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Thesis for Graduation.

The Metaphysics of the Guide.
with
A Sketch of Maimonides' Life.

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Preface

In presenting the Metaphysics of
Maimonides as expressed in his Guide of the
Perplexed, the sole object has been to bring
them in a connected order with especial refe-
rence to the arguments on which they were based.
Within the narrow limits of a graduation essay
nothing further could be attempted. It was
found even necessary to present only such pro-
positions as were most general; leaving those
of a particular nature in some cases with barely
a mention, in others wholly out of account. The
subject was accordingly divided into three main
divisions: The Universal Cause, The Nature
of God, and The World-Structure, each supported

by two or more propositions which account
of their general and far-reaching character
could not possibly be omitted.

Likewise the sketch of Maimonides' life
could include only the most salient features in
his career, as all detail had to be avoided.

Besides the text in Hebrew, use was
made of Friedländer's translation of Eisner's
"Vorlesungen" and of Jell's "Beiträge". The
life of Maimonides as found in Friedländer
Vol. I, 7-40 furnished almost all the material
of the sketch here.

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I The Primal Cause

The Primal Cause a Necessity of
Thought.

"God and the universe alone
exist" and God must be the Cause and
the universe the Effect. For everything in the
visible world is seen to proceed from some
other thing as its cause, and this other
thing assumed as the cause must be an
effect in its turn. In this way, things can
be traced back in a long series of causal
relations until every possible cause has
been made an effect of something preceding.
But this series of cause and effect can

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not be infinite - it must stop somewhere for a beginning. There must be a First Cause as the ultimate source. For, unless there is such a Cause we would be compelled to assume that there was never a beginning that the series of cause and effect in nature is infinite. This however is impossible. For all are agreed that bodies can not be other than finite. and if this be so it must be equally true, that no series of bodies can ever be infinite. Both must go together. By admitting the first we imply the second. If we look upon nature as consisting only of finite things a series of its causes and effects - if regarded as infinite - would bring in an element

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which at the start we have taken care to remove Infinity - can not be made up of things that we assume as finite.

We must conclude, then, that the causal relation has had a beginning that the order of causes and effects - as far as we can conceive - has had and must have had the starting-point where nature took its origin. From this starting-point all things must have, in course of time been evolved directly and indirectly as their ultimate primal source. This ultimate source or First Cause we may call by any name that will express the idea; but philosophers call it God. God, therefore must at the very outset be assumed as the beginning of the world.

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all reasoning from effect to cause. His existence is a necessity in the understanding of any fact in causation.

God, as the source directly and indirectly from which all things come is the Primal Cause not alone as following from our conception of causation in general, but also as proceeding from our understanding of things individually. It follows as a necessary consequence upon an examination of any object in nature.

There are four causes necessary for the origin and production of anything that shall possess the properties of existence. These are: 1) Substance 2) Form 3) the Agent 4) End. Without these there can be no entities.

The Principal Cause

As regards Substance that has to be assumed as a cause, it is such only relatively. Absolutely it is not a cause, for its existence is made possible only in connection with-Form. But it is a cause in so far as, after deriving its existence from a union with-Form, it establishes the basis for a succeeding substance with-which a later Form is to unite.

The Form itself as a cause (*Causa formalis*) is that by virtue of which a thing is in its properties, accidents-and relations. It is the essential of a thing, its real principle. Without it the thing would lose its identity-and become non-existent.

The Agents or effecting cause (*Causa efficiens*) the 8th is that cause which does

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not merely bring a thing into existence as an external agent but one at times which produces it in accordant of its own inherent nature.

Fire, being as it is, becomes not only the effecting but also the efficient cause of heat.

The End or purpose (*causa finalis*) the *telos* is that cause for the sake of which anything is or is made. Strife and consequent war thus become the purpose or end of weapons and armies.

These three causes Form Agent and End, must each have a series of causes of its own kind from which they were ultimately derived before they can be said to unite in producing anything as their effect. The Form of any particular thing must have had its

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origin is another Form and this is some other and so on; - but not ad infinitum. For it has been sufficiently proved by Aristotle and now established beyond doubt, that the existence of an infinite number of particular causes and effects even though they were not magnitudes (such as Forms) is impossible.

Tracing back, however so far, in the succession of Forms we must at last come to One as the source whence all the Forms following proceeded. This One, must be the First Form, as it is the Cause of all the rest. It must be the First Cause of Forms. If then, by definition, the Form of things is that which gives them their reality; then since the First Form or Cause must be that which gave to the universe

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its reality and essence. As it is impossible for the substance of a thing to exist apart from its form, so it is impossible for the universe to exist apart from the First Cause. The First Cause or God must then be the only essential reality. All things can be but manifestation of Him. He is their real being, their living principle. He is the giver the active life of the universe. Without Him all things would cease to exist.

Similarly may it be shown that God is the Efficient Agent. If any particular thing has an efficient cause it has this cause only as coming from some other Efficient cause. No one agent can neither spring up by itself nor can it be traced back infinitely. It

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must in the end be reduced to One, as the beginning of all efficient Causes, God. He is the ultimate Agent notwithstanding the countless intermediate Causes and effects intervening. He is the Prime Mover.

He is also the End of all things. All aim and purpose must at last find their source in Him. After searching for every possible cause or account of which anything is or is being brought about, we find behind each one as the last ground either God's Will or God's Wisdom. But His Will and Wisdom are essentially one both being a manifestation of Himself. Indeed, they are but different names for His One Essence His God hood. It follows, then, that everything in the uni-

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verse is only by virtue of God as its ultimate End. He is the Great End. For His sake the spheres revolve in their orbits - for His sake the minutest insect crawls upon the earth. He is that to whom all things tend at last.

