

י"ג עיקרים של הרמב"ם

Rambam

THE 13 PRINCIPLES OF FAITH

THE SLAGER EDITION

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Rambam

THE 13 PRINCIPLES OF FAITH

PRINCIPLES VI & VII

*With an anthology of commentaries
from the Talmud, Midrash,
Rishonim and Acharonim,
and elucidation from the works
of the Lubavitcher Rebbe.*

*Compiled and Adapted by
Rabbi Chaim Miller*

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RAMBAM - THE 13 PRINCIPLES OF FAITH
PRINCIPLES 6 & 7: PROPHECY

with commentary from classic Rabbinic texts,
and the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson.

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Dedication of the

THIRTEEN PRINCIPLES OF FAITH

*Rambam's Thirteen
Principles of Faith
is dedicated to
our dear friends*

DAVID & LARA SLAGER

NEW YORK / LONDON

*May the merit of
spreading words of Torah
illuminated by the teachings of Chasidus
to thousands across the globe
be a source of blessing
for them and their family
for generations to come.*



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PREFACE



The current volume is the second in a series on the *Thirteen Principles of Faith* of Rambam, Rabbi Moshe ben Maimon (1138-1204)—known in Western culture since the Renaissance as Maimonides, following the publication of commentary on *Principles Eight* and *Nine* in 2007. This volume addresses the topics of prophecy in general (*Principle Six*), and the unique prophecy of Moshe (*Principle Seven*). Since many individuals are likely to make use of separate volumes in the series independently—this book, for example, stands alone as a book on prophecy—I will reproduce here my introductory words from the earlier published work.

☞ THE NEED FOR THIS WORK

This is, of course, not the first book to discuss *Rambam's Principles*. But, at a time when Jewish publishing, especially in the English language, has blossomed exponentially in the space of just a few decades, it is remarkable how little attention the *Principles* have attracted.

Partially at least, this may be attributed to the fact that, even in *Rambam's* original text, the *Principles* themselves are extremely brief summaries of some very deep ideas. This means that to study the *Principles* in outline is a relatively short exercise, whereas to meditate upon them and come to a thorough appreciation of their true meaning is a huge undertaking. So most works on the *Thirteen Principles*, both in Hebrew and in English, tend to be either overly brief, or intensely philosophical, which means that the majority of people are lacking a commentary that is informative and at the same time accessible.

In our day, the need to study the *Thirteen Principles of Faith* is as pertinent as ever, when modern life forces most of us to engage with cultures and thought-systems which are not based on the *Principles* and, in many cases, are antithetical to them.

Educating the next generation to act as observant, G-d-fearing Jews is proving to be more difficult than ever, as the outside world appears to be increasingly colorful and enticing, while Jewish texts remain in “black-and-white.” And why *should* our youth be attracted to Judaism if they are not imparted a profound appreciation of its basic beliefs and ideas?

Furthermore, each year there are countless Jewish men and women who are in the process of adopting a life of Torah and *mitzvos* and are thirsty to know its true, spiritual meaning. With the constant expansion of outreach efforts in every part of the global Jewish community, there are countless Jews whose interest has been sparked, and want to discover more about the Torah. How many times have we heard the question: I want to study, but where do I begin?

And even for those of us who are happy, observant Jews, not suffering a crisis of faith, and not in the process of major soul-searching, it is so important that our *mitzvah*-acts do not become dry and performed by rote. Studying the *Principles* refreshes our worship of G-d, invigorating every deed with an enhanced awareness of Whom we are serving and why we are serving Him. While each *mitzvah* has its own specific *kavanah* (intention and purpose), the *Thirteen Principles* enrich us with the general *kavanah* which underlies all of the *mitzvos*.

🌀 NOTES ON METHOD

For these reasons, among others, I have long felt it necessary that a text be prepared from which thoughtful people can study the *Thirteen Principles of Faith*, so as to come to a deeper appreciation of the basic tenets of Judaism.

Faith is, of course, something we all grapple with and it cannot be “delivered” in book-form. Genuine faith demands much thought and reflection, a process of nurturing that “sixth-sense” that we are all born with by speaking with our souls and encouraging our spiritual sensitivities to become honed and refined.

