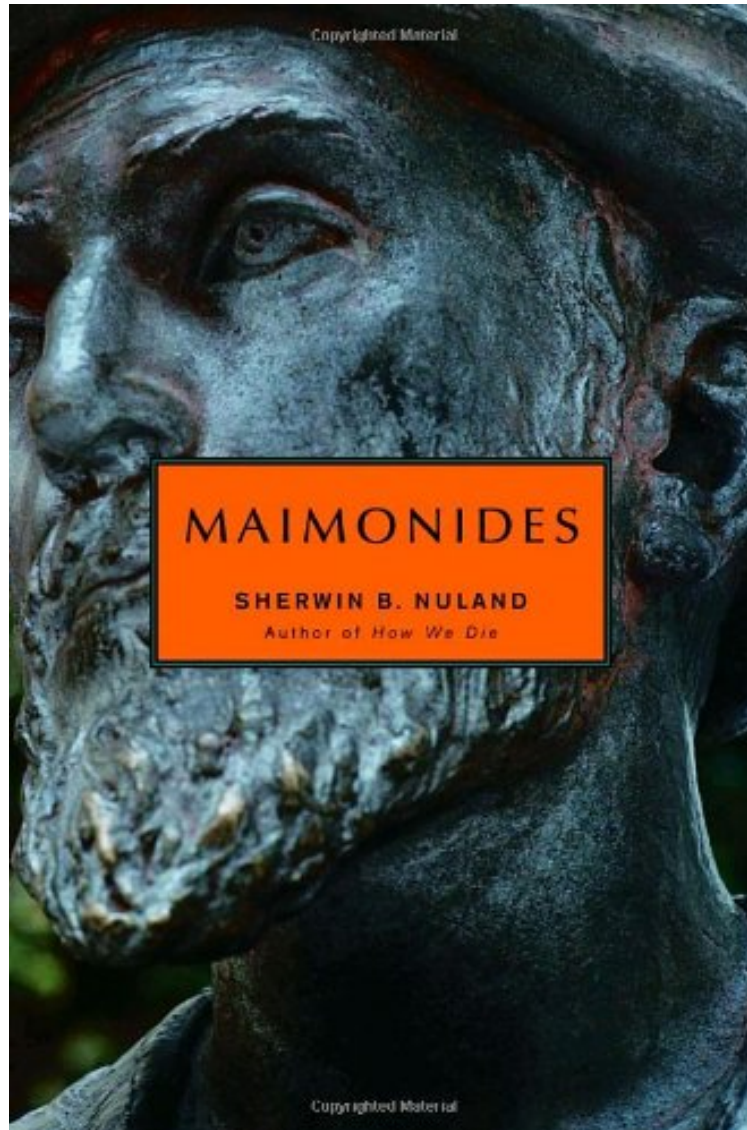


(Ebook free) Maimonides (Jewish Encounters)

## Maimonides (Jewish Encounters)

*Sherwin B. Nuland*

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**Sherwin B. Nuland : Maimonides (Jewish Encounters)** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Maimonides (Jewish Encounters):

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. A great guide to Dr. Rambam By Michael Lewyn The most interesting parts of this book focus on Maimonides the physician (as opposed to Maimonides the religious leader, where Nuland's discussion is a bit too sparse here and there). Maimonides (known to most Jews as Rambam) did not develop new medical knowledge, but wrote ten books synthesizing existing medical knowledge in a clear and concise

