

Jewish Philosophy  
and the Crisis of Modernity

Essays and Lectures  
in Modern Jewish Thought

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INTRODUCTION BY

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Why We Remain Jews:  
Can Jewish Faith and History  
Still Speak to Us?

*Joseph Cropsey, Chairman:* It is a strange title, and has the simultaneous characteristics of being apparently somewhat narrow and at the same time apparently bold. It seems to be narrow in being apparently addressed to Jews: "why we remain Jews." Why it is a bold-sounding title, I suppose hardly needs to be spelled out, since it suggests that a question remains as to why people should continue to be Jews. This is something which as Jews, perhaps you would never expect to raise as a question. Now, as it happens, the boldness of this fundamental question is connected with the breadth of it. It is not a narrow question, as it will turn out, because the problem seems to arise in virtue of some very deep and far-ranging developments coming from modern science and modern politics. Some developments in modern political life seem to cause a special difficulty for people when they consider their Jewish character; and indeed, this is what makes the question somewhat more than narrow when they consider the question of their religious affiliation at all. And I think that since the question does so much have to do with developments coming from modern science and modern political life, the question is one that probably occurs not only to Jews but to people of every religious persuasion. I am absolutely uncommissioned to speak for any of the subsequent lecturers, and I do not in any way wish to appear to anticipate what they might say; but it would surprise me very much if it did not turn out to be true that in one way or another the lectures will speak to the question that arises in the mind of everybody, not only of a Jew, and can easily be transformed, with some modifications, into the question why anybody should remain anything that he happens to be to begin with. One other consideration might deserve to be mentioned. Not only is the title of this series of lectures a bit bold in its appearance; you might also have been somewhat taken aback by