Since time immemorial, Jews have done this, not by meditating on mountain-tops, but by studying the Torah. Besides providing us with fascinating and important information, the Torah’s inner light guides its student on the right path and nourishes his or her

spirituality.* While this is true for all Torah texts, whatever the subject may be, studying the *Principles of Faith* is more directly rewarding in this respect than, for example, examining minutiae of law.

In this volume, we have gathered a series of classic texts which address the *Principles* from over 150 sources—beginning with the Biblical canon, Mishnah, Midrash and Talmud, spanning across the Gaonic and Medieval period, to the era of Jewish philosophers, the Kabalists, the Chasidic masters, giants of the Lithuanian school, and modern thinkers up to the twentieth century.

We begin each *Principle* with *Rambam's* original formulation, excerpted from his *Commentary to the Mishnah*. Originally, it was our intention to place this text on the top of the page and have a running commentary underneath, but *Rambam* is so brief in his formulation of the *Principles* and so much commentary is required that such a layout proved unworkable. Instead, we have isolated a number of key topics and questions that arise from *Rambam's* text and address them in a series of “lessons.”

While the lessons do follow a logical sequence, in most cases they can be studied independently, without knowledge of the material that preceded it, and many crucial ideas are cross-referenced.

A weakness common to some treatments of the *Thirteen Principles* is a tendency to drift off the subject. So in the lessons, we have endeavored to address only the subject-matter of *Rambam's* text, or questions that arise from it.

While the texts have been prepared primarily for the English reader, we are aware that nowadays works of English Judaica are used by a vast cross-spectrum of readers, ranging from total beginners to those well-versed in Torah study. Therefore, all the classic texts appear here alongside their Hebrew (or Aramaic) source, so that those who are capable of studying in the original may do so. Nevertheless, our translations of the texts are specifically geared to the reader who is studying *only* in English, so we have aimed to make them as readable and digestible as possible,

*See *Eichah Rabah*, Intro. 2 and *Yefey Anaf* *ibid.*, Jerusalem Talmud *Chagigah*, 1:7 and *Korban ha-Eidah* *ibid.*; *Mesilas Yesharim*, author's introduction; *Alter Rebbe's Shulchan Aruch*, *Hilchos Talmud Torah* 4:3.

often choosing to paraphrase or summarize more intricate Hebrew passages. The English rendition will therefore be of limited value, in many instances, for those who seek a precise, linear translation, so as to familiarize themselves with Hebrew, etc.

🌀 STRUCTURE OF THE LESSONS

Since the *Kol Menachem Chumash* was published, countless readers have noted how much they enjoyed the way in which information was presented. “In most *Chumashim*,” wrote one reader, “questions are answered but not explicitly asked. Uneducated readers are lost. In the *Kol Menachem Chumash*, questions always precede answers. This means that the reader understands what he or she is about to read. Suddenly, the text makes sense. Not only has the reader studied Torah—he or she has actually understood it.”

The English commentaries in the *Chumash* were basically built around three structural elements: a.) *Classic Questions*—addressed by a series of citations from the classic commentaries. b.) *Toras Menachem*—A discussion of these texts, based on the Lubavitcher Rebbe’s works, encouraging the reader to explore various possible interpretations. c.) A further layer of commentary offering a Chasidic angle, entitled *Sparks of Chasidus* (insights) and *The Last Word* (practical directives).

Presenting the material in this fashion proved to be effective for a number of reasons:

i.) By engaging in a rabbinic debate before exploring possible solutions, the reader becomes an “active” participant in a multifaceted discussion, rather than being spoon-fed from a “flat text” (as the above citation illustrates).

ii.) Those familiar with the Rebbe’s teachings found it refreshing to see how his thoughts interplayed with a host of different views.

iii.) For those unfamiliar with the Rebbe’s approach, this structure brought to light the Rebbe’s desire to be a genuine *teacher* of Torah and not a preacher of his own ideas.*

*Rabbi Pinchas Hirshprung (1912-1998), Chief Rabbi of Montreal and world renowned Talmudic scholar, once exclaimed to the Rebbe, “I particularly enjoy the footnotes in *Likutei Sichos*. They are remarkable!”

iv.) A pleasant balance was achieved among *information* (becoming familiar with different sources), *analysis*, *inspiration* (through Chasidic insights) and *direction* (through the “Last Word” commentaries).

