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AN INQUIRY INTO THE ETHICS OF MOSES MAIMONIDES

by

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Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts in Hebrew Letters and
Ordination

HEBREW UNION COLLEGE-JEWISH INSTITUTE OF RELIGION

June 1964

Referee, Professor Alvin J. Reines

DIGEST

This paper seeks to synthesize the ethics of Moses Maimonides. While certain inferences will be drawn pertaining to his decision making process and to the significance of ethics for his world view, the emphasis will be on reconstruction, and not on originality. One must proceed with caution in reaching conclusions about Maimonides' ethics, and this for two reasons. In the first place, his discussions of ethics are scattered throughout the various treatises which he wrote during his lifetime. Much of his ethical theory is concentrated in the introduction to his commentary to Sefer Haavot entitled Shemonah Perakim (The Eight Chapters). Applied ethics are the subject of the Hilchot Deot in his Mishneh Torah. Still more theory and casuistry are contained in his magnum opus, the Moreh Nevukim. The initial problem, then, is to reassemble a theory of ethics which is strewn through three and more major sources. In the second place, the student of Maimonides is beset by a more difficult problem. Like others of his contemporary philosophers, Maimonides purposely obscured the pristine meaning of some of his views in order to avoid persecution at the hands of the unenlightened, arouse masses. Therefore, we must apprehend the meaning of a statement within the context of a given work and its relation to other works. For the apparent meaning of a statement will often disguise its real intention, as Maimonides himself tells us in the introduction to the Moreh.

The attempt, here, will be to understand what Maimonides means by ethics and what relationship he envisages between ethical knowledge and his total metaphysical system. Of necessity, this inquiry will lead us to a discussion of Maimonides' epistomology - how he knows what is good or bad in an ethical sense. And this, in turn, will involve a brief look at his theory of prophecy which is central to his epistomology. It will further seek to discover a

decision making principle for his ethics and to discern how this principle is applied. Finally, it will try to gain some perspective on his view of ethics by comparing and contrasting it with the Greek and Pharisaic ethics which were the matrix of his own thought.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

At the outset of this paper it would be helpful to distinguish among several terms commonly used in association with the subject matter. In contemporary philosophical parlance a distinction is drawn between ethics and morals. Ethics is defined as the study of moral principle; morals as the subject matter of ethics.[1] Maimonides is unaware of this distinction and employs a variety of terms עניין חברת בני אדם, מעלות המדות, מדות טובות. interchangeably to express the one or the other. Consequently, we shall attempt no great precision in our use of them, but will mean the same when referring to ethical behavior as to moral behavior. Similarly the words right and good טוב wrong and bad רע, are sometimes distinguished from one another by contemporary philosophers.[2] Here, too, we shall follow the lead of Maimonides and intend by morally good to mean the same as right, and by morally bad to mean the same as wrong.

In estimating the scope of any ethical system, initial consideration should be given to the moral principle which governs it. Before ascertaining what for Maimonides was morally significant, we might first inquire into his decision making principle. What is his definition of right? How does he decide? Our approach then will be definition first: and application second.

Everything that exists in nature, says Maimonides, possesses a final end.[3] That is, everything which is subject to the process of generation and corruption is also subject to the perfection of its specific form. When a natural entity perfects those acts which necessarily derive from it form, its final end has been achieved perfectly and completely. It is this final end or purpose of all created things that gives us a clue to Maimonides' definition of the good. Commenting on the verse: "And God saw that it was good" (Genesis 1.) he states:"Good is an expression applied by us to what conforms to our purpose."[4]

It is within the context of purposiveness - a purposiveness envisaged and established by an infinitely wise and benevolent Diety - that the meaning of the Maimonidian good is to be apprehended. The question, then, becomes: What is it that conforms to our purpose? Initially, we may state it in broader fashion. What is the purpose of all that exists? What is that final perfection toward which the whole universe tends? Such a question, thinks Maimonides, is incapable of resolution. For even if we should conclude that the final end of all that exists is man, and that the final end of man is the worship of God, we must still ask the question: To what end is man's worship of God? "For He, may He be exalted, would not acquire greater perfection if He were worshipped by all that He has created and were truly apprehended by them, nor would He be attained by a deficiency if nothing whatever existed except Him."[5]

— והוא יתעלה לא יוסיף שלמות אם יעבדוהו כל מה שברא וישיגוהו

— תכלית ההשגה, ולא ישיגוהו חסרון אם לא יהיה זולתו במצא כלל

Inevitably the search for universal purpose must conclude in a cul-de-sac. No end can be given save that God Himself, in His divine wisdom, willed the world to operate in its present form.[6]

Yet we need not conclude at this point that Maimonides' notion of purpose (and hence goodness) defies more precise definition. Granted that universal purpose eludes us. May we not inquire into the specific end of man? If the ultimate purpose of all created things lies in the perfection of whatever necessarily derives from their form, then, should we discover what constitutes perfection for man, we shall also know what it is that conforms to his purpose, i.e. the good for man.[7]

It is significant that Maimonides places his major discussion of human perfection at the very end of Guide for the Perplexed. In view of the highly systematic nature of the Guide, it is not unlikely that Maimonides is proffering by way of emphasis the key (or the copstone) to his philosophy.

Four kinds of perfections are described[8], each differing qualitatively from the next. Lowest on the scale is the perfection of possessions. שלמות הקנין. No integral relationship characterizes this first perfection. The article possessed is not united with the possessor. In fact most of the relationship is purely imaginary because the object possessed exists independently of the possessor. Therefore, the individual does not become self-sufficient by virtues of his possessions.

Slightly above the perfection of possessions is the perfection of the bodily constitution and shape שלמות חבנית הגוף וחכונתו וצורתו. But neither should this perfection be taken as an end in itself; for it is a perfection leading to other more useful ends. Furthermore it is shared by all animals, and does not belong exclusively to man qua man.

Higher on the scale of perfection is moral virtue שלמות מעלות המדות. This is the state of refined habits which have achieved their ultimate excellence. Yet here, too, the end is only a utilitarian one, what Maimonides describes as "only the disposition to be useful to other people" וכאלו זה השלמות במדותיו הוכן בה לחועלת בני אדם

The ultimate perfection is the attainment of a state of rationality through which man is enabled to comprehend "intelligibles which teach true opinions concerning the divine things." ציור המושכלות ללמוד מהם דעות אמתיות באלהיות, Maimonides calls this "the true human perfection" השלמות האנושי האמתי because through it, alone, the individual man is distinguished from all other

other creatures and is provided with something which is permanently his.

