Maimonides, a quintessential cosmopolitan individual of the middle ages, was not only a leading legal scholar, philosopher and ethicist, but also a skilled and renowned physician. Medical studies over a millennium after his passing can testify to the correctness of the dietary regimen that he writes of in his medical texts. He believed that specific dietary practices could help keep a person healthy and protect him or her from potential illnesses. Some of his most important suggestions include reclining while eating, refraining from drinking during a meal and exercising one’s body before breakfast. In this paper I will investigate these three Maimonidean theories, and investigate the history and thought processes that Maimonides may have used in formulating them. Furthermore, I intend to show that with only the most primitive knowledge of the human body, the dietary regimen which he put together is appropriate even by today’s medical knowledge of digestion.

Although Maimonides goal was not to become a physician, this profession was thrust upon him. He writes to a friend, Jonathan ben David ha-Cohen of Lunel, “Although from my boyhood the Torah was betrothed to me,… strange women whom I first took into my household as her handmaids became her rivals and absorbed a portion of my time”1, one of these so-called “women” being medicine. When his brother David perished in a tragic boat accident and the family’s wealth was lost, Maimonides was

1 Harry Friedenwald, The Jews and Medicine (Maryland: he Johns Hopkins Press, 1944), 200.
required to support his own family as well as the wife and child of his brother. He turned to medicine and instantly became well known for his expertise in this field. He was invited by Sultan Saladin to be a physician for the royal family and moved on to work for his son Aldel, the vizier of Egypt. Maimonides regretted his decision to take on these responsibilities. In a letter to a friend, Samuel Ibn Tibbon, in 1199 he explains that he was exhausted from taking on duties as personal physician to the palaces of Saladin and Aldel and it left him with little energy for his other patients and his study of Torah. And so it can be understood that when Richard the Lion-Hearted invited Maimonides to be his personal physician in Britain, Maimonides refused.

Maimonides built his knowledge of medicine by integrating Biblical teachings, Greek and Arabic medicine and his own experiences and logic. He was first introduced to medical studies by the famous Arab doctors of Andalusia, known today as Spain. This seems highly improbable, because by the age of 11, Maimonides with his family had left Spain for Morocco. Although he never mentions his teachers by name, some believed them to be either Abu Marwan ibn Zuhr or maybe Ibn Rushd. Others believe that his teachers were Moroccan rather than Spanish physicians, and that he learnt with two men in Fez to whom he alludes to over and over in his Book on Asthma. Ancient greek medical authorities clearly play a large role in Maimonidean medical works, with many

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2 Ibid. 196.
3 Ibid. 203-204.
6 Dr. Isaac Unterman. Moses Maimonides; His Life and Teachings (Miami: Central Agency for Jewish Education, 1978), 203.
references to the teachings of Hippocrates and especially Galen who systematized the medical science of his time. Although he precedes Maimonides by over 800 years, Galen’s ideas are very prevalent throughout Maimonides 11 or so medical texts, including one that is based solely on Galen’s aphorisms. Although he reveres these great thinkers, he does not hesitate to disagree with them when his logic leads him to different conclusions. Maimonides was so careful in the medical advice that he gave that he would only prescribe medications of which he had previously tried on himself. His works, all written in Arabic, deal with a range of subjects from hemorrhoids and snake bites to proper cohabitation rituals and diet. His ten most famous medical works are Extracts from Galen (The Art of Cure), Commentary on the Aphorisms of Hippocrates, Medical Aphorisms of Moses (Pirkei Moshe), Treatise on Hemorrhoids, Treatise on Cohabitation, Treatise on Asthma, Treatise on Poisons and Their Antidotes, Regimen of Health (Regimen Sanitatis), Discourse on the Explanation of Fits and Glossary of drug names which are in addition to the hundreds of halachic rulings regarding health in his other works.