Things then demand a source for their Form, their efficient Cause their End. A Primal Cause must be assumed as without it these several causes could not be found existing much less producing. This Cause is God who unites in Himself all Form, all efficacy, all End and purpose. His existence it is that must be assumed be it a speculation or observation. It becomes a necessity of the mind.

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2. God, the Primal Cause, necessarily Primal.

The existence of God, as shown, must imply that He is First not only in the order of causation, but also in the order of time.

All forms of existence can be conceived only as either following on their own account or proceeding by virtue of some external force. Things within the realm of perception belong to the latter. Being dependent on causes back of their immediate existence, they could not be except for these causes. In this case the conditions necessary to bring them into being preceded them in the order of time as well as in the order of cause and effect. We there

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Cause and Effect can be thought of as simultaneous, a previous cause behind both - is assigned priority - as without it either one would have been impossible. Any form of existence therefore, that is determined directly or indirectly by some cause or external force is in the order of time subsequent or following. Where it can be simultaneous with its immediate cause, it can be referred to a cause that is more remote. In either case all things that exist by virtue of something external to them - and not through the necessity of their nature are thus seen to follow their cause or agent, directly or indirectly.

But when they exist by reason of being such as they are, they are at once cause and effect; they are unto themselves all, and they are not-

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pendent of other things. They are absolute, and they are related to other forms of existence, not in the order in which they came into being (for having the cause of existence in them they could have always been) but in the order in which they manifest themselves. Here there is no succession, no following in time strictly so called.

Now God is the First Cause, as assumed.

Being thus First, it follows that His existence could not have been due to anything preceding or simultaneous. In either case the one or the other would be the Primal Cause not we. God, therefore, must exist by virtue of Himself. He must be absolute in point of time and independent of everything external. From Him all things must derive

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their coming into being, as from Him they must all proceed. As He is First in the order of causation, there being nothing before Him and nothing simultaneous with Him He must also be First in the order of time. Primal Cause then implies One, Absolute, Independent Being, who is the First & only cause.

* 3. God the Primal Cause defined.

Having shown the necessity of a Primal Cause we may now be prepared to define it. But we must take care to have a definition that will be strictly logical. The Primal Cause must have its demonstration so expressed that it will at once indicate its perfectly absolute nature. Otherwise the definition will be imperfect.

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The subject and the predicate will not be co-extensive.

It will be of advantage first to examine into the relation between the Primal Cause and the universe before we layard any definition at all. We may thus eliminate such terms that can not be used in our predicate, and select such as can be used.

It has already been proven that a series of causes and effects can not be infinite. There must be a First Cause as the source of all causes and effects. But this First Cause is not the source of things directly. Countless intermediary causes and effects intervene before we can trace anything so far back. All things in and

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On this our sphere are thus not the direct
but the indirect effect of the First Cause.

* Motion here comes from the sphere above us,
the fifth substance, and not directly from
the Prime source. This fifth substance is
the only direct cause of everything here hap-
pening or to be. It is the cause not only of
locomotion change of place but also of every
other change, be it in substance quality or
quantity. A stone is set in motion by the
hand, the hand by the muscles the muscles
by the nerves the nerves by the natural heat
of the body the heat of the body being produced
by its form. But the form has for its
source the higher sphere, the fifth element.
The change of position made by that part.

* By motion all followers of Aristotle understood to
mean change in substance, quality, quantity or position.

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icular stone is due therefore to the sphere above us. But it is even more directly connected with this fifth element. The stone may be moved in order to be put into a crevice; and this crevice admits a draught of wind. But the wind is the motion of the air that is directly caused by the motion of the higher sphere. The placing of the stone in the crevice is thus much nearer to the direct Cause, the fifth-element than the trace through the various agents. Thus all things more or less directly find their source in this upper sphere. Its motion is the life and potentiality of motion here below; nothing can be without it.

The motion of the 5th element itself

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must have been caused by some agent. It could not have begun to move by itself.

There must have been and there must yet be some force that put it into motion, that endowed it with-properties, that created it as the cause of this lower sphere. That force which effected this must naturally have been either within the sphere or without the sphere.

If within the sphere we must suppose either that it was distributed throughout the body permeating its every part or that it was indivisible remaining as one single force like the soul in man. If without the sphere the force must have been either corporeal or incorporeal, a third alternative being inadmissible. We have then four alternatives respecting it

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force that set the fifth-Element in motion.

It is either: 1) a force residing in every part of the sphere; 2) a force residing within the sphere but indivisible; 3) a force that is without or apart from the sphere but corporeal; 4) a force without or apart from it and incorporeal.

1. It can not be a force distributed throughout the whole body of the sphere. This sphere is finite. If some of the force is found in every part and all parts go to make a finite whole it is evident that the force thus distributed can not but be finite itself. Yet with-Aristotle we regard motion in our sphere as eternal. How can a finite force be the cause of something eternal?

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2. It can not be a force within the sphere and indivisible but actuating and energizing the sphere as the soul does the human body. If the force put the sphere into motion it must have partaken of the motion itself since it is within. This motion of the force was not essential but accidental - it moved because the body moved and for no other reason. But all accidental motion must come to rest and if the force moving accidentally caused the body to move, the body must eventually come to rest as well. As before this would contradict the conception that motion is eternal

3. Nor can the moving agent of the sphere be without it or apart from it and corporeal.

* Proposition VIII: "אין שום דבר המניע את השמים" (There is no mover of the heavens)

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- a) If it is corporeal it must have itself moved & setting the sphere in motion. Then it would require another corporeal force to put it into motion first, and this last would require another corporeal force still, and so ∞ ad infinitum. We would then have an infinite number of bodies setting one another in motion which is impossible.

