

interpretation or citation of his work. The Maimonidean controversy is both very specifically at the heart of Jewish culture and, at the same time, part or a set of problems central to Judaism, Islam, and Christianity alike.

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Dov Schwartz (2nd ed.)]

MAIMONIDES, MOSES (**Moses ben Maimon**; known in rabbinical literature as “**Rambam**”; from the acronym **Rabbi Moses Ben Maimon**; 1135–1204), rabbinic authority, codifier, philosopher, and royal physician.

BIOGRAPHY

The most illustrious figure in Judaism in the post-talmudic era, and one of the greatest of all time, Maimonides was born in Cordoba, Spain, to his father *Maimon, *dayyan* of Cordoba and himself a renowned scholar and pupil of Joseph *ibn Migash. He continues his genealogy, “the son of the learned Joseph, son of Isaac the *dayyan*, son of Joseph the *dayyan*, son of Obadiah the *dayyan*, son of the rabbi Solomon, son of Obadiah” (end of commentary to Mishnah); traditions extend the genealogy to R. Judah ha-Nasi. Posterity even recorded the day and hour and even minute of his birth, “On the eve of Passover (the 14th of Nisan) which was a Sabbath, an hour and a third after midday, in the year 4895 (1135) of the Creation” (*Sefer Yuhasin*). Maimonides’ grandson David gives the same

day and year without the hour (at the beginning of his commentary to tractate *Rosh Ha-Shanah*).

As a result of the fall of Cordoba to the *Almohads in May or June, 1148, when Moses had just reached his 13th birthday, and the consequent religious persecution, Maimon was obliged to leave Cordoba with his family and all trace of them is lost for the next eight or nine years, which they spent wandering from place to place in Spain (and possibly Provence) until in 1160 they settled in Fez. Yet it was during those years of wandering, which Maimonides himself describes as a period “while my mind was troubled, and amid divinely ordained exiles, on journeys by land and tossed on the tempests of the sea” (end of commentary to Mishnah) that he laid the strong foundations of his vast and varied learning and even began his literary work. Not only did he begin the draft of the *Strāj*, his important commentary on the Mishnah, in 1158, but in that same year, at the request of a friend, he wrote a short treatise on the Jewish calendar (*Ma’amar ha-Ibbur*) and one on logic (*Millot Higgayon*) and had completed writing notes for a commentary on a number of tractates of the Babylonian Talmud, and a work whose aim was to extract the *halakhah* from the Jerusalem Talmud (see below Maimonides as halakhist). According to Muslim authorities the family became formally converted to Islam somewhere in the period between 1150 and 1160. But Saadia ibn Danan (Z. Edelman (ed.), *Hemdah Genuzah* (1856), 16a) relates that the Muslims maintain the same about many Jewish scholars, among them Dunash ibn Tamim, Hasdai b. Hasdai, and others. In any case in the year 1160 Maimon and his sons, Moses and David, and a daughter, were in Fez. In his old age ‘Abd al-Mu’min, the Almohad ruler, somewhat changed his attitude to the Jews, becoming more moderate toward those who were living in the central, Moroccan, part of his realm. It was probably on account of this that in 1159 or early in 1160 Maimon deemed it worthwhile to emigrate with his family to Morocco and settle in Fez. Living in Fez at that time was R. Judah ha-Kohen ibn Susan, whose fame for learning and piety had spread to Spain, and Maimonides, then 25, studied under him. Many Jews had outwardly adopted Islam and their consciences were troubling them, and this prompted Maimon to write his *Iggeret ha-Neḥamah* (“Letter of Consolation”) assuring them that he who says his prayers even in their shortest form and who does good works remains a Jew (*Hemdah Genuzah*, pp. LXXIV–LXXXII). Meantime his son worked at his commentary on the Mishnah and also continued his general studies, particularly medicine; in his medical works he frequently refers to the knowledge and experience he gained among the Muslims in North Africa (see Maimonides as physician). Here also he wrote his *Iggeret ha-Shemad* (“Letter on Forced Conversion”) also called *Iggeret Kiddush ha-Shem* (“Letter of the Sanctification of the Divine Name”). These letters of father and son, as well as Maimonides’ utterances after leaving Morocco, do not point to outrages and bloody persecutions. Although Maimonides in the opening lines of the *Iggeret ha-Shemad* most strongly deprecates the condemnation of the forced converts by “the self-styled sage

who has never experienced what so many Jewish communities experienced in the way of persecution,” his conclusion is that a Jew must leave the country where he is forced to transgress the divine law: “He should not remain in the realm of that king; he should sit in his house until he emigrates ...” And once more, with greater insistence: “He should on no account remain in a place of forced conversion; whoever remains in such a place desecrates the Divine Name and is nearly as bad as a willful sinner; as for those who beguile themselves, saying that they will remain until the Messiah comes to the Maghreb and leads them to Jerusalem, I do not know how he is to cleanse them of the stigma of conversion” (*Iggeret ha-Shemad*, in: Z. Edelman (ed.), *Hemdah Genuzah*, 11b–12a).

Maimon and his sons acted in accordance with this advice, as certainly did many others. Maimonides’ departure from the country of the Almohads is commonly assumed to have taken place in 1165; according to Saadiah ibn Danan (*Seder ha-Dorot*, in: *Hemdah Genuzah*, 30b.), it was promoted by the martyrdom of Judah ibn Susan, who had been called upon to forsake his religion and had preferred death to apostasy. R. Maimon and his family escaped from Fez, and a month later they landed at Acre. The day of his departure as well as that on which the ship was saved from a tempest were instituted as a family fast enjoined on his descendants, and that of his arrival in Erez Israel as a festival (E. Azikri (Azcari), *Sefer Haredim*; Maim. Comm. to *Rosh Ha-Shanah*, ed. Brill, end).

The family remained in Acre for some five months, striking up an intimate friendship there with the *dayyan* Japheth b. Ali. Together with him they made a tour of the Holy Land, visiting Jerusalem where Maimonides states, “I entered the [site of the] Great and Holy House and prayed there on Thursday the 6th day of Marḥeshvan.” Three days later they paid a visit to the Cave of Machpelah in Hebron for the same purpose. Maimonides also appointed both these days as family festivals. The family then left Erez Israel and sailed for Egypt. After a short stay at Alexandria they moved to Cairo and took up residence in Fostat, the Old City of Cairo.

Maimon died at this time either in Erez Israel or in Egypt. It has been suggested that the reason for the choice of Alexandria was the existence at that time “outside the town” of “the academy of Aristotle, the teacher of Alexander” to which “people from the whole world came in order to study the wisdom of Aristotle the philosopher” mentioned by Benjamin of Tudela (ed. by M.N. Adler (1907), 75). It is not certain what prompted the move to Cairo. That Maimonides’ influence was decisive in virtually destroying the hitherto dominating influence of the Karaites who were more numerous and wealthy than the Rabbanites in Cairo is beyond doubt (see below) and in the 17th century Jacob Faraji, a *dayyan* in Egypt, states that it was this challenge which impelled Maimonides to move to Cairo (see Azulai, letter M150).

For eight years Maimonides lived a life free from care. Supported by his brother David who dealt in precious stones, he was able to devote himself entirely to preparing his works for publication and to his onerous but honorary work as both

religious and lay leader of the community. His *Sirāj*, the commentary to the Mishnah, was completed in 1168. The following year he suffered a crushing blow. His brother David drowned in the Indian Ocean while on a business trip, leaving a wife and two children, and with him were lost not only the family fortune but moneys belonging to others. Maimonides took the blow badly. For a full year he lay almost prostrate, and then he had to seek a means of livelihood. Rejecting the thought of earning a livelihood from Torah (see his commentary on *Avot* 5:4, and especially his letter to Joseph ibn Sham’un in 1191, “It is better for you to earn a drachma as a weaver, or tailor, or carpenter than to be dependent on the license of the exilarch [to accept a paid position as a rabbi]”; F. Kobler (ed.), *Letters of Jews Through the Ages*, 1 (1952), 207) and he decided to make the medical profession his livelihood.

Fame in his calling did not come to him at once. It was only after 1185 when he was appointed one of the physicians to al-Faḍil, who had been appointed vizier by Saladin and was virtual ruler of Egypt after Saladin’s departure from that country in 1174, that his fame began to spread. It gave rise to a legend that Richard the Lionhearted “the King of the Franks in Ascalon” sought his services as his private physician. About 1177 he was recognized as the official head of the Fostat community. Ibn Danan says of him, “Rabbenu Moshe [b. Maimon] became very great in wisdom, learning, and rank.” In the so-called *Megillat Zuta* he is called “the light of east and west and unique master and marvel of the generation.”

These were the most fruitful and busy years of his life. His first wife had died young and in Egypt he remarried, taking as his wife the sister of Ibn Almali, one of the royal secretaries, who himself married Maimonides’ only sister. To them was born their only son Abraham to whose education he lovingly devoted himself, and an added solace was his enthusiastic disciple Joseph ibn Sham’un (not Ibn Akin, as often stated), whom he loved as a son, and for whom he wrote, and sent chapter by chapter, his *Guide of the Perplexed*. It was during those years, busy as he was with the heavy burden of his practice and occupied with the affairs of the community, writing his extensive correspondence to every part of the Jewish world (apart from the Franco-German area), that he wrote the two monumental works upon which his fame chiefly rests, the *Mishneh Torah* (compiled 1180) and the *Guide* (1190; according to Z. Diesendruck, in: HUCA, 12–13 (1937–38), 461–97, in 1185), as well as his *Iggeret Teiman* and his *Ma’amar Tehiyyat ha-Metim*.

The following passage in the letter to the translator of the *Guide*, Samuel b. Judah ibn *Tibbon, in which he describes his multifarious cares and duties, with the aim of dissuading Ibn Tibbon from coming to visit him, has often been quoted:

I dwell at Miṣr [Fostat] and the sultan resides at al-Qāhira [Cairo]; these two places are two Sabbath days’ journey distant from each other. My duties to the sultan are very heavy. I am obliged to visit him every day, early in the morning; and when he or any of his children, or any of the inmates of his harem, are indisposed, I dare not quit al-Qāhira, but must stay during

the greater part of the day in the palace. It also frequently happens that one or two royal officers fall sick, and I must attend to their healing. Hence, as a rule, I repair to al-Qāhira very early in the day, and even if nothing unusual happens, I do not return to Miṣr until the afternoon. Then I am almost dying with hunger ... I find the antechambers filled with people, both Jews and gentiles, nobles and common people, judges and bailiffs, friends and foes – a mixed multitude who await the time of my return.

