

# Georg Simmel: How is Society Possible?

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(In Hebrew)

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Georg Simmel, possibly the most post-modern among the founders of sociology, was a daring and innovative philosopher and the first one to introduce a shift of the sociological perspective, from the “big” social questions that focus on society, to a social microcosm that centers on the individual. The subversive nature of the shift did not go unnoticed by his contemporaries. The essays translated in this volume that touch on topics such as adventure; the sociology of senses, meal or money, paved the way for a new kind of social thought dealing with issues which were previously regarded as “marginal” and “low”, which constitute a key to the understanding of social processes and identities that is crucial for the comprehension of issues interwoven with modern society. His essays were invaluable assets for sociologists, anthropologists and researchers on communication around the world.

His observations on the metropolis Berlin and the contemporary German society constitute an ambivalent diagnosis of a careful observer who has one foot in the phenomena described and the other one outside of it. Many link this position to his biography and to his identity as Berliner who was born in 1858 into a converted Jewish family, and who, for his Jewish background, only got an academic position in his old age. An example of this is his essay on “The Stranger” – a short article of crucial impact that turned into a foundational work for the definition of sociological paradigms dealing with foreigners, immigrants, refugees and migrant workers.

Although written hundred years ago, Simmel’s essays on the crisis of culture and the modern man’s alienation are more relevant today than ever. From the perspective of the Hebrew reader, the way in which they open a window to the world of the “assimilated Jew” in pre-war Germany, gives an additional value to this first collection.