There remains but the one other alternative. That the force is without the sphere and incorporeal. Such therefore must the force be. Being the Cause of eternal motion it can not be corporeal it can not itself be subject to motion essential or accidental it can not be a force distributed throughout

a) *It is not possible for a body to move itself.* Prop IX

b) *The existence of an infinite number of magnitudes is impossible.* Prop II

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the sphere. It must be a force that is incorporeal, indivisible and unchangeable. This Force can not be other than God.

We now have all the terms necessary in our predicate in a definition of God. God is the Prime Motor that is without the properties and accidents of corporeity. He is One, being indivisible, He is eternal, being unchangeable; He is Absolute Being and Force since He partakes not of corporeity.

With this definition we can now explain why we make God synonymous with Primal Cause and not with Maker. Many philosophers belonging to the Mutakallem school asserted that having once

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him made the universe could exist without God. We see on every hand how an effect still remains though the cause has long disappeared. Could not then the universe remain, though God had ceased to exist?

Such reasoning follows from calling God merely the Maker. By our definition, however, He is the Prime Motor. Without Him the fifth Element, the upper sphere could neither receive nor impart motion. All motion, therefore be it in substance, quality, quantity or position - and motion thus taken is nothing less than the entire universe - depends exclusively upon Him alone as existing. Indirectly and by means of the fifth Element, the four causes necessary

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to the production of a thing - the substance
the form, the agent and the end - as already
shown imply that It exists. Being the
Prime Form, Agent, and End, It must
exist or else nothing can exist. It is the
Cause and by this is meant that It combines
within Himself all that is essential to
existence - Force, Form and End.

God, therefore is the Primal Cause of
the universe, Eternal and One.

II The Nature of God

1. God is One

In demonstrating the existence of a Primal Cause it was incidentally shown that this Cause can be only One. The Oneness of God may thus be implied in the mere demonstration that there is a Primal Cause and not Causes. The implication would possess all logical validity.

It is by far best, however, to offer independent arguments—as regards this subject. As the basis of the Hebrew faith—the principle of God's absolute unity—is the one vital element without which Jewish Law and Tradition would

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lose their force and disappear. It concerns itself with everything to which the Hebrew people can lay claim as the Chosen of God as the promulgators of the correct belief. To demonstrate the correctness of this conception of God becomes therefore the duty of every thinker. and accordingly many philosophical arguments have been advanced all intending to show that God is One absolutely, One in every conceivable manner.

Those following are regarded as most conclusive and are based mostly on Aristotle.

1. If there is a composition of two Elements and one of them is found to be existing by itself the other of the two Elements must also be existing by itself. If they were

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connected indissolubly neither could exist without the other, they would exist only by virtue of their mutual inter-connection. Honey vinegar is a composition but as we find honey existing by itself, vinegar also must be existing by itself, which is virtually the case. But on the other hand, can not be severed from fire or flame. The one can not be except by or through the other.

Now we see in the sphere of change that objects are a combination of two distinct elements; they have in them motion active and motion passive. In setting other things in motion they at the same time set themselves in motion: they possess not only the motor but also the motum. It sometimes happens, however,

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That objects are themselves moved, without causing other objects to move. They have passive motion alone, there is in them but the one element, the motum. One element in this composition is thus seen to exist by itself, and hence as before the other element also must exist by itself. The Motor must be in existence, apart and by itself.

Putting the universe as a whole we see it only as receiving motion passively. Motion in the active sense must therefore exist independent of the things of this world. The Motor of the universe must be in existence without the universe and it must exist alone, absolutely free of all things not itself. This must be the Prime Motor. Being the

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Prime Motor it can not itself be subject to Motion. It follows, therefore that it is individual. The Prime Motor is One.

We thus see the necessity of assuming God's absolute unity - if we only resolve motion into its components. All things subject to motion have motion active and motion passive - in many cases the latter only. Since passive motion exists by itself, active motion must exist by itself. But the active motion is only one of the two elements; therefore God is but one single element.

2. All philosophers will admit that many things do exist - unless we choose to distrust the evidence of our senses. They can exist, however, in but one of three modes.

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a) Either all are without beginning and end,
 b) or all have a beginning and end, c) or
 some are with-a beginning and end and others
 without.

Things can not exist in
 the first mode. They would be eternal, suffering
 neither increase nor destruction. But we
 see many things coming into existence and
 many others disappearing. Things, therefore
 can not be without a beginning and end.

The second mode of existence is equally im-
 possible. Since all things are subject to
 destruction, there would soon come a time
 when all things would disappear. First the
 individuals of a class would pass away then
 the whole class and later the wider branch
 until the universe would become a complete

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void disappearing itself in course of time.

But we find proof, the contrary of this, on every hand. As soon as one thing disappears another springs up to take its place. We must conclude, then, that there can not be a beginning and end to all things.

Things, therefore must exist in the third mode - some have a beginning and end while others have not. It is true that their existence is but temporary, but inasmuch as there is an ever-present permanence in spite of all the changes of time, it must be equally true that there must be an element in the universe which is not temporary but eternal. That element which is eternal can not be subject to destruction. It must be a being whose

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existence is made evident and actual by the million and one things in the universe of which it is the only source. Now that eternal being can be but One. If there were two such beings, absolutely independent existence could be attributed to both. But neither of them would be thus absolute on its own account but by virtue of something common to both. Let that one thing or property which is common to both-world have the real, absolutely independent existence. It must be admitted, therefore that this eternal being which is God can be but One.

3. Without a doubt the universe is one organic whole of which the parts are inextricably connected. Where there is such a close

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and organic connection, it is impossible that the deity should have concerned himself with one part and the other (if there were two) with another part. The universe would receive certain signs whereby it would indicate, as if by an impress, that this is characteristically the work of the one and that the work of the other. No such signs however can be seen; hence the universe is all the work of one.