I dismount from my animal, wash my hands, go forth to my patients, and entreat them to bear with me while I partake of some slight refreshment, the only meal I take in the twenty-four hours. Then I go forth to attend to my patients, and write prescriptions and directions for their various ailments. Patients go in and out until nightfall, and sometimes even, I solemnly assure you, until two hours or more in the night. I converse with and prescribe for them while lying down from sheer fatigue; and when night falls, I am so exhausted that I can scarcely speak.

In consequence of this, no Israelite can have any private interview with me, except on the Sabbath. On that day the whole congregation, or at least the majority of the members, come to me after the morning service, when I instruct them as to their proceedings during the whole week; we study together a little until noon, when they depart. Some of them return, and read with me after the afternoon service until evening prayers. In this manner I spend that day.

The two major works will be described below, but something must be said of the two letters. The Arab ruler in Yemen, who, unlike the sultans in Egypt who were Sunnites, belonged to the sectarian Shi'ites, instituted a religious persecution, giving the Jews the choice of conversion to Islam or death. Not only did many succumb, but there arose among those Jews a pseudo-Messiah, or a forerunner of the Messiah who, seeing in these events the darkness before the dawn, preached the imminent advent of the Messianic Age. In despair the Jews of Yemen turned to Maimonides, who probably in 1172 answered their request with the *Iggeret Teiman (al-Risāla al-Yamaniyya)*. It was addressed to R. *Jacob b. Nethanel al-Fayyumi, with a request that copies be sent to every community in Yemen. Deliberately couched in simple terms, "that men, women, and children could read it easily," he pointed out that the subtle attack of Christianity and Islam which preached a new revelation was more dangerous than the sword and than the attractions of Hellenism. As for the pseudo-Messiah, he was unbalanced and he was to be rejected. These trials were sent to prove the Jews.

The effect of the letter was tremendous. In gratitude for the message of hope, combined with the fact that Maimonides also used his influence at court to obtain a lessening of the heavy burden of taxation on the Jews of Yemen, the Jews of Yemen introduced into the **Kaddish* a prayer for "the life of our teacher Moses b. Maimon" (Letter of Nahmanides to the rabbis of France, in: *Kitvei Ramban*, ed. by C.B. Chavel (1963), 341).

This remarkable tribute, usually reserved for the exilarch, has an indirect connection with the third of his public (as distinct from his private) letters, the *Ma'amar Tehiyyat ha-Metim*

("On Resurrection"; 1191). Maimonides wrote the letter with the greatest reluctance. It was the direct result of his *Mishneh Torah* and constituted his reply to the accusation leveled against him that in this work he denied, or did not mention, the doctrine of personal resurrection which was a fundamental principle of faith among the Jews of his time. An objective study of his work does lend a certain basis to the allegation. It is true, as he indignantly protests, that he included this doctrine as the last of his famous Thirteen Principles of Judaism, but in his *Mishneh Torah* the undoubted emphasis is on the immortality of the soul and not on individual bodily resurrection. That the allegation was not based upon mere malice or envy of his work is sufficiently proved by the fact that anxious queries were addressed to him from the countries in which he was most fervently admired, Yemen and Provence, and Maimonides answered them. Abraham b. David of Posquières wrote: "The words of this man seem to me to be very near to him who says there is no resurrection of the body, but only of the soul. By my life, this is not the view of the sages" (Comm. to Yad, Teshuvah 8:2). Some Jews from Yemen however, unsatisfied, wrote to *Samuel b. Ali the powerful and learned *Gaon* in Baghdad who sent a reply, which although couched in terms of respect to Maimonides, vigorously denounced his views. It would appear that the vehemence of this reply was connected with Samuel's desire to assert his authority as *gaon* over Egypt, which he thought was being usurped by Maimonides. On the other hand, Maimonides held the exilarch Samuel (of Josiah b. Zakkai's line), the successor of the exilarch Daniel b. Hiṣdai, in higher esteem than the *gaon* Samuel b. Ali. Thus the relations between Maimonides and the *gaon* remained strained, although there was never open hostility. Joseph ibn Sham'un, in Baghdad, who had also queried Maimonides' views on resurrection, sent a copy of Samuel's reply to Maimonides and with great reluctance Maimonides felt himself compelled to write his *Ma'amar Tehiyyat ha-Metim* in which he asserted and confirmed his belief in the doctrine.

Maimonides was active as head of the community. He took vigorous steps to deal with the Karaites, and as a result brought about the supremacy of the Rabbanites in Cairo. On the one hand he emphatically maintained that they were to be regarded as Jews, with all the attendant privileges. They might be visited, their dead buried, and their children circumcised, their wine permitted; they were however not to be included in a religious quorum (Resp. ed. Blau, 449). Only when they flouted rabbinic Judaism was a barrier to be maintained. One was particularly to avoid visiting them on their festivals which did not coincide with the dates fixed by the rabbinic calendar. One of the inroads which they had caused in orthodox observance was with regard to ritual immersion for the **niddah*. Their view that an ordinary bath was sufficient had been widely adopted among the Rabbanites. Maimonides succeeded in restoring rabbinic practice in this matter, but generally his policy toward the Karaites was more lenient in his later years, and was continued by his son Abraham. (For an

exhaustive treatment of this subject see C. Tchernowitz, *Toledot ha-Posekim* (1946), 197–208.)

Maimonides made various changes in liturgical custom, the most radical of which was the abolition of the repetition of the **Amidah* in the interests of decorum. With the completion of the *Guide*, Maimonides' literary work, apart from his extensive correspondence, came to an end. In failing health he nevertheless continued his work as head of the Jewish community and as court physician. (It is doubtful whether he actually held the appointment of *nagid* as is usually stated; see M.D. Rabinowitz, Introduction to *Ma'amar Tehiyat ha-Metim in Iggerot ha-Rambam*, 220–7.)

It was during this period however that he engaged in his correspondence with the scholars of Provence in general and with Jonathan of Lunel in particular. In some instances the border line between responsum and letter is not clearly defined (e.g., his letter to Obadiah the Proselyte, see below), but, as Kobler comments, the letters of Maimonides mark an epoch in letter writing. He is the first Jewish letter writer whose correspondence has been largely preserved. Vigorous and essentially personal, his letters found their way to the mind and heart of his correspondents, and he varied his style to suit them. But above all they reveal his whole personality, which is different from what might be expected from his *Mishneh Torah* and the *Guide*. The picture of an almost austere and aloof intellectual above human passions and emotions derived from there is completely dispelled.

Maimonides died on December 13, 1204. There were almost universal expressions of grief. Public mourning was ordained in all parts of the Jewish world. In Fostat mourning was ordained for three days and in Jerusalem a public fast and the Scriptural readings instituted concluded with the verse "the glory is departed from Israel, for the Ark of the Lord is taken" (1 Sam. 4:22). His remains were taken to Tiberias for burial, and his grave is still an object of pilgrimage.

Influence

The influence of Maimonides on the future development of Judaism is incalculable. No spiritual leader of the Jewish people in the post-talmudic period has exercised such an influence both in his own and subsequent generations. Despite the vehement opposition which greeted his philosophical views the breach was healed (see **Maimonidean Controversy*). It is significant that when Solomon **Luria* strongly criticized Moses Isserles for his devotion to Greek philosophy, Isserles answered that his sole source was Maimonides' *Guide*, thus giving it the cachet of acceptability (Resp. Isserles 7). It was probably due to his unrivaled eminence as talmudist and codifier that many of his views were finally accepted. They were very radical at the time. To give but one example, the now universally accepted doctrine of the incorporeality of God was by no means accepted as fundamental before him and was probably an advanced view held by a small group of thinkers and philosophers. Even Abraham b. David of Posquières protested the statement of Maimonides that anyone

who maintains the corporeality of God is a sectarian: "Why does he call him a sectarian? Many greater and better than he accepted this idea [of the corporeality of God] basing themselves on Scripture" (Yad, Teshuvah 3:7). C. Tchernowitz (*Toledot ha-Posekim*, 1 (1946), 193) goes so far as to maintain that were it not for Maimonides Judaism would have broken up into different sects and beliefs, and that it was his great achievement to unite the various currents, halakhic and philosophical.

Maimonides is regarded as the supreme rationalist, and the title given by Aḥad Ha-Am to his essay on him, "*Shilton ha-Sekhel*" ("The Rule of Reason"; in: *Ha-Shilo'ah*, 15 (1905), 291–319) included in his collected works, *Al Parashat Derakhim* (1921), has become almost standard in referring to him, and so long as one confines oneself to his three great works, the commentary on the Mishnah, the *Mishneh Torah*, and the *Guide*, a case can be made out for this view.

In the *Mishneh Torah*, Maimonides rigidly confines himself to a codification of Jewish law, refraining almost entirely from allowing his personal views to obtrude. Where he does advance his own view to which he can find no talmudic authority, he is careful, as he explicitly states in a letter to Jonathan of Lunel, to introduce it with the words "it appears to me" (cf. Yad, Sanhedrin 4:11). From his knowledge of medicine he was aware that certain disabilities in animals which in the time of the Talmud were regarded as fatal were susceptible to cure, while some which were not so regarded were in fact fatal, yet he lays it down that the talmudic view must be applied (Sheḥitah 10:12 and 13). Among the few exceptions the most striking is his outburst against belief in witchcraft and enchantment. After faithfully giving in their minutest details the talmudic description of, and laws concerning, these practices, he adds: "All these and similar matters are lies and falsehood... it is not fitting for Jews, who are intelligent and wise, to be attracted by them or believe that they are effective... whosoever believes in them, and that they are true, only that the Bible has forbidden them, belongs to the category of fools and ignoramuses and is in the class of immature women and children" (*Avodat Kokhavim* 11:16). In his work on the calendar included in the *Mishneh Torah* (*Hilkhot Kiddush ha-Ḥodesh*) he maintains vigorously that one should have recourse to works written by non-Jewish astronomers (11:1–6). At the end of *Hilkhot Temurah*, he defends the search after reasons for the biblical commandments (4:13).

In the *Guide* he allows himself more freedom, but the main difference between the two works lies in their different purpose and aim. The *Mishneh Torah* was written for the believing Jew untroubled by the apparent contradictions between revealed law and current philosophy, and its aim was to tell him how he should conduct himself in his desire to live according to the law. The *Guide*, as its name conveys, was designed for those whose faith had been weakened by these doctrines and its aim was to tell him why he should adhere to traditional Judaism. This helps to explain the contradictions between the two.