In this volume, we have followed a virtually identical structure. The only significant change is the addition of a further element to the commentary, entitled “A Living Example,” where authentic stories culled from classical texts are used to further illustrate various points in the discussion.

The reader should also be reminded that the *Toras Menachem* commentaries are: a.) Adaptations and not translations.** The editor has taken extreme care not to add arguments of his own. Where it was deemed necessary to add background information, additional explanation or further illustrations, this was indicated in a footnote or by the use of square brackets. b.) The material here only represents a fraction of the Rebbe’s teachings which fill some two hundred volumes. c.) Many essays have been constructed from a number of sources written or spoken on different occasions. d.) We have drawn primarily from sources which were edited for publication by the Rebbe himself, though in many instances we were forced to rely on unedited transcripts which are the only existing records of many of his teachings.

Since the format of the *Toras Menachem* commentary differs considerably from its original presentation by the Rebbe himself, if the reader finds the logical sequence of ideas uneasy or if any points are lacking clarity, the shortcoming is to be attributed to the editor and not to the original author.

The Rebbe replied, “There is another purpose here, which is why I endeavor to make all the references in *Likutei Sichos*: that if somebody does not agree with the explanation I offer in the *sicha*, he will be able to study the sources for himself in Mishnah, Gemara, Midrash, Zohar and Chasidic texts, beginning with the Tanya” (*Hisvaduyos* 5748, vol. 2, p. 558).

**In reference to publishing his own teachings in English translation, the Rebbe wrote: “As I have mentioned many a time, what matters is the content and not the word-for-word translation. Therefore, you should ensure that the language is clear and the style appropriate, for the main objective is that the readers should appreciate what is written” (*Igros Kodesh* vol. 28, p. 267).

[For further details on our methodology, the source texts which were available to us, and our system of transliteration, see Foreword to the *Kol Menachem Chumash*].

🌀 OTHER APPROACHES TO THIS SUBJECT

One of the reasons why the *Thirteen Principles of Faith* have not yet become an extremely popular topic for Torah study, despite their centrality and the fascinating nature of the subject material, is because existing works tend towards one of two extremes: they are either too *philosophical* or too *polemical*.

Much of the source material which relates directly to the *Principles* is to be found in works of medieval Jewish philosophy. These texts tend to be long and complex, and demand background knowledge in the Aristotelian and Neoplatonic thought which was in vogue at the time they were composed. Perhaps the best book on our subject, *With Perfect Faith* by Rabbi J. David Bleich (Ktav, 1983), clearly possesses this drawback. While the author offers thought-provoking introductions to each Principle and remains loyal to the subject, his selections from the classic philosophical texts are far too long and intricate for anything less than an intense academic study. He also limits himself strictly to philosophical works, and does not draw upon Talmudic and Midrashic passages which serve to illustrate the *Principles*, nor does he touch upon the vast corpus of mystical texts (Kabbalah and Chasidus), or quote from any Acharonim (post-medieval texts) or contemporary sources.

Other works make the mistake of being too polemical: they are on the offensive to prove their point aggressively with various arguments, etc. In my opinion, such an approach is of very limited effectiveness, and can even prove counterproductive, for a number of reasons:

a.) Human nature is such that when we are “attacked” with proofs for ideas which we are uncomfortable with, and may well have a vested interest in rejecting, our defenses are raised. In one letter, the Rebbe wrote:

“In most polemics, debates, dialogues and the like, the usual outcome is not a rapprochement of minds and hearts; rather do they evoke an impulse of rivalry and the desire to score a

point, or gain a victory over the opponent by any means. This is usually the case even in non-religious polemics, and certainly very much so in religious debates, inasmuch as the subject matter touches one's inner soul; and even more so where religious zealots are concerned" (Letters from the Rebbe, vol. 1, p. 7).

