

Review Essay: Rabbi Soloveitchik's Lectures on the Guide

Maimonides: Between Philosophy and Halakhab. Edited by Lawrence J. Kaplan. (Brooklyn: Ktav; Jerusalem: Urim, 2016), 256 pp.

Reviewed by: Heshey Zelcer

During the years 1950-51, Rabbi Dr. Joseph B. Soloveitchik taught two consecutive courses on Maimonides' *Guide of the Perplexed* at Bernard Revel Graduate School of Jewish Studies. These lectures were recorded by Rabbi Gerald (Yaakov) Homnick in five handwritten spiral notebooks totaling 375 pages. No other record of these lectures is known to exist: not Soloveitchik's notes, nor any audio recordings.

Included in the book being reviewed is a Foreword by Prof. Dov Schwartz, a preface by Prof. Lawrence J. Kaplan, and a lengthy 49-page *Editor's Introduction*—also by Kaplan. Actually, it is less an introduction and more a summation and elaboration of some of the more important ideas developed in the lectures (the *Lectures*). This introduction is very valuable as Soloveitchik's ideas were developed over the entire first course and sometimes span many noncontiguous lectures.

The *Editor's Introduction* is followed by Soloveitchik's *Lectures* on the *Guide of the Perplexed* which according to Kaplan, is a 'lightly annotated edition of the First Course' spanning the first 224 pages of Homnick's notes.¹ Kaplan is being modest. In the hands of a lesser scholar, the *Lectures* would not have had the clarity of writing for which Kaplan is known nor would they have captured the unique voice and idiom of Soloveitchik.

Finally, at the end of the book are biographical notices as well as a set of indices.

¹ There are two types of footnotes in the *Lectures*. Some contain text from the lectures that, in Kaplan's estimation, are tangential to the issues being discussed (appx. 22). Other footnotes are Kaplan's comments which are identified by open and closed square brackets (appx. 71).

Heshey Zelcer is on the editorial board of *Hakirah* and has published books and articles on Jewish law, philosophy, history and liturgy. Heshey and Mark Zelcer are coauthoring a book on the philosophy of Joseph B. Soloveitchik, a portion of which is abstracted in this review.

Soloveitchik's Philosophical Project

To appreciate the *Lectures*, or for that matter any of Soloveitchik's writings, it is necessary to have a basic understanding of Soloveitchik's philosophical project. Most people who have been exposed to Soloveitchik's works find it difficult to articulate his philosophical project. For example, people familiar with Soloveitchik's *Halakhic Man* understand it to be a portrait of either an actual halakhic person, an imagined one, or a composite. But what makes Soloveitchik's works a philosophic system? How do we classify such disparate works as *And From There You Shall Seek* (*AFTYSS*) seek, his eulogies, *Halakhic Man* and *The Halakhic Mind* so that they form a uniform whole?

Soloveitchik's primary contribution to Jewish philosophy, as spelled out over many books, articles, and public lectures, can be divided into three broad categories: 'foundation,' 'development,' and 'personality.'² This is most easily seen in what is sometimes deemed his early trilogy: *The Halakhic Mind*, *And From There You Shall Seek*, and *Halakhic Man*. *The Halakhic Mind* is his 'foundational' work. *And From There You Shall Seek* is an early and important 'development' work. *Halakhic Man* (Part 1) is one of his most important 'personality' texts. Let us look at what we mean by each of these three categories.

Foundation. The foundation part of Soloveitchik's philosophy—the portion of his thought that sets the intellectual foundations—is completely contained in *The Halakhic Mind*.³ There, Soloveitchik lays out the foundation of his new philosophy. He presents a philosophical justification for doing Jewish philosophy in the precise way he will practice and expand it for many years. Soloveitchik articulates his reasons for abandoning old styles of what we now think of as classical Jewish philosophy and instead advocates approaching Jewish philosophy anew, from a fresh and unique standpoint with a novel methodology using tools, ideas, and strategies that are indigenous to Judaism.

² Lawrence Kaplan in "Joseph Soloveitchik and Halakhic Man," *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Jewish Philosophy* (Cambridge University Press, 2007) pp. 211ff alludes to a similar structure.