In both works one sees only the unemotional man of intellect. It is in his letters that Maimonides emerges as the warm human being, his heart open to the suffering of his people, and expressing and responding to both affection and hostility. It comes almost as a shock to read in his letter to Japheth b. Ali, when he informs him of the death of his brother David, that he remonstrates with him for not sending a letter of condolence to him on the death of his father which took place 11 years earlier though he had received innumerable such messages from all over the Jewish world, repeating the complaint twice. The letter was written eight years after his brother's death, yet he writes, "I still mourn, and there is no comfort.... Whenever I come across his handwriting or one of his books, my heart goes faint within me, and my grief reawakens" and in that letter he continues that he will never forget those days which he passed in Erez Israel with his correspondent (Kobler 192–3). The personal human element is equally to the fore in the above-quoted letter to Samuel ibn Tibbon, while his letter-responsum to Obadiah the Proselyte reveals Maimonides' spirit to the full. It was surely only to his intimate disciple that he could open his heart and declare, "when I see no other way of teaching a well-established truth except by pleasing one intelligent man and displeasing ten thousand fools, I choose to address myself to the one man and take no notice whatsoever of the condemnation of the multitude" (Introduction to the *Guide*). On the other hand Maimonides is almost virulent in his opposition to songs and music: "song and music are all forbidden, even if unaccompanied by words ... there is no difference between listening to songs, or string music, or melodies without words; everything which conduces to the rejoicing of the soul and emotion is forbidden." It is immaterial whether they are in Arabic or in Hebrew. "A person who listens to foolish songs with musical accompaniment is guilty of three transgressions, listening to folly, listening to song, and listening to instrumental music. If the songs are sung with accompaniment of drinking, there is a fourth transgression, if the singer is a woman there is a fifth." The references in the geonic sources to singing are only to liturgical hymns (Resp. ed. Blau, 224. cf. 269; *Guide* 3:8; *Yad*, Ta'anit, 5:14). Despite this last permission he was opposed to the insertion of *piyyutim* in the prayers (180, 207, 254, 260, 261). If the ignorant insist on them and their ways prevail, they should be said before the *Shema*, the beginning of the essential service (207).

No praise can be too high for the outer form of his works, both in language and logical method. The *Mishneh Torah* was the only work which he wrote in Hebrew, and the language is superb, clear, and succinct. He regretted that he did not prepare Hebrew versions of his other works. In answer to Joseph b. Gabir's request written in 1191 that he translate the work into Arabic, not only does he state that it would thereby lose its specific character, but that he would have liked to translate his works written in Arabic into Hebrew (Kobler 199); and when the rabbis of Lunel asked him to translate the *Guide* into Hebrew, he stated that he wished he were young enough to do so (*ibid.*, 216).

The *Mishneh Torah* is a model of logical sequence and studied method, each chapter and each paragraph coming in natural sequence to its preceding one. More impressive is the fact that in his earliest work one can so clearly discern the seeds of the later, so that it can confidently be stated that his whole subsequent system and ideas were already formulated in his mind when he wrote it. The *Shemonah Perakim* which form the introduction to his commentary on *Avot* is almost a draft of the first portion of *Sefer Madda*, the first book of the *Mishneh Torah*. When attacked on his views on resurrection he pointed out that he had included it in the Thirteen Principles which he evolved in his commentary to the tenth chapter of *Sanhedrin*. The radical view found in the very last chapter of the *Mishneh Torah* that the messianic age is nothing more than the attainment of political independence in Israel is stated in detail in that same excursus, and his original view on the possibility of the reestablishment of the Sanhedrin, which he carefully puts forward as his own ("it appears to me") and which he qualifies by the statement "but the matter must be weighed up" (*Sanhedrin* 4:11), is already expressed in his commentary on the Mishnah (*Sanh.* 1:1).

[Louis Isaac Rabinowitz]

AS HALAKHIST

Maimonides' halakhic activity began during his youth with his commentary to some tractates of the Talmud (introduction to commentary to the Mishnah). Only fragments on several tractates have survived (see S. Asaf, in: *Sinai*, 6 (1940), 103–32, on *Shabbat*; M. Kamelhar (1956) on *Yoma*): the commentary to *Rosh Ha-Shanah*, published in its entirety (by J. Brill, 1865; Y.A. Kamelhar, 1906), is of doubtful authenticity (see M.J.L. Sachs, *Hiddushei ha-Ra-MBa-M la-Talmud* (1963), introd. 13–23). His *Hilkhot ha-Yerushalmi* ("Laws of the Palestinian Talmud"), alluded to in his commentary to the Mishnah (*Tamid* 5:1), is not extant; the authenticity of the fragments published by Saul Lieberman (1947) has been challenged (Benedikt in: *KS*, 27 (1950–51), 329–49). It is interesting to note, in view of the fact that his famous code, the *Mishneh Torah*, embraces the whole of Jewish law, both practical and theoretical, that in both these works he confined himself to the practical *halakhah*, his commentary on the Talmud being confined to the orders **Mo'ed*, **Nashim*, and **Nezikin* and the tractate **Hullin*, which deals with dietary laws.

Commentary to the Mishnah

It is through his commentary to the Mishnah that one can begin to review Maimonides as a halakhist. In his commentary, Maimonides sets out to explain to the general reader the meaning of the Mishnah, without having recourse to the involved and lengthy discussions in the *Gemara*, the language of which was more difficult than the Mishnah itself (*Mishneh Torah*, introd.). Out of the mishnaic and other tannaitic texts and corresponding passages in the *Gemara*, often widely scattered throughout the Talmud, Maimonides evolves the underlying principles of the subjects discussed, which a particular

Mishnah, chapter, or entire tractate presupposed. In some cases he interprets the Mishnah differently from the *Gemara* (cf. in Sanh. 1:1). It has been asserted that even during his early work as a commentator, Maimonides was at the same time a codifier, a role which he later successfully developed in the *Sefer ha-Mitzvot* and the *Mishneh Torah* (M. Guttmann, in: J. Guttmann et al. (eds.), *Moses ben Maimon*, 2 (1914), 306–30; idem, in: HUCA, 2 (1925), 229–68). Following his explanatory glosses to the mishnaic passage, Maimonides gave the halakhic decision in each Mishnah based on his reading of the discussion in the *Gemara*.

Of special significance are the lengthy introductions he included in his commentary. The general introduction which heads his commentary to the order of *Zera'im* is in reality an introduction to and history of the Oral Law from Moses until his own days. The introduction to *Avot*, known as the *Shemona Perakim* (“Eight Chapters”) is a philosophical and ethical treatise in which its author harmonized Aristotle’s ethics with rabbinical teachings. In the introduction to Mishnah *Sanhedrin* (10:1), which begins with the words “All Israel has a portion in the world to come,” Maimonides dealt at length with the fundamental doctrines of Judaism which are formulated in the Thirteen *Articles of Faith. Especially extensive and exhaustive is the introduction to the difficult order *Tohorot*, in which Maimonides systematizes all that had been said in talmudic literature on the subject of ritual purity and impurity. The standard Hebrew translation, the work of a number of hands, is a poor rendering of the Arabic original. A new and more faithful translation was made by Y. Kafah, *Mishnah im Perush ha-Rambam ...* (1963–68).

The Responsa of Maimonides

The publication of the critical editions of the responsa of Maimonides (ed. by A. Freimann, 1934; J. Blau, 1957–61) affords a better opportunity to appraise his role in the communal life of the Jews of Egypt and neighboring countries. The responsa, which were in the language of the questioner, whether Hebrew or Arabic, number 464; some of them soon found their way into halakhic literature. Although not all responsa bear the date of composition, it has been ascertained that Maimonides’ responsa extend from about 1167, a short time after his arrival in Egypt, until a little before his death. The questioners include prominent scholars like R. Anatoli and R. Meshullam, *dayyanim* in Alexandria; *Jonathan ha-Kohen of Lunel; Joseph b. Gabir; Nissim of Damascus; and Samuel b. Ali, *Gaon* of Baghdad. From these responsa one learns of the growing tension between the *gaon* of Baghdad and Maimonides in connection with traveling on the high seas on the Sabbath, prohibited by Samuel b. Ali but permitted by Maimonides (ed. Blau, no. 308–9). Some of the responsa to Jonathan of Lunel, who was a disciple of *Abraham b. David of Posquières, are in essence rejoinders to the latter’s criticisms, for his questions coincide with the language and style of these criticisms (ed. Freimann, introd. xlv = ed. Blau, 3 (1961), 43).

The bitter experience of his youth failed to nurture in Maimonides rabid anti-Muslim feelings, and he consistently declined to classify Muslims as idolators. Even the ritual practices connected with the Ka’ba stone in Mecca did not in his opinion deny Islam its purely monotheistic nature (ed. Freimann, no. 369 = ed. Blau, no. 448; see S. Baron, in: PAAJR, 6 (1935), 83f.). In reply to an inquiry by Saadiah b. Berakhot about the authenticity of the gnostic work, *Shi’ur Komah*, Maimonides writes: “Heaven forbid that such work originated from the sages; it is undoubtedly the work of one of the Greek preachers ... and it would be a divine act to suppress this book and to eradicate its subject matter” (ed. Freimann, no. 373 = ed. Blau, no. 117; see Scholem, *Mysticism* (1946²), 63ff.). Of special interest is his responsum to Obadiah the Proselyte (ed. Freimann, no. 42 = ed. Blau, no. 293), who inquired if he was permitted to say in the blessings and prayers, “Our God and God of our Fathers,” “Thou who has chosen us,” “Thou who has worked miracles to our fathers,” and similar expressions. Maimonides’ responsum, apart from its halakhic merit, is a unique human document displaying grave concern for the feelings of this lonely proselyte who was so unsure of himself. Obadiah was advised that he was to recite all those prayers in the same way as one born a Jew, that he must not consider himself inferior to the rest of the Jews. The major part of this responsum has been translated into English by F. Kobler (see also S.B. Freehof, *Treasury of Responsa* (1962), 28–34). These responsa, although confined to halakhic decisions, nevertheless display Maimonides’ views on matters of doctrine and fundamentals of Judaism.

Sefer ha-Mitzvot (“Book of the Commandments”)

Maimonides found all previous attempts at enumerating the traditional 613 *commandments unsatisfactory. He therefore composed the *Sefer ha-Mitzvot* in which he gave his own enumeration of the 248 positive and the 365 negative commandments. As an introduction to this work, he laid down 14 principles which guided him in the identification and enumeration of the commandments. He severely criticized the work of his predecessors, such as the enumeration of the *Halakhot Gedolot and of R. Hefez, as well as those *paytanim* like Solomon ibn Gabirol, who composed the *Azharot*, religious hymns based on enumeration of the commandments.