Maimonides’s special attention to digestion is exceptional and a look deeper into the reasoning behind these ideas and their validity seems to be worthy of investigation. Although he admits that his very specific diet may affect people of certain regions and ethnicities differently12, the regimen he recommends in conjunction with digestion should be of equal importance to all. Three examples of such actions that he suggests for proper

9 Unterman, 205.
10 Ibid. 198, 207.
11 Ibid. 203
digestion are reclining while eating, warming up one’s body before eating and allowing the body time to digest properly before intake of fluids.\footnote{Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Deot, 4:1-3.} Without giving reasons or citing the sources of his *halachot* and dietary beliefs, it nevertheless could be surmised why Maimonides so theorized. For Maimonides, digestion was one of the most important factors to take into account when considering diet and illness. He mentions digestion and its importance in almost every one of his medical texts. In his Treatise on Hemorrhoids, Maimonides devotes seven chapters to this topic, further proving how much importance he placed on good digestion for one’s health. His views seem to have been highly influenced by Galen who Maimonides quotes as saying “He who wishes to avoid all illness should take care to avoid bad digestion” and who is quoted elsewhere teaching a similar and almost identical digestive system mentioned by Maimonides.\footnote{Maimonides in Bar-Sela, 17.}

However, Maimonides is quite incorrect when it comes to the physiology of digestion. This may be due to the fact that anatomy was “a weak and neglected branch of medicine”\footnote{Riesman, 173.} during the Middle Ages. What they knew about the human innards during his lifetime was taken from the writings of Galen which had been the standard view for over a thousand years. Interestingly, Galen’s description is not based on the human body. From early in history until the time of Maimonides, rarely had a dissection been attempted on humans due to religious reasons. Even during his lifetime, no headway was made because the two cultures with the foremost medical expertise, Moslems and Jews, were prohibited from desecrating a human corpse, even in the name of science.\footnote{Ibid. 173.} And so, although he has a grasp of its importance, the three areas of the body that Maimonides
believes to be digesting food are incorrect. In his Regimen on Health he states that
“When the meal is poorly digested in the stomach, its second digestion in the liver is
bound to be bad and its third digestion in all of the organs will perforce to be worst of
all”\textsuperscript{17}. Although there is partial digestion in the stomach, it is only of certain proteins, and
much of the food goes on to the small intestine where it is fully chemically digested.
Digestion mainly occurs in an organ that Maimonides does not even make mention of
here, the small intestine. It is within this organ in an area called the duodenum, where
secretions from the intestines, pancreas and gallbladder mix with the food entering from
the stomach to fully digest food. The liver, which Maimonides mentions as the second
stage of digestion, does not digest the food, nor does food even pass through it. Although
it aids in the digestive process by producing bile to emulsify fats in the small intestine, it
would be incorrect to consider this organ as a stage in digestion. The third stage of
Maimonides’ digestion, in the organs, is also incorrect. The organs do not digest the food
directly either, although they do take in nutrients that have been processed by the food in
the body and transported to the organs via the circulatory system.\textsuperscript{18} It may be that by
“digestion” מְ PUSH - to digest) Maimonides, had meant “absorption”, but such a translation
brings about its own problems. There is absorption in the stomach, the liver and the
organs but the latter two are very indirectly connected to the food tract and it is highly
unlikely that Maimonides considered this to be the case. And had he meant absorption he
surely would have mentioned the kidneys and small intestine, which are two organs in
which absorption almost obviously takes place. At one point in his Mishneh Torah, the

\textsuperscript{17} Maimonides in Bar-Sela, 17.
\textsuperscript{18} Kaplan, 125-126
digestion in the intestines, or entrails, is taken into account but this stage is missing in his breakdown of digestion previously mentioned from his Regimen on Health. So it seems that whatever Maimonides meant, he was slightly inaccurate as to the physiology and purpose of different organs within the body. Nevertheless, and quite extraordinarily, his recommendations for a healthy digestion are still very much relevant. Without having a correct understanding of the innards and organs, Maimonides still knew of the importance of digestion and what he proposes in his works can be considered accurate.

One interesting recommendation of Maimonides is that “when one eats, one should always sit in one's place, or recline on one's left side”\(^{19}\). Before Maimonides himself had proposed this, it had been a custom in Judaism to do so and the idea of reclining during the meal is referenced to in the writings of the *Tanaim* somewhat often. One example is in the Talmud Bavli, where it states “Once Rabban Gamliel and the elders were reclining… and they ate”\(^{21}\). Even as far back as the *Mishna*, we can see evidence of the tradition to recline during the meal in that it was taught that when eating of the unleavened bread on the Passover night “one may not eat unless he reclines”\(^{22}\). Their reason was a historical and symbolic one, in that the kings would lay down during meals as a portrayal of their luxurious living conditions and it would be proper to act accordingly during the Passover seder. In proposing that one recline, the rabbis were not considering bodily function and health as had Maimonides.