In the light of Maimonides' classification of human perfections we can more adequately understand his statement that "good is that which conforms to purpose." Universal purpose is as we have seen, unknowable. Nevertheless, we can inquire into the ultimate purpose of man. That purpose is to achieve the highest perfection of which he is capable. Perfectiom implies more for Maimonides than absence of defect. Fully understood it means a state of self-sufficiency wherein man is a wholly autonomous unit. Perfection implies independence both from other values and from other men.[9]

Only the fourth species of perfection - the acquisition of rational virtues - allows for the achievement of "true human perfection." Only "this ultimate perfection...pertains to you alone, no one else being associated in it with you in any way."[10] " אבל זה השלמות האחרון הוא לך לבדך ואין לאחר עמך בו שתוף כלל."

The famous parable of the king's palace which is narrated just a few chapters before this last one[11] illuminates the nature of this final perfection. The subjects of the king possess varying relationships to him corresponding to the quality of their religious beliefs. Those farthest removed are the people professing no religion, or those who hold to erroneous doctrines. They are called by Maimonides "irrational animals."[11] Nearer are the multitudes of religious devotees who observe the commandments without seeking their rational explanation. To them Maimonides attaches the epithet "ignoramus."[12] The jurists who study the law merely out of a sense of duty to God are little better equipped to take their place alongside the king. Not until men speculate on the origin of religious principles do they

breach the palace walls and enter its ante-chambers. Says Maimonides: "He, however, who has achieved demonstration, to the extent that that 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 - has come to be with the ruler in the inner part of the habitation."[13] " אכל מי שהגיע לדעת מופת כל מה שנמצא עליו מופת, וידע מן העניינים האלהיים אמתת כל מה שאפשר שהורע אמתתו, ויקריב לאמתת שא"א כו רק להתקרב אל אמתתו, ככר הגיע עם המלך בתוך הכית."

It is clear that by rational virtue Maimonides wishes to convey the idea of metaphysical perfection, a kind of knowledge that includes rational demonstration through proofs to the greatest extent possible. Nothing short of demonstrative knowledge can satisfy the demands of this highest kind of perfection. Man's final purpose is to achieve rational virtue, that is, metaphysical knowledge.[14] In its broadest and highest formulation the metaphysical good for Maimonides is the apprehension of eternal being by man through rational proof. Whatever conduces to that apprehension is good; whatever prevents it is bad. Consequently, no form of activity in and of itself is virtuous. Rather it becomes virtuous only to the extent that it involves and intends the actualization of the human intellect. This is why Maimonides can refer to those who observe the Law without seeking its rational basis as עמי הארץ - ignoramuses. Goodness or virtue in any significant sense cannot apply to them. Elsewhere in the Moreh[15] he carefully distinguishes between these two aspects of human personality. The aim of the law, he says, is twofold - the welfare of the soul תקון הנפש and the welfare of the body תקון הגוף. The welfare of the soul he equates with correct opinions דעות אמתיות, while the welfare of the body involves conduct iit. "The

improvement of their ways of living one with another."[16] " יעשה כל אחד מהם מה שבו תרעלת הכל. ". As between the two Maimonides leaves no doubt which is of a higher order. For he says: "Know that as between these two aims, one indubitably greater in nobility, namely, the welfare of the soul - I mean the procuring of correct opinions..."[17] ודע ששתי הכוונות האלה האחת מהם בלא ספק קודמת במעלה והוא תקון הנפש, ר"ל נתינת הדעות האמתיות ".

The highest state of virtue, then, transcends even moral activities, and has as its aim metaphysical speculation.[17] "

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Yet we must not conclude that the transcendent state of metaphysics excludes conduct from the realm of virtue. Our attempt thus far has been to discover a decision making principle in Maimonides' thought which would enable us to estimate the broadest possible scope of his ethical concern. We may now re-ask the question: How does Maimonides decide what is <u>right</u> or good? The answer is: by judging its utility in producing actually intelligent beings. This delimits the outer frame of the Maimonidean ethic. It remains to fill in the detail of his ethical position.

If Maimonides' ethical principle has its roots in the realm of

metaphysical reason, his metaphysics has important ethical consequences.

His constant concern with the practical arts indicates the essential bond between the two. Man is comprised of both body and soul, matter and form. If the essence of his form is reason, then by virtue of his material self, the perfection of his reason is contingent upon the perfection of his body. But the body, too, is not self-sufficient. It is subject to physical needs for which man by himself cannot adequately provide. Because matter is deficient and subject to defect, the body desires sexual satisfaction, warmth, food, drink, - all the necessities which society alone can offer. Therefore, we can understand what Maimonides means when he says that man is political by nature and that it is his nature to live in society.[18] Without the satisfaction of his bodily requirements man's rational self would, practically speaking be unable to function.[19] Indeed, the leisure time which those individuals need who seek to develop knowledge of divine science through study and contemplation is available only through the well-ordered society which can support a scholar class. "Consider," says Maimonides, "how (the sages) laid down as conditions of the perfection of the individual his being perfect in the varieties of political regimes..."[20] "והתבונן איך התנו..." שלמות האיש בהנהגות ."

We conclude that, as man is a creature necessarily rooted in society, so ethics for Maimonides are essentially political in nature. Ethics becomes a branch of politics treating of man's relationship to man within the framework of an organized society. Broadly conceived, the range of virtue reaches across the total field of human endeavor, embracing metaphysical and the uppermost limits of man's rational power. Whatever activity tends toward this end is virtuous.

From a narrower perspective, ethics becomes something else again. Ethics pertains specifically to societal conduct. The actions of an individual which in no way affect the life of his neighbor fall outside the purview of ethics. Right and wrong are measured within the limited context of a given societal order.

But on what is this more limited notion of virtue to be based? Is it grounded in the dictates of reason? Or does its source lie elsewhere in the mind or in the realm of experience? Is its validity equal to philosophic speculation? Or does less certainty attach to it than to other kinds of knowledge?

That moral knowledge does not occupy the same exalted level as philosophical truth is evident from a passage early in the Guide.[21] Maimonides addresses himself to a "learned" Biblical commentator who once observed that it was curious that God should have granted man his greatest perfection - the intellect - as a punishment for disobeying God. For according to Scripture man achieved this noble characteristic as a direct result of his eating from the tree of knowledge of good and of evil. Maimonides' reply distinguishes between two kinds of knowledge. Truth and falsehood were cognized by the perfect intellect which Adam possessed prior to the Fall. "Fine and bad, on the other hand, belong to things generally accepted as known, not to those cognized by the intellect."[22] אמנם המגונה והנאה הוא כמפורסמות לא במושכלות.

Knowledge of good and bad was the gift (or the curse) obtained by eating from the tree. Thus, Adam felt no self-consciousness about his nakedness prior to disobeying God.[23] Only afterward, when his eyes were opened, did he apprehend that his naked state was bad.

