

The Almohads' condemnation of the popular Maliki theological-legal school [a Sunni school of thought named for Malik ibn Anas who lived in Medina in the eighth century] led to rebellion against them [the Almohads] throughout southern Morocco and along the coast.

In his magisterial study on the appropriation and role of the sciences in the medieval Jewish communities of Southern France, Gad Freudenthal documented and explained the radical transformation which these communities underwent, from traditional Talmud-Torah centers into leading centers of philosophy and science. I wish to thank them for raising interesting questions. I am also grateful for helpful comments from Erik Dreff, Rachel Haliva, and an anonymous referee, as well as for the technical assistance I received from Zoli Filotas. As Rachel Haliva has pointed out to me, this is not true for all thirteenth-century Maimonideans. Ravitzky, *The Thought of Rabbi Zerahyah b. According to Maimonides the commandment to love God Deut. Note that throughout this paper I have often modified existing English translations. Fraenkel, From Maimonides to Samuel ibn Tibbon: At first view, the Maimonidean framework invoked by Freudenthal fails to explain this phenomenon. They include not only study aids such as dictionaries of technical terms and philosophical encyclopedias that make scientific contents accessible to a wider public, but also many distinctly Jewish genres*—from commentaries on the Bible to synagogue sermons. For one thing, much of the *Guide of the Perplexed* is devoted to a straightforward explanation of the allegorical meaning of terms and parables occurring in the Bible and in rabbinic texts. Halbertal, *Concealment and Revelation: This view was first set forth by I. Only recently are the basic assumptions of Strauss coming under scrutiny. See, for example, A. Maimonides is consistently described as the greatest Jewish representative of this school. To explain the rationale for disseminating philosophy and science to the general public, I first briefly examine the political Platonism which seems to be at odds with this project, in particular the division of human beings into philosophers and non-philosophers and the esoteric character of philosophy following from this division. Since human nature is not susceptible to radical change, however, this replacement must take place gradually. It is complemented by the prescription to study the Law of Moses, including its esoteric contents, i. The main difference between Maimonides and Ibn Tibbon is that for the former intellectual habituation to true beliefs is a function of legislation whereas for the latter it is a function of the scientific culture of the non-Jewish environment. Pointing out in public that the literal sense of the divine Law is false and disclosing its allegorical sense would precisely undermine the intention of the prophet who concealed the allegorical sense because of the division of humankind into philosophers and non-philosophers. They will, therefore, no longer follow the guidance of the lawgiver on account of either the literal or the allegorical sense of the divine Law. Hourani and translated by C. In the introduction to the *Guide*, the perplexed is characterized as a Jewish intellectual who has studied philosophy, but fails to understand the relationship between philosophy and the divine Law. Maimonides indeed claims to have concealed his teachings in the *Guide* through obscuring his argumentation by means of esoteric devices such as deliberate disorder and contradictions. These explanations are, after all, accessible to anyone who can read. To solve this puzzle, my key claim is that for Maimonides not only Jewish philosophers need to be elevated from the literal to the allegorical content of the divine Law, but non-philosophers as well. Although non-philosophers cannot acquire knowledge by means of demonstration, they can be habituated to beliefs that correspond to the true nature of things. These beliefs, acquired through habituation, coincide with the knowledge philosophers acquire through demonstration. For man has in his nature a love. For this reason also man is blind to the apprehension of the true realities and inclines toward the things to which he is habituated. All this is due to people being habituated to, and brought up on, texts. The false belief that God is corporeal is thus replaced with the true belief that God is incorporeal. In both cases the belief is the outcome of habituation. Habituation, therefore, can be an obstacle as much as a vehicle for spreading the truth. Stroumsa, *Maimonides in His World: It turns out, therefore, that much of the exegetical program of the *Guide* aims not only at resolving the perplexity of philosophers, but the perplexity of non-philosophers as well! It is part of a broad project of habituating non-philosophers to true beliefs which**

clearly breaks with the framework of Platonism. For his sociology of religion Maimonides makes creative use of various sources which have been studied in detail in previous scholarship. A brief summary will thus suffice here. God made a wily and gracious arrangement [talattafa] with regard to all the individuals of the living beings that suck. For when born, such individuals are extremely soft and cannot feed on dry food. Accordingly breasts were prepared for them so that they should produce milk with a view to their receiving humid food, which is similar to the composition of their bodies, until their limbs gradually and little by little become dry and solid. Maimonides adapts elements of this conception to explain the many commandments included in the Law of Moses whose rationale is not evident. His explanation is based on an ontological thesis applied to human nature: Funkenstein, *Theology and the Scientific Imagination: On divine accommodation in general*, see S. Benin, *The Footprints of God: And therefore man, according to his nature is not capable of abandoning suddenly all to which he was habituated ["alifa]*. As a consequence Moses had to deal with a twofold constraint: This would have had the same effect as feeding a newborn solid food. Instead, Moses had to embark on a project of gradual reform. The paradigmatic example for the compromises which this reform project required is the laws of sacrifice: His wisdom, may He be exalted, and His gracious ruse, which is manifest in regard to all His creatures, did not require that He give us a Law prescribing the rejection. At that time this would have been similar to the appearance of a prophet in these times who, calling upon the people to worship God, would say: Your worship should consist solely in meditation without any works at all. Through this divine ruse it came about that the memory of idolatry was effaced and that the grandest and true foundation of our belief—namely, the existence and oneness of the deity—was firmly established, while at the same time the souls had no feeling of repugnance. They are a concession Moses had to make to the stage of the Jews in their cultural-religious development at the time of the exodus from Egypt. Their role is similar to that of the milk for the newborn. Inadequate habits of worship thus can be replaced through adequate habits in a process of gradual religious reformation. What scholars have not yet clearly seen, however, is that this developmental model applies not only to religious practices but to religious beliefs as well. Hence the secrets of the Torah can be disclosed not only to philosophers, but, step by step, to non-philosophers as well. At the final stage the beliefs of philosophers, based on demonstration, will coincide with the beliefs of non-philosophers, based on habituation. The issue requires further investigation, however, because Maimonides also holds that sacrifices will resume in the Messianic era. He thus felt authorized to take the reform project one step further by introducing a new aspect of the true notion of God, i. A second example is the belief in reward and punishment. Now inasmuch as these notions were generally accepted so that they were regarded as certain, and as God, may He be exalted, wished in His pity for us to efface this error from our minds. For the belief that He will procure us benefits if we obey Him and will take vengeance on us if we disobey Him,. Here again Maimonides does not convey doctrines by means of demonstration nor by means of dialectical, rhetorical, or poetical devices. Instead he imposes a succinct summary of Aristotelian metaphysics and physics through the authority of the law. Maimonides, by contrast, thinks that nihilism can be avoided if true beliefs are imposed gradually through habituation. The dichotomy between philosophers who assent to true beliefs on the basis of demonstration and non-philosophers who embrace true beliefs on the basis of habituation is, however, less clear-cut than I have presented it thus far. The ultimate goal of the Law of Moses, according to Maimonides, is twofold: It takes pains to inculcate [i. The time assigned to study should be divided into three parts. This is called Talmud. The words of the Prophets are contained in the written Law and their interpretation in the oral Law. The subjects called Pardes [i. But once he makes progress in wisdom [hokhmah].

