

## ABSTRACT

My thesis centers on three modern Jewish thinkers—Yeshayahu Leibowitz, David Hartman and Joseph Soloveitchik—and their philosophical relationship with and use of Maimonides. Maimonides is the central thinker in and the touchstone of Jewish philosophy, matched only by Aquinas in Catholic theology.

The first essay concerns the nature of halakha in the concluding chapters of *The Guide of the Perplexed* and Leibowitz's formalist understanding of the Law through those chapters. I defend this reading of Maimonides by employing David Shatz's provocative argument that 3.51 and not 3.54 constitutes the true end of the *Guide*. By arguing thusly a Leibowitzean reading of the conclusion is plausible and faithful to Maimonides' purpose in the *Guide*.

The middle essay covers Hartman's philosophy of halakha in association with Maimonides' philosophy of halakha. Three controlling aspects of Hartman's philosophy of halakha are examined: pluralism, rationalism and *lifnim mi-shurat ha-din*. I attempt to assess Hartman's use of Maimonides in determining these aspects, and find his interpretations of the Rambam to be generally in error.

The final essay looks at neglected second part of Soloveitchik's *Halakhic Man* and his seamless utilization of Maimonides to shape the concepts of creation, repentance divine providence, time and prophecy. I argue that Soloveitchik's use of Maimonides is closest to the Rambam's intentions, but that it also takes the fewest risks. Instead, Soloveitchik employs Maimonides as a prop and support to defend his radically new and radically strange vision of individual observant existence in modern times.