Moral judgments are not the product of an abstract process of

rational demonstration. They are arrived at by the general agreement of many individuals who together comprise societies. This view of morality is emphasized by a comment[24] on the verse from Zechariah: "Only love ye truth and peace."[25] "Know that by truth the intellectual virtues are meant, for they are immutably true,...and that by peace, the moral virtues are designated, for upon them depends the peace of the world."

"The peace of the world" is insured by the general agreement of men as to what constitutes good and bad. Maimonides attaches great significance to those things "generally accepted as known." Yet he is very vague about the way in which this general agreement occurs. Do all reasonable men grasp a moral truth through an intuitive act - by the mind's split-second assent to an idea without any recourse to logical deduction? Or, are such reasonable men content to rely on the judgment of past generations whose traditions have been assiduously preserved fro the benefit of their progeny? Or is some other process meant?

Maimonides offers some clarification when he discusses the nature of the revelation at Sinai. Two kinds of knowledge were involved which enabled the Israelites to apprehend some, but not all of the Decalogue. The first two commandments presupposed speculative powers which the people as well as Moses possessed. The existence and unity of Deity were communicated directly to the assembled populace through its demonstrative abilities. In this respect the prophet possessed no superiority over his contemporaries.[26] With regard to the other eight commandments Maimonides has the following to say:"...they belong to the class of generally accepted opinions and those adopted in virtue of tradition, not to the class of the intellects."[27] Immediately we are informed that Maimonides distinguishes in his own mind between generally accepted opinions and traditions. The two are not synonomous.

Elsewhere he is more precise.[28] He describes "generally accepted opinions" as when we recognize that "uncovering the privy part is ugly, that compensating a benefactor generously is beautiful." By contrast, traditions are what we receive "from a chosen person or from a chosen assembly." This distinction would appear to attach an element of subjectivity to moral judgements, that is, "generally accepted opinions." What we consider to be moral is not only what tradition has told us is moral, but what we ourselves may perceive is moral.

The question is: how much subjectivity is admissable in a moral judgement? Surely Maimonides does not mean to imply that what the individual thinks is moral necessarily is so. In a footnote to the Genesis passage discussed earlier in this paper, Solomon Munk throws some light on this matter.[29] He takes the phrase "things generally accepted as known" to mean probable opinions. They are distinguished from the demonstrative syllogism in that they are not evident in and of themselves. Their probability rests in the consensus of the totality or majority of ordinary men, or, perhaps, of the wisest men within society.

The idea of probability resting in consensus suggests that more than subjectivity is here involved. That most men (of whatever class or intellect) should tend toward the same conclusions in matters of moral conduct indicates an ethic that is to some degree objectively determinable. That is, right conduct is something capable of being discovered, and not a matter for each person to decide according to his own preference. Were this not the case, we should have to assume a remarkable coincidence of moral judgments based on appetetive faculties that differ from man to man. For according to the Maimonidean psychology "moral virtues belong only to the appetetive faculty."[30]

Moral judgments will be made by subjectively apprehending an objective moral truth. The individual submits his appetites to the careful scrutiny and con-

trol of his own reason - not demonstrative, but practical reason, - a kind of reason growing out of day to day living within society. When our bodies are correctly conditioned by right living, our minds will be ennabled to deduce the correct moral decision in a given situation. This decision will be correct because it corresponds to universal moral principles, what we have referred to elsewhere as objective moral truths.

Maimonides' position would seem to closely approximate the medieval concept of conscience, or syneidesis. This is a disposition to apprehend what is right in particular situations.[31] Conscience convinces us that nakedness in public (to use Maimonides' own example) is wrong. We might assume that conscience operates on hunches, or through insightful intuitions. This would be an incorrect appraisal of the operations of conscience, according to the medievals. Rather it dictates only after a process of reasoning of which we may not be aware.

Conscience is not infallible. It can lead us to (moral) erroneous decisions in matters of morality because of our natural dispositions toward lusts or anger. Man, because he is man, "will seek opinions that will help him in that toward which his nature inclines."[32] Often situations may arise where the correct decision is in doubt. One society may, by virtue of its traditions, answer such a situation one way; while another, operating from a different set of traditions, may solve it in another way. However, the area of disagreement would center around detail. The principle governing conduct would be the same for both societies.

We might well wonder at this point: Are there not in fact societies whose traditions and moral values flatly contradict one another? Again, to take the example of Maimonides, would not certain African tribes uphold the morality of nakedness in opposition to his point of view? In short, are the

governing principles of morality the same for all mankind?

No doubt Maimonides (or the medieval advocate of synedeisis) would reply that some societies are intellectually more advanced than others. Agreement about moral values would presuppose comparable levels of intelligence. The point we wish to make is that Maimonides probably felt moral values were determined by a consensus of the wisest men which a society produced, rather than a consensus gentium of ordinary men. Objective moral truths were perceived by practical wisdom. which was itself the possession of the prudent and experienced individual.

Before attempting to evaluate Maimonides' category of moral truth with a view to determining how much certain knowledge we may have of it, we would do well to examine the process through which man achieves knowledge of moral matters. For if we understand how man attains a state of moral virtue, then we shall also understand something more of what a moral virtue is, and how clearly it may be perceived.

Practical wisdom is contingent upon the acquisition of habits which help us to function well within society. Maimonides gives us a precise definition of habits in the fourteenth chapter of his Treatise on Logic. "By habits is meant those exercised characteristics that cling to the soul until they become habits which manifest themselves in actions. Philosophers describe habits as virtues and vices, and they call the worthy habits moral virtues and the unworthy habits they call moral vices. The acts that come from worthy habits they call right, and the acts that come from unworthy habits they call wrong."[33] Moral virtues (which are a function of practical reason) can only be determined within the context of specific activities through the application of proper or worthy habits. How are these habits

(moral virtues) developed? Is there a rule of thumb that the individual seeking the right way may follow?

Maimonides' solution is to advocate the middle path as a guide to moral action. The virtuous path is the one between two reprehensible extremes. One extreme tends toward exaggeration; the other toward efficiency.[34] For example abstemiousness would be the mean between wanton abandonment to lusts and insensitivity to pleasures. In this respect the mean is not a half way point between two absolute extremities, but is determined relative to one's own dispositions.[35]

The mean as the virtuous or the right way is the equivalent of justice.[36] The just man is the one whose virtues exceed his vices.[37] The more often he adheres to the mean, the greater his achievement of justice. Indeed, every moral virtue is called by the Hebrew word tsdakah, justice.[38]

But justice itself requires that certain preconditions be met. Chief among these is the regulation of the body in order to acquire perfect health. Sickness leads the human being to crave evil things in the same way that it sometimes reverses the sense of taste and causes the bitter to taste sweet, and the sweet bitter.[39] Conversely, health is a prerequisite to the stability of organized society through which alone man can acquire correct opinions of God.[40]