Obviously, this stands true for a written polemic as it does for a verbal one.

b.) Logical arguments tend to come and go as they are formulated and later refuted. If a person's Judaism is based on logical proofs, then his commitment will be shaky and liable to be refuted at any time. Just as he was once convinced by an argument, he might later find it unconvincing.

Of course, this does not mean to say that we should only have blind faith and never explore our beliefs intellectually. This book was conceived on the foundation that it is important for thoughtful people to try to appreciate their beliefs intellectually as much as possible, and that faith is strengthened when intellectually supported. But when the Jews were given the Torah they declared, "We will observe *and then* we will understand" (*Shemos* 24:7), indicating that intellectual inquiry is a necessary accessory to our faith, but it should not be the basis of it.

c.) Proofs tend to send a dogmatic message that if we harbor doubts we are not cut out for religious life, leading a person to suffer feelings of rejection.

Nothing could be further from the truth. We all possess a *yetzer hara* (evil inclination), which in all but the most exceptional of cases is never eliminated. And, consequently,

"one should not feel depressed or very troubled at heart even if he be engaged all his days in this conflict, for perhaps this is what he was created for, and this is the service demanded of him—to subdue the forces of evil constantly" (Tanya, ch. 27).

Furthermore, the fact that our doubts *trouble* us is really an expression of faith:

"With reference to the other topic of our correspondence, namely, my suggestion that one's protestations against G-d are in themselves proof of belief in the existence of G-d—perhaps I did not make myself clear, in that it is not the negation which I consider to be proof, so much as the manner in which it is

expressed. For, when one declares his atheism once and for all, affirming that henceforth he has no place for G-d in his thoughts, lexicon and daily life, then the matter is settled and closed. However, when one asserts that G-d does not exist yet at the same time, on seeing an injustice in the world, experiences pain and promptly demands, "Where is G-d?"—his harping on the same theme again and again is proof that deep in his heart he believes in G-d—which is precisely why he feels so hurt and outraged (Letter written by the Rebbe in 5727).

This inner kernel of faith needs to be nurtured by a gradual process of reflection and study. It cannot be built overnight by a series of proofs.

A further important point concerning the process of faith-building is that observance of the commandments plays an important role:

"The physical body requires a daily intake of certain elements in certain quantities obtainable through breathing and food consumption. No amount of thinking, speaking and studying all about these elements can substitute for the actual intake of air and food. All this knowledge will not add one iota of health to the body unless it is given its required physical sustenance; on the contrary, the denial of the actual intake of the required elements will weaken the mental forces of thought, concentration, etc. Thus it is obvious that the proper approach to ensure the health of the body is not by way of study first and practice afterward, but the reverse, to eat and drink and breathe, which in turn strengthen also the mental powers of study and concentration, etc.

Similarly in the case of the soul and the elements which it requires daily for its sustenance, known best to its Creator, and which He revealed to all at Mount Sinai, in the presence of millions of witnesses, of different outlooks, walks of life, character, etc., who in turn transmitted it from generation to generation, uninterruptedly, to our day, the truth of which is thus constantly corroborated by millions of witnesses, etc. (undated letter by the Rebbe).

Consequently,

"the absence of the religious practice itself handicaps the powers of the intellect to grasp the truth. Furthermore, since the

human intellect is by its very nature limited, while the subject it desires to grapple with is related to the Unlimited, it is only with the aid of the Infinite G-d that one hopes to be lifted across the unbridgeable chasm separating the created and the Creator, and such Divine aid can come only through Divine service (Letter written by the Rebbe on 18th of Sivan, 5715).

To avoid these pitfalls, we have stayed clear, for the most part, of lengthy philosophical texts. Obviously one cannot ignore the contribution of the medieval philosophers, but we have attempted to present the essence of their arguments in a few short paragraphs. The other texts cited were chosen because they make their points briefly and clearly.

Likewise, we have steered away from polemics.* The lessons aim to enlighten and inform the reader and guide him or her through the various pathways of understanding the *Principles* of our faith. Very often, a person's difficulty with a Principle will arise because his understanding of it is too rudimentary and simplistic. By informing the reader of the various subtleties and nuances of the last two thousand years of Rabbinic discussion, it is hoped that many foundations of our faith will be freshly illuminated.

