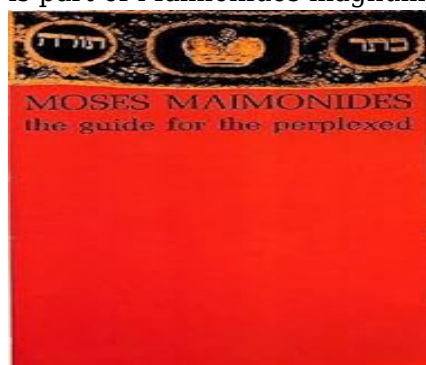


Mishne Torah Sefer haavodahv

موسى بن ميمون in Arabic or Rambam רמבם - Hebrew acronym for Rabbi Moshe ben Maimon was a preeminent medieval Jewish philosopher and one of the greatest Torah scholars and physicians of the Middle Ages He was born in Córdoba Spain on Passover Eve 1135 and died in Egypt or Tiberias on 20th Tevet December 12 12046 He was a rabbi physician and philosopher in Morocco and Egypt His year of birth is disputed with Shlomo Pines suggesting that he was born in 1138 He was born during what some scholars consider to be the end of the golden age of Jewish culture in Spain after the first centuries of the Moorish rule At an early age he developed an interest in the exact sciences and philosophy In addition to reading the works of Muslim scholars he also read those of the Greek philosophers made accessible through Arabic translations Maimonides was not known as a supporter of mysticism He voiced opposition to poetry the best of which he declared as false since it was founded on pure invention and this too in a land which had produced such noble expressions of the Hebrew and Arabic muse This Sage who was revered for his saintly personality as well as for his writings led an unquiet life and penned his classic works with the staff of the wanderer in his hand⁷ Maimonides studied Torah under his father Maimon who had in turn studied under Rabbi Joseph ibn Migash The Almohades from Africa conquered Córdoba in 1148 and threatened the Jewish community with the choice of conversion to Islam death or exile⁷ Maimonides's family along with most other Jews chose exile For the next ten years they moved about in southern Spain avoiding the conquering Almohades but eventually settled in Fez in Morocco where Maimonides acquired most of his secular knowledge studying at the University of Al Karaouine During this time he composed his acclaimed commentary on the Mishnah in the years 1166-1168⁸ Following this sojourn in Morocco he lived briefly in the Holy Land before settling in Fostat Egypt where he was physician of the Grand Vizier Al-Fadhl and Sultan Saladin of Egypt and also treated Richard the Lionheart while on the Crusades⁹ He was considered to be the greatest physician of his time being influenced by renowned Islamic thinkers such as Ibn Rushd and Al-Ghazali²³ He composed most of his oeuvre in this last locale including the Mishneh Torah He died in Fostat and was buried in Tiberias today in Israel His son Avraham recognized as a great scholar succeeded Maimonides as Nagid head of the Egyptian Jewish community; he also took up his father's role as court physician at the age of eighteen He greatly honored the memory of his father and throughout his career defended his father's writings against all critics The office of Nagid was held by the Maimonides family for four successive generations until the end of the 14th century Maimonides was a devoted physician In a famous letter he describes his daily routine After visiting the Sultan's palace he would arrive home exhausted and hungry where I would find the antechambers filled with gentiles and Jews I would go to heal them and write prescriptions for their illnesses until the evening and I would be extremely weak¹⁰ He is widely respected in Spain and a statue of him was erected in Córdoba by the only synagogue in that city which escaped destruction and which is no longer functioning as a Jewish house of worship but is open to the public Translation commentary of the Book Of Ha'avodah laws of Temple Service which is part of Maimonides magnum opus The Yad Hachazaka Mishne Torah Sefer Ha'avodah



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