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Robert Wright \u0026amp; Rebecca Newberger Goldstein [The Wright Show] (full conversation)

The 2007-08 Jewish Community Endowment Fund Lecture with Rebecca Goldstein

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Baruch Spinoza Part 5

Excursions, Ep. 172: Freethought and Freedom: Spinoza's Political TheoryA
Conversation on Jewish Secularism | The New School Betraying Spinoza The
Renegade Jew

"I remember the destruction of the Warsaw Ghetto," he writes in "Genocide and Ideology" (1978), "which I saw from outside; I lived among Poles who were active in helping Jews and who risked ... of ...

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Part of the Jewish Encounter series In 1656, Amsterdam's Jewish community excommunicated Baruch Spinoza, and, at the age of twenty-three, he became the most famous heretic in Judaism. He was already germinating a secularist challenge to religion that would be as radical as it was original. He went on to produce one of the most ambitious systems in the history of Western philosophy, so ahead of its time that scientists today, from string theorists to neurobiologists, count themselves among Spinoza's progeny. In *Betraying Spinoza*, Rebecca Goldstein sets out to rediscover the flesh-and-blood man often hidden beneath the veneer of rigorous rationality, and to crack the mystery of the breach between the philosopher and his Jewish past. Goldstein argues that the trauma of the Inquisition's persecution of its forced Jewish converts plays itself out in Spinoza's philosophy. The excommunicated Spinoza, no less than his excommunicators, was responding to Europe's first experiment with racial anti-Semitism. Here is a Spinoza both hauntingly emblematic and deeply human, both heretic and hero—a surprisingly contemporary figure ripe for our own uncertain age. From the Hardcover edition.

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Acclaimed philosopher and novelist Rebecca Newberger Goldstein provides a dazzlingly original plunge into the drama of philosophy, revealing its hidden role in today's debates on religion, morality, politics, and science.

Psychology professor Cass Seltzer finds his relationship challenged by a former girlfriend's invitation to join her biochemistry experiment in immortality, an effort that is complicated by his ongoing quest to understand religion.

Mazel means luck in Yiddish, and luck is the guiding force in this magical and mesmerizing novel that spans three generations. Sasha Saunders is the daughter of a Polish rabbi who abandons the shtetl and wins renown as a Yiddish actress in Warsaw and New York. Her daughter Chloe becomes a professor of classics at Columbia. Chloe's daughter Phoebe grows up to become a mathematician who is drawn to traditional Judaism and the sort of domestic life her mother and grandmother rejected.

When it appeared in 1670, Baruch Spinoza's *Theological-Political Treatise* was denounced as the most dangerous book ever published. Religious and secular authorities saw it as a threat to faith, social and political harmony, and everyday

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morality, and its author was almost universally regarded as a religious subversive and political radical who sought to spread atheism throughout Europe. Steven Nadler tells the story of this book: its radical claims and their background in the philosophical, religious, and political tensions of the Dutch Golden Age, as well as the vitriolic reaction these ideas inspired. A vivid story of incendiary ideas and vicious backlash, *A Book Forged in Hell* will interest anyone who is curious about the origin of some of our most cherished modern beliefs--Jacket p. [2].

From Pulitzer Prize-finalist Steven Nadler, an engaging guide to what Spinoza can teach us about life's big questions In 1656, after being excommunicated from Amsterdam's Portuguese-Jewish community for "abominable heresies" and "monstrous deeds," the young Baruch Spinoza abandoned his family's import business to dedicate his life to philosophy. He quickly became notorious across Europe for his views on God, the Bible, and miracles, as well as for his uncompromising defense of free thought. Yet the radicalism of Spinoza's views has long obscured that his primary reason for turning to philosophy was to answer one of humanity's most urgent questions: How can we lead a good life and enjoy happiness in a world without a providential God? In *Think Least of Death*, Pulitzer Prize-finalist Steven Nadler connects Spinoza's ideas with his life and times to offer a compelling account of how the philosopher can provide a guide to living one's best life. In the *Ethics*, Spinoza presents his vision of the ideal human being, the "free person" who, motivated by reason, lives a life of joy devoted to what is most

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important—improving oneself and others. Untroubled by passions such as hate, greed, and envy, free people treat others with benevolence, justice, and charity. Focusing on the rewards of goodness, they enjoy the pleasures of this world, but in moderation. “The free person thinks least of all of death,” Spinoza writes, “and his wisdom is a meditation not on death but on life.” An unmatched introduction to Spinoza’s moral philosophy, *Think Least of Death* shows how his ideas still provide valuable insights about how to live today.

"Exhilarating...Stewart has achieved a near impossibility, creating a page-turner about jousting metaphysical ideas, casting thinkers as warriors." —Liesl Schillinger, *New York Times Book Review* Once upon a time, philosophy was a dangerous business—and for no one more so than for Baruch Spinoza, the seventeenth-century philosopher vilified by theologians and political authorities everywhere as “the atheist Jew.” As his inflammatory manuscripts circulated underground, Spinoza lived a humble existence in The Hague, grinding optical lenses to make ends meet. Meanwhile, in the glittering salons of Paris, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz was climbing the ladder of courtly success. In between trips to the opera and groundbreaking work in mathematics, philosophy, and jurisprudence, he took every opportunity to denounce Spinoza, relishing his self-appointed role as “God’s attorney.” In this exquisitely written philosophical romance of attraction and repulsion, greed and virtue, religion and heresy, Matthew Stewart gives narrative form to an epic contest of ideas that shook the seventeenth century—and

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continues today.

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