



The Crooked Timber of Humanity: Chapters in the History of Ideas

Isaiah Berlin

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"Out of the crooked timber of humanity, no straight thing was ever made."--Immanuel Kant

Isaiah Berlin was one of the most important philosophers of the twentieth century--an activist of the intellect who marshaled vast erudition and eloquence in defense of the endangered values of individual liberty and moral and political plurality. In *The Crooked Timber of Humanity* he exposes the links between the ideas of the past and the social and political cataclysms of our own time: between the Platonic belief in absolute truth and the lure of authoritarianism; between the eighteenth-century reactionary ideologue Joseph de Maistre and twentieth-century Fascism; between the romanticism of Schiller and Byron and the militant--and sometimes genocidal--nationalism that convulses the modern world.

This new edition features a revised text that supplants all previous versions, a new foreword in which award-winning novelist John Banville discusses Berlin's life and ideas, particularly his defense of pluralism, and a substantial new appendix that provides rich context, including letters by Berlin and previously uncollected writings, most notably his virtuoso review of Bertrand Russell's *A History of Western Philosophy*.

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