Granting, notwithstanding this, that two gods could exist and that both had a hand in the making of our world. We must then suppose: a) either that one was active at one time and the other at another, b) or that both acted simultaneously. The former can not be. The fact that one was passive (i.e. in a

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potential state) comes from that god all real, absolute actuality. If he could at any time be only potential his godhood must at once disappear - godhood implying actuality - only from first to last. And there must have been some agent to bring about the transition from his potential to his actual state. Then he would receive his real existence not on his own account, but on account of that agent. With a god, this is impossible.

The latter supposition is equally untenable. If they act only simultaneously and nothing can exist except through their union neither of them alone can be said to be the cause of anything they produce, but the fact that both had united. It is only by virtue of their

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having that common union that they bring
anything about, and not by virtue of each
being taken singly a god. But this union
would have to be effected by some Cause; and
this Cause controlling the action and the working
of the two, would itself be a god - and a god
superior to the two under its control. If
this cause ^{itself} be a union of two or more forces
or gods then the cause of that union would
be the One God. We must at last come to
one simple being which is the cause of the
universe, as an organic whole. God there-
fore must be One.

These arguments thus demonstrate
most conclusively that God is One in the
highest, widest sense that we can conceive.

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It is One Element and hence indivisible
 It is the One, Only God and hence there
 can be no plurality. It is One

2. It is incorporeal

After the foregoing had been made
 clear this proposition will scarcely require
 any special demonstration. If, as already
 shown God is the First Cause His existence
 was actual and real before there was any form
 of substance. It must be independent of all
 the manifestations of matter whatever be its
 mode of existence or operation. It is above
 material phenomena, for as the First Form
 Agent and End It is pure Spirit, pure essence,
 subject to no change or modification. It
 is incorporeal.

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But the arguments above if nothing else will prove the truth of this proposition beyond a doubt. If God be corporeal His body must of necessity have parts. for no body can be thought of except as having smaller divisions of which the whole is made up. God then, could not be regarded as indivisible. Like other bodies we could imagine Him as divided off into smaller and smaller parts. and as each part would have a portion of His godhood. then would be when taken together as many gods as parts and particles - and all in One. This would contradict the truth reached by the foregoing arguments - and these arguments have all logical validity - that God is One in the sense that there is

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None besides Him; that God is One in the sense that He is a simple, uncompounded Being composed of no parts or elements: God, therefore is incorporeal.

But this is implied in everything that has been said so far and special arguments are hardly necessary.

3. We can ascribe only negative Attributes to God.

a) Origin of the ascribed attributes and their development.

It is an assertion which none will dispute that to bring to view things merely as existing is one thing and to demonstrate their real Essence is another. Especially is this the case where the mind to which we address ourselves

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is either untutored or slow. The faculties of the average man are either the one or the other - speaking from a philosophical standpoint - and the difference in the man between his perceiving objects and his attempts at comprehending the essentials of their existence, is immeasurably great. In fact, the latter amount almost to nothing as without special application and training the conception of essentials is seldom (if ever) reached. The existence of objects, however, can be shown by accidents. An object may be made manifest to an individual by its visible peculiarities and relations without reference whatever to its real character.

Now, it was found necessary to prove to

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common, uneducated people that God exists. His existence could not be demonstrated to them by means of philosophical arguments respecting the real essential nature of God: for that would have been above them. It was necessary to frame the demonstration in such a way as could be popularly understood. For this reason the Bible is made to speak "in the language of men." The use of analogy, comparison and simile entered. Average men could not understand God's existence in the abstract; they could understand it only as related to the environments by which they themselves were surrounded. Existence with their implied motion, and change of position as well as other forms of change was in-
 * Changing from joy to sorrow, or from hate to benevolence
 * and then from the one to the other of opposite states.

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volunt in their very first conception of God. The senses, too were ascribed to Him, and for the same reason. They were familiar with sense-manifestation and interaction; and to believe Him as manifested in God - to be sure far more perfectly than in themselves - they imagined that they could thereby understand Him better. Gradually their conception grew clearer and clearer. First locomotion was negative of Him; then the lower senses: such as touch and taste; then the remaining senses, resting finally in the affections of the spirit: such as joy & anger. But the object was merely to reach a clearer conception.

b) Classification of Attributes.

1) There are attributes which express

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the real essence of things. They tell what the things to which they are ascribed virtually are. Such attributes would form a definition. Making the individual thing the subject and the attribute ascribed the predicate - we would have ~~the best logical and most accurate~~ the perfect definition.

2) There are attributes expression of only a part of a thing's essence. "Man," for instance * "is a rational being." There is implied here a certain relation between two ideas, between "reason" a group, and "man" an individual partaking in the group.

3) A description may be given of an object that will express nothing of its essence that will be made up simply of the qualities

* Friedlander Vol I 78.

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of that object. Now quality in all its modes is but accident. Whether we say that a certain man is good or bad, lean or fat or thin, or whether we say that this thing is hard or soft, long or short, we are merely expressing accidents, relating in no manner to the essence of the man or thing.

4) An object may also be shown by relation to other things. The object is neither defined nor described but merely pointed out with reference to other objects.

5) Lastly, an object may be presented by enumerating or describing its effects or workings. The thing itself is perhaps not touched upon at all. Knowing its operations and effects, however, we may in some cases

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gain a correct idea of the thing itself.

We shall now take each set of attributes, in turn, in connection with the idea of God which these attributes were said to strengthen and make clear. We shall then see which may and which may not be ascribed to Him.

