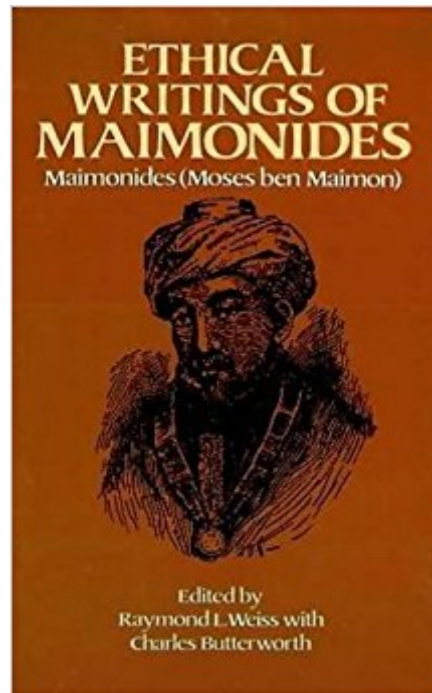




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Ethical Writings Of Maimonides



Synopsis

Philosopher, physician, and master of rabbinical literature, Moses ben Maimon (1135-1204) strove to reconcile biblical revelation with medieval Aristotelianism. His writings, especially the celebrated *Guide for the Perplexed*, exercised considerable influence on both Jewish and Christian scholasticism and brought him lasting renown as one of the greatest medieval thinkers. This volume contains his most significant ethical works, newly translated from the original sources by Professors Raymond L. Weiss and Charles E. Butterworth, well-known Maimonides scholars. Previous translations have often been inadequate – either because they were not based on the best possible texts or from a lack of precision. That deficiency has been remedied in this text; the translations are based on the latest scholarship and have been made with a view toward maximum accuracy and readability. Moreover, the long "Letter to Joseph" has been translated into English for the first time. This edition includes the following selections: I. Laws Concerning Character Traits (complete) II. Eight Chapters (complete) III. On the Management of Health IV. Letter to Joseph V. *Guide of the Perplexed* VII. The Days of the Messiah Taken as a whole, this collection presents a comprehensive and revealing overview of Maimonides' thought regarding the relationship of revelation and reason in the sphere of ethics. Here are his teachings concerning "natural law," secular versus religious authority, the goals of moral conduct, diseases of the soul, the application of logic to ethical matters, and the messianic era. Throughout, the great sage is concerned to reconcile the apparent divergence between biblical teachings and Greek philosophy.

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Customer Reviews

Text: English, Arabic, Hebrew (translation)

Particularly important in English translations of Maimonides' writings is that translations be made from accurate editions. As the editors write of the selections of Maimonides' works included in Ethical Writings of Maimonides, "[a]lmost all the translations of these works already available in English are inadequate because they either are not precise enough or are not based upon the best possible texts" (p. vii). Maimonides' Judeo-Arabic writings were translated to Hebrew hundreds of years ago by various translators who did not do his writings justice, even in his lifetime (see, e.g., Rabbi Qafih's introduction [Hebrew] to his edition of Maimonides' Moreh: (...)). It is an indication of excellence that the scholars, Charles Butterworth and Raymond Weiss, used the editions of Rabbi Yoseph Kafih available to them (when this was published in 1975, which preclude Kafih's edition of Mishneh Torah, based on Yemenite manuscripts, published about 10 years later and onward in two-dozen volumes), as they indicate in "Notes on the Translations" (p. ix-x). From what I've seen so far Butterworth and Weiss have done an impressive job. Though I don't know Judeo-Arabic, something which tells me that Butterworth & Weiss were more than amateurs is that in endnote 5, p. 96, they note that a particular translation was with reading the Judeo-Arabic word in question per "the Arabic Introduction in Gorfinkle and with Ibn Tibbon" instead of Kafih's spelling of the Judeo-Arabic word. Though it is supposedly quite strange to "demote" Kafih's reading in favor of Ibn Tibbon, what happened in this instance was that a spelling misprint occurred in Kafih's original printing. About two decades later, in a later printing of Avot (published in a single volume by Makhon Mishnat HaRambam - 1993, with vowels added),

אֵלֶּה הָיוּ אֲשֶׁר עָמְדוּ לְפָנַי בְּעִתִּי וְכֹחַ יָדִי מִן הָעָם
אֵלֶּה הָיוּ אֲשֶׁר עָמְדוּ לְפָנַי בְּעִתִּי וְכֹחַ יָדִי מִן הָעָם
אֵלֶּה הָיוּ אֲשֶׁר עָמְדוּ לְפָנַי בְּעִתִּי וְכֹחַ יָדִי מִן הָעָם (p. 3), a correction that Butterworth & Weiss perceived 2 decades before the correction to the Judeo-Arabic text would be made.

Some cons:-
Endnotes. Who likes page flipping; give us footnotes! Seriously, endnotes have got to go the way of the dodo bird.- The latest reprint (2016 and with the green cover) still states "This Dover edition, first published in 1983, is an unabridged and unaltered republication of the edition published by New York University Press in 1975." However, the 2016 reprint that I got ("Manufactured in the United States by RR Donnelley") is a reprint of poor quality, with slight "blurring" of the reprinted text resulting in non-crystal-clear and crisp text as appeared in earlier printings (like one expects from any book). In other words: 2016 Donnelley reprint - For shame. Can any other book owners report what year their reprints are and whether its text is crisp like any other book?

Good thoughtful selection. Should lead to a desire for further study of Maimonides. Leo Strauss is a good guide and example.

This is a great read for any Jew who is looking to make positive changes in their character development in today's world..

very good

Between Moses and Moses there is no one like Moses (ibn Maymun, that is).

The man is probably the father of understanding disease as disease with many revelations of spirit and character acting in unison with the human condition

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