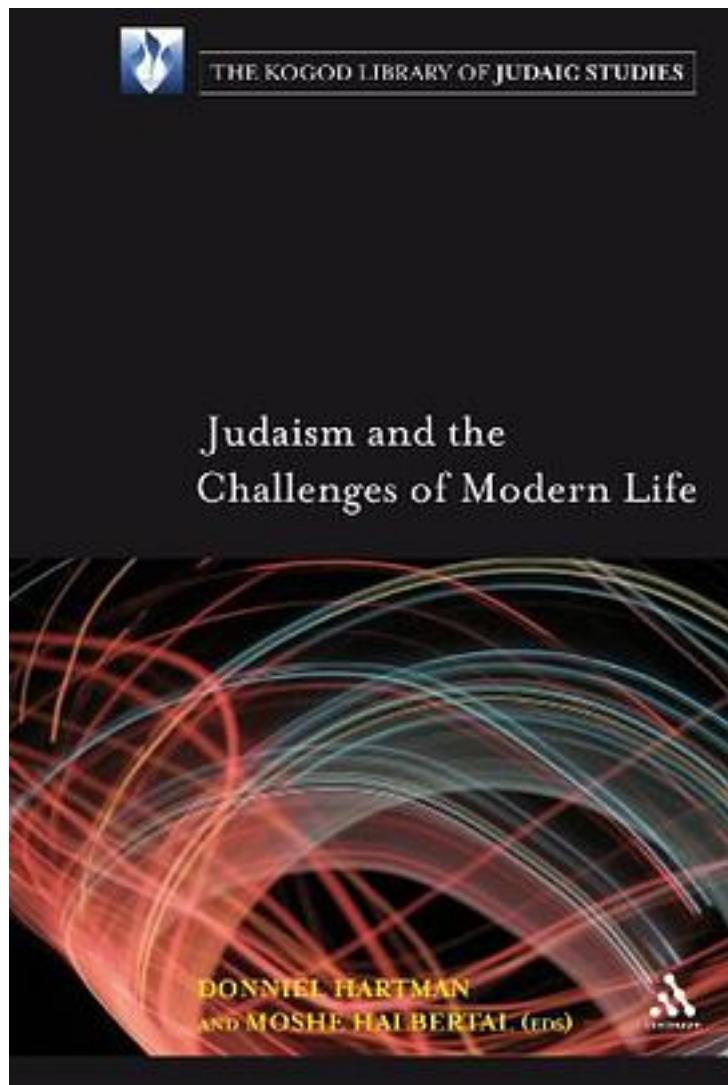


# Judaism and the Challenges of Modern Life



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Much more than a particular period in world history, modernity has fundamentally transformed how we think and live, and especially how we understand and relate to religious traditions. As the 'ghetto walls' have fallen, both empirically and metaphorically, Judaism is compelled to compete in an open marketplace of ideas. Jews can no longer count on an assumedly necessary Jewish identity or commitment, nor on the rallying force of anti-Semitism to ensure an individual and collective sense of belonging. Rather Jewish moral, spiritual and historical values and ideas must be read with new eyes and challenged to address modernity's proliferating array of questions and realities. The pertinent questions modern Jewry faces are how to embrace modernity as Jews and what such an embrace means for the meaning and future of Jewish life. This collection of essays, authored by scholars of the Shalom Hartman Institute, addresses three critical challenges posed to Judaism by modernity: the challenge of ideas, the challenge of diversity, and the challenge of statehood, and provides insights and ideas for the future direction of Judaism. Providing readers with new insights into Judaism and the Jewish people in contemporary times, the collection explores a wide range of issues that includes: the significance of Israel for the future of Judaism; the Jewish people as a people; the relationship between monotheism and violence; revelation and ethics; Judaism and the feminist challenge; and Judaism and homosexuality.

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