Reclining while eating has been a topic covered by many studies within recent years. While reclining may be uncomfortable, these research studies show that digestion occurs

\(^{19}\) *Mishneh Torah. Hilchot Deot* 4:2
\(^{20}\) *Mishneh Torah. Hilchot Deot*, 4:3.
\(^{21}\) *Berachot* 37a.
\(^{22}\) *Tractate Pesachim* 10:1.
more slowly in people who are in the supine position or leaning on their left. In August of 2000, a study was done on nine healthy women to determine the effects of such actions. Their average age was 29.6 with a range of 20-38. Their average body mass index (weight/height$^2$) was 22.7. None of the test subjects were on a diet and none had any history of weight problems. Each subject was fed an egg sandwich and tomato soup. As a control to this experiment, each woman ate once while seated in an upright position and once while lying down. The researchers observed the subjects for two and a half hours after ingestion of the food. The results showed “that emptying of the sandwich was slower when the subjects were supine than when they were seated.” The reason that they propose is that “some of the small intestine was superimposed on the stomach when the subjects were supine, but not when they were seated.” After each test the subjects were asked to rate their hunger. The answers remained consistent in that they remained more satiated after being fed in the supine position rather than a seated position.23

Rate of emptying sandwich out of stomach  Hunger ratings as a function of time

(Legend- Smaller dots=eating while sitting up, Larger dots= eating while reclined)

From this study and other similar ones such as *The effect of posture on gastric emptying and intragastric distribution of oil and aqueous meal components and appetite* by the Department of Medicine of South Australia, it seems as though Maimonides was correct in his theory. He must have observed that he and his fellow people would relieve themselves more quickly after a meal when seated and felt less satiated just as these test subjects had felt. Common sense would have one believe that a slower digestion of food would lead to more of the energy within it being taken into the body. This logic is what most probably led Maimonides to such a conclusion, as they did not have the medical knowledge and instruments to test for real evidence. And yet with just this logic, Maimonides had proposed what seems to be correct even by today’s standards of medicine.

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Another of Maimonides’ suggestions when it comes to digestion is that one should “warm up their body before eating breakfast”\textsuperscript{25}. Warming up here is in reference to exercise, although he does mention that a warm bath is a good addition. It can be inferred that he is alluding to exercise because in a related statement in chapter eighteen of his book Medical Aphorisms, Maimonides states that “A person who customarily exercises before meals does not have to be as careful with his diet”. The idea of exercise though, was not uniquely a Maimonidean idea but rather has been around since earlier times as can be seen from references in ancient Jewish texts. Although not explicitly mentioned as forms of exercise, there are scenes from the \textit{Tanach} that seem to recognize the importance of exercise as defined by Maimonides. He defines exercise in his book, Medical Aphorisms, as “physical movement that alters respiration, resulting in deep breathing, and at a faster pace than usual”\textsuperscript{26}. Stories within the \textit{Tanach} that can be seen as following these criteria include when Jacob “wrestled with an Angel”\textsuperscript{27} and the testing of one’s strength by moving a huge stone\textsuperscript{28}. The importance of physical activity and labor is mentioned in Ecclesticies as well when it states “the sleep of a laboring man is sweet”\textsuperscript{29}. The Talmud makes mention of physical activity on many separate occasions such as when it is stated, “Spend one third of your time in sitting, one third in standing and one third in walking”\textsuperscript{30}. The men of Talmudic time were said to be able to “walk ten parasangs in a day”\textsuperscript{31} because of the importance they had placed on being in good physical shape through exercise. In addition to these bibilical and rabbinic sources,

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{25} Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Deot, 4:2.
\item \textsuperscript{26} Medical Aphorisms 18:12
\item \textsuperscript{27} Genesis 32:26
\item \textsuperscript{28} Zecharia 12:3
\item \textsuperscript{29} Ecclesticies 5:11
\item \textsuperscript{30} Ketubot 111a
\item \textsuperscript{31} Pesachim 93b
\end{itemize}
Maimonides’ proposal to exercise was also influenced by the Greeks. Hippocrates taught that “exercise is a cornerstone in the preservation of health and the repulsion of most illness and that nothing can substitute for exercise in any way”. Maimonides also explains in his Regimen on Health that Hippocrates deemed it important for one’s health for them to exert themselves. The idea of warming up the body for digestion is also seen within the writings of both Galen and Ibn Sina, a famous and applauded Arabic physician who lived in the tenth century of the Common Era. They believed that when the food is eaten “it undergoes heating or cooking, first in the stomach and then in the liver” and what is not waste, is transformed into one of the four humors of the body. And so it comes to no surprise when Maimonides himself speaks in similar terms of heating and warming the body. Ibn Sina whose teachings were available to Maimonides stressed the importance of heat for digestion. In believing that there were four main humors that made up the fluids in a human body, he believed, just as the Greeks had, that each was formed from the differing qualities of food people ate at different body temperatures during the time of digestion.