³ Kaplan in "J.B. Soloveitchik's Philosophy of Halakhah," *Jewish Law Annual* 7 (1989) writes that the title *The Halakhic Mind* was not given by Soloveitchik. In *Community Covenant and Commitment: Selected Letters and Communications*. Ed. Nathaniel Helfgot (Ktav, 2005), pp. 271-272, is a letter from Soloveitchik to Rabbi Leo Jung stating he would like to write an essay on "The Neo-Kantian conception of subjectivity and objectification of the act and its application to the analysis of the *ta'amei ha-mitzvot* problem." This might refer to what would eventually be published as *The Halakhic Mind*.

It is difficult to do justice to Soloveitchik's philosophy system in a few brief sentences. Nevertheless, here it is: Soloveitchik's philosophy consists of reconstructing Halakhic Man's subjective religious consciousness from the objective Halakhah. In other words, if we understand the halakhic details of a mitzvah we can understand what is in the mind of a Halakhic Man when he performs it. This is important for two reasons:

1. By reconstructing the religious consciousness of Halakhic Man, we learn what the world is like when perceived through his eyes. Think, for example, of a mikveh or a sukkah, or the concept of impurity or holiness. All of these have properties, or constructs, that are meaningful to Halakhic Men, but meaningless to everyone else.
2. By reconstructing the religious consciousness of Halakhic Man, we understand his religious experience. Soloveitchik believed that the subjective feelings and emotions a Halakhic Man experiences while performing a mitzvah (e.g., love and fear of God) are integral and important parts of the mitzvah. In other words, Soloveitchik was trying to define the religious experience (i.e., the religious consciousness) of a Halakhic Man—his spirituality, if you wish. He was interested in Halakhic Man's religious experience, but only as it is defined and evoked by the details of Halakhah. A spiritual experience brought on, for example, by meditation or medication would, according to Soloveitchik, be meaningless as a Jewish religious experience.

Development. In the development literature Soloveitchik describes how to develop the type of religious consciousness possessed by Halakhic Men, the type of people described in his personality works. This can be found most vividly in *Halakhic Man* (Part 2) and in *And From There You Shall Seek*. Creation and creativity play a central role in developing halakhic man's religious consciousness. Creation, as used by Soloveitchik, refers to man recreating himself, as well as creating new and original halakhic insights and concepts. Later, when we compare the *Lectures* to *AFTYSS*, we discuss how *imitatio Dei* (imitating God) and *devekut* (cleaving to God) are two key factors in creating and developing Halakhic Man's religious consciousness.

The developmental part of Soloveitchik's philosophical approach includes not only the two works just mentioned but also his novella on Talmud and on Maimonides' *Mishneh Torah*, and his numerous remarks on repentance, prayer, mourning, and other halakhot.

Personality. The personality literature comprises the philosophy for which Soloveitchik is most famous. This material can be found in *Halakhic Man* (Part 1) and *The Lonely Man of Faith*. His essays: "Catharsis," "Majesty

and Humility,” and “The Community,” among others, paint a fuller picture. This literature tells us how Soloveitchik imagined the ideal Jewish personality: the “finished product,” the paradigmatic Halakhic Man, who lives a redeemed halakhic life. When we read his personality sketches we begin to appreciate Soloveitchik’s methodology of interrogating Jewish sources to develop portraits of idealized Jewish personalities.

The essence of the foundation, development, and personality literature can also be described by the questions they address. Broadly speaking, the foundational work addresses the questions: Is the world different for halakhic Jews? If so, what does that mean? What shapes a Jewish world and what methodology should we use to understand the relationship between this world and the religious experience of a Halakhic Man? The development works address the question How does one attain the religious consciousness of a Halakhic Man? The personality works address the question What is it like to have the religious consciousness of a Halakhic Man?

One important aspect of Soloveitchik’s personality profiles is that they are usually dialectical. What this means is that ideal Halakhic Men become great—or redeemed—when they embody and grapple with conflicting ideas and feelings. According to Soloveitchik one who lives a one-dimensional religious existence is living an unredeemed life. One example of dialectical feelings is experiencing both love and fear of God. Another example is feeling both worthless and great before God. Halakhic Men embody these and many other contradictory and dialectical experiences, grapple with them and thus they become great people who live a redeemed life.