We can not ^{ascribe} essential attributes to God; for
 * a definition of God is impossible. Every definition consists of a general and a particular (genus and differentia); and this general and particular virtually make the thing defined as it really is. God, being the First Cause can not therefore be defined.

Attributes expression of only a part of a thing's essence can not be ascribed to God.
 Expressing only a part the attribute would

* we can not

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most readily indicate that God's essence is divisible. This would contradict the principle underlying the whole conception of deity - that He is One, indivisible.

God, further, could not be described by any quality. Quality, as shown above, is mere * accident. Accident, however, is removed from any understanding of the real essence; and by affirming it of God we would by no means arrive at a clearer idea of Him.

nor can God be described by any relation. Relation can be expressed only with reference either to time, objects, or space. But as God is absolute, He is independent of all time and space. Time, as respects Him, does not exist, is not; nor does space. Further, . . .

* In understanding essence per se we can admit of nothing in any way accidental

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He can have no relation with His creatures. The mere fact that with-Him existence is absolute, and with-men and objects only possible, sufficiently shows that there can be no element that may be common to both.

The only one other mode left in which some description of God can be framed is that which finds its expression in a contemplation of His works. As said above, a knowledge of the effects - may bring about in some cases a certain knowledge of the Cause itself. By knowing God's manifestations we may gain some understanding of Him-Self; and, therefore if He is in any way to be conceived by us at all as regards his real nature and essence, it can happen only by means of

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a thorough understanding of what He has
made

4 Essential Attributes are in-
admissible.

Philosophers have insisted on ascribing essential attributes to God - those attributes belonging to the first class as enumerated above. These accordingly will be more particularly discussed.

Essential attributes can not be admitted for two reasons: 1) Logically they are mere accidents; 2) Virtually they are the same as His Essence.

1. That which is attributed to a thing is not inherent in the thing. It is something added to its essence - something more than

ה'תשנ"ב. "הלכות אגפריס כדלזיל" ב' ז'

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the essence; it is an accident. For if the attribute denotes the essence, it would be mere repetition; it would be the same as saying: the essence is the essence. It must therefore express something different from the object, something accidental to it. But, even if the attributes of God were not accidents but essentials they would have to be rejected for another reason. Being essentials and united in God they would form so many eternal substances; a belief in God's Oneness implies that He is but One, simple substance.

2. Existence is an accident belonging to all things in common; it is therefore something added to essence - something apart from the thing itself. This is true as regards all things. Why, then, in the classification does he call them essential?

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* Things having a cause. For, a thing and its existence can be spoken of separately; and the latter, therefore is not in any way connected with the essence. But God has no cause; we can not think of Him except as existing. His existence and essence are thus one and the same; they are identical. Since God exists without possessing the attribute of existence as such. Similarly unity and plurality are accidents superadded to objects according as they consist of one or of many. But as number is not in the substance of things that have number, so unity or One-ness is not in the substance of Him that has this unity or One-ness. It is nothing added to Him. He and One-ness are the same - they

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are identical. He is One without possessing the attribute of unity as such.

Similarly may it be shown as regards the other attributes ascribed to Him - they are all in reality the same as His Essence

d) Only negative attributes can be ascribed to God.

Attributes of a positive sense have thus been found inadequate. In some there was too great a deficiency; in others (in the case of essential attributes) there was too much of God Himself to make them consistent with the belief that He is One. Neither of these will be found in attributes of a negative sense. These express nothing relative to His essence and hence would prevent any

Nature of God

erroneous conception of Him. By elimination and removal they may in the end so circumscribe Him that we shall arrive at an understanding of Him, though indirectly, with as much certainty as by means of positive attributes. We may with all assurance say that God is not many or corporeal; that it is impossible that He should not exist, or be other than the Good and the Just. Here we are free of all error, seeing that we profess to know nothing whatever of God's real nature. Positive arguments would carry with them implications for which our limited knowledge of anything beyond material circumstance has no sure warrant. We may then conclude that only those attributes may be

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ascribed to God which affirm or imply something positively. They must be of a negative character.

III

The World. Structure

Introduction.

The aim of all philosophy is to arrive at a conception of Truth. The human mind contains within itself the faculty of searching, of comprehending and of inferring. If this faculty has emanated from the Great Being, the All-embracing Truth - it can be employed properly only in the direction of its Source, its Maker. Speculation, then, though "the mysteries belong to God" Himself, is a legitimate - if not a necessary process. It is that alone which forms our human characteristic; it is that alone which is

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peculiarly ours - as men fashioned after a divine pattern.

And all Truth - has its source in God. The phenomena in the universe are but his manifestations of His nature. He alone is the essential, the Absolute and the One. All things in life flow as effects from Him, as their ultimate Primary Cause. To see the relation between Him and these effects - to see how the universe arose - becomes, therefore, a necessary step in all philosophical inquiry. A knowledge of the universe then is indispensable; for without such knowledge a correct conception of God would be impossible. "We can know Him only through His works."

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What is this universe and how was it formed?

The old doctrine was: "the earth is in the middle and the stars are set around it in a circle." This we do not hold now; it is rather as the neo-Platonists interpreted the Aristotelian teaching: that the earth is the central point about which the other elements concentrate. These elements are the following and in the order named: water, air, fire - all being circles whose common centre is the earth. From the fire-circle upward are the spheres, the heavenly bodies. First comes the sphere of the moon which is immediately above the fire-circle; then come those spheres in which Mercury is

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* formed; then Mars and Jupiter; then Venus, then the sphere of the Sun; then Saturn, then the sphere of the fixed stars; and then lastly, the ninth-sphere. This last sphere, the ninth, revolves about its own axis once every twenty-four hours, and as it extends around the other spheres (^{they} being smaller circles within a larger) it sets also them in motion.