The elaborate detail with which Maimonides treats the mean of health is, no doubt, occasioned by his professional interest in medicine. The largest section of his tractate on Ethics in the Mishneh Torah (Hilchot Deot Chapters 3-5) is devoted to a list of the extremes to which man's sense of touch draws him. Food, drink, rest, hygiene, sexual mores are considered in all their particulars. Again and again pleasure for pleasure's sake is inderdicted as a legitimate motive. Those people who pursue the hedonistic course in any

respect are compared to "dogs" or "asses."[41] The sole permissable purpose for exercising the appetetive faculty is to keep the body in good health and this only to the end that, through physical well being, man may set his heart to "know the Name."[42]

The way in which Maimonides would have us establish a regimen indicates the precision with which he felt the mean was, in some cases, approachable. Food consumption should be one-fourth less than the amount necessary to sate a person.[43] One should not sleep on stomach or back, but sleep first on the left side and then on the right. Nor is sleeping permissable in the daytime, nor until three or four hours have elapsed after meals.[44] Bathing should be observed once every seven days, beginning with lukewarm water and gradually falling off to cold.[45]

Sexual intercourse is a habit which evokes Maimonides' most puritanical outcries. If the extreme is indulgence, and the defect is insensibility, then the mean is abstemiousness. He does not distinguish between physical and emotional drives in the sex act. Intercourse is purely the result of physical needs, which like eating, drinking, and sleeping should be kept to a minimum. In picturesque fashion Maimonides designates the proper attitude toward sex. "Through one's wife is ever lawful to him it is proper that a disciple of the wise should demean himself with sanctity, and not be like a rooster."[46]

It is difficult to conclude that Maimonides has, in fact, followed the mean path in his discussion of sex. Whatever theoretical interest pulled him in that direction, some aspect of his development, perhaps emotional, perhaps intellectual, seems to have caused him to consider the subject with a jaundiced eye. Why is it that Maimonides selects abstemiousness as the mean between lust (רוב התאוה) and indifference (ערך הרגשת ההנאה)?[47]

Temperance would be a more logical halfway point between these two emotive extremes. Yet, Maimonides goes far beyond the implication of restraint when he describes the purpose of the Torah vis a vis sex as"...the abandonment, depreciation, and restraint of desire in so far as is possible, so that these should be satisfied only in so far as this is necessary...Similarly one of the intentions of the Law is purity and sanctification: I mean by this renouncing and avoiding sexual intercourse and causing it to be as infrequent as possible."[47a] Words such as these emphasize his utter abhorrence of sex as well as his evident inability to arrive at an objective mean Ironically, he falls victim to the same defect of judgment as those of his countrymen whom he criticizes for being too much influenced by the manner of living of their fellows.[48]

What Maimonides occasionally does unconsciously, he also does deliberately. That is, when he feels the need he will violate the mean and recommend adherence to one or the other extreme. For example, in discussing the extreme of anger, insensibility to shame and disgrace is the defect and patience is the mean.[49] But in the Mishnah Toral he cautions: "And yet, there are certain tendencies which man is forbidden to follow in the middle-way, but must distance himself from extreme to extreme....So is anger an extremely evil tendency and it is proper for man to remove himself from it to the other extreme. One should teach himself not to get angry, even over a matter which befits anger."[50] Similarly, pridefulness is the extreme of which self-effacement is the defect and humility its mean.[51] But, "the good way is not merely that man be meek (שפל רוח), but that he should be humble-spirited (ענו), then his spirit will be extremely lowly."[52]

When, and under what conditions, should a person take it upon himself to veer toward an extreme? Maimonides is not very clear here, though he seems

to favor two general methods. The first involves the acceptance of the word of Torah as a guide to ethical conduct. We may infer this from his use of Scriptural proof texts and rabbinic commentaries to buttress his attitude vis a vis anger and pride. The great Moses himself is the prototype of the virtuous man who abjures pride and is punished when he eschews anger. More than this, Maimonides points out in his discussion of aescetism (Mishneh Torah Book One II 3.1) that man may not deny himself the necessities of life except in those cases which are explicitly warranted by the Torah. "Therefore did the sages command, saying: A man shall not deprive himself of ought save the things which the Torah itself deprived him of; nor shall he bind himself by vows and oaths to abstain from things which are permitted."[53] Thus, Torah becomes an authoratative guide indicating those areas of conduct where it is proper or improper to adhere to the extreme.

The second area where a moral extreme is considered desireable has to do with Maimonides' distinction between the chacham, the wise man, and the chasid, the pious or saintly man. The wise man is the one who performs virtuous deeds by continually practicing self-restraint and overcoming the baser urges to which his appetetive faculties excite him. The saintly man has reached beyond the level of pure or virtuous conduct to the realm of pure thought.[54] His bodily activity and mental processes are united, one in act and in mind.[55] Moral action proceeds "from innate longing and desire." While lewd thoughts never enter his mind, he must guard against their intrusion by going beyond even what the Torah permits a man to do. Accordingly, he sanctifies himself by refraining from things permitted to a man. With reference to the doctrine of the mean, the saintly person would distance himself toward the desireable extreme. Thus one would expect him to be the most self-effacing of individuals, yet eminently dignified; very courageous, and

well contented with his lot. For every pair of tendancies there is one with regard to which he should move between it and its mean. Again, Maimonides has indicated that the truly virtuous path is not taken by adhering strictly to the middle way.

With the advent of modern critical scholarship, the ethics of Maimonides have become the subject of a tug of war between two radically different points of view. On the one hand, certain Jewish scholars have sought to establish Maimonides' loyalty to rabbinic tradition in matters of ethics. On the other, an equally eminent group of academicians has attested his loyalty to Greek modes of ethical thought, in particular to the views of Aristotle. To complicate matters, a third force has been introduced into the line of argument by those who maintain that Maimonides' ethic is essentially neither rabbinic, nor Aristotelian, but Platonic. A full discussion of this problem would take us deeply into the realm of Aristotelian and Platonic thought, an endeavor which is beyond the scope of this paper. Nevertheless, within the limits of our research these contentions can be examined in brief, and certain conclusions can be reached.