While the *Lectures* are precisely that—lectures—much of the material within them falls into the Personality and Development categories, or more succinctly, they reflect the religious experience of a halakhic man (see the following paragraph), specifically Maimonides (or at least Soloveitchik’s conception of him) as he strives for *devekut* (cleaving to God) and *imitatio Dei* (imitating God).

Overview of the *Lectures*

Soloveitchik opens his first lecture on the *Guide* by highlighting its faults. He argues that there are two aspects of philosophical creativity: style and thought. In the *Guide* (as opposed to his *Mishneh Torah*) Maimonides failed at both: he used old Aristotelian philosophical jargon; and he was merely a routine Middle Ages scholar using arguments resembling those of, for example, Thomas Aquinas and Albertus Magnus. In the *Guide*, argues

Soloveitchik, the only area in which Maimonides excelled is in the religious experience—which permeates the *Guide*. Only in regard to this aspect does Maimonides achieve greatness. Only in this aspect does he touch subjective heights (75-76).

Soloveitchik then elaborates on the biblical phrase “In the name of the Lord, God of the World” (Genesis 21:33)—which precedes each of the three sections of the *Guide*. He argues that this phrase is the motto of the entire *Guide* and that it is meant to evoke (1) the existence of a transcendent God; (2) creation of the world by God as an act of free will and thus an ethical act; and (3) the obligation of man to follow the ethical example of creation (76–87).

Soloveitchik then points out that the *Guide* was written for Maimonides' student Joseph b. Judah ibn Aqnin,⁴ who was reared in a non-Jewish environment. He was bright, intelligent and well educated but lacked conviction and courage. After spending two years studying with Maimonides, he became his disciple and defended him against attacks from Samuel ben Ali, the Gaon of the Yeshiva in Baghdad. After receiving a copy of the *Guide*, however, ibn Aqnin was not satisfied with it, and it led to a bitter exchange between them. Ultimately, they reconciled and remained friends (88–90).

The *Lectures* then go on to discuss various philosophical topics in the *Guide*, including prophecy, knowledge of God, moral excellence, Maimonides vs. Aristotle, the nature of knowledge, God's creative act of Creation, ethics, and fear of God.

The book closes with a *Summary and Conclusion* that ends with the dramatic declaration: “After all his adventures in the field of philosophy, [Maimonides] came back to the Halakhah.”

We now discuss two themes from the *Editor's Introduction* and the *Lectures*. Afterwards we compare the *Lectures* to *AFTYSS*.

Moral Relativism

Soloveitchik notes that many philosophers believed that Maimonides, following Aristotelian ethics, denied that ethical norms possess inherent validity or worth. Indeed, there are a number of texts which suggest that Maimonides espoused a form of ethical relativism, i.e., that morality is not absolute but relative to the norms of one's society. For example, in the eighth chapter of his *Millot ha-Higayyon (Treatise on Logic)* Maimonides writes:

⁴ Kaplan 88n1 points out that current scholarship identifies the student as R. Joseph b. Judah ibn Shimon.

ואולם המפורסמים הנה בהם חלוף ויתרון כי שם משפטים נתפרסמו אצל אומה ולא נתפרסמו אצל אומה אחרת. וכל מה שיהיה הענין מפורסם אצל אומות רבות היה האמתות בו יותר חזק.⁵

And as for the *mefursamot*⁶ [sic], they may vary and differ from one another; for there are judgments which are generally accepted among one people and not generally accepted among another people. And any matter which is generally accepted among many peoples, the belief in its being true is stronger. (120)⁷

Morality is thus based on opinions which are accepted and which appear to be true—although these values may be accepted today but not tomorrow (120). This appears to indicate that for Maimonides, moral values are not absolute values.