Chapter 2 : Maimonides - Simple English Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Almohad universities continued the knowledge of Greek and Roman ancient writers, while contemporary cultural figures included Averroes and the Jewish philosopher Maimonides. In terms of Muslim jurisprudence, the state gave recognition to the Zahirite school of thought, [13] though Shaf'ites were also given a measure of authority at times.

At an early age, he developed an interest in sciences and philosophy. He read those Greek philosophers accessible in Arabic translations, and was deeply immersed in the sciences and learning of Islamic culture. This sage, who was revered for his personality as well as for his writings, led a busy life, and wrote many of his works while travelling or in temporary accommodation. The loss of this status left the Jewish and Christian communities with conversion to Islam, death, or exile. Some say, though, that it is likely that Maimonides feigned a conversion to Islam before escaping. During this time, he composed his acclaimed commentary on the Mishnah, during the years 1158–1161. While in Cairo, he studied in a yeshiva attached to a small synagogue which now bears his name. He wrote that this day of visiting the Temple Mount was a day of holiness for him and his descendants. He sent five letters to the Jewish communities of Lower Egypt asking them to pool money together to pay the ransom. The money was collected and then given to two judges sent to Palestine to negotiate with the Crusaders. The captives were eventually released. After a long arduous trip through the desert, however, David was unimpressed by the goods on offer there. The death of his brother caused Maimonides to become sick with grief. The greatest misfortune that has befallen me during my entire life—worse than anything else—was the demise of the saint, may his memory be blessed, who drowned in the Indian sea, carrying much money belonging to me, to him, and to others, and left with me a little daughter and a widow. On the day I received that terrible news I fell ill and remained in bed for about a year, suffering from a sore boil, fever, and depression, and was almost given up. About eight years have passed, but I am still mourning and unable to accept consolation. And how should I console myself? He grew up on my knees, he was my brother, [and] he was my student. Around 1161, Maimonides was appointed the Nagid of the Egyptian Jewish community. Goitein believes the leadership he displayed during the ransoming of the Crusader captives led to this appointment. Gaining widespread recognition, he was appointed court physician to the Grand Vizier Al Qadi al Fadil, then to Sultan Saladin, after whose death he remained a physician to the royal family. He was knowledgeable about Greek and Arabic medicine, and followed the principles of humorism in the tradition of Galen. He did not blindly accept authority but used his own observation and experience. It is remarkable that he managed to write extended treatises, including not only medical and other scientific studies but some of the most systematically thought-through and influential treatises on halakha rabbinic law and Jewish philosophy of the Middle Ages. It is widely believed that he was briefly buried in the study room *beit hamidrash* of the synagogue courtyard, and that, soon after, in accordance with his wishes, his remains were exhumed and taken to Tiberias, where he was re-interred. This location for his final resting-place has been debated, for in the Jewish Cairene community, a tradition holds that he remained buried in Egypt. He succeeded Maimonides as Nagid and as court physician at the age of eighteen. The office of Nagid was held by the Maimonides family for four successive generations until the end of the 14th century. Although it no longer functions as a Jewish house of worship, it is open to the public. Maimonides is sometimes said to be a descendant of King David, although he never made such a claim. It is exceptional for its logical construction, concise and clear expression and extraordinary learning, so that it became a standard against which other later codifications were often measured. A popular medieval saying that also served as his epitaph states, From Mosheh of the Torah to Mosheh Maimonides there was none like Mosheh. It chiefly referred to his rabbinic writings. But Maimonides was also one of the most influential figures in medieval Jewish philosophy. His brilliant adaptation of Aristotelian thought to Biblical faith deeply impressed later Jewish thinkers, and had an unexpected immediate historical impact. In reaction, the more radical interpretations of Maimonides were defeated. At least amongst Ashkenazi Jews, there was a tendency to ignore his specifically philosophical writings and to stress instead the rabbinic and halakhic writings. These writings often included considerable philosophical chapters or discussions in support of halakhic observance; David Hartman observes that

Maimonides clearly expressed "the traditional support for a philosophical understanding of God both in the Aggadah of Talmud and in the behavior of the hasid [the pious Jew]. Crescas bucked the eclectic trend, by demolishing the certainty of the Aristotelian world-view, not only in religious matters but also in the most basic areas of medieval science such as physics and geometry. Because of his path-finding synthesis of Aristotle and Biblical faith, Maimonides had a fundamental influence on the great Christian theologian Saint Thomas Aquinas. An example is the modern citation of his method of determining death of the body in the controversy regarding declaration of death to permit organ donation for transplantation.

Chapter 3 : Project MUSE - Maimonides in His World

There is also Maimonides School in Brookline, Massachusetts, Maimonides Academy School in Los Angeles, California, the Brauser Maimonides Academy in Hollywood, Florida, and Maimonides Medical Center in Brooklyn, New York.