"When Maimonides leaves metaphysics and enters upon the discussion of religio-ethical questions, he is in every way a Biblico-Talmudic Jew...Nowhere in Maimonides does one discover any deviation from the fundamentals of Judaism as taught by the Rabbis."[56] In this way one author has attempted to capsulize the view of Maimonides as the great exponent of rabbinic thought. What evidence do such scholars adduce to support their contention? The general argument seems to rest on Maimonides' reliance on Biblical and Rabbinic sources for his discussion of ethical, religious, and social problems. Every point of view adopted by the RAMBAM had, at some previous time, been articulated by the Rabbis. His views of evil, omniscience, prophecy, providence, will, etc.,

are substantially rabbinic. The rationalism and skepticism which some have felt characterized his works are decidedly limited and superficial.[57] Even the doctrine of the golden mean can be traced to the rabbis. Judaism never countenanced extremes. The Talmud tells us: "The ways of the Torah may be likened to two roads, on one of which one encounters snow, and on the other fire. If one proceeds along one path, he will be burned to death, and if he proceeds along the other, he will perish in the snow. What, then, should he do? He must go between the extremes."[58]

Even more significant was the disclaimer of Greek influence on the ground that Greek ethics were utilitarian and intellectualistic, lacking a certain quality of mercy and sense of social responsibility. By contrast the ethic of Maimonides in accordance with Jewish tradition was absolute and obligatory because it was part of the revealed word of God. Furthermore, to argue that Maimonides stressed the Aristotelian ideal of wisdom and contemplation as the highest goal of life, and therefore, as the foundation of ethics, is to ignore the tremendous emphasis within Judaism on wisdom. "Did Maimonides have to go for such emphasis to Aristotle?"[59]

Clearly the attempt to place Maimonides within the Rabbinic tradition and beyond the pale of Greek thought is ludicrous. Merely to say that "the rabbis also said it" is to ignore the question: why did Maimonides choose to employ Greek formulations and modes of thought if the rabbinic models were so readily available and satisfactory? Gorfinkle himself remarks in a footnote to The Eight Chapters that it is curious Maimonides never referred to the Hagigah passage mentioned above in his discussion of the mean.[60] What is most disconcerting, however, is that behind the obscurantism of half-baked analysis of Greek ethics and their lack of "social responsibility," the

essential partings of the ways of Maimonidean with Pharisaic thought have been ignored. In rabbinic thought social conduct was of the highest order in the scale of religious values. It was a primary means of worshipping God While, as we have attempted to make clear earlier in this paper, ethical conduct for Maimonides had value only in so far as it led to speculative perfection and the apprehension of metaphysical entities. Ethics in rabbinic theory is the essence of Judaism. For Maimonides ..."ethical perfection does not touch the essential core of man."[61]

What is more, the Pharisaic and Maimonidean ethic originates from two completely different sources. and,therefore, their individual characters are not to be blurred. Rabbinic ethics are the subject of a divine revelation. They are certain and immutable by virtue of the nature of their source. They are, in the strictest sense, authoritarian. The Maimondean ethic is, as we have seen, incapable of great precision. It is a matter of "generally apprehended knowledge," subject to the limitations of man's specific form. The most that can be assumed for such an ethic is that <u>in general</u> right and wrong have objective existence. However, in their particulars, that is, in the case of specific ethical values or decisions, right and wrong are imprecise and will vary according to the societal milieu and its traditions.

We should, perhaps, note that the classification of rabbinic ethics as authoritarian is regarded by some authorities as inaccurate. According to Mauritz Lazarus[62] in the view of the rabbis "...not because God has ordained it is a law moral, but because it is moral, therefore has God ordained it. Moral law is not a command of God, but an emanation from His Being." Lazarus would have us think that the rabbinic ethic is not authoritarian, but "autonomous." An autonomous morality does not create the law by itself. Rather it senses the law through a process of introspection as something

necessary to the individual. The individual adopts the law solely out of an inner compulsion which "implies the absence of every extraneous will in the creation of morality."[63] What Lazarus appears to be saying is that the rabbis operated in the ethical sphere as proto-Kantians, obeying the ethical imperative of God because it corresponded to some reflective apprehension of their own moral convictions.

There may, in fact, be a few examples in the rabbinic literature expressing an autonomous view of the law. Lazarus cites the Tanhuma to Lech L'chaw ( ) as one instance where free moral convictions which are not based upon revelation or otherwise tied to authority, are ranked above mere obedience to that authority. Assuming his interpretation to be correct, there are, nevertheless, numerous examples suggesting an authoritarian rationale. One of the most frequent and characteristic of this viewpoint is the midrash on the giving of the Torah in which God threatens to overturn Mt. Sinai on the Israelites if they refuse the Law. The manifest purpose of this midrash is to emphasize the authoritarian character of the Law. Perhaps, in the light of this and many similar examples found in Jewish literature, George Foote Moore reaches what appears to us to be the correct conclusion. In his discussion of the ethics of the Pharisees he states: "Right and wrong were for them not defined by the reason and conscience of men, naive or reflective, nor by national custom or the consensus gentium, but by the revealed will of God." ...Their obligation lies in the authority of the sovereign Lawgiver."[64] Moore makes it clear that the ethics of Judaism were founded on a legislation of a civil and religious nature which had the authority of divine revelation, "and not on deductions from general principles."[65]

Rejecting, then, the arguments of those scholars who represent the

Maimonidean ethic as an organic development from Pharisaism, we turn to those who see him closely linked to Greek moral philosophy, specifically to Aristotelianism. One partisan of this viewpoint has formulated it as follows: "Maimonides was not a rabbi employing Greek logic and categories of thought in order to interpret Jewish religion; he was rather a true mediaeval Aristotelian, using Jewish religion as an illustration of the Stagirite's metaphysical supremacy."[66]

How closely Maimonides followed the ethical theory of Aristotle is evident from even a cursory reading of the Nichomachean Ethics. The good (in a metaphysical sense) for Aristotle corresponds to the final end of an entity and, as in the view of Maimonides, is equivalent to its ultimate purpose.[67] For man this end is <u>eudemonia</u>.[68] The two chief characteristics of <u>eudemonia</u> are: 1) that it is an end in itself, and 2) that it is self-sufficient.[69] Again, we note the element of self-containment in Aristotle's idea of the good which has its counterpart in the Maimonidean notion of individual self-perfection.

The good for man is the exercise of his faculties in accordance with his excellences or virtues. The highest excellence of man is the exercise of that reason which is peculiarly his.[70] For Aristotle contemplation becomes the highest "activity" which man possesses. This is the intellectual aspect of virtue. There is a moral aspect as well. Once more we see the parallel to be found in Maimonidean thought where virtues are of two kinds, rational and moral.[71]

But is it note merely the formal character of the Maimonidean and Aristotelian ethical systems that is similar. Their concepts of good and bad closely approximate one another. According to Aristotle (moral) "virtue is a state of character concerned with choice, lying in a mean i.e., the mean

relative to us, this being determined by a rational principle, and by that principle by which the man of practical wisdom would determine it."[72] There are at least three elements contained in this definition that immediately concern us.

