

MODERN JEWISH PHILOSOPHY AND THE POLITICS OF DIVINE VIOLENCE

Is commitment to God compatible with modern citizenship? In this book, Daniel H. Weiss provides new readings of four modern Jewish philosophers – Moses Mendelssohn, Hermann Cohen, Franz Rosenzweig, and Walter Benjamin – in light of classical rabbinic accounts of God's sovereignty, divine and human violence, and the embodied human being as the image of God. He demonstrates how classical rabbinic literature is relevant to contemporary political and philosophical debates. Weiss brings to light striking political aspects of the writings of the modern Jewish philosophers, who have often been understood as non-political. In addition, he shows how the four modern thinkers are more radical and more shaped by Jewish tradition than has previously been thought. Taken as a whole, Weiss's book argues for a fundamental rethinking of the relationship between Judaism and politics, the history of Jewish thought, and the ethical and political dynamics of the broader Western philosophical tradition.

DANIEL H. WEISS is Polonsky-Coexist Senior Lecturer in Jewish Studies, Faculty of Divinity, University of Cambridge. He is author of *Paradox and the Prophets: Hermann Cohen and the Indirect Communication of Religion* (2012), among other publications, and co-editor of multiple books, including *Scripture and Violence* (2020). Actively involved in the Cambridge Interfaith Programme, he is a recent recipient of a Humboldt Research Fellowship for Experienced Researchers.

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DANIEL H. WEISS

University of Cambridge



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For Julia and Tamara

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Note on Transliteration and Translation

Transliteration of Hebrew into Latin characters is according to the general-purpose style guidelines in the *SBL Handbook of Style*, apart from the transliteration of the letter *chet*, which I render as *ḥ*, and of the letter *tzadi*, which I render as *tz*.

Translations from the Tanakh are usually drawn from the New Jewish Publication Society (1985) translation, although I have adjusted the translation in some places. New Testament translations are drawn from the New Revised Standard Version.

Abbreviations

BT	Babylonian Talmud
CV	Walter Benjamin, “Critique of Violence,” in <i>Selected Writings, Volume 1, 1913–1926</i> , eds. Marcus Bullock and Michael W. Jennings (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996)
<i>Jerusalem</i>	Moses Mendelssohn, <i>Jerusalem, or On Religious Power and Judaism</i> , trans. Allan Arkush (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1983)
JS	Hermann Cohen, <i>Hermann Cohen’s Jüdische Schriften</i> (New York: Arno Press, 1980)
<i>JubA</i>	Moses Mendelssohn, <i>Moses Mendelssohn Gesammelte Schriften, Jubiläumsausgabe</i> (Stuttgart–Bad Cannstatt: Friedrich Frommann Verlag, 1971–).
KG	Walter Benjamin, “Zur Kritik der Gewalt,” in <i>Gesammelte Schriften</i> II.1, eds. Rolf Tiedemann and Hermann Schweppenhäuser (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1977).
MMHW	<i>Moses Mendelssohn’s Hebrew Writings</i> , trans. Edward Breuer, ed. Edward Breuer and David Sorkin (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2018)
<i>RoR</i>	Hermann Cohen, <i>Religion of Reason Out of the Sources of Judaism</i> , trans. Simon Kaplan (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1995)
RV	Hermann Cohen, <i>Religion der Vernunft aus den Quellen des Judentums</i> [1929, 2nd ed.] (Wiesbaden: Fourier Verlag, 1978)
SE	Franz Rosenzweig, <i>Der Stern der Erlösung</i> (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1988)

xii	<i>List of Abbreviations</i>
SR	Franz Rosenzweig, <i>The Star of Redemption</i> , trans. Barbara Galli (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2005)
WJCB	<i>Moses Mendelssohn: Writings on Judaism, Christianity, and the Bible</i> , ed. Micah Gottlieb (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 2011)