

MAIMONIDES LECTURE ON SCEPTICISM

NOVEMBER 22, 2018
18:00

CAN WE BE ANCIENT SCEPTICS?

ism might be a viable outlook today. The answer depends in part on what The lecture will consider how far Pyrrhonism might be a viable outlook today. The answer depends in part on what range of issues suspension of judgment might plausibly be generated in today's intellectual climate. On many ethical, religious, and philosophical issues, the prospects seem just as good as in Sextus' day. Concerning natural science, the matter is more complicated. Here there are many issues where we know too much for suspension of judgment to be realistic, and where science has infiltrated ordinary life. On the other hand, suspension of judgment is possible on some issues, such as climate change, where there is a vocal popular opinion about a scientific question. In addition, it is possible on philosophical questions concerning the status of science itself, questions that did not occur to the ancients. A further issue is the *value* of suspension of judgment. Here Sextus seems overly ambitious, because of exaggerated claims about *ataraxia* as its outcome. Whether suspension of judgment would yield *ataraxia* depends on people's character and circumstances, regardless of the perceived importance of the topic. What remains is a worthwhile recommendation to be open-minded.

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VENUE

MAIMONIDES CENTRE FOR ADVANCED STUDIES

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The event is open to the public,
with advance registration via e-mail:
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