Al-Andalus followed the fate of Africa. Between and , the Almohads gradually wrested control from the Murabits over the Moorish principalities in Iberia. The Almohads transferred the capital of Al-Andalus to Seville. The Almohad princes had a longer and more distinguished career than the Murabits. Initially their government drove many Jewish and Christian subjects to take refuge in the growing Christian states of Portugal, Castile, and Aragon. From the time of Yusuf II , however, the Almohads governed their co-religionists in Iberia and central North Africa through lieutenants, their dominions outside Morocco being treated as provinces. When Almohad amirs crossed the Straits it was to lead a jihad against the Christians and then return to Morocco. The battle broke the Almohad advance, but the Christian powers remained too disorganized to profit from it immediately. Before his death in , al-Nasir appointed his young ten-year-old son as the next caliph Yusuf II "al-Mustansir". The Almohads passed through a period of effective regency for the young caliph, with power exercised by an oligarchy of elder family members, palace bureaucrats and leading nobles. In early , the youthful caliph died in accident, without any heirs. But the rapid appointment upset other branches of the family, notably the brothers of the late al-Nasir, who governed in al-Andalus. The challenge was immediately raised by one of them, then governor in Murcia , who declared himself Caliph Abdallah al-Adil. With the help of his brothers, he quickly seized control of al-Andalus. This coup has been characterized as the pebble that finally broke al-Andalus. It was the first internal coup among the Almohads. The Almohad clan, despite occasional disagreements, had always remained tightly knit and loyally behind dynastic precedence. Sensing his greater priority was Marrakesh, where recusant Almohad sheikhs had rallied behind Yahya, another son of al-Nasir, al-Adil paid little attention to this little band of misfits. With Almohad arms, men and cash dispatched to Morocco to help Caliph al-Adil impose himself in Marrakesh, there was little means to stop the sudden onslaught. In late , with surprising ease, the Portuguese raiders reached the environs of Seville. Knowing they were outnumbered, the Almohad governors of the city refused to confront the Portuguese raiders, prompting the disgusted population of Seville to take matters into their own hands, raise a militia, and go out in the field by themselves. The result was a veritable massacre – the Portuguese men-at-arms easily mowed down the throng of poorly armed townsfolk. Thousands, perhaps as much as 20,, were said to have been slain before the walls of Seville. A similar disaster befell a similar popular levy by Murcians at Aspe that same year. Trust in the Almohad leadership was severely shaken by these events – the disasters were promptly blamed on the distractions of Caliph al-Adil and the incompetence and cowardice of his lieutenants, the successes credited to non-Almohad local leaders who rallied defenses. But Capilla refused to hand them over, forcing the Castilians to lay a long and difficult siege. A popular uprising broke out in Cordova – al-Bayyasi was killed and his head dispatched as a trophy to Marrakesh. The Andalusian branch of the Almohads refused to accept this turn of events. He promptly purchased a truce from Ferdinand III in return for , maravedis , allowing him to organize and dispatch the greater part of the Almohad army in Spain across the straits in to confront Yahya. That same year, Portuguese and Leonese renewed their raids deep into Muslim territory, basically unchecked. Feeling the Almohads had failed to protect them, popular uprisings took place throughout al-Andalus. City after city deposed their hapless Almohad governors and installed local strongmen in their place. A Murcian strongman, Muhammad ibn Yusuf ibn Hud al-Judhami , who claimed descentance from the Banu Hud dynasty that had once ruled the old taifa of Saragossa , emerged as the central figure of these rebellions, systematically dislodging Almohad garrisons through central Spain. The next twenty years saw a massive advance in the Christian reconquista – the old great Andalusian citadels fell in a grand sweep: The Andalusians were helpless before this onslaught. Ibn Hudd had attempted to check the Leonese advance early on, but most of his Andalusian army was destroyed at the battle of Alange in . Ibn Hud scrambled to move remaining arms and men to save threatened or besieged Andalusian citadels, but with so many attacks at once, it was a hopeless endeavor. The Almohads would not return. After the great Christian

advance of the 12th century, the Emirate of Granada was practically all that remained of old al-Andalus. Some of the captured citadels e. Murcia, Jaen, Niebla were reorganized as tributary vassals for a few more years, but most were annexed by the s. Granada alone would remain independent for an additional years, flourishing as the new center of al-Andalus. Collapse in the Maghreb[edit] In their African holdings, the Almohads encouraged the establishment of Christians even in Fez , and after the Battle of Las Navas de Tolosa they occasionally entered into alliances with the kings of Castile. They were successful in expelling the garrisons placed in some of the coast towns by the Norman kings of Sicily. The history of their decline differs from that of the Almoravids , whom they had displaced. They were not assailed by a great religious movement, but lost territories, piecemeal, by the revolt of tribes and districts. Their most effective enemies were the Banu Marin Marinids who founded the next dynasty. Almohad reforms Almohad universities continued the knowledge of Greek and Roman ancient writers, while contemporary cultural figures included Averroes and the Jewish philosopher Maimonides. While not all Almohad leaders were Zahirites, quite a few of them were not only adherents of the legal school but also well-versed in its tenets. The Almohads reduced decorations, and introduced the use of geometrical holes, following in general the principle of expressing a certain degree of magnificence. As centuries passed, the buildings had increasingly oriental appearance and similar structures: The most common building material was brickwork, followed by mortar. Foreign influence can be seen in domes of Egyptian origin and, in the civil sector, the triumphal arches inspired by those in the same country. The construction of fortifications with towers was also widespread.

Chapter 4 : Who was Maimonides? | Israel Drazin | The Blogs

Maimonides departure from the standard Platonic position is best understood as an Aristotelian adaptation of the political-theological program of the Almohad rulers of Muslim Spain and North Africa.

He was the pre-eminent medieval Jewish philosopher, and marked the end of the golden age of Jewish culture in Moorish Spain. His copious works on Jewish law and Ethics were initially met with much opposition during his lifetime, but today his works and his views are considered a cornerstone of Jewish thought and study, and he remains the most widely debated Jewish thinker among modern scholars see the section on Jewish Philosophers. Maimonides foreshadowed Scholasticism and undoubtedly influenced later medieval Scholastics such as St. Thomas Aquinas, Albertus Magnus and John Duns Scotus, although he also maintained many doctrines which the Scholastics could not accept. He strove to reconcile Aristotelian and Neo-Platonic philosophy and science with the teachings of the Jewish Torah. At an early age, he developed an interest in the sciences and philosophy, and read the works of Muslim scholars and also Arabic translations of the Greek philosophers. He studied the Jewish Torah under his father, Maimon, who had in turn studied under the great scholar, Rabbi Joseph ibn Migash - There, Maimonides acquired most of his secular knowledge, studying at the University of Al Karaouine. As his reputation grew steadily, the Islamic authorities began to inquire into the religious disposition of this highly gifted young man, and Maimonides narrowly avoided execution due to the intercession of a Muslim friend. In time, he obtained a position as physician to the Grand Vizier Alfadhil and, later, Sultan Saladin of Egypt he also reputedly treated Richard the Lionheart while on the Crusades. He began to take a leading part in the administration of the affairs of the community of Fostat and Cairo, and by he had become recognized as its official head. In Fostat, both Jews and Muslims observed public mourning for three days, and his body was taken to Tiberias, Israel, where his tomb became a place of pilgrimage. His son, Avraham, also recognized as a great scholar, succeeded Maimonides as head of the Egyptian Jewish community and as court physician. Work Back to Top Maimonides composed works of Jewish scholarship, rabbinic law, philosophy and medical texts, mainly in Arabic. In philosophy, Maimonides was a Jewish Scholastic and he exerted an important influence on the later medieval Scholastics such as St. Thomas Aquinas. His aim was to reconcile Aristotelian philosophy and science with the teachings of the Jewish Torah. One of his central tenets was that it is impossible for the truths arrived at by human intellect to contradict those revealed by God. In his attempt to prove this, he primarily relied upon the science of Aristotle and the teachings of the Talmud, finding basis for the latter in the former, although in some important points he departed from the teachings of Aristotle. He also wrote on theodicy the attempt to reconcile the existence of a God with the existence of evil in the world, adopting the Aristotelian view that defines evil as the lack of, or the reduced presence of, a God. However, Maimonides was also led by his admiration for the Neo-Platonic commentators to maintain many doctrines which the Scholastics could not accept, such as "apophatic theology" or "negative theology", in which one describes God only through negative attributes. In his "Guide for the Perplexed", he explicitly distinguished between "true beliefs" beliefs about God which produced intellectual perfection and "necessary beliefs" beliefs which were conducive to improving social order. For instance, God does not actually become "angry" with people, having no human passions, but that may be a "necessary belief" if it encourages people to desist from sinning. He distinguished two kinds of intelligence in man, a material one dependent on, and influenced by, the body and an immaterial one independent of the bodily organism. This focus on the immortality of the soul for people of perfected intellect rather than the traditional resurrection of physical dead bodies developed into a full-blown controversy and prompted some hostile criticism from the rabbis of his day, and he was even charged as a heretic by some Jewish leaders. In an attempt to placate his opponents, he arrived at the compromise position that physical resurrection may occur at some time in the future, but was not permanent or general. In response to an inquiry concerning astrology, Maimonides answered that man should believe only what can be supported either by rational proof, by the evidence of the senses, or by trustworthy authority. Astrology, therefore, does not deserve to be described as a science, and anyway it robs life of purpose and makes man a slave of destiny. In