* Now is this motion communicated to these spheres and how are they related to God?

Then comes from God an Intelligence which looks only to God and to itself. In the act of conceiving God there springs from it a second Intelligence; in the act of regarding itself, there arises the first sphere which is the highest in the order. Now the first

* Venus and the Sun are usually placed before Mars and Jupiter

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Intelligence is not simply the cause of the second Intelligence and its sphere; it is also the perpetual regulator of the Motion which they have. The second Intelligence and its sphere are in fact dependant for their every manifestation as well as for their mere existence, on the First Intelligence.

The second Intelligence likewise has a double function: it first looks to what is above itself (in this case it does not look directly to God, but what is immediately above it, the first Intelligence), and then to itself. From the act of conceiving the Intelligence above, then proceeds another which is the third; from the act of regarding itself, a second sphere - that of the fixed stars.

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The second Intelligence is related to the Intelligence and Sphere below in exactly the same manner as the First Intelligence is related to itself and to its own Sphere - being not alone the cause of its existence, but also the source and guidance of its motion. And thus on and on until we come to the last Intelligence which proceeds out of that one which inhabits the sphere of the moon, the sphere immediately above us.

* This last Intelligence the truth is order, is to the elements of this sphere precisely what the other Intelligences are to the spheres issuing from them. It differs from the other Intelligences, however, in this: that it does not give rise to another Intel.

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light, but to human understanding and to a primal Element (Urstoff?). This Element is either fire or water or something mediate between the two, according as to its being near to the sphere above it (the moon) or remote from it. That which is nearest to that sphere becomes fire, that which is next becomes air - both circling above that remains as remotest from it, earth.

But the motion of the spheres needs to be particularly explained. It is not like the ascent of air or descent of a stone, for such motion is but a striving to reach its natural condition. After having moved they come to rest. Should such be the motion of the spheres they would soon remain

Motion - Structure

fixed and immovable. But the motion of the sphere is constant; hence their motion is not like that of inanimate objects.

Further their motion is not like that of animals which is occasioned by pleasure or pain. Such motion is varying and irregular, depending exclusively on physical surroundings. The spheres, however, move by a fixed and regular impulse which never varies; coming, as it does, from a conception (constant and unchanging) of the Intelligence above. But an act of conceiving necessarily implies mind. It follows, then, that the spheres are not only animate but having all the faculties of their Intelligences. They strive to comprehend, each its Intel.

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lignce above - and thus indirectly God
Himself - and in this striving lies the cause
of their motion.

Through the motion of this outer
sphere, as a whole, comes the motion that
is imparted to the element, or elements. These
elements are so impelled as to bring the
element fire which is nearest to the sphere
of the moon immediately under the influence
of the latter. Fire then takes along with
itself the next circle - air; air, the next
below which is water; and water, earth - which
is the last and lowest. But through this
complex motion there comes a mixture in
the elements; and each strives to return
to its own proper place. Hence vapors
* See above

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arise; hence spring the minerals, plants and animals - all coming from the various compositions in which the different elements are combined. The element that was primary (that is, substance in general) underlying all four now existing is perpetually receiving new form from the sphere above. Hence while undergoing constant change, the universe is being ever renewed.

From the heavenly spheres there come yet through the influence of light, four forces:

- 1) a force for the preservation of minerals,
- 2) a force for the preservation of vegetable life,
- 3) a force for the preservation of animal life, and
- 4) the power of thinking in rational creatures.

Besides these, the moon, itself

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has particular influence over the motion of
water; the sun over that of fire; the planets
over that of air; and the fixed stars over
that of earth. Every fixed ^{star} perhaps, has
* influence over some special vegetable species.

The universe is thus one organic
whole of which each part is made for and
because of the other. It was created out
of nothing material, as all come directly
and indirectly from God alone and from
the Intelligence of which He is the source.

Continued.

The question as to the origin of the
universe, first asked (from a philosophical
standpoint) by the Greeks had not yet
* More Vol II, 10.

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received a satisfactory reply. Thales, Anaxagoras and Xenophanes - all made the attempt and were apparently unsuccessful. At last came one whom all regarded as having given the correct reply. This was Aristotle. In his *Metaphysics* the principles of ontology and visible existence are laid down with a precision and clearness that carried authority with every subsequent thinker. In the Arabic schools of philosophy these principles assumed especial force. In the time of Maimonides, after they had become blended with some neo-Platonic ideas, Aristotle's teachings became of supreme authority - and formed the basis of speculation in

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The Middle Ages.

However, is the foregoing explanation of the universe, Maimonides does not follow Aristotle (strictly speaking) either as he himself understood that philosopher or as the philosophers of the Arabic school understood him. Aristotle gives him ~~very~~ the outline in which the universe may be molded; affords him even some details. Yet we must not from this infer that Maimonides has that philosopher's opinion. For where the former will adopt some of the Greek's most dogmatic propositions he may as likely as not take issue with him on all that is at the bottom of the latter's whole system. Where Aristotle may

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Employ a scheme of reasoning in order to prove that the universe is eternal, Mainmonides may use the same scheme and perhaps the same argumentation for the purpose of inferring that it is not eternal. In this sense and in so far Mainmonides may be said to be original in his explanation of the universe. He is independent of all previous authority.

Life of Maimonides

Moses ben Maimon was born at Cordova in Spain on the 30th of March 1135.

Of the early period of his life nothing of certainty is known; except that he was the younger of two sons who was put under the care of teachers at a very early age. A thorough knowledge of Bible was the first requirement among all of the higher class of Jews in Spain. The youthful son of Maimon must have had instruction in Hebrew Law and Tradition then

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yet scarcely out of childhood. For besides being a man of ample means his father Maimon was also a man of culture; and to afford his son all possible advantages in the way of Education was from first to last his only desire.