Maimonides’ sharp criticism of the *Halakhot Gedolot* evoked a defense of the latter by Nahmanides, a staunch apologist “for the ancients,” who in his *Hassagot* strongly criticized Maimonides, accusing him of inconsistencies. He was also challenged by Daniel ha-Bavli, a disciple of Samuel b. Ali, the anti-Maimonist. His criticisms took the form of questions which he sent to Abraham, the son of Maimonides, who replied to them. The *Sefer ha-Mitzvot*, however, was generally accepted, and a whole body of literature was produced in defense of it, apart from the general works on the 613 commandments according to Maimonides’ classification and enumeration (see A. Jellinek, *Kunteres Taryag*, 1878).

The *Sefer ha-Mitzvot*, originally written in Arabic, was translated several times into Hebrew. The version by Abraham

ibn Ḥasdai is no longer extant, while the translation by Moses ibn Tibbon, in its critical edition by H. Heller, is accepted as the standard text (1946).

The Mishneh Torah (“Repetition of the Law”)

The *Sefer ha-Mitzvot* was not an end in itself but an introduction to the *Mishneh Torah* (Responsa, ed. Freimann, no. 368 = ed. Blau, no. 447), on which Maimonides labored for ten successive years. The purpose of the work is explained by Maimonides:

In our days, many vicissitudes prevail, and all feel the pressure of hard times. The wisest of our wise men has disappeared; the understanding of our prudent men is hidden. Hence, the commentaries of the *geonim* and their compilations of laws and responsa, which they took care to make clear, have in our times become hard to understand, so that only a few individuals fully comprehend them. Needless to add that such is the case in regard to Talmud itself, both Babylonian and Jerusalem, and the *Sifra*, *Sifrei*, and *Tosefta*, all of which require, for their comprehension, a broad mind, a wise soul, and considerable study. Then one might learn from them the correct way to determine what is forbidden and permitted, as well as other rules of the Torah. On these grounds, I, Moses the son of Maimon the Sephardi bestirred myself, and relying on the help of God, blessed be He, intently studied all these works, with the view of putting together the results obtained from them ... all in plain language and terse style, so that thus the entire Oral Law might become systematically known to all without citing difficulties and solutions of differences of view ... but consisting of statements, clear and convincing, that have appeared from the time of Moses to the present, so that all rules shall be accessible to young and old ... (introduction to *Mishneh Torah*).

Maimonides then set for himself the task of classifying by subject matter the entire talmudic and post-talmudic halakhic literature in a systematic manner never before attempted in the history of Judaism. The *Mishneh Torah* was divided into 14 books, each representing a distinct category of the Jewish legal system. (In Hebrew 14 is *yad* and hence the alternative name of the work *Yad ha-Hazakah*, i.e., “the strong hand.”)

Even though the *Guide of the Perplexed* was written after the completion of the *Mishneh Torah*, Maimonides succeeded in incorporating many of its philosophic and scientific aspects into this purely halakhic work. Philosophy and science were handmaidens to theology. Hence Book 1 contains a complete system of metaphysics, Book 3 the astronomical calculations for reckoning the calendar, and Book 14 a discussion of the doctrine of the Messiah and a refutation of Christianity, Islam, and their founders. These digressions, which technically speaking are not halakhic in essence but rather ethical and philosophic, occur frequently in the halakhic writings of Maimonides.

Unlike the commentary to the Mishnah and *Sefer ha-Mitzvot* which were written in Arabic, the *Mishneh Torah* was written in a beautiful and lucid Hebrew, the like of which had not been known in halakhic literature since Judah ha-Nasi composed the Mishnah. The *Mishneh Torah* influenced the

language of later codes, including the *Shulḥan Arukh* (see J. Dienstag, in: *Sinai*, 59 (1966), 54–75).

OPPOSITION TO THE CODE. The entire structure, form, and arrangement of the *Mishneh Torah* was a cultural and historical phenomenon unprecedented in Jewish dogmatic jurisprudence (see *Codification of Law) which both awed and shocked the scholarly world for centuries (see *Maimonidean Controversy). The architectural beauty of its structure, its logical arrangement, and ready-reference nature were the main targets for criticism, for it was feared that students would turn away from the study of the Talmud and commentaries, the source and wellspring of dynamic halakhic creativity. The severest criticism came from Abraham b. David of Posquières, an older contemporary of Maimonides, who probably equaled him in talmudic scholarship. The most serious of his charges was that Maimonides neglected to cite the sources and authorities from which his decisions were derived:

He [Maimonides] intended to improve but did not improve, for he forsook the way of all authors who preceded him. They always adduced proof for their statements, citing the proper authority; this was very useful, for sometimes the judge would be inclined to forbid or permit something and his proof was based on some other authority. Had he known there was a greater authority who interpreted the law differently, he might have retracted... hence I do not know why I should reverse my tradition or corroborative views because of the compendium of this author. If the one who differs from me is greater than I, fine; and if I am greater than he, why should I annul my opinion...? Moreover, there are matters on which the *geonim* disagree and the author has selected the opinion of one.... I should I rely on his choice.... It can only be one that an overbearing spirit is in him (Abraham b. David's *Hassagot* to introduction of *Mishneh Torah*).

These charges were not motivated by personal animosity, as claimed by some scholars of the Haskalah period, for on many occasions Abraham b. David traces certain sources of laws in the Code or comments upon it. At other times he is overwhelmed by this compendium (see I. Twersky, in: *Sefer ha-Yovel ... Zevi Wolfson* (1965), 169–86). Abraham b. David's objections were shared by lesser-known scholars (I. Twersky, in: A. Altmann (ed.), *Biblical and other Studies* (1963), 161–82), who added their own criticism. During the 19th century, opposition to the *Mishneh Torah* was still a subject of controversy between S.D. Luzzatto, N. Krochmal, and others (J. Dienstag, in: *Bitzaron*, 55 (1967), 34–37).

In a series of letters Maimonides replied to his criticism that his intention in writing the *Mishneh Torah* was not to discourage talmudic studies, including the *halakhot* of Alfasi. On the contrary, he had lectured to his pupils on these subjects (A. Lichtenberg (ed.), *Kovez Teshuvot ha-Rambam* (1859), pt. 1, no. 140 p. 25, b–c). He regretted the omission of his sources and hoped to include them in a supplement (*ibid.*). Maimonides never realized this hope. However, practically every commentary on the *Mishneh Torah* attempted to trace its sources. If his aim in compiling the Code was “so that no other work should

be needed for ascertaining any of the laws of Israel," the more than 300 commentaries and novellae which have been written on it – and their number is growing – is an ironic phenomenon that could not have been anticipated by Maimonides. The *Mishneh Torah* did not become the definitive code its venerated creator had hoped. Actually, it surpassed his hopes, for it became the major source of halakhic creativity and talmudic research equaled only by the Talmud itself.

Maimonides the Halakhist in Modern Jewish Scholarship

Finally, it is interesting to note that no other halakhic authority has been the subject of so much modern Jewish scholarship as Maimonides. The tendentious, albeit subtle, anti-halakhic orientation of many of the exponents of the Wissenschaft school and the scholars of the Haskalah (including the leaders of Reform Judaism) has dampened, if not outright discouraged, intensive research in *halakhah* per se. Some of those who did engage in this discipline, such as A. Geiger, N. Bruell, J.H. Schorr, and others, were motivated by their anti-traditional bias and sought to undermine its authority and advance the cause of modernism and reform. The preoccupation of modern Jewish scholarship with Maimonides as halakhist is out of proportion to its interest in rabbinic literature and the stream of systematic studies on the subject has continued unabated.

[Jacob I. Dienstag]

PHILOSOPHY

Maimonides was, by general agreement, the most significant Jewish philosopher of the Middle Ages, and his *Guide of the Perplexed* is the most important philosophic work produced by a Jew. The Arabic original *Dalālat al-Hā'irīn* was completed about 1200 and shortly thereafter was twice translated into Hebrew as *Moreh Nevukhim*. The first translation, a literal one, was made by Samuel ibn Tibbon with Maimonides' advice and was completed in 1204. The second, a freer translation, was made by the poet Judah *al-Ḥarizi a little later. In its Hebrew translations, the *Guide* determined the course of Jewish philosophy from the early 13th century on, and almost every philosophic work for the remainder of the Middle Ages cited, commented on, or criticized Maimonides' views.

While the *Guide* contained the major statement of Maimonides' position, his philosophic and theological views appeared in a variety of other writings, among which the most important are the three lengthy essays in his commentary to the Mishnah (see above), first book of the *Mishneh Torah*, *Sefer ha-Madda* which is devoted to God and His attributes, angelic beings, the structure of the universe, prophecy, ethics, repentance, free will and providence, and the afterlife, and the last section of the work, *Mishneh Torah*, *Hilkhot Melakhim* which includes a discussion on the Messiah and the messianic age.

Influences on Maimonides

In his philosophic views Maimonides was an Aristotelian (see *Aristotle), whose philosophy also contained some neoplatonic elements, and it was he who put medieval Jewish philos-

ophy on a firm Aristotelian basis. But in line with contemporary Aristotelianism his political philosophy was Platonic. In his works he quotes his authorities sparingly (see "*Shemonah Perakim*," introduction, end), but in a letter to his translator Samuel ibn Tibbon (A. Marx, in: JQR, 25 (1934–35), 374–81) he indicated his philosophic preferences explicitly. In this letter he advises Ibn Tibbon to study the works of Aristotle with the help of the Hellenistic commentators *Alexander of Aphrodisias and *Themistius and of Maimonides' contemporary *Averroes. It appears, however, that Averroes' commentaries reached Maimonides too late to have any influence on his *Guide*. He recommends highly the works of the Muslim al-*Fārābī, particularly those on logic, and he speaks of the writings of the Muslim *Avempace (Ibn Bāja) with approval. The works of *Avicenna (Ibn Sīnā) in Maimonides' view are also worthy of study, but they are inferior to those of al-Fārābī. Of Jewish philosophers he mentions only Isaac *Israeli, of whose views he disapproves, and Joseph ibn *Zaddik, whom he praises for his learning, though he states that he knew only the man, not his work. He also mentions some other philosophers of whose views he disapproves. Al-Fārābī, Avempace, and Averroes interpreted Aristotle rationalistically, and it appears that Maimonides preferred their interpretations to the more theologically oriented one of Avicenna, though he relied on Avicenna for some of his views.

(For a full discussion of sources, see S. Pines, *Guide of the Perplexed* (1963), translator's introduction lvii–cxxxiv.)