his commentary on the "Mishnah", Maimonides formulated his 13 principles of Jewish faith, which evoked much criticism at the time, but which eventually became widely held and are considered as obligatory by Orthodox Jews today: His "Mishneh Torah" was a code of Jewish law of the widest possible scope and depth, gathering together all the binding laws from the Talmud. It too attracted much opposition initially, but it has been recognized as a monumental contribution to the systemized writing of Halakha the collective body of Jewish religious law , and has been widely studied throughout the centuries. Maimonides also wrote a number of influential medical texts, some of which are still in existence, including a collection of medical aphorisms, and treatises on poisons and their antidotes, hemorrhoids, cohabitation, regimen of health, the causes of symptoms, the human temperaments and asthma.

Chapter 5 : Maimonides (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy)

Maimonides eventually came to what is today Cairo, called Fustat back then, to escape from the Almohads. He would live in Egypt for the balance of his life, the next 45 years. The first problem was that it says three times in the Torah that Jews are not supposed to go back to live in Egypt.

He is considered the most important Jewish philosopher, and famously combined Aristotelian philosophy with an understanding of Jewish Scripture. He believed that God is unknowable, and in *The Guide for the Perplexed* he will criticize those who believe in anthropomorphic human-like conceptions of the divine. Maimonides also believed that the Torah can be read in different ways, and that with proper understanding one can recognize the truths contained within. He would famously write an extensive commentary on the Oral Torah *Mishneh Torah*, and be the first to put forth a formulation of Jewish theology known as the Thirteen Principles of Faith. Born in Cordova, Spain, a thriving intellectual center in the medieval world, Maimonides and his family were forced to flee when the city was captured by a group known as the Almohads. The Almohads required everyone in the city to either convert to Islam, go into exile, or be killed. Maimonides would make his way through Southern Spain and Morocco, before ultimately settling in Cairo, Egypt. There, he became famous for successfully writing letters to the Jewish communities in Southern Egypt, which resulted in money being raised to pay the ransom needed to free Jews captured in the city of Bilbays. He would become the leader *Nadir* of the Egyptian Jewish community. As a consequence, Maimonides needed to make money and so he became a physician. He would be appointed as the official court physician to the Sultan and the Royal family, and remain a physician the rest of his life. Maimonides believes that all truth comes from God. In the Garden of Eden, while Adam did not know to cover himself moral knowledge, he did have true knowledge of the nature of God and the world. He knew that God was not a material being, but rather an eternal, unchanging, spiritual being. Unfortunately, over time this truth was lost. For this reason, Maimonides explains that when Moses had his revelation, he needed to do more than just tell the Israelites the truths of monotheism that there is one God. In this way, Maimonides understands Adam, the Biblical Patriarchs, and Moses to have known the true nature of the world and God. For this reason, he explains that the philosophical and scientific truths of ancient Greece are also contained in the Torah. In this way, Maimonides is similar to other philosophers in the medieval period known as Scholastics, who understood philosophy reason and faith revelation to be compliments of each other. In order to show that the truths of ancient Greece are contained in the Jewish Scriptures, Maimonides explains that the Torah can be read and interpreted in different ways. For Maimonides, God is an eternal, unchanging, and non-material being. Influenced by Aristotelianism, Neoplatonism, and Islamic philosophy, Maimonides embraces an understanding of God as both unknowable and indescribable. This is known as negative theology. For this reason, Maimonides says that the best form of prayer is silence. Believing that the heavenly bodies are eternally in motion, he explains that since as bodies they are finite, there must therefore be something with is infinite which allows them to be in motion eternally. This infinite being is God. Maimonides, although recognizing that there is a limit to human understanding and that Creation cannot be proven logically, will also put forth arguments for the possibility of creation. First, Maimonides addresses those who believe that Creation from nothing *ex nihilo* is impossible. The argument is that since everything comes from something else, for example the way an oak tree comes from an acorn, it is impossible that the world could have come from nothing. Maimonides responds by explaining that even though this is currently the way the world works, before the world existed, reality could have been otherwise. In this way, Maimonides shows the possibility of Creation. As created beings, Maimonides believes our purpose is to cultivate ourselves, morally as well as intellectually, in order to be as close to God as possible. He encourages us to be charitable, to honor our parents, to avoid anger and hate, and to follow the laws of the Torah which he believes are designed to help us be both healthy and wise. Just as the body benefits from being in equilibrium, likewise the soul is healthy when it is in between extremes. Maimonides explains the importance of being able to avoid anger and other emotions in order to maintain proper understanding. While wisdom is the result of the healthy soul,

Maimonides also explains that there are times when one should go beyond the mean. He tells us that the pious hasid knows when to do this, as for example when Moses went without water for forty days and nights in preparing himself to receive the revelation at Mount Sinai. Maimonides believes that as human beings, we are but one part of Creation. By recognizing our lowly position in the universe and having humility, we act virtuously. But when we lose sight of the good, and act according to our lower nature, there is evil in the world. Maimonides will explain how it is possible that there can be evil in a world created by God. This is known as the problem of evil or theodicy. He says that while God created all that is good in the world, since humans have free will, they can act in a way that is without good. In addition to his philosophical writings, Maimonides wrote an extensive commentary on the Oral Torah Mishneh Torah in which he puts forth his Thirteen Principles of Faith. Maimonides was a rabbi, also known as the Rambam. His Thirteen Principles serve as the first formulation of Jewish theology in history and include the belief that God exists, that he is one, that he is not a material being, that he is eternal, and that there is no other God. Additionally, Maimonides says all Jews must believe that revelation was received by the prophets, that Moses is the greatest of the prophets, that the laws received at Mount Sinai are from God and that they cannot be changed. Finally, Maimonides says that God knows all human actions and will reward good and punish evil, and that the Messiah is coming and the dead will be resurrected. Maimonides is considered the greatest Jewish philosopher of all time for both combining the philosophy of Aristotle with his understanding of Jewish Scripture, his commentary on the Oral Torah, and for putting forth his Thirteen Principles. He would influence modern thinkers such as Spinoza , Leibniz , and Newton, and in modern times has been used as an example by Leo Strauss of what can be found when one reads between the lines.