Soloveitchik also provides an example from the *Guide* that appears to indicate that for Maimonides, ethics is on a lower level than rational virtues:

שכבר התבאר במופת כי מעלות המדות הם הצעות למעלות הדבריות. (מורה הנבוכים א:לד)⁸

It has been explained or rather demonstrated that the moral virtues are a preparation for the rational virtues. (121)

Moral virtues thus appear to be merely a prerequisite for intellectual achievement, a means for attaining intellectual excellence.

Also, in *Guide* 3:54 Maimonides speaks of four kinds of human perfections:

הראשון—והוא הפחות שבהם, והוא אשר עליו יכלו ימיהם אנשי העולם—הוא שלמות הקנין... והמין השני... והוא—שלמות תבנית הגוף ותכונתו וצורתו—רצוני לומר: שיהיה מזג האיש ההוא בתכלית השווי, ואבריו נערכים חזקים כראוי... והמין השלישי... והוא—שלמות מעלות המדות... וזה המין מן השלמות גם כן איננו רק הצעה לזולתו, ואינו תכלית כונה בעצמו... שאם תעלה בלבך שאחד מבני אדם עומד לבדו ואין לו עסק עם אדם—נמצאו כל מדותיו הטובות

⁵ מילות ההגיון. מקאלה פי צנאעת אלמנטק. תרגום אבן תבון (Ch. 8, p. 40). PDF available at <http://www.cs.technion.ac.il/~janos/maimonides-treatise-on-logic.pdf>.

⁶ *Mefursamot* refers to a class of generally accepted or conventional judgements which require no proof.

⁷ When a page number appears in this review without citing a specific work, it refers to the *Editor's Introduction* (when the page number is less than 69) or to the *Lectures* (when it is greater than 69).

⁸ Yehudah (Even Shmuel) Kaufman edition, single volume (Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook, 2000) p. 66.

עומדות בטלות, איו צריך להם... והמין הרביעי הוא השלמות האנושי האמתי, והוא—הגיע לאדם המעלות השכליות... (מורה הנבוכים ג:נד)⁹
The first kind, the lowest, in the acquisition of which people spend their days, is perfection as regards property... The second kind... It includes the perfection of the shape, constitution, and form of man's body; the utmost evenness of temperaments, and the proper order and strength of his limbs... The third kind... moral perfection... but even this kind is only a preparation for another perfection, and is not sought for its own sake... Imagine a person being alone, and having no connexion whatever with any other person, all his good moral principles are at rest, they are not required, and give man no perfection whatever... The fourth kind of perfection is the true perfection of man; the possession of the highest intellectual faculties... (Guide)¹⁰

Here Maimonides explicitly states that moral perfection is merely a preparation for intellectual knowledge of God and not an end in itself. Maimonides explains, "...if you suppose a human individual is alone, acting on no one, you will find that all his moral virtues are in vain and without employment and unneeded" (122).

For Soloveitchik these readings of Maimonides—that ethics and the moral act are only relative values and on a lower level than intellectual knowledge—are problematic. They are contrary to the vision of the prophets who placed the ethical act as central to Judaism, and contrary to Halakhah which places the performance of the mitzvah as the central obligation of Jews (123).

To resolve these problems Soloveitchik explains that there are two types of ethical norms (216), which Kaplan labels "pre-theoretical ethics" and "post-theoretical ethics" (54). Pre-theoretical ethics are purely instrumental in nature and indeed are subordinate to intellectual perfection. Post-theoretical ethics, however, which are based on an ethics of *devekut* and *imitatio Dei*, are an end in themselves (54, 186, 188–197). Once man unites with God and imitates His *hesed*, by including others in his own experience, he has achieved a level of ethical perfection that is no longer a relative value but an absolute value (190).

⁹ Ibid. p. 595-596.

¹⁰ M. Friedländer. *The Guide for the Perplexed by Moses Maimonides: Translated from the original Arabic Text* (New York: Dover, 1956), p. 394-395. Originally published in 1904.