We are not surprised, accordingly, to find among his instructors while yet very young, such men as Joseph Ibn Migash and Ibn Rosha. There were none in Spain or even in all Europe who were their superior in Hebrew lore. Maimon himself was a man of no mean accomplishments. And he superintended his son's Education with the utmost care and discretion. It was his hope and sole ambition to see in his son a successor

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to the line of teachers in Surah and Pumbedita, a successor to the greatest sages - in Israel's history.

It is very unlikely that young Maimonides was indifferent to these opportunities. Rabbi Gedaliah ben Yochiah who wrote the first account of our author's life states that he who later became Israel's second Moses was in his youth - not only disinclined to study but exceedingly dull. To believe this would compel us to believe also that as he was advancing towards manhood, he was undergoing a complete change. For not only did his instructors at this period of his life find in him an assiduous and most painstaking scholar but also a mind whose clearness, subtlety

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and vigor made possible a most glorious future. Later this was realized, and the impression that Rabbi Gedaliah received of him was no doubt lasting. Maimonides was a born student. He was only in his twenty-third year when he published a treatise on the Hebrew Calendar - a subject then regarded as highly abstruse. Requiring a thorough knowledge of the higher mathematics, the work though not of a finished character gave evidence of a broad and masterful mind. In the same year there also appeared his *Millath-Higayon* - an explanation of logical terms - in which it was clearly apparent that already at this age he read philosophy with-profit.

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Aristotle must have been a familiar author to him. That Greek philosopher who was the guide of the Middle Ages whom all religions wished to include within their pale failed not to impress the first great philosopher of Israel. Henceforth Aristotle was to guide him in his speculations, give clear form to his conceptions and in the end afford him a basis for his religious principles.

But while his progress in study seems to have been so rapid it must not be supposed that Maimonides encountered no obstacles. The times in which he lived were of the most unsettled and troublesome in Spanish history. Those were days when peace was unknown, when the great and

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Small walked in an atmosphere of peril. The war between the Arabs and the Christians were then raging in all their fury on the border. On the peninsula itself the civil strife between the Mahometan sects were no less fierce. In 1148 the Moravides were succeeded by the Almohades on the throne of Spain. The victories of this dynasty were attended by acts of greatest intolerance and oppression. The royal family preceding held sway with a fanaticism heretofore unknown. But the present line and especially Abdalnuuma surpassed even them in that regard - if that could have been possible. No mercy was shown to unbelievers. Jew and Christian alike had

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the choice only between Islam, emigration and death. Emigration then was the rule of the day; and the sufferings of the unfortunate transients who began streaming out of Spain were indescribable.

Such intolerance on the part of the reigning family was not calculated to give great impetus to speculation. Great thinkers and leaders in the arts were forced to modify their views for fear of offence to the crown. Islam being supreme throughout the land all manner of thinking had to conform in accordance with its tenets and beliefs. Free thought was thus impeded, if not crushed by royal authority. Philosophers who had the temerity to advance

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views other than those expressed or implied
in the Koran were in the greatest of danger.
With Maimonides a Jew by persuasion and
a thinker following a Greek school the dan-
ger must have been doubly great and the
difficulties that surrounded him in this
his early career were undoubtedly of the
gravest kind.

Among the exiles that fled from
Spain in the time of Ibn Tamiel soon after
the accession of the Almohadian line of rulers
was the family of Maimon. Rather than give
* up their faith ~~spontaneously~~, Maimon's
household submitted to the hardships and
privation of exile. The conditions attending
his sacrifice can scarcely be appreciated.

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to-day. By a cruel decree all who left the country - thus confiscated every thing of value, to the State. When they left, their remains behind them comfort, home, country - all. And once on their way their was only an uncertain future before them and nothing more. With few hopes, with prospects far from promising, with scarcely the means of immediate support, Maimon's family set sail from Spain trusting in their God for whose sake they were ready to endure every suffering. That trust was all they had. All the rest they left behind. This was their sacrifice on the altar of their faith.

After a long and severe journey on the sea, Maimon and his family arrived at Coſtat

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in Egypt. Here they settled. Maimonides now resumed his studies and supported by his elder brother David, he went on in his work with a vigor and rapidity that were so characteristic of him. But he also busied himself with congregational affairs in the community. He soon had the esteem and confidence of his coreligionists. In 1167 after taking a leading part in some decree issued by the rabbis at Cairo, he was already recognized as a very learned man, and his name became generally known, accordingly, not alone in Egypt but also in Europe. As evidence of this it may be said that when his father Maimon died, about this time letters of condolence came to him

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from all parts of Europe - from Mahometans
as well as from his own co-religionists.

All this time he was at work on
a commentary to the Mishnah. Amid the
varying circumstances of departure, voyage
and arrival, amid the hardships with which
such circumstances were then invariably asso-
ciated, this commentary remained his con-
stant task. When arrived in Egypt, he con-
tinued in his labors with increased zeal
and application, and now he gave it to his
* co-religionists, as the result of many years'
hard and earnest study. Viewing at an ex-
position of the Mishnah, for such as were not
in a condition to study its sources, this work
has ever since been regarded as one of the
greatest explanation of ethical and religious principles. This is best shown in
his Commentary on Abbot.

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most valuable contributions to Hebrew literature. In whatever light his more philosophical works were looked upon by Jewish thinkers of a later day, his Commentary has always been of highest authority among them and has been made the basis of numerous similar works in Mishnaic literature.