Maimonides considered himself in the tradition of the Aristotelians, adapting and developing their teachings in accord with his own views; but he differed from them in the works he produced. While the Muslims had composed commentaries on Aristotle's works, summaries of his views, and independent philosophic treatises, Maimonides produced no purely philosophic work of his own, the early *Treatise on Logic* excepted. He held that the extant philosophic literature was adequate for all needs (*Guide* 2, introd., proposition 25, and ch. 2), and he devoted himself to specific issues, particularly those bearing on the interrelation of philosophy and religion.

Distinction between Intellectual Elite and Masses

Fundamental to Maimonides' approach is a division of mankind into two groups: an intellectual elite, who, using reason, can understand by means of demonstrative arguments, and the masses (including those scholars who study only religious law), who, using imagination, understand by means of persuasive arguments. In the light of this distinction Maimonides' works may be divided into two kinds: *Guide of the Perplexed*, addressed primarily to an intellectual elite, and his other writings, addressed to the masses.

This distinction had one further consequence for Maimonides. Maimonides identified *ma'aseh bereshit* (the account of the creation) and *ma'aseh merkavah* (the account of the divine chariot of Ezekiel) with physics and metaphysics respectively. According to the Mishnah, however (Ḥag. 2:1) one may not teach the former to two persons, nor the latter even to one,

unless he is wise and able to understand by himself. Maimonides codifies this as *halakhah* (Yad, Yesodei ha-Torah, 2:12; 4:10–13) and in his commentary to the Mishnah gives as the reason for the prohibition the current philosophical opinion that the teaching of abstract matters to someone who cannot grasp them may lead to unbelief.

This prohibition against the public teaching of *ma'aseh merkavah* and *ma'aseh bereshit* posed a problem. How could he write the *Guide*, a book devoted to these esoteric topics, when putting something in writing is equivalent to teaching it in public? Maimonides solved this problem by making use of certain literary devices. First, Maimonides addressed the book to his disciple, Joseph ben Judah ibn Sham'un, who after studying with him left for Baghdad. Hence, the *Guide* in its formal aspect is a personal communication to one student. Moreover Maimonides, in a dedicatory letter at the beginning of the *Guide*, relates Joseph's intellectual history, showing that he had acquired some philosophic wisdom and that he was able to reason for himself. Hence, Joseph had fulfilled the conditions necessary for studying the esoteric disciplines.

But Maimonides was well aware that persons other than Joseph would read his work. Hence, he had to make use of other devices. Invoking modes of esoteric writing also current among Islamic philosophers, Maimonides wrote his work in an enigmatic style. Discussing the same topic in different passages, he would make contradictory statements about it. He describes this method in the introduction to the *Guide*, where he speaks of seven types of contradictions which appear in literary works, stating explicitly that he will make use of two of them. It is left to the perceptive reader to discover Maimonides' true views on a given issue.

The enigmatic nature of the *Guide* imposed great difficulties on medieval and modern commentators, and two schools of interpretation arose. Some, such as Julius Guttman, while aware of Maimonides' method, consider him a philosopher who attempted to harmonize the teachings of religion with those of philosophy. Others, such as Leo Strauss, considered Maimonides a philosopher, whose views were in agreement with those of the rationalistic Aristotelians, and who expressed religious opinions largely as a concession to the understanding of the masses. For example, Maimonides, according to the first interpretation, believed that the world was created, while according to the second, his true view was that the world is eternal.

With all these distinctions in mind one may proceed to an exposition of Maimonides' philosophy based largely on the *Guide*.

Purpose of the Guide

Maimonides wrote his work for someone who was firm in his religious beliefs and practices, but, having studied philosophy, was perplexed by the literal meaning of biblical anthropomorphic and anthropopathic terms. To this person Maimonides showed that these difficult terms have a spiritual meaning besides their literal one, and that it is the spiritual meaning that

applies to God. Maimonides also undertook in the *Guide* the explanation of obscure biblical parables. Thus, the *Guide* is devoted to the philosophic interpretation of Scripture, or, to use Maimonides' terms, to the "science of the Law in its true sense" or to the "secrets of the Law" (*Guide*, introd.).

God

Maimonides' first philosophical topic is God. In line with his exegetical program he begins by explaining troublesome biblical terms, devoting the major portion of the first 49 chapters of the first part of the *Guide* to this task. Representative of his exegesis are his comments on the term "image of God" (*zelem Elohim*), found in the opening section of Genesis. Some have argued, Maimonides states, that since man was created in the image of God, it follows that God, like man, must have a body. He answers the objection by showing that the term *zelem* refers always to a spiritual quality, an essence. Hence, the "image of God" in man is man's essence, that is his reason but not physical likeness (*Guide* 1:1).

DIVINE ATTRIBUTES. Maimonides then takes up the question of God's attributes (*Guide* 1:50–60). The Bible describes God by many attributes, but it also states that God is one. If He is one in the sense of being simple, how can a multiplicity of attributes be ascribed to Him? Medieval philosophers held that attributes applied to substances are of two kinds: essential and accidental. Essential attributes are those that are closely connected with the essence, such as existence or life; accidental attributes are those that are independent of the essence and that may be changed without affecting the essence, such as anger or mercifulness. Medieval logicians generally agreed that accidental attributes introduce a multiplicity into that which they describe, while they disagreed concerning essential attributes. Some, such as Maimonides' contemporary Averroes, held that essential attributes are implicitly contained in the essence and, hence, do not introduce multiplicity; others held that they provide new information and, hence, produce multiplicity. Avicenna was an exponent of the latter view, holding that essential attributes, particularly existence, are superadded to the essence. Maimonides accepted Avicenna's position on this point. Maimonides came to the conclusion that accidental attributes applied to God must be interpreted as attributes of action, that is, if it is said that God is merciful, it means that God acts mercifully; and essential attributes must be interpreted as negations (or more precisely, negations of privations), that is, if God is said to be existing, it means that he is not nonexistent.

(See also *God, Attributes of).

EXISTENCE, UNITY, AND INCORPOREALITY OF GOD. Prior to Maimonides, Islamic and Jewish *Kalām philosophers had offered arguments for the existence, unity, and incorporeality of God and for the creation of the world. Maimonides summarized the teachings of the Kalām philosophers in order to refute them (*Guide* 1:71–76). In the case of the existence, unity, and incorporeality of God, Maimonides held that these are le-

gitimate philosophic issues, but that the Kalām philosophers, relying on categories of the imagination rather than reason, had not solved them correctly. In the case of creation he held that to demonstrate the creation or eternity of the world lies outside the competence of the human mind.

Maimonides prefaces his own proofs for the existence, unity, and incorporeality of God with 25 metaphysical and physical propositions, which he considers to have been demonstrated in the philosophic literature of his days. To these he adds a 26th proposition, namely, that the world is eternal. However, it appears that this proposition does not reflect Maimonides' own belief concerning the origin of the world (see below), but serves, rather, a methodological function. It can be seen readily, Maimonides implies, that if it is assumed that the world is eternal, the existence of God can still be demonstrated (Guide 2, introd.).

EXISTENCE. To demonstrate the existence of God, Maimonides makes use of four proofs current in his day: from motion, from the composition of elements (also a kind of argument from motion), from necessity and contingency, and from potentiality and actuality (causality). The common structure of all of them is that they begin with some observed characteristic of the world, invoke the principle that an infinite regress is impossible, and conclude that a first principle must exist. For example, Maimonides begins his first proof, that from motion, by noting that in the sublunar world things constantly move and change. These sublunar motions, in turn, are caused by celestial motions which come to an end with the motion of the uppermost celestial sphere. The motion of that sphere is caused by a mover that is not moved by another mover. This mover, called the Prime Mover, is the last member in the chain of causes producing motion. Maimonides uses the following example as an illustration. Suppose a draft of air comes through a hole, and a stick is used to push a stone in the hole to close it. Now the stone is pushed into the hole by the stick, the stick is moved by the hand, and the hand is moved by the sinews, muscles, etc., of the human body. But one must also consider the draft of air, which was the reason for the motion of the stone in the first place. The motion of the air is caused by the motion of the lowest celestial sphere, and the motion of that sphere, by the successive motions of other spheres. The chain of things moved and moving comes to an end with the last of the celestial spheres. This sphere is set in motion by a principle which, while it produces motion, is itself not moved. This is the Prime Mover, which for Maimonides is identical with God.

Maimonides then turned to the nature of the Prime Mover. Four possibilities exist: Either the Prime Mover exists apart from the sphere, and then either corporeally or incorporeally; or it exists within the sphere, and then either as distributed throughout it or as indivisible. It can be shown that the Prime Mover does not exist within the sphere, which rules out the last two possibilities, nor apart from it as a body, which rules out the third. Hence, it exists apart from

the sphere and must be incorporeal. Maimonides shows, further, that there cannot be two incorporeal movers. Thus, it has been established that the Prime Mover exists, is incorporeal, and is one.

Maimonides' proof from necessity and contingency rests on the observation that things in the world are contingent, and that they are ultimately produced by a being that is necessary through itself. This proof was first formulated by Avicenna and was rejected by Averroes (Guide 2:1; for a more popular discussion of Maimonides' conception of God, and his attributes, see *Yad, Yesodei ha-Torah*, 1–2).

Creation

Maimonides next turned to the incorporeal intelligences of the celestial spheres which he identifies with the angels (Guide 2:2–12), and then to creation of the world (Guide 2:13–26). On the last subject he begins by enumerating three theories of the origin of the world: that of the Torah, that the world was created by God out of nothing; that of Plato and others, according to which God created the world out of preexistent matter; and that of Aristotle, according to which the world is eternal. A major portion of the discussion is devoted to showing that Aristotle's and his followers' proofs of the eternity of the world are not really proofs. From an analysis of Aristotelian texts Maimonides attempted to show that Aristotle himself did not consider his arguments as conclusive demonstrations but only as showing that eternity is more plausible than creation. Maimonides' own position is that one can offer plausible arguments for the creation of the world as well as for its eternity. From this it follows that a conclusive demonstration of the creation or the eternity of the world lies beyond human reason; the human mind can only offer likely, technically known as dialectical, arguments for either alternative. However, an examination of these arguments reveals that those for creation are more likely than those for eternity, and on this basis Maimonides accepts the doctrine of creation *ex nihilo* as his own. An additional reason is that Scripture also teaches creation. Maimonides' intellectual daring is apparent in his statement (ch. 25) that had the eternity of the world been demonstrated philosophically, he would not have hesitated to interpret the Bible accordingly, just as he did not hesitate to interpret anthropomorphic terms in the Bible allegorically. He also states that the principle of creation is the most important one after that of God's unity, since it explains the possibility of miracles and similar occurrences. It should be noted, however, that some interpreters understand Maimonides' esoteric teaching as propounding the eternity of the world.

