



The Limits of Orthodox Theology: Maimonides' Thirteen Principles Reappraised (Littman Library of Jewish Civilization)

Marc B. Shapiro

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It is commonly asserted that Maimonides' famous Thirteen Principles are the last word in Orthodox Jewish theology. This is a very popular notion, and is often repeated by scholars from all camps in Judaism. Yet such a position ignores the long history of Jewish theology in which Maimonides' principles have been subject to great dispute. Now available in paperback, this book begins with a discussion of the significance of the principles and illustrates how they assumed such a central place in traditional Judaism. Each of the principles is then considered in turn - the reasons underlying Maimonides' formulation are expounded and the disputes that have arisen concerning them are discussed in detail. The authoritative analysis makes it quite clear that the notion that Maimonides' principles are the last word in traditional Jewish theology is a misconception, and that even Maimonides himself was not fully convinced of every aspect of his formulation. Although structured around Maimonides' principles, the book can also be seen as an encyclopedia of traditional Jewish thought concerning the central issues of Jewish theology. The diversity of opinion in Jewish tradition on such issues as God, Creation, and the Revelation of the Torah are sure to surprise readers. 2004 National Jewish Book Award Finalist.

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