Knowledge of Torah

Soloveitchik notes that Maimonides appears to value knowledge of Torah less than scientific interpretation of the universe:

[Modern] historians thought that Maimonides considered knowledge of the Torah inferior to the scientific interpretation of the universe. For knowledge of the Torah is knowledge of the norm. But the norm belongs to the third level of human perfection... the last and highest perfection is the theoretical life, which, according to the historians, is identical to scientific. (209)

There is also a hint of derision toward those who merely study Talmud in Maimonides' famous palace parable in the *Guide* (3:51), which speaks thus of the *talmuddiyyim*:¹¹

והמגיעים אל הבית ההולכים סביבו—הם התלמודיים, אשר הם מאמינים דעות אמתיות מצד הקבלה ולומדים מעשי העבודות, ולא הרגילו בעיון שרשי התורה ולא חקרו כלל לאמת אמונה. (מורה הנבוכים ג:נא)¹²
... [The] jurists who believe in true opinions on the basis of traditional authority and study the laws concerning the practices of divine service, but do not engage in speculation concerning the *shorshei ha-Torah*, the fundamentals of the Torah. (211)

How is it possible that Maimonides placed those with knowledge of Torah (*talmuddiyyim*) on only the second highest level of achievement? Is it possible that the Maimonides who authored the *Mishneh Torah* believed this? Soloveitchik does not believe this is possible:

[It] is hard to reconcile his supposedly viewing knowledge of Torah as an inferior form of knowledge with his writing the *Mishneh Torah* and devoting to it the best part of his life. Maimonides... spent ten years of unremitting toil, day and night working on it... If Maimonides considered knowledge of the Torah being inferior to the scientific knowledge of the cosmos, why did he devote his life to it? (209-10)

To solve this problem Soloveitchik differentiates between two levels of Torah knowledge.

[There] is a two-fold concept of knowledge of the Torah corresponding to the two-stage development of the ethical personality. In

¹¹ The Yosef Kapah translation has *hakhamim*. Soloveitchik did not use the Kapah edition as it did not exist at the time of his lectures. The Hebrew version of the *Guide* used by Soloveitchik was "Hebrew translation of Samuel ibn Tibbon, edited by Yehudah (Even Shmuel) Kaufman" (71).

¹² Kaufman edition, p. 579.

the stage of moral imperativism, study of the Torah is necessary for the performance of the norm. To perform the norm properly one must know its content. (210)

But in the last stage, man reconstructs his knowledge of the Torah in light of his cosmic-ethical experience. The external law imposed from above becomes one with man's personality. The Torah becomes assimilated with him. Study of the Torah had previously meant study of the Torah as an external norm. Now it means assimilating the Torah, merging with the Torah and God's will. Here the Torah, the ethical norm, the cosmos, and God's will merge into one whole. (211)

When one studies Torah merely as a means to perform the *mitzvot*, such knowledge of Torah is on a lower level. When, however, one has studied the cosmic-ethical experience and merged his knowledge with the Torah and God's will, his knowledge of Torah is on the highest level.

Differences between Soloveitchik's *Lectures* and his *And From There You Shall seek*

There is much overlap in the *Lectures* and *And From There You Shall Seek*. Keep in mind that *AFTYSS* was drafted in the 1940s (although not published until 1978) but the *Lectures* were not delivered until 1950-51. Not only were the *Lectures* delivered a few years later but they were also developed for graduate students. The overlapping ideas thus tend to be more fully developed in the *Lectures*. We will also see that there are stark differences in how the ideas are developed in these two works.

In 55n38, Kaplan notes two differences. In Soloveitchik's *Lectures*, his treatment of *imitatio Dei* (*ve-halakhta bi-drakhav*) and cleaving to God (*devekut*) differ in significant ways from his treatment of these same ideas in *AFTYSS*:¹³

1. In *AFTYSS* the development of religious consciousness moves from *imitatio Dei* to cleaving, whereas in the *Lectures* it moves from cleaving to *imitatio Dei*.
2. Soloveitchik's understanding of *imitatio Dei* as found in *AFTYSS* differs from that found in the *Lectures*.

¹³ Kaplan, in his Preface on p. 8, already notes that the two works are different. Thanking Prof. James Diamond, he writes that in "*And From There You Shall Seek* [Soloveitchik] follows... in the footsteps of *Mishneh Torah*, while in these lectures he follows in the path of the *Guide*."