If the world was created, will it come to an end at some future time? He answers in the negative and adds that the future indestructibility of the world is also taught in the Bible (Guide 2:27–29). Maimonides concludes this phase of the discussion with an explanation of the creation chapters at the beginning of Genesis and a discussion of the Sabbath, which in part is also a reminder of the creation.

Prophecy

In the introduction to the *Guide* Maimonides incidentally discussed the nature of the prophetic experience, likening it to intellectual illumination. In the present section (Guide 2:32–48) he is interested in the psychology of prophecy and its political function. He begins by listing three possible theories of how prophecy is acquired: that of the unsophisticated believer, who holds that God arbitrarily selects someone for prophecy; that of the philosophers, according to which prophecy occurs when man's natural faculties, particularly his intellect, reach a high level of development; and that of Scripture, which specifies the same development of natural faculties but adds dependence on God, Who can prevent someone from prophesying, if He so desires. According to this last view, God's role in prophecy is negative, rather than positive.

Maimonides defined prophecy as an emanation from God, which, through the intermediacy of the Active Intellect, flows first upon man's intellectual faculty and then upon his imagination. While a well-developed imagination is of little significance for the illuminative experience of the prophet, it is central to his political function. In line with the views of the Islamic Aristotelians, particularly al-Fārābī, Maimonides conceives of the prophet as a statesman who brings law to his people and admonishes them to observe it. This conception of the prophet-statesman is based on Plato's notion, found in the *Republic*, of the philosopher-king who establishes and administers the ideal state. For Maimonides the primary function of prophets other than Moses is to admonish people to adhere to the Law of Moses; this requires that the prophets use the kind of imaginative language and parables that appeal to the imagination of the masses. Maimonides characterizes three personality types: philosopher, who uses only his intellect, the ordinary statesman, who uses only his imagination, and the prophet, who uses both.

Though he discusses the phenomenon of prophecy extensively, Maimonides mentions Moses, the chief of the prophets, only in passing in the *Guide*. However, in his halakhic writings he singles out Moses for special discussion. Moses, he states, differed so much from other prophets that he and they had virtually only the name "prophet" in common. Moses' prophecy is distinguished from that of the other prophets in four ways: other prophets received their prophecy in a dream or vision, Moses received his while awake; other prophets received their prophecy in allegorical form, Moses received his directly; other prophets were filled with fear when they received prophecy, Moses was not; other prophets received prophecy intermittently, Moses received it when he wished (*Hakdamah le-Ferek Helek*, Principle 7; Yad, Yesodei ha-Torah, 7:6; cf. Guide 2:35). Moses also differed from other prophets and legislators in that he conveyed a perfect law, that is, one that addressed itself not only to man's moral perfection but also to his intellectual perfection by requiring the affirmation of certain beliefs.

Nature of Evil

Maimonides begins the third part of the *Guide* (introd. ch.

1–7) with a philosophic interpretation of the divine chariot (*merkavah*); this exposition brings to a close that part of the *Guide* that deals with speculative matters, that is, physical and metaphysical topics (Guide 3:7–end). Next he turns to practical philosophy, discussing evil and providence first.

Maimonides accepts the neoplatonic doctrine that evil is not an independent principle but rather the privation, or absence, of good. Like the Neoplatonists and other monists he had to accept this position, for to posit an independent principle of evil was to deny the uniqueness and omnipotence of God. There are three kinds of evil: natural evils, such as floods and earthquakes, which man cannot control, social evils, such as wars, and personal evils, the various human vices, both of which man can control. Natural evils are infrequent, and, hence, the majority of evil in the world, which is caused by man, can be remedied by proper training. Maimonides also argues against those who hold that the world is essentially evil, stating that if one looks at the world at large, rather than at one's own pains and misfortunes, one finds that the world as a whole is good, not evil (Guide 3:8–12).

Divine Providence

Maimonides discusses divine omniscience and then turns to the related question of divine providence. He distinguishes between general providence, which refers to general laws regulating nature, and individual providence, which refers to God's providential concern for individual men. He lists four theories of providence that he rejects: the theory of Epicurus (see *Epicureanism), which states that everything that happens in the world is the result of chance; that of Aristotle (really that of the commentator Alexander of Aphrodisias), which states that there is only general, not individual, providence; that of the Islamic Asharites (see *Kalām), which states that the divine will rules everything – this is equivalent to individual providence extended to include all beings, animate and inanimate; and that of the Mu'tazilites (see *Kalām), which states that there is individual providence extending even to animals but not to inanimate objects. Last, Maimonides discusses the attitude toward providence of the adherents of the Torah. They all accept man's free will and God's justice. To these principles some more recent scholars (Maimonides had in mind the *geonim*, most likely Saadiah) have added the principle of *yissurin shel ahavah* ("afflictions of love"), which explains that God may cause suffering to a righteous person in order to reward him in the hereafter. Maimonides rejected it, however, stating that only an unjust God would act in this manner, and asserted that every pain and affliction is a punishment for a prior sin. Finally, Maimonides gave his own position: there is individual providence, and it is determined by the degree of development of the individual's intellect. The more developed a man's intellect, the more subject he is to divine providence (Guide 3:16–21). Maimonides used this theory of providence in his interpretation of the Book of Job, in which the characters of that book represent the various attitudes toward providence discussed above (Guide 3:22–23).

Nature of Man and Moral Virtue

Maimonides' final undertaking in the *Guide* is his explanation of the Law of Moses and its precepts. But this account is based on his philosophy of man, which he summarizes only in his "*Shemonah Perakim*." From this summary it is clear that Maimonides' philosophy of man was one current among Muslim Aristotelians. Man is composed of a body and a soul, the soul, particularly the intellect, being the form of the body. The soul, which is unitary, contains five basic faculties: nutritive, sensory, imaginative, appetitive, and rational. Of these faculties, the appetitive and rational are important for the good life and for happiness on earth and in the hereafter. Man attains happiness through the exercise of moral virtues to control his appetites and by developing his intellectual powers. In Maimonides' discussion of morality he follows Aristotle in holding that virtuous action consists of following the mean, but he holds that all should go to the extreme to avoid pride and anger (Yad, Deot, 2:3). While in his halakhic writings Maimonides embraced a morality of the mean, in the *Guide* he advocates a more ascetic life, and he particularly recommends curbing the sexual drive. As in Aristotelian thought, the moral virtues serve only a preliminary function, the final goal being the acquisition of intellectual virtues.

(For another discussion of Maimonides' moral philosophy, see Yad, Deot.)

Law of Moses

In the *Guide* 3:26–49 Maimonides discusses the reasons of the commandments. Maimonides considers a distinction made by Mu'tazilite philosophers, *Saadia among them. These philosophers had divided divine law into two categories: rational commandments, such as the prohibitions against murder and theft, which the human mind can discover without revelation; and revealed commandments, such as prayer and the observance of holidays, which are neutral from the point of view of reason and can be known only through revelation. Maimonides understands this position as implying that the revelational commandments come from God's will rather than His reason. Against this view, Maimonides argues that all divine commandments are the product of God's wisdom, though he adds that some are easily intelligible (*mishpatim*), and others intelligible only with difficulty (*hukkim*). However, Maimonides adds that particular commandments have no rational principle behind them and are commandments only because God willed them.

Maimonides postulates two purposes of the Law: the well-being of the soul (intellect) and the well-being of the body, by which he means man's moral well-being. The former is acquired through true beliefs; the latter, through political and personal morality. The beliefs which a man must accept are graded according to his intellectual ability. There are also true beliefs, such as the existence of God, His unity, and His incorporeality, which everyone must accept regardless of intellectual ability; and there are beliefs, such as that God gets angry at those who disobey Him, which have primarily a po-

litical function and are considered necessary beliefs. Ordinary men will accept the Law only if they are promised rewards or threatened with punishment, and it is the function of the necessary beliefs to provide such motivation. They are unnecessary for the philosopher, who obeys the Law because it is the right thing to do regardless of consequences.

Although reasons for general moral laws can readily be found, it is more difficult to explain the numerous ritual laws found in the Bible. Maimonides explains many of them as reactions to pagan practices, and he makes use of his extensive familiarity with such books as the *Nabatean Agriculture*, which describe such practices (see *Commandments, Reasons for). Thus, for example, he explains the biblical prohibition against wearing garments made of wool and linen combined as a reaction to a pagan practice requiring priests to wear such garments. Maimonides also considers certain commandments as concessions to historical situations, such as those dealing with sacrifice. Worship without animal sacrifices is preferred, but it would have been unrealistic to require the Israelites leaving Egypt to give up sacrifices altogether. Hence the Bible commanded sacrifices, restricting, however, the times and places for them and permitting only priests to offer them. We should not infer from this, however, that Maimonides believed in a progressive development of Jewish law; in fact, he codifies all of rabbinic law in his *Mishneh Torah*. The *Guide* concludes with a supplementary section on the perfect worship of God and man's perfection.

Eschatology

Eschatology is barely mentioned in the *Guide*, although Maimonides developed it fully in other works. Following traditional Jewish teachings, he deals with the Messiah and messianic times, the resurrection of the dead, and *olam ha-ba* ("the world to come"). He proceeds characteristically by stripping these occurrences of supernatural qualities as much as possible. The Messiah is an earthly king, descended from the house of David. He will bring the Jews back to their country, but his major accomplishment will be to bring peace and tranquility to the world, thereby facilitating full observance of God's commandments. The Messiah will die of old age and be succeeded by his son, the latter, by his son, and so on. No cataclysmic events will take place during messianic times, but the world will continue in its established natural order. Maimonides calculated the year of the coming of the Messiah ("*Epistle to Yemen*"), although he generally opposed speculations of this kind (*Hakdamah le-Ferek Helek*, principle 12; Yad, Melakhim, 12:2 – uncensored edition).

During messianic times the dead will be resurrected with body and soul reunited though later the human person will die again. (For his affirmation of this doctrine in reply to criticism that he rejected it, see above.) Undoubtedly, the central notion of Maimonides' eschatology is his account of *olam ha-ba*. In his view the intellect, but not the body, has an afterlife, and in that afterlife the intellect is engaged in the contemplation of God. Generally, he speaks of incorporeal intelligences

(plural), implying that immortality is individual, but there are passages which suggest that immortality is collective, that is, in the world to come there exists only one intellect for all mankind (*Hakdamah le-Ferek Helek*; Yad, Teshuvah, 8–10, Guide 1:41; *Treatise on Resurrection*).

