

## Offender Rehabilitation: The Middle Way of Maimonides to Mental and Social Health

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**Abstract :** Traditional religious and spiritual texts offer a surprising wealth of relevant theoretical and practical knowledge about human behavior. This wellspring may contribute significantly to expanding our current body of knowledge in the social sciences and criminology in particular. In Jewish religious texts, specifically by Maimonides, we can find profound analyses of human traits and guidelines for a normative way of life. Among other things, modern criminological literature attempts to link certain character traits and divergent behaviors. Using the hermeneutic phenomenological approach, we analyzed the writings of Maimonides, mainly Laws of Human Dispositions, in order to understand Moses ben Maimon's (1138-1204) view of character traits. The analysis yielded four themes: (1) Human personality between nature and nurture; (2) The complexity of human personality, imbalance and criminality; (3) Extremism as a way to achieve balance; and (4) The Middle Way, flexibility and common sense. These themes can serve therapeutic purposes, as well as inform a rehabilitation model. Grounded in a theoretical rationale about the nature of humans, this model is designed to direct individuals to balance their traits by self-reflection and constant practice of the Middle Way. The proposal we will present is that implementing this model may promote normative behavior and thus contribute to rehabilitating offenders.

**Keywords :** rehabilitation, traits, offenders, maimonides, middle way

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