In the *Lectures*, *imitatio* means man copying God's act of *besed*, an abundant overflow of perfection and existence onto others. As Kaplan explains, "in the case of God onto all others, all existence, and in the case of man onto human others."

In *AFTYSS*, *imitatio* implies man copying God's act of creativity.¹⁴

There are also two other differences:¹⁵

1. Cleaving (*devekut*) as presented in *AFTYSS* and in the *Lectures* are very different. In his *Lectures*, cleaving is more nuanced and less absolute.
2. In the *Lectures* cleaving is an ongoing dialectical process while in *AFTYSS* the tension is ultimately resolved. This is significant because in Soloveitchik's personality sketches (as mentioned above) it is specifically the dialectical tensions that make a person great. A one-dimensional person who lives without tensions lives an unredeemed life.

Let me explain. In *AFTYSS*, Soloveitchik describes a three-step process to develop religious consciousness. It is accomplished by ascending three successive layers of transcendence: revelation (chs. 2–5); *imitatio Dei* (chs. 6–10); and cleaving to God (chs. 11–14). At the final level—cleaving to Him—man's repeating cycle of advancing out of love and recoiling out of dread is transformed by man's absolute love of God to an advance with no retreat. The dialectical tension is resolved. In the following *AFTYSS* sources we see both the maximalist, absolute form of cleaving to God, and a resolution to the dialectical tension:

Intellectual yearning to cleave to God appears hand-in-hand with recoil out of dread, in a sort of running back and forth, turning into "madness"—the "madness" of absolute love, ultimate and without successor. It is all clinging and joining, all running toward without running away. (*AFTYSS*, 81)

At first, the yearning of love is joined with the repulsion of fear, but in the end a wave of pure love, ablaze with the fire of longing, surfaces and expels the anxiety and dread. The man of God begins with duality and ends with unity, starts with love mixed with terror and ends with love that transforms the repulsive power into attractive power and the deterrence into yearning. (*AFTYSS*, 91)

¹⁴ In 55n38 Kaplan suggests some explanations for these differences.

¹⁵ While Kaplan does not articulate these two latter differences using the same language presented herein, he does note that in *AFTYSS*, unlike in the *Lectures*, fear does not always follow love, implying that the dialectical love/fear tension is resolved. See Kaplan 59n42 for a fuller discussion of this.

At first, it seems to the individual that extinction lies in wait for him in the hidden mysteries of infinity and that extinction is about to catch up with him where he cannot escape it; his immediate reaction is therefore to recoil from God. The end of the journey for the creature man, however, is joy born of love, and permanent friendship between God and man. (*AFTYSS*, 92)

This thesis still requires clarification, however. What is the epistemological and metaphysical foundation on which is based the possibility of cleaving to God in the sense of running toward Him without running away? (*AFTYSS*, 93)

In the *Lectures*, however, we find that the stage of cleaving to Him is less absolute. Furthermore, even after man has succeeded in cleaving to Him, the dialectical cycle of approach and retreat continues.

For Maimonides fear always accompanies love. One cannot separate man's drive towards God from his desire to flee from Him. Both form a unity. Despite man's inherent desire to be joined to God, he finds it impossible to realize this objective. This is not only because this objective is an infinite one. More relevant, it is impossible because as man gets close to God he begins to move away from Him. Man's consummation of his union with God does not occur not simply because it is inherently impossible, but because man does not want it to occur, does not want to consummate this goal. (58; 230-231)

But love, the consciousness of ontic identification, and fear, the consciousness of ontic separation are the highest pinnacle of the religious experience. But fear always follows upon love. Full participation in the divine order of existence, full unity, is impossible. The creature can never merge with His Creator. (233)

But the fear of God means that it is impossible to pursue to the end the goal of merger with God. (234)

However, the consummation of unity with God is neither desirable nor possible. Indeed, the identification of God and man is blasphemy. (234)

The previous quote is startling. It is almost as if Soloveitchik is disavowing the type of cleaving he advocated in *AFTYSS*. In fact, in the *Lectures*, Soloveitchik states explicitly that man will resolve the love/fear dialectic only in the eschatological end-of-days.