Chapter 6 : Maimonides > By Individual Philosopher > Philosophy

Unfortunately, when Maimonides was 10 years old, a fundamentalist Berber tribe called the Almohads entered Córdoba and presented Jewish residents with three choices: conversion, exile or death. The Maimoni family chose exile, leaving Córdoba and eventually emigrating to Morocco in about , when Maimonides was in his early 20s.

Life and Works Maimonides was born to a distinguished family in Cordova, Spain in In addition to Maimonides, it was the birthplace of Averroes. But events took a turn for the worse when the Almohads invaded in and offered all non-Muslims the choice of conversion, exile, or death. His first philosophic work of note was the Treatise on the Art of Logic. Around this time, he began work on his first religious masterpiece, the Commentary on the Mishnah, which was finished in It is noteworthy for the emphasis Maimonides places on Oral Torah, by which he means the details, specifications, and interpretations derived from the Written Torah, which was revealed to Moses at Sinai. While discussing the claim that all Israel has a share in the world to come, Maimonides lists 13 principles that he considers binding on every Jew: Maimonides arrived in Egypt in and eventually settled in Fustat, a section of Cairo. With the publication of the Mishneh Torah, he established himself as a thinker for the ages. Not only does this work systematize all the commandments of the Torah, it tries to show that every part of Jewish law serves a rational purpose and nothing is given for the sake of mere obedience. Of particular note are Book One The Book of Knowledge , which sets forth the philosophic foundations of Jewish belief, a theory of moral traits or dispositions, the need to study the Torah, the laws concerning idolatry, and the importance of repentance. Also of note is Book Fourteen Judges , which ends by arguing that a Messiah will come, restore sovereignty to Israel, establish peace with the other nations, and lead the world in the study of science and philosophy. By contrast, the Messiah will not make people rich, introduce changes in the Torah, or be required to perform miracles. Ostensibly a letter written to an advanced student who cannot decide whether to follow philosophy or the teachings of his religion, it is in reality much more: According to Maimonides, all of Jewish law aims at two things: The former is in every case a means to the latter. The soul is improved by acquiring correct opinions and eventually knowledge on everything humans are capable of knowing. The more knowledge the soul acquires, the more it is able to fulfill the commandment Deuteronomy 6: The biggest stumbling block to love of God is the belief that the only way to remain true to the Bible is to interpret it literally. The Guide has long been considered a controversial work and in some rabbinic circles was originally banned. It also raises the question of whether the real meaning of the Torah is too controversial to be taught to the average worshipper and should be restricted to the educated few; in short the question of esotericism. He defends himself by saying that the important issue is not whether and how resurrection will occur but whether it is possible for it to occur. As for the latter, once one accepts belief in creation, the possibility of bodily resurrection follows immediately. The Letter on Astrology was written at a time when many people believed that the heavenly bodies exert influence over human events. Nevertheless, he argues that there is no scientific basis for this belief and that it should be abandoned even if support for it can be found in the sacred literature. Facing ever-growing demands on his time, Maimonides worked himself into a state of exhaustion and died in Fostat in An old saying has it that from Moses to Moses, there was none like Moses. Fundamental Orientation Maimonides presents a challenge to the modern reader because his view of truth is totally unhistorical. We saw that he was guided by the need to systematize. Given original commandments, he argues that all are means to the fulfillment of the first two, which he interprets as belief in the existence of God and rejection of idolatry. To satisfy the first two commandments, one must believe in a timeless, changeless, immaterial deity who is one in every respect and unlike anything in the created order. A person who fails to recognize such a deity is accorded the status of an idolater no matter how many other commandments she may fulfill or how fervently she may fulfill them. Simply put, to worship God under a false description is not to worship God at all. Not only is this true at present, as Maimonides sees it, it has been true since God first spoke to Adam. Early in the Guide 1. By necessity this would have to include belief in a timeless, changeless, immaterial deity. Again Maimonides thinks he is justified in saying that Abraham discovered proofs for the existence of a God who is neither a body nor a force in a body even though the Bible