Basic Principles of Judaism

Maimonides' intellectualism is reflected in the formulation of 13 principles that in his view every member of the Jewish community is bound to accept (see *Articles of Faith). Did he intend these principles as a means of developing the intellects of the masses, thus enabling them to share in *olam ha-ba*, or as a political expedient, that is, to make the masses aware of intellectual issues so that philosophers can live safely in their midst? Proponents of both views are found among Maimonides' interpreters (see A. Hyman, in: A. Altmann (ed.), *Jewish Medieval and Renaissance Studies* (1967), 119–44).

Influence

Maimonides' *Guide*, as has been noted, profoundly influenced the subsequent course of medieval Jewish philosophy. Among the extensive literature that arose were numerous full and partial commentaries on the *Guide*, most of them still unpublished. However, four of these have been printed and they appear many times with the Hebrew text of the *Guide*. They are those of Profiat *Duran (Efodi), Shem Tov ben Joseph *Ibn Shem Tov, Asher *Crescas, and Isaac *Abrabanel. In addition, the following commentaries have appeared in print: *Moreh ha-Moreh* by Shem Tov ibn *Falaquera, which also contains corrections of Ibn Tibbon's Hebrew translation based on the Arabic original (edited by M.L. Bisseliches, 1837); Yair Shiffman has published a critical edition of Shem Tov Ibn Falaquera's commentary *Moreh ha-Moreh* (Jerusalem, 2001); and a commentary by *Moses Narboni (all three reprinted in *Sheloshah Kadmonei Mefareshei ha-Moreh*, 1961). Samuel ibn Tibbon composed a philosophic glossary on the *Guide* entitled *Perush me-ha-Millot ha-Zarot asher be-Ma'amarei ha-Rav*, which has also been printed many times. One aspect of the commentary literature is the attempt to reconcile Maimonides' views with the divergent ones of his contemporary Averroes. Of commentaries and notes that have appeared on the *Guide* in more recent times are those of Solomon Maimon's *Givat ha-Moreh* (edited by Samuel Hugo Bergman and N. Rotenstreich, 1966), the notes in S. Munk's French translation of the *Guide*, and the Hebrew commentary in Ibn Shmuel's edition.

In addition to its significance for medieval Jewish philosophy, the *Guide* also had a formative influence on modern Jewish thought. Maimonides provided a first acquaintance with philosophic speculation for a number of philosophers of the Enlightenment period and served as a bridge for the study of more modern philosophy. Moses *Mendelssohn is a case in point. In addition, Maimonides became a symbol for their own philosophic endeavors; he had attempted to introduce the spirit of rationalism into Jewish teachings during

medieval times, just as they tried to do in their own time. Among modern thinkers influenced in some way by Maimonides are, in addition to Mendelssohn and Solomon Maimon (c. 1752–1800), Nahman *Krochmal, Samuel David *Luzatto (who opposed Maimonides' rationalism), S.L. *Steinheim, Hermann *Cohen, and *Aḥad *Ha-Am.

Maimonides exercised an extensive influence on Christian scholastic thought. Among these scholastics are *Alexander of Hales, *William of Auvergne, *Albertus Magnus, Thomas *Aquinas, Meister *Eckhart, and *Duns Scotus. These scholastics generally quote Maimonides by name, but sometimes they cite his views anonymously. Giles of Rome composed a treatise entitled *Errores philosophorum* about 1270 (edited by J. Koch, with an English translation by J.O. Riedl, 1944), the 12th chapter of which is devoted to a refutation of Maimonides' views. (For Maimonides' influence on scholastic philosophy, see B. Geyer, *Die patristische und scholastische Philosophie* (1928), index; E. Gilson, *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages* (1955), index; Gorge Hasselhoff, *Dicit Rabbi Moyses, Studien zum Bild Moses von Moses Maimonides im lateinischen Westen vom 13. bis zum 15. Jahrhundert* (Würzburg, 2004) Kaufmann, *Schriften*, 2 (1910), 152–89; Jacob Guttman, in: *Moses ben Maimon*, J. Braun et al. (editors), 1 (1908), 135–230; and see also other studies by Jacob Guttman, Issachar Joel, and Isaac Husik.)

In early modern times Maimonides influenced the secular philosophers Baruch *Spinoza (see H.A. Wolfson, *The Philosophy of Spinoza* (1954), index) and Gottfried Wilhelm Leibnitz.

[Arthur Hyman]

AS PHYSICIAN

Maimonides was probably first taught medicine by his father, but, as stated above, during the seven years which his family spent in Fez, Maimonides probably had the opportunity to pursue his medical studies and mingle with well-known physicians. In his "Treatise on Asthma" he describes discussions with the Jewish physician Abu Yūsuf b. Mu'allim and with Muhammad, son of the famous Avenzoar, and others. From his commentary on drugs it may also be concluded that he received his basic medical education in Morocco. He refers to "our physicians in the West" and to Morocco and Spain. Most of the names of drugs are given there not only in Arabic but also in Berber and Spanish. The only authors quoted by name are Spanish-Moroccan physicians (Ibn Juljul, Ibn Wafid, Ibn Samajūn), who lived one to two centuries before him, and his older contemporary al-Ghāfiqī. Maimonides was certainly very familiar with Arabic translations of the writings of Greek physicians as well as with the writings of the older Arab physicians, for he himself condensed some of them.

That Maimonides was highly regarded as a physician among the Muslims is evident from the statements of the historians Ibn al-Qiftī (c. 1248) and Ibn Abi Uṣaybi'a (c. 1270) as well as of the physician 'Abd-al-Laṭif of Baghdad, who visited Maimonides when he was in Cairo in 1201. A song of praise

which was written by a grateful patient, Sa'īd b. Ṣanā' al-Mulk, has been preserved by Ibn Abi Uṣaybī'a:

Galen's art heals only the body
 But Abu-Amran's [Maimonides'] the body and the soul.
 His knowledge made him the physician of the century.
 He could heal with his wisdom the sickness of ignorance.
 If the moon would submit to his art,
 He would free her of the spots at the time of full moon,
 Would deliver her of her periodic defects,
 And at the time of her conjunction save her from waning.
 (Translation taken from B.L. Gordon, *Medieval and Renaissance Medicine* (1959), 235.)

Moreover, from certain statements made by Ibn Abi Uṣaybī'a, it is clear to us that Maimonides also lectured on medicine and taught disciples such as his own son Abraham, as well as Joseph b. Judah ibn Sham'un, and Rashīd al-Dīn.

Maimonides classified medicine into three divisions: preventive medicine; healing of the sick; and care of the convalescent, including invalids and the aged. His medical teachings, based on the then prevailing humoral pathology as taught by Hippocrates and Galen, are of a strictly rational character. He disapproved strongly of the use of charms, incantations, and amulets in treating the sick, and was outspoken against any blind belief in authority. He encouraged his disciples to observe and reason critically and insisted on experiment and research. In his "Treatise on Asthma" Maimonides stresses that the physician is important not only during sickness but also when the body is healthy. Unlike any other craftsman, the physician must use art, logic, and intuition. Maimonides also added that the physician must be able to take a comprehensive view of the patient and his circumstances in order to make a diagnosis of both his general condition and of diseases of individual organs.

Except for part of his Galen compendium, all of Maimonides' medical writings, most of which were apparently written in Arabic in Cairo during 1190–1204, have been preserved. The majority of these works were translated into Hebrew and Latin and helped to spread his fame in the West.

(1) *Al-Mukhtaṣarāt* is a compendium of the works of Galen for teaching purposes, of which only three, in Arabic, have been preserved.

(2) A commentary by him on the *Aphorisms* of Hippocrates, which had been translated into Arabic by the ninth-century translator Ḥunayn ibn Ishāq, in general follows Galen's commentary; it has been only partially preserved in two defective Arabic manuscripts.

(3) *Fuṣūl Mūsā* ("The Aphorisms of Moses") is possibly the most famous and most widely quoted of all Maimonides' medical writings. It was translated into Hebrew under the title *Pirkei Moshe*, in the 13th century. In this work Maimonides included a large number of medical aphorisms and sundry information, mostly from Galen's own writings or his commentaries on Hippocrates, but also from Arab authors. On speaking of the relation between the right-hand part of the heart and the lungs (1:55), Maimonides seems to have touched

on the lesser circulation, without, however, venturing further afield. The passages in 1:19 as well as 8:57 and 62 strongly indicate that he was speaking of arterioles connecting the arteries and the veins.

(4) *Sarḥ asmā' al-ʿuqqār* is a commentary on drugs, the manuscript of which was found in Istanbul in 1932. It consists of 56 pages of 17 lines each. In the introduction Maimonides deals with the necessity of identifying drugs by their popular names. He then lists, in alphabetical order, about 350 remedies, mainly derived from plants. The Arabic names are often followed by Greek and Persian terms as well as colloquial Spanish, Moroccan, Egyptian, and Berber names. The so-called "Prayer of a Physician" was not written by Maimonides but was added later.

(5) *Fī al-Bawāsīr* is a work on hemorrhoids and was written for a young aristocrat.

(6) *Fī al-Jimā'a*, a treatise on sexual intercourse, was written for the sultan Omar son of Nur al-Dīn.

(7) *Maqāla Fī al-Rabw* ("Treatise on Asthma") was written in 1190. Maimonides regards bronchial asthma as largely due to nervousness, and believes that some people thus inclined react strongly to certain irritants. Correct diet and spiritual treatment, he says, have a beneficial effect on the asthmatic.

(8) *Kilāb al-Sumūm wa al-Mutaharriz min al-Adwiya al-Qitāla* ("On Poisons and Their Antidotes"), a very famous manuscript, includes a classic description of the various symptoms of poisoning and is of value even today. Maimonides is the first to distinguish between the various types of snake venoms and suggests the establishment of collections of antidotes in state pharmacies. For snakebites he advises cautery, local tourniquets, rest, and general treatment against shock.

(9) *Fī Tadbīr al-Ṣiḥḥa* ("Guide to Good Health"), a treatise on hygiene, is one of the most popular of Maimonides' works. It was written in 1198 for the Egyptian sultan Afḍal Nūr al-Dīn Ali, who suffered from attacks of depression accompanied by physical symptoms. Maimonides teaches that physical convalescence is dependent on psychological well-being and rest. He stresses the necessity of hygienic conditions in the care of the body, physical exercise, and proper breathing, work, family, sexual life, and diet, and suggests that music, poetry, paintings, and walks in pleasant surroundings all have a part to play toward a happy person and the maintenance of good health.