The first is Aristotle's reference to "a state of character concerned with choice." Evidently he means by this that moral virtues do not exist in man by virtue of his nature. Rather are they the product of habitual conduct.[73] Virtue is not a matter of theory. It comes from practice, from day after day coping with concrete situations. In this sense moral virtue is an art which must be cultivated over a considerable period of time. Some students of Aristotle have mistakenly assumed that the proper habits or states of moral character can be acquired through mechanical or non-reflective conduct. Nothing could be further from the truth. Choice, involving rational reflection, is an essential aspect of any moral act. "Everything that is done by reason of ignorance," says Aristotle, "is not voluntary."[74] Hence it cannot be ethical. The point we must grasp is the close connection between the rational and moral virtues. A moral character is not to be desired because it enables man to dispense with rational reflection and to operate instinctively out of habit to achieve the ideal of <u>eudemonia</u>. At each step of the way a moral decision requires the proper use of the intellect if it is to be reached at all. As one commentator on Aristotelian ethics has succinctly put it: "...the reason the so-called moral virtues are needed for the good life is not that they will enable us to dispense with thinking and knowledge, but precisely and solely in order that such thought and knowledge may be brought to bear and become operative in our likes and dislikes and our choices of action. We shall then not merely know what the intelligent things to do is, but we shall come to want it and actually choose

to do it precisely because it is what intelligence dictates."[75]

Habits, then, or states of character have as their aim an equilibrium of conduct relative to a given individual. The golden mean, as it is commonly called, is the second element which has significant bearing on the ethics of Maimonides. One wonders at the objectivity of those who would remove Maimonides from the category of Aristotelian ethics in view of the great similarity and significance of the mean in both systems. Granted there are differences in its formulation and application. These hardly outweigh the overall impression of two patterns cut from the same basic material.

The virtuous mean is the one that achieves an intermediate position between excess and defect It is neither too much, nor too little, nor is it always the same for every person.[76] Thus temperance is the suggested mean between profligacy and insensibility; magnificence between vulgarity and meanness; courage between rashness and cowardice. Sometimes the virtuous position will be nearer to one extreme or the other. For example, courage is by nature closer to rashness than it is to cowardice. Or, because we are personally more prone to one extreme than the other, we choose that intermediate position which is farthest from our weakness.

Lest we are tempted to conclude that doing good is a simple matter, as simple, let us say, as determining the proper mean, Aristotle reminds us that this is not so. "Matters concerned with conduct and questions of what is good for us have no fixity, anymore than matters of health."[77] In every case the individual must seek out whatever course of activity is appropriate to the occasion. A knowledge of rational principles will help him in his search. But equally important will be his ability to exercise the faculty of "practical wisdom," - the third element we would consider in Aristotle's definition of moral virtue.

That practical wisdom differs from both reason and intuition, he makes abundantly clear. Reason may be forgotten, practical wisdom may not. Reason consists of the categorizing of specific data and its application to universal principles. Practical wisdom necessarily involves the process of deliberation based on past experience and concerns itself as much with particulars as with universals.[78] Similarly, intuitive reasoning leaps immediately to universal truths, bypassing the processes of scientific reason. Practical wisdom avoids leaping to universals. It stresses the ultimate particulars, searching, calculating, always striving to think correctly before making a moral judgment.[79] It is something acquired, not innate. Consequently it cannot operate on the basis of universal moral principles, for such principles do not exist.[80] An eminent philosopher has described the man of practical wisdom as the prudent man and, therefore, the good or moral man. It is his function "...never to create the havoc that comes from acting on universal moral or political principles, never to be so stupid as to follow the right, ruat caelum, but rather, to make the very best he can out of every situation." For in every situation there exists the possibility of correctly distinguishing right from wrong. Only, it is up to the practical wisdom of each of us to discover the correct path to follow.

Stripped of its context, the preceding description of virtue could easily be mistaken for Maimonides' own views. Not only the language is similar but the conception of ethics and the process for choosing the good bear a close resemblance to the RAMBAM'S. In both systems virtue is acquired, never innate. It's possession is an art. One must work hard for a long period of time to attain just the right habits which will result in the right choice of conduct. The mean is always relative to the individual, and not always to be exactly observed Aristotle posits scrupulousness in justice as a desireable extreme. Maimonides recommends self-effacement. In cases where one's natural disposition is toward one extreme. both suggest removing

oneself an equivalent distance toward the other extreme as a means of remedy. What Aristotle calls practical wisdom and would correspond to the medieval notion of synedeisis Maimonides would include under the category of mefursamos, or generally accepted truths. Both men interrelate intellectual and moral virtues. The former are required to achieve the latter, and the latter, in turn, are essential for the fullest development of the former. Each conceives of ethics, not as ends in themselves, but as means to the highest human end which is intellectual contemplation and love of God.

The list of similarities could be extended considerably. Perhaps it might be more fruitful at this point to consider possible areas of difference, and to determine their effect on the view that holds Maimonides to be a medieval Aristotelian.

Even so thorough-going a rationalist as Ahad Haam sees a significant departure in Maimonides' concept of the golden mean from that of his mentor. (See essay of Ahad Haam: The Supremacy of Reason and note his discussion of the mean.) Aristotle, he claims, never established a higher moral criterion by means of which it would be possible to precisely fix the point equidistant between two extremes in each and every situation. "For him all virtue was really but a code of good manners to which the polite Greek should conform, being enabled by his own good taste to fasten instinctively on the point equi-
81
distant from the ugliness of the two extremes." Bu contrast, Maimonides used the mean as a peg on which to suspend his entire moral system by coupling with it "a formulation of the supreme moral end." What is this supreme end according to Ahad Haam? "For the extremes, being apt to impair physical health or mental peace, prevent a man from fulfilling his intellectual

function; the mean is that which helps him on his road."[82]

What Ahad Haam appears to be saying is this: The Aristotelian mean is not a true moral principle because it is governed by the individual's good tast, and that alone. By contrast, the Maimonidean mean is morally significant because it aims at something higher than individual preference, namely, the activization of the intellect. Now such a comparison might be dismissed out of hand as a patent misreading of Aristotle, were it not that it is all too commonly shared by other scholars. No less a personage than Hermann Cohen sees the Aristotelian mean as simply "a way to get through life," the most expedient course for a man, not to be confused with a genuine moral principle.[83]

The means of Aristotle and Maimonides are not to be distinguished on the ground that the latter's is the truly moral principle. Both are means to the higher end which is the actualization of the human intellect through the perfection of the individual and society. Aristotle does not envisage the goal of life as getting by the best one can. Eudemonia is not mere hedonism. Well-being consists in the perfection of one's specific form, that is, one's intellect. The virtuous man is the happy man only in the sense that "perfect happiness is a contemplative activity."[84] If we are going to evaluate the golden mean's moral value by virtue of its satisfying some higher category of human experience, such as the perfection of the individual through the perfection of society, then we can hardly distinguish between the mean of Aristotle and that of his Jewish disciple.