By combining these biblical, rabbinic and scholarly sources along with the then-current ideas within the medical field, Maimonides had proposed that every person exercise to keep healthy. In addition to this he adds new criteria to this proposal, which is that this exercise should be done before the morning meal. This new addition to the ancient idea of exercise seems to be uniquely Maimonidean. In fact, the Talmud seems to have advised otherwise in Tractate Shabbat, saying “If one eats without walking four

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33 Maimonides in Bar-Sela, 16.
34 Freidenwald, 201-202.
35 Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Deot, 4:2.
cubits [afterwards], his food rots\textsuperscript{36} within the intestines and it is not digested\textsuperscript{37}. By contradicting the Talmud here, Maimonides seems to have believed that medical advice, even of rabbis, can be proven incorrect by using logic and updated medical knowledge. If so, he would not mind if today, we did not heed to his every medical advice and ignore modern scientific studies.

Through investigation of the hundreds of studies done on this topic, it seems as though Maimonides was square on in his suggestion to exercise in the morning. Not only does it help physiologically with digestion but can positively affect individuals’ mental attitudes as well. One important study on this subject is \textit{Sustained increase in dietary oleic acid oxidation following morning exercise} by Votruba, Atkinson and Schoeller.\textsuperscript{38} The experiment called for six women with an average age of 24 and average body mass index of 21, meaning they were healthy. In their first three visits they were put on a stationary bicycle to exercise, and in their last three visits they rested. In all six tests they ate breakfast, lunch and dinner. The ending results showed “that prior exercise selectively alters the partitioning of dietary fatty acids”, meaning that an exercise before a meal helps to break up the fats eaten during the meal. A similar study by Stiegler, Sparks and Cunliffe in London called \textit{Moderate exercise, postprandial energy expenditure, and substrate use in varying meals in lean and obese men} came to a similar conclusion.

\textsuperscript{36} \textit{Shabbat} 41a
stating “Exercising before meal consumption can result in a marked increase in fat oxidation, which is independent of the type of meal consumed”39.

Once again Maimonides was correct in his assumption. By using the knowledge of his predecessors and applying his logic, Maimonides was able to come to the conclusion that heat helps to break up food for absorption into the body. Just as fire breaks down wood in a bonfire, so too heat from a short exercise can break down the food in one’s digestive system. Exercise had been instituted much earlier in history as a beneficial practice for one’s health, and it can be seen in The Bible, Talmud and in the works of Hippocrates, Galen and Ibn Sina. By using the terminology “warm up” in context with exercise, it is highly probable that these three physicians had impacted Maimonides’ knowledge of medicine. Each of these three physicians had alluded to heat as a beneficial factor in aiding digestion of food into the four humors. And so although exercise had not been instituted solely by Maimonides, his suggestion to do so before a meal was new and unique. He was correct in his assumption and digestion does in fact occur more readily after the body has been “warmed up”.

Using this logic, it seems odd that Maimonides suggests not to exercise after a meal in the very next ruling of his Mishneh Torah.40 If heat from a light exercise breaks down food, than surely exerting oneself after a meal should aid the digestive process. It can be assumed that with digestion in mind, he believed that physical activity would put the body in motion that would be detrimental to digestion. He must have believed that in order for the food to flow smoothly through the digestive tract and to be broken down,


40 Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Deot 4:3.
the body should be still. One study done recently is of the opposing view. A study called *Weight control and calorie expenditure: thermogenic effects of pre-prandial and post-prandial exercise* was done in South Carolina by Davis, Sadri, Sargent and Ward.⁴¹ Although they agree with Maimonides in that exercise is good before a meal, they add that “exercise following a meal would be more beneficial… in increasing and maintaining an elevated energy expenditure”. And so the case can be made both for and against Maimonides’ warning of the dangers of exercise after the meal, although everyone agrees that exercise before a meal is beneficial.

