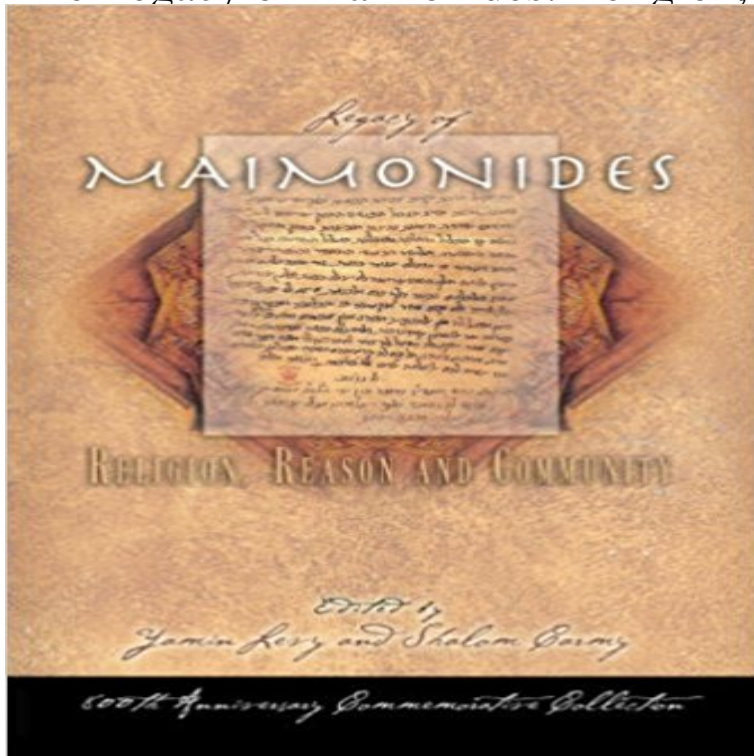


## The Legacy of Maimonides: Religion, Reason and Community



Rabbi Moses Maimonides (1135-1204), known as Rambam, is widely known as a profound philosopher and authoritative legal scholar. However, Rambams contributions are not merely remnants of medieval scholarship but a vibrant legacy that gives compelling guidance in modern mans spiritual search. In this book, leading scholars present surveys of Rambams thinking and his impact on Judaism, and apply Rambams approach to various issues of critical contemporary importance. The opening essay in the book is by the late Professor Isadore Twersky, dean of intellectual historians working on Rambam, and himself a role model for the combination of Torah and academic scholarship. His subject is the growth of Rambams reputation and his impact on later Torah scholarship. Rabbi Norman Lamm, for so many years a productive scholar and leader of American Orthodoxy, discusses a question central to religious lifethe love of Goddrawing on Rambams halakhic works and the Guide. Professor Arthur Hyman, who occupies a prominent place among contemporary interpreters of Maimonides philosophy, surveys, with his customary concision and clarity, the broad options in the academic scholarship of the 20th century. Contributions by Shalom Carmy and David Berger focus on critical questions regarding the ongoing implications of certain Maimonidean doctrines. Rabbi Carmys article offers a defense of Rambams robust approach to dogma. Dr. Berger explores present day utilizations of Rambams naturalistic teachings about the messianic age. The late educator and scholar Rabbi Norman Frimer depicts Rambams influence as a role model for intellectual searchers. His son, the legal scholar Dov Frimer, turns to the details of Rambams jurisprudence, and produces some unexpected conclusions regarding the halakhic status of non-Jews. Roslyn Weiss devotes her paper to a detailed examination

of one text in the introduction to the Guide, communicating the exhilaration of such microscopic study and its more systematic pertinence. Yamin Levys essay looks at the general relationship between Rambams championing of rational thought and the kind of community it fosters. Hayyim Angel surveys many of Rambams discussions pertinent to Biblical exegesis and their abiding importance for our own study of Tanakh. Elimelekh Polinsky deals with a specific area, honor and respect for parents. His essay, too, exemplifies the integrated study of Rambams Halakhah and his philosophy. The essays by Moshe Sokolow and Gerald Blidstein expand the scope of the book. Sokolow demonstrates the significant issues tackled by Rambam in his epistles. Blidstein, much admired for his three analytic and historical monographs on specific topics in Maimonides jurisprudence, discusses the idea of Oral Law in Rambam. David Shatz aptly closes the volume with an analysis of the last chapters in the Guide, casting new light on Rambams view of human nature, the role of the mitzvot and the goal of human existence, while demonstrating yet again the necessity of painstaking microscopic analysis of the text and its literary organization.

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