is silent on such matters. These proofs were supposedly passed down to Isaac and Jacob but lost during the Egyptian captivity when the Israelites adopted the pagan beliefs of their captors. When Moses arose to lead the people out of captivity, he faced a serious problem. If all he did were to offer philosophic proofs again, the people would forget them just as they had forgotten before. So instead of offering proofs alone, he offered the blueprint for a social order that would help the people remember their history and the principles on which it is founded. That is why in addition to the first two commandments, there are others designed to create an environment in which people will have the time, health, and mental facility needed to grasp the truth of monotheism GP 3. Judaism then is based on a particular philosophy. To someone who asks why we have no explicit record of their philosophy, Maimonides answers that any record of such teaching was destroyed when Israel went into exile and suffered persecution. So despite the appearance of a split between Jerusalem and Athens, Maimonides thinks there is only one tradition worth preserving: In short, Jewish tradition has always been philosophical. The problem is that these subjects are too difficult for the average worshipper to grasp and must be expressed as parables or metaphors that the educated few will interpret at one level and the average worshipper at another Stern Looking at his own situation, Maimonides concludes that the tradition of learning that began in Israel has been lost once again. People pray to a material God and justify their actions on the basis of literal interpretation. Someone was needed to reverse this situation and reintroduce Jews to the teachings of their own tradition. Strictly speaking, such truths are Jewish only in the sense that Jews were the first to discover them. From an ethnic standpoint, they are no more Jewish than the Pythagorean theorem is Greek. All this goes to show that Maimonides did not conceive of progress as we do. Although he regarded mastery of science and philosophy as essential parts of human perfection, he did not view them as cumulative. Rather than take us into new territory, his goal was to reacquaint us with the territory that Moses and the patriarchs had already staked out. The important truths do not change. Human progress is measured by the degree to which they are identified and understood. That is why the primary function of the Messiah will be to teach these truths and help create conditions in which more people are able to reflect on them. Demythologized Religion It is clear that the religion Maimonides envisions is not the normal kind. He recognizes that when one is first exposed to Bible stories and the ritual of daily prayer, one may need anthropomorphic descriptions of God and promises of material reward. As he points out time and again, the Torah speaks in the language of ordinary people. If it did not, its appeal would be greatly reduced. But, Maimonides continues, the purpose of the religion is to get one to the point where these things cease to matter and are eventually overcome. To take a few examples, the Bible often suggests that a prophet, or in one case the elders of Israel, saw God e. Maimonides counters GP 1. By the same token, when God is described as near or close, the Bible is not talking about physical location but intellectual apprehension "as when scientists say they are close to finding a cure for a disease GP 1. The many places where the Bible says that God spoke to a prophet do not indicate that God has vocal cords that produce sound but that the prophet came to understand what God wants GP 1. Again one is inclined to ask: Is this the religion of the prophets or a philosophically sanitized religion concocted by a medieval thinker under the sway of Aristotle? Maimonides would reply that there is no difference. The highest human achievement is the perfection of the intellect GP 3. As a sacred document, the Bible is a source of truth. While the truths contained in the Bible may not always be apparent, we know in principle that they are there if one wishes to dig deeply enough. Should human knowledge advance and come up with demonstrations it previously lacked, we would have no choice but to return to the Bible and alter our interpretation to take account of them GP 2. Anything else would be intellectually dishonest. Where does this take us? In the Parable of the Palace GP 3. He "who has achieved demonstration, to the extent that it is possible, of everything that may be demonstrated; and who has ascertained in divine matters, to the extent that that is possible, everything that may be ascertained; and who has come close to certainty in those matters in which one can only come close to it " This is not just an intellectual achievement but a spiritual one as well. God and the Via Negativa Maimonides offers several proofs for the existence of God, all of which are versions of the cosmological argument GP 2. According to one such argument, we assume that the heavenly bodies are engaged in eternal motion. We then recognize that it is impossible for there to be an infinite body or an infinite number of finite bodies. So every corporeal thing

is finite. If it is finite, it can only contain a finite amount of power. If it can only contain a finite amount of power, it can only explain motion over a finite period of time. Because the heavenly bodies are always moving, the only thing that can explain that motion is an infinite power. Because an infinite power cannot be contained in a finite thing, it cannot be corporeal. If it is not corporeal, it is not subject to division or change. Seeing that its power is infinite, it cannot derive that power from something else. Thus the only way to explain the motion of the heavenly bodies is to posit the existence of a being that is neither a body nor a force in a body. Although Maimonides thinks this argument gives us sufficient grounds for saying that God is, he does not think it provides any grounds for saying what God is. To see why not, we have to recognize that God is not one in a way comparable to anything else: According to Guide 1. There is no oneness at all except in believing that there is one simple essence in which there is no complexity or multiplicity of notions, but one notion only; so that from whatever angle you regard it and from whatever point of view you consider it, you will find that it is one, not divided in any way and by any cause into two notions. If Maimonides is right, there can be no plurality of faculties, moral dispositions, or essential attributes in God. Even to say that God is all-knowing, all-powerful, and all-good is to introduce plurality, if one means thereby that these qualities are separate attributes. The same is true if we say that God is a composite of matter and form, genus and specific difference, or essence and accident. All introduce plurality where none can be tolerated. Aside from religious considerations, plurality is objectionable because it compromises logical priority. If God were a composite of F and G, some reason would have to be found for what brought them together and keeps them together. In short, if God were a composite, there would have to be a cause prior to God, which is absurd GP 2.

Maimonides. Maimonides is one of the most famous Jewish philosophers from the Middle Ages. He is well known for writing the Commentary on the Mishnah (Mishnah Torah), which is a fourteen-volume work on Jewish law, as well as for his book Guide of the Perplexed.

Moses Maimonides Died Jewish philosopher T he philosopher Moses Maimonides wrote about a number of subjects, and became justifiably recognized as a man of wisdom not only in spiritual but in scientific matters. As a scholar of the scriptures, he added immeasurably to the literature of the Jewish faith. As a physician and scientist, he may be considered one of the earliest fathers of psychology as a discipline. Those scriptures include the Old Testament , and particularly its first five books, known as the Torah. To these, extensive books of commentary were added over the years: As for the name Moses, there were few greater names in Jewish history that Maimon could have given to his boy. At the time when the first Moses led the children of Israel out of slavery in Egypt, as described in the Old Testament Book of Exodus, the Israelites celebrated the first Passover, a highly important festival in the Jewish calendar. The "second Moses," as Maimonides came to be called, was born on the eve of Passover, March 30, , which also happened to fall on a Saturday, the Jewish Sabbath , or holy day. To Maimon, all these facts seemed significant, a sign that his son was destined for greatness. As a child, Maimonides was a serious-minded boy with a strong sense that he had a mission in life. Therefore he spent little time playing, and devoted much of his attention to educating his younger brother David. The Almohads were far less tolerant of other religions than the previous Muslim rulers had been, and the years that followed were tense ones. Finally, in , when Maimonides was twenty-five years old, the family moved to the city of Fez in Morocco. Years of wandering and tragedy In Fez, Maimon and David built a successful jewelry business while Maimonides continued to devote himself to his studies, particularly of medicine. Once again, the family lived quietly for a time, and once again their peaceful life was shattered—this time by Maimonides himself. In about , he published his first significant work, translated as Letter Concerning Apostasy. In , they moved to Palestine, but after five months they relocated to Alexandria, Egypt. There tragedy struck a double blow: Maimonides was devastated, particularly by the death of his younger brother, and he later recalled that for a whole year his grief prevented him from moving on with his life. Settling in Cairo, he began to make a living as a physician, and he continued his studies. At some point he had married, but his first wife died. Soon afterward, he remarried and had two children, a girl and a boy. The writings of Maimonides Despite the wide-ranging nature of his scholarly pursuits, Maimonides used a consistent approach to all subjects: Thus his work has continued to remain fresh to readers over the centuries. The first of these books was an attempt to render the complex legal writings of the Mishnah into a form that average readers could understand, and the Mishneh Torah classified the vast knowledge contained in the Talmud. More than years before Maimonides, Avicenna was the first to attempt a synthesis, or joining, of ancient Greek philosophy with the principles of religious faith—in this case, Islam. His family valued study as well, and engaged in lively discussions regarding a number of subjects. Avicenna gained other useful knowledge from an Indian teacher who exposed him to Indian principles of mathematics, including the numeral zero, first used by Hindu mathematicians. The teenaged Avicenna rapidly mastered difficult texts in the sciences and religious scholarship, and was soon teaching physicians and engaging in discussions of Islamic law with highly trained scholars. His study of logic, or the system of reasoning and testing conclusions, led him to read Aristotle. This reading initially upset him, because he did not know how to square the teachings of the ancient Greek philosopher with those of the Koran. One day, however, his reading of another Islamic scholar helped him unlock the seeming contradiction, and Avicenna was so over-joyed that he gave alms, or money, to the poor in gratitude. Over the years that followed, Avicenna held a number of positions, primarily in the courts of various sultans and emirs, the equivalent of kings and dukes in the Muslim world. He wrote more than a hundred books on a variety of subjects, and had a number of adventures as he went from place to place. Among his writings, the Canon of Medicine was particularly important, and became a principal source of medical knowledge both in the Middle East and in Europe for centuries. Like many

