



# David Hartman died

## **Rabbi Prof. David Hartman, One of the Great Jewish Philosophers of His Generation and Founder of the Shalom Hartman Institute, Dies at 81**

Rabbi Professor David Hartman, one of the great Jewish philosophers of his generation and the founder of the Shalom Hartman Institute, passed Feb. 10, 2013, at the age of 81. Rabbi Hartman is considered to be one of the leaders of liberal Orthodoxy, and his philosophy influenced tens of thousands of Jews in Israel and around the world.

Rabbi Hartman founded the Shalom Hartman Institute in Jerusalem in 1976, in memory of his father. The Institute has since become a center that has established a pluralistic Jewish worldview which responds to the challenges facing contemporary Judaism. Over the course of four decades, Rabbi Hartman taught and mentored generations of students who are today at the forefront of Jewish education and thought in Israel and around the world.

A man of action, Rabbi Hartman knew that the way to make change was through pluralistic study programs and educational initiatives in which asking challenging questions of the tradition was not only permitted but encouraged. The Hartman Institute has created a pluralistic Jewish conversation that is critical and relevant to modern life. The Institute's Israel-based programs for educators and IDF officers form the cornerstone for bringing together different sectors in Israel. The Shalom Hartman Institute of North America enriches the resources, vision and commitment of leaders and change agents who will shape the future of Jewish life in North America and set the agendas of its educational, religious, and community institutions.

Rabbi Hartman was born in Brooklyn in 1931 to an ultra-Orthodox family. He was raised and educated at the Lithuanian Lakewood yeshiva, which was considered the most important and prestigious yeshiva for North American Jews. In his adolescence, he was one of the most prominent students of Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik, who ordained him as a rabbi. Rabbi Hartman completed his doctorate in philosophy at McGill University in Montreal, Canada.

After serving as a pulpit rabbi at a number of important congregations in North America, Rabbi Hartman, inspired by the Six Day War, made aliya with his wife and children. For more than two decades, Rabbi Hartman served as a professor of Jewish Thought at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. From 1977-1984 he was an advisor to Minister of Education Zevulun Hammer and acted as an advisor to many prime ministers on the issues of religious pluralism in Israel and the relationship between Israel and the Diaspora.

David Hartman published dozens of articles and books, among them Maimonides: Torah and Philosophic Quest, A Living Covenant: The Innovative Spirit in Traditional Judaism, A Heart of Many Rooms: Celebrating the Many Voices Within Judaism, Israelis and the Jewish Tradition: An Ancient People Debating Its Future, and The God Who Hates Lies, many of which were also published in Hebrew.

His thought dealt with the intersection of the traditions of the past and the challenges of the

present. At its foundation stands a request for dialogue with the tradition on one hand and with modern streams of thought on the other.

Rabbi Hartman earned international recognition for his exceptional contributions to renewing the face of the Jewish world. Awards include the Avi Chai Prize (2000), Guardian of Jerusalem Prize (2001), Samuel Rothberg Prize for Jewish Education from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (2004), Marc and Henia z"l Liebhaber Prize for Religious Tolerance (2012), and honorary doctorates from Yale University, Hebrew Union College, and the Weizmann Institute.

10.02.2013, *by Shalom Hartman Institute*

For further articles about David Hartman and essays and appreciations of David Hartman see:  
[Shalom Hartman Institute](#)