself is excellent, and I also found the essays included that were actually based on lectures Leo Strauss had given very readable. In short - this is a book I am very glad to have bought - and I highly recommend it.

Read "Jerusalem & Athens," "Progress or Return" and "Interpretation of Genesis." You will not emerge from the reading the same person. What a gift Strauss is to the world. He lived 1899-1973. Here's Robert Locke describing one of Strauss's ideas: The key hidden step in the Machiavellian view, a bold intellectual move that is made logically rigorous and then politically palatable by

Thomas Hobbes and John Locke, is to define man as outside nature. Strauss sees this as the key to modernity. Man exists in opposition to nature, conquering it to serve his comfort. Nature does not define what is good for man; man does. This view is the basis for the modern penchant to make freedom and comfort (read "prosperity") the central concerns of political philosophy, whereas the ancients made virtue the center. Once man is outside nature, he has no natural teleology or purpose, and therefore no natural virtues. Since he has no natural purpose, anything that might give him one, like God, is suspect, and thus modernity tends towards atheism. Similarly, man's duties, as opposed to his rights, drop away, as does his natural sociability. The philosophical price of freedom is purposelessness, which ultimately gives rise to the alienation, anomie, and nihilism of modern life.

Great book, especially if you want to understand the mind of Leo Strauss

This book of essays by Leo Strauss is an invaluable collection of works on Jewish thought. Each of the essays are gems in themselves. The introduction to the book by Kenneth Hart Green is particularly enlightening and is a penetrating overview of Strauss' approach to Judaism. In fact, the book provides an excellent source book for anyone searching for a Jewish philosophy for our time.

This book will only be of interest to individuals who are knowledgeable of Judaism. It is a brief rehashing of old ideas, etc. I would summarize it as a broad brush watercolor with a lot of water and not too much pigment.

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