The last of Maimonides theories to be discussed in this paper is regarding prandial drinking. Maimonides is of the opinion that water should not be drunk during a meal.⁴² This idea is prevalent in the ancient Greek and Arabic medical texts, although it seems to go against certain Jewish opinions brought down in the *Tanach* and Talmud. In the book of Samuel, a story is relayed as such, “And they found an Egyptian in the field and brought him to David, and gave him bread, and he did eat, and they made him drink water. And they gave him a piece of a cake of figs, and two clusters of raisins, and when he had eaten, his spirit came again to him.”⁴³ Clearly, they did not practice what Maimonides advocates, and instead the foreigner was given water to drink, within the meal itself. In the *Mishna* concerning the Passover seder, one is instructed to drink four cups of wine, some of which are during and after the meal.⁴⁴ In yet another example,

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⁴² *Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Deot* 4:2

⁴³ *Samuel I* 32:12

⁴⁴ *Pesachim* 10:1-7
found in the Talmud, it is stated that "He who makes his food float in water will not suffer from indigestion” which certainly contradicts Maimonides’ theory. Although absent in the ancient Jewish texts, the idea of refraining from drinking during the meal, is prevalent throughout Greek and Arabic texts. One example where this idea can be found is in the writings of Ibn Sina. In his *Canon of Medicine* it is written that one should not drink water with a meal, but only at the meal’s end, and even then, in small quantities. His reasoning is that “water taken in during digestion, would interrupt that process”.

This topic is one that remains controversial within the field of medicine today. One study dealing with the issue is *Studies on Water Drinking: The Metabolic Influence of Copious Water Drinking With Meals* by C. C. Fowler and P. B. Hawk from the Laboratory of Physiological Chemistry at the University of Illinois. They had a healthy man of the age 22, drink three liters of water with meals for five days and then studied the affects on his body. Their findings tend to agree with Maimonides’ theory. These findings include a weight gain of two pounds, an elevation in the number of particles of nitrogen found in his urine, catabolism or the breaking down of important proteins, high levels of excreted ammonia in urine and perspiration, a decrease in the amount of bacteria expelled by the body and increased levels of nitrogen based bacteria. Each of these effects are detrimental to one’s health. The weight gain is an obvious problem, high levels of nitrogen can be toxic to the kidney and liver, breaking down of proteins is a sign

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45 *Baba Kama* 92b
of energy deficiency and increases in bacteria can cause problems as well. In another study which also portrays the detrimental results of drinking during at mealtime, 24 overweight individuals were tested for energy deficiencies in connection with water intake before a meal. Although drinking before the meal is not what Maimonides advises against, this study shows that even such actions would affect a person negatively. The water taken in before a meal can be seen as having the same affect as prandial drinking and so this study seems to agree with his theory. These men of mean age 61 and body mass index of 31, were fed meals both with and without 500 milliliters of water preceding the meal. Results showed that “Meal energy intake was significantly less in the water preload condition as compared with the no-preload condition, representing an approximate 13% reduction in meal energy intake”. The lack of energy intake in this study is in agreement with the previous study which showed that proteins were being broken down for energy in an individual who drank during his meal.

These studies prove that Maimonides theory in regards to water intake and digestion during the meal were in fact correct. Even in terms of energy, which is a topic that will not be discussed at length in this paper, Maimonides had come to similar conclusions as these tests. He writes, “A person who does not exercise will suffer from pain and depleted energy levels, even if all the correct foods are eaten”. Despite disagreeing with Talmudic opinions that were seemingly of the opposite opinion,

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49 Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Deot 4:15.
Maimonides theory emerges unscathed. Although many individuals such as William Robinson, in *The Medico Pharmaceutical Critic and Guide*, come to other conclusions\(^5\), the prevalent opinion among doctors is that of Maimonides. In this case, Maimonides most probably attained his theory by learning from the teachings of Ibn Sina, but only through his logic and medical experience did he come to agree with his predecessor.

In each of these theories of Maimonides, there is one underlying premise, his use of logic and reason in coming up with them. Each idea that he presents, is one that he had thought up using his common sense in addition to his knowledge of matter and the body. Even the theories that he may have learned from past physicians, he accepts, only on condition that they are practical and correct through reason. The use of empirical evidence and logic is so important to Maimonides that he even believed that if there existed a “logical and empirical proof” to do so, even a law of the Torah may be overridden for medical purposes.\(^6\) At any rate, it seems as though he never does find such a case in which logic or his medical knowledge went against a dietary law of the Torah. There are times, though, at which Maimonides does disagree with the Talmud, some of which are brought down in this paper. He must have believed that although the Torah is divine, the sayings of the *Tanaim* were using only the medical knowledge of their time which was by Maimonides time, outdated. Surely if the United States Dietary Guidelines, which are written by the finest scientists and dieticians, are frequently


revised, the ancient medical advice of the Tanaim from the year 600 may be cautiously reviewed and even questioned.\textsuperscript{52}

