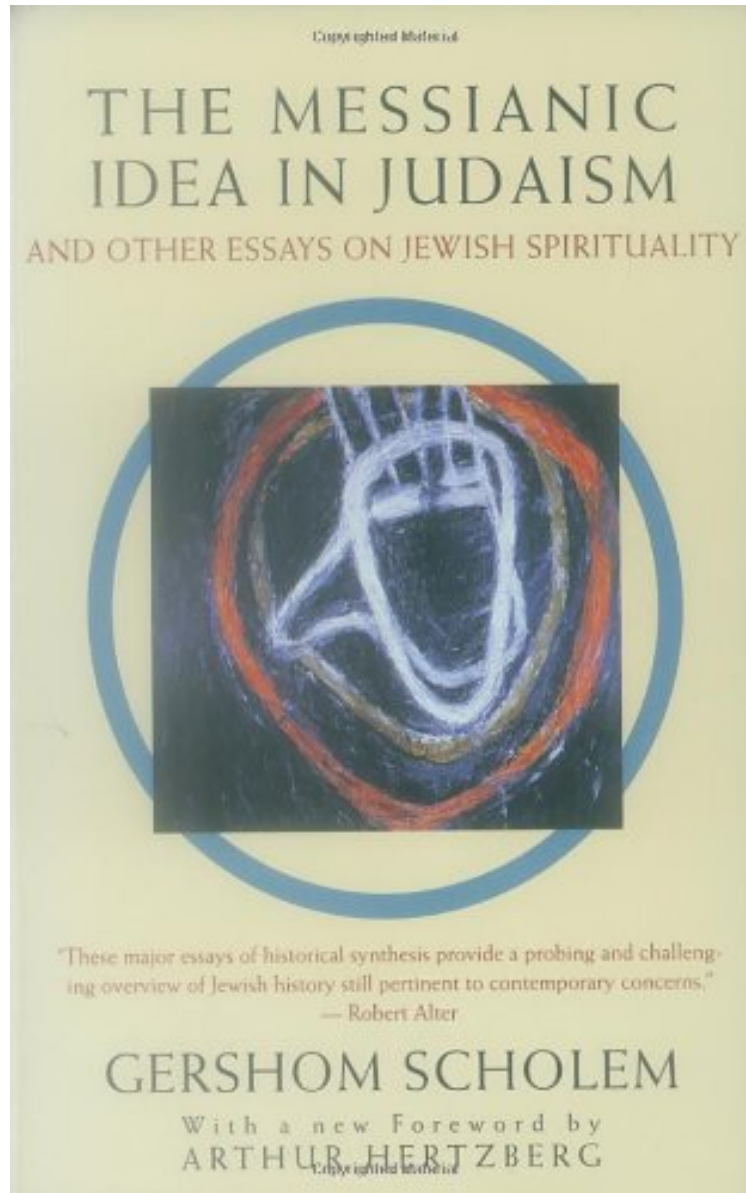


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The Messianic Idea in Judaism: And Other Essays on Jewish Spirituality

Gershom Scholem

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Gershom Scholem : The Messianic Idea in Judaism: And Other Essays on Jewish Spirituality before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Messianic Idea in Judaism: And Other Essays on Jewish Spirituality:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Essential readingBy John IsnerThis book is essential reading for anyone interested in understanding the messianic impulse, whether in Judaism, Christianity, or Shi'ite Islam.3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. FascinatedBy A. GrossA fascinating collection of lectures. The discussion of some of the more bizarre, and yet intellectual followers of Shabtai Zvi into the 20th century is amazing. I had never understood antinomianism, but Scholem explains the thinking and rationale behind it brilliantly.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy daveexcellent

Gershom Scholem was the master builder of historical studies of the Kabbalah. When he began to work on this neglected field, the few who studied these texts were either amateurs who were looking for occult wisdom, or old-style Kabbalists who were seeking guidance on their spiritual journeys. His work broke with the outlook of the scholars of the previous century in Judaic *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, the Science of Judaism whose orientation he rejected, calling their disregard for the most vital aspects of the Jewish people as a collective entity: a form of censorship of the Jewish past. The major founders of modern Jewish historical studies in the nineteenth century, Leopold Zunz and Abraham Geiger, had ignored the Kabbalah; it did not fit into their account of the Jewish religion as rational and worthy of respect by enlightened minds. The only exception was the historian Heinrich Graetz. He had paid substantial attention to its texts and to their most explosive exponent, the false Messiah Sabbatai Zevi, but Graetz had depicted the Kabbalah and all that flowed from it as an unworthy revolt from the underground of Jewish life against its reasonable, law-abiding, and learned mainstream. Scholem conducted a continuing polemic with Zunz, Geiger, and Graetz by bringing into view a Jewish past more varied, more vital, and more interesting than any idealized portrait could reveal.
from the Foreword by Arthur Hertzberg, 1995

"These major essays of historical synthesis provide a probing and challenging overview of Jewish history still pertinent to contemporary concerns."Robert Alter
Gershom Scholem earned international renown as a brilliant interpreter of esoteric religious texts as well as a trenchant contributor to many of the central intellectual debates of his day. At a time when apocalyptic impulses are intensifying with the approach of a millennial moment in the Christian calendar, we can only welcome Scholem's soberly presented and scrupulously researched account of their Jewish counterparts.
Martin Jay, University of California, Berkeley
Having had the privilege of knowing Gershom Scholem and having learned much from him, I am delighted to see this collection made available once more. I am especially fond of the essay on Revelation and Tradition, which is vintage Scholem—learned, sharp, witty, and adorned with delightful anecdotes from the Talmud. In juxtaposition with the essay that follows, on *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, it documents the subtle relationship between rational and nonrational elements in the Jewish tradition, the very relationship that Scholem both described so incisively and embodied so vividly.
Jaroslav Pelikan, Yale University
About the Author
Gershom Scholem was a professor of Jewish mysticism at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem until his death in 1982. Among his most important works are *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, *The Messianic Idea in Judaism*, *On the Kabbalah and Its Symbolism*, *On the Mystical Shape of the Godhead*, and editor of *Zohar, the Book of Splendor: Basic Readings from the Kabbalah*.