way, and even occasionally criticizing the Greco-Roman masters whose works dominated medieval medicine. By the low standards of the Middle Ages, this passed for genius. Nuland links Rambam's religious and medical careers by pointing out that in both areas, Rambam focused heavily on codifying existing knowledge in ways that would be easy for the public to use. Nuland also engages in interesting speculation about a variety of other issues, including: 1. Why were Jews so likely to be doctors in the Middle Ages? Nuland asserts that (a) Christians were uninterested in medicine because they were more ascetic, (b) because priests could not take employment as doctors, the Christian talent pool for medicine was artificially diminished and (c) because Jews' wealth could easily be taken away, Jews had a strong incentive to seek portable skills (as opposed to investing in fixed assets such as land). 2. Why was Rambam so uninterested in accommodating or discussing competing religious views? Nuland speculates that because of Judaism's dire condition in those days (beset in persecution in some places and the temptation of assimilation into Islam in more tolerant places) Rambam may have felt the need to "circle the wagons" by encouraging as much uniformity as possible. 3. Why did Rambam (who generally opposed Messianic speculation) suggest in his letter to Yemenite Jews that prophecy might return in 1216? Nuland suggests that Rambam may have been trying to defang Messianic fever by setting a date so far in advance that he could not be disproven during his lifetime.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Well written, easily read, useful summary of Maimonides. lifeBy pengeek Five stars because fairly short, readable, and informative about a Giant figure of early medicine who contributed much to the ethics and personal commitment to healing his community's spiritual and physical malaise in an inspiring way. I knew little of him but his name until reading this book. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Intriguing and informative By Trudie Barreras All of Dr. Nuland's books are well worth reading. "Maimonides" is different from all of the other books I've read by him, in that it was narrative, and did not deal with a modern topic. However, it was extremely intriguing and informative. It gave a fascinating insight into both the cultural circumstances of that historical period, as well as into the personality and genius of a unique person. I believe that the author's special gift is to take complex and confusing information and synthesize it into a form which is not only meaningful but fun to read. I am reading Nuland's books more for inspiration and enjoyment than for anything else, and I have been extremely blessed by all of them.

Part of the Jewish Encounter series Moses Maimonides was a Renaissance man before there was a Renaissance: a great physician who served a sultan, a dazzling Torah scholar, a community leader, a daring philosopher whose greatest work *The Guide for the Perplexed* attempted to reconcile scientific knowledge with faith in God. He was a Jew living in a Muslim world, a rationalist living in a time of superstition. Eight hundred years after his death, his notions about God, faith, the afterlife, and the Messiah still stir debate; his life as a physician still inspires; and the enigmas of his character still fascinate.

Sherwin B. Nuland best-selling author of *How We Die* focuses his surgeon's eye and writer's pen on this greatest of rabbis, most intriguing of Jewish philosophers, and most honored of Jewish doctors. He gives us a portrait of Maimonides that makes his life, his times, and his thought accessible to the general reader as they have never been before.

From Publishers Weekly Maimonides, one of the preeminent personalities of medieval Jewish history, was a jurist, philosopher, expert in Jewish law, physician at the court of Saladin and a respected and dedicated communal leader. Given all that, it's difficult to understand the decision to present Maimonides's legacy primarily through the lens of his work as a physician. The 12th century was a time of stagnation in the history of medicine, and the author himself concedes that Maimonides contributed very little that was new or innovative to the field. By contrast, his jurisprudential magnum opus, the *Mishne Torah*, constituted a groundbreaking work in its own day and continues to be authoritative almost a millennium later. Although Nuland acknowledges this in a chapter on Maimonides's religious scholarship, it is dwarfed by the overarching concern with medicine which seems the primary interest of Nuland, a clinical professor of surgery at Yale. The author does a serviceable job of stitching together this slight, popular biography of the larger-than-life Maimonides, but his writing is marred by an overwrought prologue and some glib generalizations. (Oct.) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

From Booklist Reputedly the greatest figure in Judaism after his namesake, Moses Maimonides (1138 [not, as long supposed, 1135]-1204) was also a great physician. That second identity (he has a third as a philosopher, though no one now comprehends his *Guide for the Perplexed*, and a fourth as a judge) furnishes the surgeon--author of the National Book Award-winning *How We Die* (1994) entree into the life of this medieval intellectual titan. Like disproportionately many Jewish sons, Maimonides became a doctor in obedience, Nuland thinks, to the Lord's injunction to his people to choose life. In chapters centered on Maimonides' travels, three great books, and medical papers, Nuland argues that that obedience shows in more than Maimonides' medical career. Maimonides was devoted to sustaining the Jews as a people, and out of that, to human life generally. If he was otherwise a physician of his time, bound by the authority of Hippocrates and Galen, he believed that reason and observation should also inform prescription. A little gem of intellectual biography. Ray Olson Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved "Will educate and inspire not only people of faith, but all who seek to lead a life of significance and meaning."--Dr. Jerome Groopman,

author of *The Anatomy of Hope*"Nuland writes sympathetically, one Jewish doctor considering this most extraordinary of Jewish doctors . . . His book is a guide for those perplexed by Maimonides, as well as those ignorant of him. [It is] a deeply satisfying and humane introduction to the greatest of Jewish thinkers."--The New York Times Book From the Trade Paperback edition.