(10) *Maqāla Fī Bayān al-A'rāq* ("Explanation of Coincidences") was also written for the sultan Afḍal Nūr al-Dīn Ali, who requested an explanation of the causes of his continued depression. It is a short treatise on the subject, in 22 chapters.

In the formation of his opinions on man's spiritual well-being, Maimonides' scientific and psychological experiences are closely interwoven with his religious principles. Physical and biological rules are integrated with moral and ethical principles in his world of values. To integrate oneself consciously into the natural biological laws of the world represented for

Maimonides the fulfillment of the idea of walking in the paths of science and wisdom and achieving true knowledge and perfect bliss.

[Suessmann Muntner]

AS ASTRONOMER

Maimonides did not compose a systematic treatise on astronomy, but his competence in the subject is well illustrated by a number of passages in the *Moreh Nevukhim* (*Guide of the Perplexed*) and by his treatise on the calendar, *The Sanctification of the New Moon* (*Kiddush Rosh Hodesh* in *Mishneh Torah*). In the *Guide* there are references to technical aspects of Ptolemaic astronomy, and it is revealed that Maimonides' disciple Joseph ibn Sham'un had studied Ptolemy's *Almagest* under him. Maimonides states that he was acquainted with the son of Jābir ibn Aflaḥ of Seville (d. c. 1150), the author of a well-known astronomical text which takes exception to some Ptolemaic principles. He also refers to a lost work of Ibn Bāja (d. 1139), concerning the principles of astronomy, that he had obviously read with care. According to Maimonides, the physical difficulties of eccentric and epicyclic spheres need not concern the astronomer, whose task is merely to propose a theory in which the motions of the planets and the stars are uniform and circular, and conform to observation. In the *Sanctification*, Maimonides describes the calendric rules that were used in the time of the Sanhedrin, the rules of the fixed calendar that apply to this day, and the astronomical determination of the beginning of the month. The third section again shows Maimonides to be competent in the technical aspects of Ptolemaic astronomy, although he made no original contribution to the subject. In 1194 Maimonides wrote a letter addressed to the rabbis of southern France strongly denouncing *astrology as a pseudoscience opposed to the true science of astronomy, an opinion rarely expressed by Jewish scholars in the Middle Ages. In this letter Maimonides stated that astrology was the first secular subject he studied, and that he had read everything available in Arabic on the discipline.

[Bernard R. Goldstein]

TRANSLATIONS

Among Maimonides' halakhic works, Y. Kafah published a new Hebrew translation of the *Sefer ha-Mitzvot* (1958) from the original Arabic, on which C.B. Chavel based his English version, *The Commandments: Sefer ha-Mitzvot of Maimonides*, 2 vols. (1967). An English translation of the entire *Mishneh Torah*, almost all of whose volumes have appeared as of 2005, is being published in the Yale Judaica Series (begun 1949). An edition with an English translation of the first two books of *Mishneh Torah*, based on the Bodleian (Oxford) codex, was published by Moses Hyamson in 1962.

The Arabic original of the *Guide* was edited, with a French translation, by S. Munk (*Le guide des égarés*, 3 vols. (1856–66); ed. by I. Joel, based on Munk's text, 1931). Samuel ibn Tibbon's Hebrew translation was first printed in Rome

before 1480, and again in Venice, 1551, Sabionetta, 1553, and frequently thereafter. Yehudah Even-Shemuel (Kaufmann) edited part of this text with introductions and a commentary in three volumes (1935–59). Yehudah Even-Shemuel (Kaufman) also published a full edition of the Samuel ibn Tibbon translation, but without commentary, in 2000. Y. Kafah published the Judaeo-Arabic original with a modern Hebrew translation in three volumes in 1972. Michael Schwarz published a modern Hebrew translation from the Arabic with a modern Hebrew commentary and bibliography in two volumes in 2002. The translation of Judah al-Harizi was edited, with notes, by L. Schlossberg in three parts (1851–79; 19123). Both versions were translated into Latin: that of Ibn Tibbon by J. Buxtorf (Basel, 1629) and Al-Harizi's edited by A. Justinianus (Paris, 1520). The *Guide* was translated into English by M. Friedlaender, 3 volumes (1885; 1904²; repr. 1956), and by S. Pines (1963), with introductions by L. Strauss, and the translator C. Rabin published an abridged translation with an introduction by J. Guttmann (1952). German translations were undertaken in the 19th century (R. Fuerstenthal, pt. 1, 1839; M. Stern, pt. 2, 1864; S. Scheyer, pt. 3, 1838), all based on the Hebrew version of Ibn Tibbon. There is also a modern Hebrew translation from the Arabic by A. Siman and E. Mani, and versions in Italian, Spanish, and Hungarian.

I. Efron published an English translation of Maimonides' *Treatise on Logic* (in: PAAJR, 8, 1938), together with part of the Arabic original and three Hebrew versions. He also published a revised edition of the full Arabic text (in Hebrew alphabet) based on the edition of M. Tuerker (in: PAAJR, 34 (1966), 155ff.). J. Gorfinkle translated the *Shemonah Perakim* into English under the title *The Eight Chapters of Maimonides on Ethics* (1966). The *Iggeret Teiman* was translated by Boaz Cohen, *Moses Maimonides' Epistle to Yemen* (1952), edited by A.S. Halkin. Translations by Abraham Halkin and discussion by David Hartman of *The Epistle on Martyrdom*, *The Epistle to Yemen*, and *The Essay on Resurrection* are found in *Crisis and Leadership: The Epistles of Maimonides* (1985). S. Muntner edited versions of many of Maimonides' medical works: *Perush le-Firkei Abukrat* ("Commentary on the Aphorisms of Hippocrates" (1961), with an Eng. introd. (*Pirkei Moshe bi-Refuah* ("Maimonides' Medical Aphorisms" (1959), with Eng. introd.); *Sefer ha-Kazzeret* (1940; *Treatise on Asthma*, 1963); *Sammei ha-Mavet* (1942; *Treatise on Poisons and Their Antidotes*, 1966); and *Hanhagat ha-Beri'ut* ("Guide to Good Health" (1957); *Regimen Sanitatis*, Ger., 1966). Volume 1 of *The Medical Aphorisms of Moses Maimonides* (ed. F. Rosner and S. Muntner) appeared in 1970. Selected letters of Maimonides are to be found in English translation in F. Kobler (ed.) *Letters of Jews Through the Ages*, 1 (1952), 178–219 (see also introduction, lx–lxi).

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MAIMUNA, celebration held by all Maghrebi Jews and many Eastern communities at the end of the last day of Passover which, according to tradition, is the anniversary of the death of *Maimonides’ father *Maimon b. Joseph who lived for a time in Fez. In every home, tables are set with food and drinks having a symbolic significance, varying according to local custom. These include fresh pitchers of sweet milk, garlands of leaves and flowers, branches of fig trees, and ears of wheat. Usually a live fish (a symbol of fertility) is placed on the table, swimming in a bowl. The menu includes lettuce leaves dipped in honey, buttermilk, and pancakes spread with butter and honey. There is a “lucky dip,” a bowl of flour in which golden objects are placed. In some places a plate of flour is set on the table with five eggs and five beans and dates set in it. In Oran, vessels of silver and gold are included in the table decoration. On this night people eat only dairy foods and wafers made of fried dough resembling pancakes, known as *muflita*. No meat is to be consumed. The Jews visit each other, taking gifts of food. On the day following the holiday, the actual day of Maimuna, people go out to the fields, cemeteries, or the beaches and organize large social gatherings. In modern Israel Jews of Moroccan extraction celebrate the day after Passover with communal outings and picnics, and a central gathering is held in Jerusalem. The exact meaning of the word Maimuna is unknown. A suggestion that it is connected with the name of Maimun, the king of the jinns, has been questioned by scholars. In an article in *Tarbiz* (41,2, Jan–March 1972), Y. Einhorn quotes new sources to support his contention that the name Maimuna is, in fact linked with the king of the jinns.

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[Reuben Kashani]

MAINE, northernmost New England state, had an estimated Jewish population of 9,300 out of a total of 1,277,000 (0.7%) in 2001. More than 7,000 lived in the southern part of the State (in Portland, the largest city, Biddeford, Saco, Brunswick, and Bath). Other substantial communities were Bangor, approximately 1000; Lewiston-Auburn, approximately 500; Rockland approximately 200; Waterville, approximately 200; Augusta, approximately 200; and 200 in other parts of Maine in such communities as Calais, Gardner, Caribou, Rumford Falls, Old Town, Old Orchard Beach and Bar Harbor. A large Jewish summer population added considerably to this number but was difficult to estimate.

There were five congregations in Portland, including a Chabad center, three in Bangor, two in Augusta, and one each in Old Orchard, Biddeford, Augusta, Rockland and Bath.

The Jewish Community Alliance of Southern Maine, located in Portland, and the Bangor Jewish Community Council are the two representative Jewish organizations in the State. The Cedars Nursing Home, the successor to the Jewish Home for the Aged in Portland, is the only such Jewish facility in Maine. Both Portland and Bangor maintained Jewish funeral chapels and Portland also maintained a Jewish Day School. There were Hillel Foundation groups at the University of Southern Maine, University of Maine in Orono and at the private Bates, Bowdoin and Colby Colleges. In addition, the history of Jewish life in Maine was maintained through the Judaica Collection at the Sampson Center for Diversity on the Portland campus of the University of Southern Maine and through the Documenting Old Portland Jewry project.

A Jewish Film Festival has been an annual event in Portland since 1999. Camp Modin, located in Belgrade and founded in 1922, is among America’s oldest overnight camps and New England’s oldest Jewish camp.

Susman Abrams (1743–1830), a native of Hamburg, Germany, was the first known Jewish resident of Maine. He came to the state in the post-Revolutionary period and lived in Waldborough, Thomaston, and finally in Union where he operated a tannery. Abrams married a Christian woman but did not himself convert to Christianity.

Maine had relatively few German or Sephardic Jewish residents. The Campanal and Decoster families, with Sephardic roots, have been prominent in Maine for several decades and Joseph M. Papo, who was the executive director of the Portland Jewish Federation in 1947–48, wrote the well-regarded book *Sephardim in Twentieth Century America: In Search of Unity* (1987).

German Jews were among the earliest Jewish residents of the state and began to settle in Bangor by 1829. Bangor developed numerous Jewish institutions and a Jewish cemetery was created in Waterville in 1830.