Not long after, in 1172, Maimonides wrote the Iggereth-Teman in answer to a letter on the critical condition of the Jews in Arabia. The Jews there had been argued into the idea that to believe in Mahomet as the true prophet was not contrary to Jewish law. With severe penalties consequent upon a refusal to admit such

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a belief many had deliberately cast away
 the Torah and sought refuge in the teachings
 of the Koran. Maimonides exhorts them
 to remain firm in the Law. Their sufferings
 he shows, were foretold by the prophet
 (Daniel XI, XII). and religious persecutions
 are as a rule of but short duration. They
 should therefore persevere in their own faith
 and not disregard the religion of the Fathers.
 The arguments based on certain Scriptural
 passages as justifying the belief in Mahomet
 are false. They should not give heed to
 such arguments. They should rather im-
 press the Sinaiic Revelation most firmly
 upon the minds of their children, and re-
 main steadfast in the belief of a Messiah

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who will soon come to deliver them.

It was owing to the success of his Commentary on the Mishnah that he now undertook a work of still wider scope and importance. He saw that only the learned could find the exact reference in the commentary. With others it involved a loss of time and much delay. For such as these he now wished to make a code of Jewish Law that would be conveniently accessible to all. Now he found his previous work, to a certain extent incomplete. Many laws had developed since the close of the Talmud and of these he ^{had} made no mention. The work that he now intended to compile would contain all laws and precepts found in the Talmud and all

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the decisions made by the Geonim later.

- * But first he formulated certain principles by which he was to be guided in this codification. These he published as a separate work - in the way of a preparation to the *Lagu* - which he called *Mishnah Torah* or *Yad Hachazakah*.

The *Yad Hachazakah* consists of an introduction and fourteen books, indicated by the numerical value of the word *yad* in the title. The introduction speaks of the unbroken chain of tradition from Moses down to the close of the Talmud and sets forth the distinction that must be made between such authorities as the Sifra and the decisions of the Geonim. The precepts contained in the

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former were to be regarded as binding on the whole people, while the latter as authoritative and applicable only in special cases.

The books following form, as the author's intention was, a compendium of all Talmudic law and that of a later day to his own time.

Though a mere compilation, the work evinced his genius in many ways. He had to distinguish between the literal meaning of a law and its merely figurative bearing; and he also had to decide between its particular and general application. He is highly original in many parts, especially in the first book *Sefer Hamadda*. In this book he lays down his ethical and religious principles with a force and clearness that attracted

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the convictions of a firm belief and a sound philosophy.

In compiling this code he spent eight years. It was his work every day and the greater part of the night. But he had ample reward for his labors. It was the work accepted by far the greater number of congregations throughout the world with the greatest approval. At the same time it was not received with that unshaken confidence or supreme authority - for which he so eagerly looked forward. It was his hope and his sole incentive that the result of his labors would be adopted by the world at large without question. And he was thus most grievously disappointed. But it was only

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* Through the ill-will of those whom he had discovered in their ignorance that his expectations were not realized. The intrinsic value of the work most assuredly entitled the author to undisputed universal distinction and gratitude.

These theological studies must have occupied nearly all of his time. Still we find that he had been studying medicine with the greatest success. He became a physician of great renown and his reputation as a skillful practitioner kept almost at pace with his reputation as theologian and savant. At one time he was offered the duties of physician to King Richard I, but, thinking that it would too greatly interfere with his studies, he refused. Later his name was enrolled

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among those of the physicians in the court of
Alfahil, when Saladin's Viceroy to Egypt. He
received a very liberal allowance, but even
then he regrets the amount of time he had to
spend in his practice. A man ever eager
for intellectual labor, he found routine duty
all but congenial. Mental activity - where
thought and study could enter, where know-
ledge could be gained or imparted - such
was the work for which Maimonides was
adapted. The hour and the day spent other-
wise was so much time lost to him.

Though burdened with his duties
as physician and overwhelmed with a corre-
spondence that since the publication of his *Yad*
commenced pouring in from all parts of

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the world, Maimonides meditated a new
 work. He had by common consent become
 the head of Jewish learning in his day. Any
 question in Jewish theology and law involving
 special difficulty was sent to him for de-
 cision. Any passage in his works that met
 with question or opposition was pointed out
 to him for immediate explanation. He
 was literally surrounded by a sea of pres-
 sing work. Besides he was advancing
 in years. He had been a hard student from
 his youth up and his mind had been un-
 ceasingly at work since he first began reading
 Torah. Yet he would begin on a new
 work. He felt that he needed proof for
 the ethical and religious principles enunciated

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in his great Code. This proof was to be based on a philosophy that had as its chief characteristic a reconciliation between reason and revelation. The extent and importance of the work in the domain of Judaism can scarcely be estimated. Briefly, it may be said to have been, from a rational standpoint the most important work in Hebrew thought and literature since the close of the * Talmud. He called it the 'Guide of the Perplexed'. It was his last and his best work. It forms the chef-d'oeuvre of a great mind. Written first in Arabic, it was first translated into Hebrew by the author's pupil Samuel Ibn Tibbon. But it gave rise to a great controversy in Jewish

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Theology that lasted long after Maimonides' death.

Soon after he had completed this guide he began complaining of a debility that had been troubling him seriously for some time.

It was not long before he yielded to the disease and in 1204, in his 70th year he died. Never since Biblical times had the death of a teacher in Israel evoked such universal mourning.

Jews sorrowed over the loss ^{from} all over the world, and even from afar showed the memory of that illustrious man the greatest honor and sincerest regard. Every where they were joined by the very Mahomedans who first drove him from their country and then combatted his principles. The whole learned world forgot all difference of opinion and strife

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in the general sorrow; and the East and
 the West with one impulse traced upon
 * the stone that marked his grave "From
 Moses to Moses there was none like him";
 none so great as Moses ben Maimon:

"אלהינו אל אחד" ואלהינו אל אחד