Muslims of his time, Avicenna owned slaves, and one of these turned against him when he was in his fifties. The drug overdose weakened him, however, and in he had a relapse and died. Continued influence In his discussions on the nature of man in the Guide of the Perplexed, Maimonides bridged the subjects of philosophy and medicine in an approach that formed the basics of psychology, the study of the human mind. He also wrote directly on the subject of medicine in a number of other works. Through such writings, Maimonides exerted an influence on thought that continued long after his death in This influence was not limited to Jewish thinkers, but to the world of scholars in general. His Thought and His Times. Rabbi, Philosopher, and Physician. The Story of Rabbi Moshe ben Maimon. Cite this article Pick a style below, and copy the text for your bibliography.

Chapter 8 : Maimonides - The Middle Ages - Facts for Kids

Maimonides. Maimonides (), or Moses ben Maimon, was the greatest Jewish philosopher of the Middle Ages. His commentaries on, and codification of, the rabbinic tradition established him as a major religious authority in Judaism.

Spanish-Hebrew philosopher, theologian, and author of the Internet Medieval Sourcebook, <http://www.angelfire.com/ny/angel/medieval/medieval.htm>: May neither avarice nor miserliness, nor thirst for glory or for a great reputation engage my mind; for the enemies of truth and philanthropy could easily deceive me and make me forgetful of my lofty aim of doing good to Thy children. In his Mishneh Torah, Maimonides organized Jewish law and tradition in a way that could be understood by the average faithful person without an interpretation provided by a rabbi, or Jewish religious leader and scholar. In The Guide of the Perplexed, Maimonides attempted to balance the ideas of rational thought—that is, thinking based on reason, explanation, and faith. He concluded that philosophy a branch of learning that focuses on values and concepts rather than practical, everyday knowledge supports faith rather than working against it. Beloved in his own age and widely respected into the twenty-first century, Maimonides was the subject of a popular Jewish expression of the Middle Ages c. From his father the young Maimonides Greek for "son of Maimon" studied mathematics; astronomy; the literature of the Torah, which consists of the first five books of the Old Testament ; and the Talmud, the body of Jewish laws not covered in the Torah. In the multicultural atmosphere of southern Spain, Maimonides also came into contact with Greek and Arabic thought and learned to read and write in several languages. The Alhomads demanded that non-Muslims convert to Islam. If they refused, there were only two choices: It was during these years of wandering that Maimonides began his first important work, the Commentary on the Mishnah, the ancient oral code of Jewish law, which was finally written down in the third century c. The Mishnah and the Gemara, representing centuries of scholarly interpretation explanation of Jewish scripture, are the two books that form the Talmud. However, by the twelfth century such scholarly writings could not be understood by average believers, making it hard to grasp the basics of Judaism. Even in the twenty-first century, it was considered one of the best explanations of the Talmud. Already in this first work Maimonides was attempting to blend Greek philosophy—especially the belief of the famous thinker Aristotle — b. As part of these commentaries, Maimonides also developed the thirteen articles, or statements, of faith—dealing with such topics as the origins of the Torah, the afterlife [life after death], and the oneness of God—that ultimately became a primary set of beliefs of Judaism. Unlike Christians, who believe that the godhead, or divinity, is made up of three, or a Trinity—God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit — Jews believe that God is one. They were later adapted to serve as the popular "Yigdal" prayer found in most Jewish prayer books, among other prayers that many Jews recite daily. Born in the French city of Troyes in , as a youth Rashi wanted to spend his life studying at Talmudic, or religious, schools in Germany. He spent the rest of his life balancing two occupations: With the beginning of the First Crusade —99 , Jewish persecution in Europe increased. Crusader armies on their way to the Holy Land to battle Islam first began killing non-Christians in Europe. They attacked Jewish communities along the Rhine River, killing thousands, including major Jewish scholars. Students of these scholars eventually came to study with Rashi, who opened his own school, which became one of the most famous centers of Jewish religious study in Europe. His students and sons-in-law spread his work throughout Europe. Rashi, who died in , was one of the best-known Jewish scholars of his day. Exile At length, Maimonides and his family had to flee Spain to avoid death at the hands of the Alhomads. In they settled in Fez, Morocco, where he continued to work on his Commentary, often from memory, clarifying complex Talmudic passages without a text. Five years later he and his family were again forced to move after angering the Islamic rulers of Morocco by working with Jews who had been required to convert to Islam. In the family moved to Palestine, in the Holy Land , where much of the territory was in the hands of the Christian Crusaders who had taken Jerusalem in —an event that marked the beginning of two centuries of hostilities between Christians and Muslims over who should control this place considered sacred by several religions. Maimonides and his family traveled throughout the Holy Land for a little more than a year, finally deciding that the Jewish community residing