Known for his rationalist approach to Judaism and knowledge in general, Maimonides applies a similar approach to the medical field. As Fred Rosner, an expert on Maimonides’ medical history, explained, “As a physician he treated disease by the scientific method, not by guesswork, superstition, or rule of thumb”\textsuperscript{53}. For instance, Maimonides even tries to rationalize the dietary laws set down in the Torah. He finds them rational and logical in that they help “to further the nourishment of the observant”\textsuperscript{54}. As opposed to the Talmudic rabbis, Maimonides does not just focus on finding a cure to a symptom, but places importance in understanding the illness and why such a cure would be of any help.\textsuperscript{55} In a letter to his student Joseph Ben Judah Ibn Shimon, Maimonides emphasizes the importance of logic and theoretical studies in science. He writes here and elsewhere that one should not say anything without first knowing its proof, its source and reasoning involved.

Although, Maimonides seems like a staunch rationalist, he does take the soul and his Jewish background into consideration in his practice of medicine. Many times throughout his works, he mentions the importance of a physician to observe and aid a patient’s soul when trying to heal the body. One example is in his Regimen on Health when he proposes that the “movements of the soul” should be taken into consideration

\textsuperscript{52} Zulberg, 4.
\textsuperscript{54} Ibid. 127.
when a physician is trying to heal someone ill.\textsuperscript{56} Elsewhere he proposes that “the physician should remember that any sick individual has an anxious heart, whereas a healthy one’s soul is roomy”\textsuperscript{57}. In his Mishneh Torah, he writes “a healthy and fulfilled body is in the ways of god because it is impossible to understand or have any knowledge of the Creator when one is sick”\textsuperscript{58}. Maimonides, although taking a secular path in proposing medical advice, still recognizes the importance of his Jewish beliefs. He is mindful of the classical Jewish texts and “he studiously avoids any direct clashes” with the “normative” \textit{halakha}. One example is in regards to the list of items that are, according to the Talmud, \textit{terefa}, meat that is deemed unsuitable as human food. Even though certain items on the list were not harmful in Maimonides view, because it says in Hullin 54a that this list may not be added to or subtracted to, “Maimonides is completely faithful to the Talmudic tradition on this issue”\textsuperscript{59}.

Maimonides, a pioneer in the medical field during the Middle Ages, used the teachings of The Bible, Greeks and Arabs in accordance with his logic and reasoning to beget his medical theories. As seen throughout his ideas on digestion, he was able to use these tools to determine a medical code of conduct that is, more often than not, in keeping with modern medical studies. By making use of statements such as “the divine presence rests only on a wise man, a strong man, a healthy man and a tall man”\textsuperscript{60}, Maimonides was able to make sense of using religion as an impetus to develop his medical knowledge.

While Judaism allowed him to study in this field, logic rather than tradition and mysticism is what he used to develop his theories. Maimonides truly believed that “man

\textsuperscript{56} Maimonides in Bar-Sela, 27.
\textsuperscript{57} Ibid. 25.
\textsuperscript{58} \textit{Mishneh Torah} Hilchot Deot 4:1. and \textit{Shemoneh Perakim} ch. 5
\textsuperscript{59} Kottek. 177.
\textsuperscript{60} \textit{Shabbat} 92a, \textit{Nedarim} 33a
should believe nothing which is not attested to by the rational proof as in mathematical science, by evidence of the senses or by authority of the prophets and saints”61. In addition to offering his own ideas, he also made use of the ideas of his predecessors such as Galen, Hippocrates and Ibn Sina as can be seen by their nearly identical medical hypotheses. With respect, he took their ideas and logically agreed with them or used his reasoning to come to differing conclusions. While he did not always agree with these medical experts of their time, he also did not always agree with the medical opinions in the Talmud, one of the foremost sources of Jewish law. Maimonides believed that medicine was a topic that evolved and was constantly being revised and reconfirmed. As a result, he was able to come up with ideas such as pre-prandial exercise, refraining from prandial drinking and reclining during the meal, which are all theories that have been proven to be beneficial according to studies done in the past 100 years.

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61 Friedenwald, 201.
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