Yet the argument does not end here. Some scholars still claim to see a distinction between the two means. Granted that moral value governs both systems, what compulsion does the Aristotelian mean contain to cause one to choose the good? A man may know perfectly well in which direction virtue lies;

"but knowledge itself will be insufficient to overcome the swaying of our emotions when they point in another direction. Neither reason nor the mathematical balancing of virtues and vices can give us a sound anchor for our moral imperatives...What can influence a person to choose the good when it is against his inclination?"[85]

By contrast, there is, according to these scholars, a source of built in obligation attached to the Maimonidean mean. Some see it as the revealed Law of God - the Torah - which makes of morality a derivative of religion.[86] Others see the source as the intuited ethical imperative of God himself.[87] According to Cohen for Maimonides God is the equivalent of Morality. Since morality consists of the relationship between man and man, morality becomes the sum and substance of Maimonidean religion, and is the highest order of human perfection and obligation. This attempt to pour Maimonides into a Kantian mould ignores and distorts most of his metaphysics. However, all these efforts seek to relate the Maimonidean ethic directly to the will of Diety. Again, the cause is a failure to understand the nature of Aristotle's metaphysics, coupled with a misrading of Maimonides' view of the Torah.

As we remarked earlier in this paper (see page 1) every created thing seeks to perfect its specific form which is derived from the final end of that thing. Man's specific form, i.e., what distinguishes man from all other creatures and belongs permanently to him is rational animality. Consequently, by the perfection of his reason, man will realize his perfected purpose. It is of the essence of man qua man to be rational. His material self may interfere with this perfective process, either because of matter defective from birth, or because of the failure to exercise the will to overcome the appetetive (material self) through the development of intellectual

disciplines. Nevertheless, that which causes a man to choose the good inheres in the very nature of his being. This is true both for the Greek metaphysician and for his Jewish counterpart. In a limited way it may be stated that man's nature obliges him to adopt the mean or virtuous course.

What, then, of God? Does not the Deity superimpose a greater degree of obligation for Maimonides through his revealed Torah? Those who would convert Maimonides' discussions of morality into an essentially authoritarian ethic grounded in the will of God, fail to distinguish between the exoteric and esoteric meaning of his words.[88]

The Torah is an instrument for the governance of the masses. In effect, it is the creation of one man, Moses, and reflects the supreme wisdom which was his by virtue of his communion with the Active Intellect. If the specific ethical pronouncements which the Torah contains do have indubitable validity, this is because no one, not even the philosophers or other prophets, ever attained the degree of moral and intellectual wisdom that Moses did. Since it is unthinkable that the mass of men should ever begin to approach such wisdom, the well-being of society (and hence the possibility of more actualized intellects) depends on the acceptance of Torah. For men of learning it will be a guide until they, out of their own mastery of moral and intellectual disciplines, will come to understand its profundity and choose its ways.

FOOTNOTES

1. John L. Mothershead, Ethics, p. 22.

2. John L. Mothershead, Ethics, p. 5, note 1.

3. Moreh Nebukim III 13.

4. Moreh Nebukim III 13. והטוב אצלנו יאמר למה שיאות לכונתו

5. Moreh Nebukim III 13

6. Moreh Nebukim III 13.

7. See page 1, bottom

8. Moreh Nebukim III 54.

9. See Harry Wolfson, Maimonides and Halevi, article in Jewish Quarterly Review Vol. II, new series, p. 312. Wolfson understand Maimonides' use of "perfection" as peculiarly Greek in conception because "he takes the individual as the unit of supreme excellence." See above page for our own discussion of Maimonides' relationship to the Greek and Pharisaic traditions.)

10. Moreh Nebukim III 54.

11. Moreh Nebukim III 51. A more literal translation of the Hebrew text is dumb animals - בעלי חיים שאינם מדברים - an expression clearly implying irrationality.

12. Moreh Nebukim III 51. עמי הארץ

13. Moreh Nebukim III 51.

14. Moreh Nebukim III 27 "His ultimate perfection is to become rational in actu I mean to have an intellect in actu· this would consist in his knowing everything concerning all the beings that it is within the capacity of man to know in accordance with his ultimate perfection."

ושלמותו האחרון הוא שיהיה משכיל כפעל, והוא שידע כל מה שיכולת האדם לרעתו מכל הנמצאות כפי שלמותו האחרון.

15. Moreh Nebukim III 27.

16. Moreh Nebukim III 27

17. See Harry Wolfson, Maimonides and Halevi, article in Jewish Quarterly Review, page 313, and note his contention that metaphysical speculation and knowledge will lead to the highest perfection "sooner than practice and right conduct." Wolfson appears to go too far here in his attempt to characterize Maimonides as a true medieval Aristotelian. Maimonides does distinguish between knowledge and conduct in terms of value categories,

17. (continued) as we have remarked above. However, this is not an absolute distinction as regards process (the manner of achieving the highest perfection) as Wolfson would lead us to believe. The choice is not between one and the other. Maimonides is quite consistent in maintaining that moral conduct is a necessary means to correct opinions. Thus he states: "It is also clear that this noble and ultimate perfection can only be achieved after the first perfection (welfare of the body) has been achieved. For a man cannot represent to himself an intelligible even when taught to understand it, and all the more cannot become aware of it of his own accord, if he is in pain or is very hungry or is thirsty or is hot or is very cold. But once the first perfection has been achieved it is possible to achieve the ultimate..." (Moreh III 27).

18. Moreh Nebukim II 40.

19. Moreh Nebukim III 27. See note 17.

20. Moreh Nebukim I 34.

21. Moreh Nebukim I 2.

22. Moreh Nebukim I 2.

23. See also Moreh NebukimIII 8.

24. Zechariah 7:3

25. Shemonah Perakim Chapter IV ורע שאמת הם המעלות השכליות, מפני שהן אמיתיות, לא ישתנו... והשלום הם מעלות המדות אשר בהם יהיה השלום בעולם.

26. Moreh II 33

27. Moreh II 33 הם מכת המפורסמות והמקובלות לא מכח המושכלות.

28. Milot Hahigayon, Chapter VIII

29. Solomon Munk, Le Guide des Egares, page 31, note 1.

30. Shemonah Perakim, Chapter II אכל מעלות מדות ימצאו לחלק המתעורר לבדו.

31. Mothershead, Ethics, p. 295.

32. Moreh II 23 כי יבקש דעות יעזרוהו על מה שטבעו נוטה אזיו.

33. Treatise on Logic, Chapter XIV והמדות הן התכונות הדבקות בנפש
ער אשר נעשו קניניים ויצאו מהנה הפעלות והפלוסופים מתארים
המדות בחשיבות והפחיתות וקוראים המדות היפות מעלות המדות
וקוראים המדות הרעות פחיתות המדות וקוראים הפעולות הבאות
מהמדות החשובות טובות והפעולות הבאות מהמדות הפחותות קוראים אותם רעות.