Eschatology, the doctrine of the end of days, tries to solve the metaphysical dilemma posed by this paradoxical experience. When the prophet proclaims, 'On that day, the Lord shall be one and His name

one' (Zech. 14:9), he is declaring that at the end of days, when man will enter into the realm of timelessness, the tension between love and fear will come to an end and thereby the metaphysical dilemma will be solved. But how that will happen is not known, for could it be known, it would be a rational solution to the dilemma, not an eschatological one. (237)

Conclusion

This review contains only a few examples of the issues discussed in the *Editor's Introduction* and in the *Lectures on the Guide*. There are many other gems. For example, Soloveitchik notes that according to Maimonides, the prophetic method is the continuation of the philosophic method (41). Where then does philosophy end and prophecy begin? How is prophecy qualitatively different from philosophy? Soloveitchik doesn't offer the solution of the *Guide* (2:36-37) that a philosopher has perfected only his intellectual faculty while the prophet has perfected both his intellectual and imaginative faculties. For Soloveitchik's solution the reader will need to read the *Lectures* or Kaplan's summary on pp. 41–45.


Keep in mind that the topics we reviewed are a summary of a much fuller discussion in the *Editor's Introduction* and in the *Lectures*. The beauty of Soloveitchik's ideas are often in their details.

As mentioned earlier there is overlap between ideas presented in the *Lectures* and in Soloveitchik's other works, although the ideas are usually more nuanced and developed in the *Lectures*. We should not be surprised, however, when his other works have different or even contradictory details about the same subject. It was Soloveitchik's ideal—especially in his lectures on Talmud—to rethink the topic each time he approached it. He was not content to simply review his notes from the previous time he taught the topic and regurgitate the ideas.¹⁶

In his Preface, Kaplan writes, "Similarly, I took it upon myself to identify—often quite cryptic—references, fill out citations..." We would like to point out that Kaplan appears to be completing the *Guide* citations primarily from the Shlomo Pines edition, which was not published until

¹⁶ See Prof. Haym Soloveitchik's eulogy for his father summarized by Eitan Fiorino at http://www.shamash.org/mail-jewish/rav/rav_hespedim.txt: "The Rav would always prepare anew for a shiur, no matter how many times he had given it before. He would dwell over difficult issues, refusing to look at his own notes from the previous year. [Prof. Haym Soloveitchik] remembered once in shiur, a talmid offered an explanation, to which the Rav replied '*narishkeit*.' The student said, 'but rebbe, you said that last year.' The Rav answered, 'maybe so, but that gives you no right to say it again now'."

1963, rather than from the Friedländer edition which is the text Soloveitchik specifies in his *Course Reading List* on p. 71.¹⁷

Finally, there is one thing the copy-editor could have done to improve the reader's experience. In the *Editor's Introduction* Kaplan frequently quotes from the *Lectures*. Unfortunately, there are no references in the *Editor's Introduction* to the page numbers in the *Lectures*. Having page number references would have allowed the reader to easily review the quoted statements in their context and in greater detail. This is, of course, a minor point and does not detract from the high quality and importance of Kaplan's contribution to the scholarship on Soloveitchik, the Rav. 

¹⁷ For example, in the *Lectures*, p. 121, when quoting *Guide* 1:34, we find "It has been explained or rather demonstrated that the moral virtues are a preparation for the rational virtues." This is almost an exact quote from the Shlomo Pines edition. The Friedländer edition has "It has been proved that moral conduct is a preparation for intellectual progress."

Also, sometimes, as in the quote on p. 211 of *Guide* 3:51, Kaplan uses a modified version of the Shlomo Pines text. The beginning of the quote is similar to the Shlomo Pines edition, while the end "the *shorshei ha-Torah*, the fundamentals of the Torah" is not.

A case can be made for using the Pines translation which, although anachronistic, is superior to that of Friedländer and which is often closer to the ibn Tibbon translation (Kaufman edition) used by Soloveitchik.

* I thank David Guttman for reading an earlier draft of this review and for his insightful comments.