🔮 THE REBBE ON FAITH

While a full-length study of the Rebbe's analytical approach to the *Thirteen Principles* (and to Torah texts in general) is most definitely a project that needs to be undertaken in the future, it would be remiss of me not to mention at least a few words here on the subject.**

*With the exception of Lesson One. Here it was deemed necessary to give at least some logical underpinning for the core of Rambam's *Eighth Principle*. Our fears of dealing with polemics were allayed in this case since the content of the lesson is excerpted *verbatim* from letters penned by the Rebbe himself which, clearly, were written with sufficient sensitivity to avoid the problems mentioned above.

**As a Chasidic Rebbe, and leader of the Jewish community at large, the Rebbe dedicated much of his life to inspiring others with faith, and was a living example of one who took faith very seriously. However, we will touch here only on his approach to the study of faith-related texts, which is the subject of this work.

First, the scope of the Rebbe's treatment is staggering. While he spoke on many topics (often revolving around the weekly Torah portion or an upcoming festival) the themes of faith recur consistently—G-d, Prophecy, the Divine authorship and eternity of the Torah, Reward and Punishment, Mashiach, and Resurrection. If one were to collect all this material, it would no doubt fill many thousands of pages.

This persistent interest in faith is, in fact, quite unusual for a Torah scholar who had mastered both Talmuds and a vast array of other important texts. Most Rabbinic writing does not repeatedly stress the need for faith or discuss its parameters, except those works which are exclusively dedicated to the subject, such as the philosophical and *mussar* (ethical) literature, etc. It is therefore quite remarkable that even amid complex legal discussions of Talmud, *Mishneh Torah* and Halachah, the Rebbe would, almost inevitably, find an opportunity to address faith issues.

A second point worthy of note is that the Rebbe approached faith-related texts with a level of analytical sophistication normally reserved for advanced Talmudic dialectics. Studying the *Principles of Faith* thus becomes an intellectually challenging enterprise, as this volume clearly demonstrates.

A third outstanding feature is the Rebbe's willingness to deal with difficult questions. When preparing the *Classic Questions* commentaries, it often surprised me how hard it was to find solutions for some glaringly obvious questions. This is all the more perplexing when one considers that modern research techniques, especially through the use of computers, and the general availability of information nowadays, means that we have at our fingertips many more texts than were accessible in the past. It is therefore notable that the Rebbe had a significant scholarly contribution to make on all of the twenty-five issues addressed by the lessons of this book—and this is despite the fact that he never addressed the *Thirteen Principles* formally or systematically.

A final point—and this strikes me as being the most outstanding of all—is the *way* in which the Rebbe dealt with faith questions. As the reader will discover over the next few hundred pages, there are numerous statements of the Talmud, Midrash and later authorities which appear, at first glance, to be inconsistent with, or worse still, a contradiction to *Rambam's Principles*. For example, *Principle Nine* states categorically that the Torah will never be

annulled, and yet at least one view in the Talmud maintains that the commandments will be annulled in the future (*Nidah* 61b).

This leaves us in a conundrum. Apparently, something is going to have to give way: either our strict adherence to the simple meaning of the Talmud's words or our unquestioning faith in the *Ninth Principle*. In fact, the commentators tend to follow one of these two paths, either arguing that the Talmud's "annulment" does not mean what it may seem at first; or by partially delimiting the scope of the *Ninth Principle*, proposing that it is only applicable before the Resurrection, but not afterwards.

While both interpretations are clearly within the pale of Orthodoxy, the Rebbe was dissatisfied with both of them. Our instinctive soul-reaction to both texts (the Talmud and the *Ninth Principle*) was to take them literally, and, in the Rebbe's view, we must seek to uphold that pure faith with an intellectually rigorous solution (see *Principle 9, Lesson 8* for how the Rebbe deals with this problem).