34. Shemonah Perakim, Chapter IV.

35. This is the meaning of Maimonides' comment in his Mishneh Torah were he

35. (continued) observes: "The straight path is the mean disposition found in each and every tendency of all the human tendencies. Such tendency is removed from both extremes an equal distance, and is not nearer to one than to the other. Therefore have the wise men of yore commanded that man should ever review his tendancies, estimate them, and direct them toward the middle-path so that he will be sound in body.

– הדרך הישרה היא מדה בינונית שבכל דעה ודעה מכל הדעות שיש לו
– לאדם, והיא הדעה שהיא רחוקה משאר הקצוות ריחוק שוה ואיבה
– קרובה לא לזו ולא לזו. לפיכך צוו חכמים הראשונים שיהא אדם
– שם דעותיו תמיד ומעשר אותם ומכוין אותם בדרך האמצעית כדי
שיהא שלם בגופו.

36. Moreh Nebukim II 39.

37. Mishneh Torah Book One V 3.1

38. Moreh Nebukim III 53.

39. Moreh Nebukim Book One II 2.1.

40. Moreh Nebukim Book One II 1.3; 7.8. Moreh Nebukim III 27.

41 Mishneh Torah Book One II 3.2.

42. Mishneh Torah Book One II 3.2.

43. Mishneh Torah Book One II 4.2. It should be noted that in this and in many other instances of recommended regimens Maimonides is following specific rabbinic traditions. For a discussion of the view which sees Maimonides as an adherent to rabbinic ethics, see page .

44. Mishneh Torah Book One II 4.4-5.

45. Mishneh Torah Book One II 4.16.

46. Mishneh Torah Book One II 5.4. – אף על פי שאשתו של אדם מוחרת לו
– תמיד ראוי לו לחלמיד חכם שינהיג עצמו בקדושה ולא יהא מצוי אצל
אשתו כתרנגול.

47. This is the Gorfinkle translation of the Hebrew הזהירות. A more accurate translation might be fastidiousness, implying a meticulousness. However, Gorfinkle's translation, though less likely, is also a possibility.

47a Moreh Nebukim III 33. להרחיק התאות ולבוז בהם ולמעטם בכל יכולת,
שלא יכוין מהם אלא ההכרחי... וכן מכוונת התורה, הטהורה והקדושה,
כלומר הרתקת המשגל ולהשמר ממנו ולמעטו בכל אשר יוכל...

48. Shemonah Perakim, Chapter IV, Mishnah Torah Book One II 6.1.

49. Shemonah Perakim Chapter IV,

50. Mishneh Torah Book One II 2.3. ריש דעות שאסור לו לאדם לנהוג בהם
בבינונית אלא יתרחק מן הקצה האחד עד הקצה האחר... וכן הכעס מדה
רעה היא עד למאוד וראוי לאדם שיתרחקו ממנה עד הקצה האחר, וילמוד
עצמו שלא יכעוס ואפילו על דבר שראוי לכעוס עליו.

51. Shemonah Perakim Chapter IV.

52. Mishneh Torah Book One II 3. שאין דרך הטובה שיהיה אדם עניו כלבר אלא שיהיה שפל רוח ותהיה רוח נמוכה למאוד.

53. Passage quoted by Maimonides is based on Talmud Yerushalmi, Sedarim 7:37.

54. See Solomon Schechter. Some Aspects of Rabbinic Theology p. 201 ff. for a discussion of chasidut (saintliness).

55. Shemonah Perakim, chapter VI. " מתאוה ונכסף אליהן "

56. Solomon Goldman, The Jew and His Universe, pp. 126, 128.

57. Solomon Goldman, The Jew and His Universe, p. 128.

58. Talmud Yerushalmi, Hagigah II, 77a bottom.

59. Solomon Goldman, The Jew and His Universe, p. 137.

60. Shemonah Perakim (The Eight Chapters) Chapter IV p. 54, note 1.

61. Philosophies in Judaism, Julius Guttman, p. 175. In stating that theoretically ethics is the essence of rabbinic Judaism, we do not mean to be guilty of oversimplification. Certain scholars, vs. Travis Herford, Ethical Teachings on the Rabbinic Line, and Jacob Lauterbach, Rabbinic Essays, have concluded that the entire halachah dissolves into ethics. This ignores other major rabbinic concerns such a ritual observance and the pursuit of pilpul for the sake of dialectical enjoyment. Theoretically, ethics may be seen as the chief concern of the halachah. Practically, it is one of several chief concerns.

62. Lazarus Moritz, Ethics of Judaism, p. 112.

63. Lazarus Moritz, Ethics of Judaism p.

64. George F. Moore Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era - The Age of the Tannaim Vol. II pp 79, 82.

65. George F. Moore, Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era - The Age of the Tannaim Vol. II p. 88.

66. Harry Wolfson, "Maimonides and Halevi" (Jewish Quarterly Review, new series, vol. II,)p. 314.

67. Aristotle, Ethics Nichomachean Book I.7 1097a.

68. Translated quite inadequately as happiness. See Aristotle by W.D. Ross p. 186 where he prefers the translation well-being.

69. Aristotle, Ethics Nichomachean Book I:7 1097 a,b.

70. Aristotle, Ethics Nichomachean Book I:7 1098 a.

71. Moreh Nebukim III 27, Shemorah Perakim, Chapter II.

72. Aristotle, Ethics Nichomachean Book II:6 1106 b - 1107 a.

73. Aristotle, Ethics Nichomachean Book II.1 1103a.

74. Aristotle, Ethics Nichomachean Book III.1 1110 b.

75. Henry Veatch, Rational Man, a Modern Interpretation of Aristotelian Ethics, p. 110.

76. Aristotle, Ethics Nichomachean Book II.6 1106a,b.

77. Aristotle, Ethics Nichomachean Book II.2 1104a.

78. Aristotle, Ethics Nichomachean Book VI.7 1141 b.

79. Aristotle, Ethics Nichomachean Book VI.8 1142a - VI.9 1142b.

80. John H. Randall, Jr., Aristotle, pp. 268-269.

81. Ahad Haam, The Supremacy of Reason, p. 13.

82. Ahad Haam, The Supremacy of Reason, p. 14.

83. Hermann Cohen, Charakteristik der Ethik Maimunis, pp. 266-267.

84. Aristotle, Ethics Nichomachean Book X.8 1178b.

85. Ben Zion Bokser, Morality and Religion in Maimonides, p. 146.

86. Ben Zion Bokser, Morality and Religion in Maimonides, p. 147.

87. Hermann Cohen, Charakteristik der Ethik Maimunis, p. 268.

88. For a full discussion of the problems of Jewish medevel philosophers and their use of esotericisms, see Leo Strauss, Persecution and the Art of Writing.

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