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978-1-107-00824-3 - Rabbi Meir of Rothenburg and the Foundation of Jewish Political Thought

Joseph Isaac Lifshitz

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## Rabbi Meir of Rothenburg and the Foundation of Jewish Political Thought

This book is a scholarly examination of the political thought of Rabbi Meir (Maharam) of Rothenburg, the most important thirteenth-century German Rabbi who was associated with the Pietist movement of the period. From the Maharam's *responsa* on community matters, a coherent political thought emerges that exercised nearly unprecedented influence on European Jewish communities up to the Jewish Emancipation. Rabbi Meir's extremely sophisticated attempt to balance the demands of the community against those of the individual was facilitated by a characteristic three-tiered structure to his political thought: concrete legal rules supported by value-laden legal principles built upon his general religious ideology. Through a systematic analysis of the Maharam's political thought, Joseph Isaac Lifshitz offers an original contribution to Jewish studies, political theory, and the study of legal philosophy. By considering the legal and theological underpinnings of one of medieval Jewry's most influential figures, this book also makes a contribution to the history of ideas in the medieval period.

JOSEPH ISAAC LIFSHITZ is a senior lecturer at the Shalem College and a fellow of the Goldstein-Goren Diaspora Research Center at Tel Aviv University. He also teaches Talmud at R' Yitzchak Yechiel Yeshiva in Jerusalem. His research areas include Jewish philosophy, Talmud, Jewish law, Jewish history, and political theory. He has published widely on the law and philosophy of the Sabbath and on Jewish economic thought.

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JOSEPH ISAAC LIFSHITZ

*Shalem College, Jerusalem*



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