there was oppressed and living in poverty. They decided to move on once again, this time to the relatively settled regions of Egypt. His father died shortly thereafter. In he published his Commentary on the Mishnah, which first brought attention to him in the Jewish world. So saddened was Maimonides that he fell ill for a year. After recovering, he realized that he now needed to support his family. He took up the study of medicine and eventually became the physician to the vizier chief counselor of the Muslim Egyptian ruler Saladin see entry and then to Saladin himself. It is reported that during the Third Crusade, King Richard I , the Lionheart see entry , asked Maimonides to become his personal physician, but he refused and stayed in Egypt for the rest of his life. A Busy Life Maimonides led a very busy and productive life. Between and he wrote his monumental work, Mishneh Torah, a complete code of Jewish law. At the same time, his duties to the sultan a Muslim ruler were "very heavy," as Maimonides wrote in a letter quoted by Wachman: 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 [female relatives living in private, isolated housing], are indisposed [ill], I dare not quit Cairo, but must stay during the greater part of the day in the palace. It also frequently happens that one or two of the royal officers falls sick, and I must attend to their healing. Hence, as a rule, I repair [go] to Cairo very early in the day, and even if nothing unusual happens, I do not return to Fostat until the afternoon. Once home, Maimonides ate a quick meal the only one of the day and then faced another heavy load of patients, both Jews and Gentiles non-Jews. As he described it, "When night falls I am so exhausted that I can scarcely speak. Despite these commitments, Maimonides was still able to continue his scholarly activities. According to Wachman, it provided "a clear, practical source to which people could turn to answer day-to-day questions of law. Maimonides divided his huge work into fourteen books, dealing with Jewish laws by subject, so that readers could quickly and easily find what they were looking for. This collection was intended to function as the only book on Jewish law a person would need to consult. Upon publication, the Mishneh Torah became one of the most important books in Judaism and was studied and consulted by Jews around the world. As a result, there were public burnings of Mishneh Torah in France. Balancing Faith and Reason Maimonides continued with his busy schedule. In he wrote the third of his greatest works, the Moreh Nevuchim, known in English as The Guide of the Perplexed, or confused. With this work the name of Maimonides became well known outside the Jewish world of the Middle East and Spain, for he balanced the work of Greek philosophy with Jewish religion. Written in the form of a very long letter, divided into three parts, to one of his students, the Guide mainly attempts to settle differences between the "scientific," or rational, tradition of Aristotle and the biblical approach to the concept and existence of God. Maimonides concludes that reason and faith can both be useful, for there is much that science and reason cannot explain. According to the Guide, where reason and philosophical explanations fail to find answers to deep questions, such as the creation and the eternal nature of the world, it is left to faith and revelation, or divine inspiration, to supply meaning. Maimonides also analyzes questions concerning good and evil, the purpose of the world and of life, and the meaning of the Ten Commandments. Maimonides himself warned against such misunderstandings in the introduction to the work: What I have written in this work was not the suggestion of the moment; it is the result of deep study and great application [hard work]. Do not read superficially [lightly], lest you do me an injury and derive [receive] no benefit yourself. You must study thoroughly and read continually. Despite such difficulties, the influence of the Guide "was great in both Jewish and non-Jewish circles," according to Wachman. Translated into all the major European languages, this final work of Maimonides influenced thinkers from the Catholic philosopher and saint Thomas Aquinas c. Maimonides lived until , dying in Fostat, where he was mourned for three days. His passing was also noted throughout the Jewish world. He was buried in Palestine, at Tiberias. As a doctor he was known as a compassionate healer. His lasting contribution to that profession was his emphasis on preventive medicine , or early treatment before the onset of illness. His gift to the world of religion and learning remains huge. Wachman has called his last two works "landmarks in the history of Jewish thought. The Guide of the Perplexed. Translated by Shlomo Pines. University of Chicago Press, The Story of His Life and Genius. Our Most Extraordinary Jewish Scholar. Rabbi Moshe ben Maimon Maimonides â€” Cite this article Pick a style below, and copy the text for your bibliography.

Chapter 9 : Almohad Caliphate - Wikipedia

Moses Maimonides: Moses Maimonides, Jewish philosopher, jurist, and physician, the foremost intellectual figure of medieval Judaism. His first major work, begun at age 23 and completed 10 years later, was a commentary on the Mishna, the collected Jewish oral laws.

Moses Maimonides Moses ben Maimon; אֲמִינֹן , a native of Spain, is incontestably the greatest name in Jewish medieval philosophy, but his reputation is not derived from any outstanding originality in philosophical thought. The young Moses studied with his learned father, Maimon, and other masters and at an early age astonished his teachers by his remarkable depth and versatility. Before Moses reached his 13th birthday, his peaceful world was suddenly disturbed by the ravages of war and persecution. But now the Islamic Mediterranean world was shaken by a revolutionary and fanatical Islamic sect, the Almohads Arabic: The Maimons temporized by practicing their Judaism in the privacy of their homes, while disguising their ways in public as far as possible to appear like Muslims. Moses continued his studies in his favourite subjects, rabbinics and Greek philosophy, and added medicine to them. Fez proved to be no more than a short respite, however. In Rabbi Judah ibn Shoshan, with whom Moses had studied, was arrested as a practicing Jew and was found guilty and then executed. This was a sign to the Maimon family to move again, this time to Palestine, which was in a depressed economic state and could not offer them the basis of a livelihood. After a few months they moved again, now to Egypt , settling in Fostat, near Cairo. There Jews were free to practice their faith openly, though any Jew who had once submitted to Islam courted death if he relapsed to Judaism. Moses himself was once accused of being a renegade Muslim, but he was able to prove that he had never really adopted the faith of Islam and so was exonerated. Though Egypt was a haven from harassment and persecution, Moses was soon assailed by personal problems. His younger brother, David, a prosperous jewelry merchant on whom Moses leaned for support, died in a shipwreck, taking the entire family fortune with him, and Moses was left as the sole support of his family. He could not turn to the rabbinate because in those days the rabbinate was conceived of as a public service that did not offer its practitioners any remuneration. Pressed by economic necessity, Moses took advantage of his medical studies and became a practicing physician. He also continued a private practice and lectured before his fellow physicians at the state hospital. At the same time he became the leading member of the Jewish community, teaching in public and helping his people with various personal and communal problems. Maimonides married late in life and was the father of a son, Abraham, who was to make his mark in his own right in the world of Jewish scholarship. Works The writings of Maimonides were numerous and varied. The Mishna is a compendium of decisions in Jewish law that dates from earliest times to the 3rd century. One of these essays summarizes the teachings of Judaism in a creed of Thirteen Articles of Faith. He completed the commentary on the Mishna at the age of 33, after which he began his magnum opus, the code of Jewish law, on which he also laboured for 10 years. He wrote two other works in Jewish law of lesser scope: A plea for what he called a more rational philosophy of Judaism, it constituted a major contribution to the accommodation between science, philosophy, and religion. It was written in Arabic and sent as a private communication to his favourite disciple , Joseph ibn Akinin. It has exerted a marked influence on the history of religious thought. Maimonides also wrote a number of minor works, occasional essays dealing with current problems that faced the Jewish community, and he maintained an extensive correspondence with scholars, students, and community leaders. His writings, in fact, are in some respects astonishingly modern in tone and contents. He died in and was buried in Tiberias , in the Holy Land, where his grave continues to be a shrine drawing a constant stream of pious pilgrims. In one zealot , Rabbi Solomon of Montpellier, in southern France, instigated the church authorities to burn The Guide for the Perplexed as a dangerously heretical book. But the controversy abated after some time, and Maimonides came to be recognized as a pillar of the traditional faithhis creed became part of the orthodox liturgyas well as the greatest of the Jewish philosophers. His philosophic work, translated into Latin, influenced the great medieval Scholastic writers, and even later thinkers, such as Benedict de Spinoza and G. Leibniz , found in his work a source for some of their ideas. His medical writings constitute a significant chapter in the history of medical

science.