Thus, repeatedly in this volume, the reader will find instances where the absolute integrity of one of the *Principles* appears to be challenged by a genuine Torah source, and the Rebbe demands a solution which confirms both our faith in the *Principles* and in the precision of Torah texts.

Furthermore, in many instances, the Rebbe succeeds in "turning the tables," and transforming something which was a *question* on the *Principles* into an argument which *supports* them. For example, the reader who is initially disturbed by the fact that the Oral Law contains so many differences of opinion, may be uplifted to hear that this actually represents something very beautiful: G-d's desire that the Torah be meaningful to us and sensitive to *our* condition, which is why He gave man the right to express his own opinion (see *Principle 8, Lesson 5*, and also *Lessons 8-10*).

In this, and so many other cases, the Rebbe's insights uplift, not merely by solving problems, but by uncovering an inner sanctity in the question itself. Darkness has not merely been dispelled, it has been transformed INTO light.

🌀 NOTES & ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Kol Menachem gratefully acknowledges the generous support and tireless dedication of our founding patron **Rabbi Meyer Gutnick**. Rabbi Gutnick has not only kept our organization financially afloat, he has also devoted thousands of hours of his personal time to assisting our work and ensuring that our publications receive the widest publicity possible. His vision is to bring words of Torah, especially as they are illuminated by the teachings of Chasidus, to the English speaking world, with unprecedented clarity and quality of presentation—and it is a task which he carries out with the loyal dedication of a Chasid.

In 2006 we had the privilege of welcoming a new partner to our enterprise, **Mr. David Slager**, who generously dedicated the Synagogue Edition of the *Kol Menachem Chumash* and the *Kol Menachem Haggadah*. His warm encouragement and continuing support have enabled us to expand the scope of our activities significantly and bring many more works to the public. This volume proudly bears his name, the *Slager Edition*, and is dedicated to the entire Slager family: **David, Lara** and their precious children **Hannah** and **Sara Malka**. May the merit of spreading words of Torah, illuminated by the teachings of Chasidus to thousands across the globe, be a source of blessing for them for generations to come.

I would like to gratefully acknowledge the following people who have assisted in producing this volume: Rabbi Itzick Yarmush, my dear colleague and friend, who spent hundreds of hours discussing and clarifying the source material with me, and painstakingly checked the *Toras Menachem* commentaries against their source texts. I also received invaluable editorial assistance from Rabbis Ya'akov Paley, Mendy Angyalfi, Yossi Barber and Shmuel Rabin. I am also grateful to Mrs. Yehudis Homnick, Chaya Sarah Cantor and Chani Telsner for proofreading.

Finally, I would like to thank all those readers who took the time to send in positive feedback about our previous works, making what is sometimes a lonely profession into an extremely rewarding one.

May we soon merit the true and complete redemption, when all the Jewish people will be free to observe G-d's commandments and study his Torah.

Rabbi Chaim Miller

General Editor

Kol Menachem

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One must educate a child in all areas of Torah and mitzvos, especially in the Thirteen Principles of Faith.

(Sichas Shabbos Parshas Terumah 5741)

*In response to the questions in your letter....
What are the correct beliefs that a person should have? Those expressed by the classic statements of "Ani Ma'amin."*

(Igras Kodesh vol. 15, p. 277)

Lectures should be arranged on the principles of our faith, its foundations and details.

(Igras Kodesh vol. 26, p. 88)



ANI MA'AMIN

THE THIRTEEN PRINCIPLES OF FAITH*

- One** | I believe with complete faith that the Creator, blessed be His Name, creates and directs all created beings, and that He alone made, makes, and will make everything.
- אני מאמין באמונה שלמה. שהבורא יתברך שמו הוא בורא ומנהיג לכל הברואים. והוא לבדו עשה ועושה ועושה לכל המעשים.
- Two** | I believe with complete faith that G-d in One. There is no unity that is in any way like His. He alone is our G-d—He was, He is, and He will be.
- אני מאמין באמונה שלמה. שהבורא יתברך שמו הוא יחיד ואין יחידות כמוהו בשום פנים. והוא לבדו אלהינו. הנה ויהיה.
- Three** | I believe with complete faith that G-d does not have a body and that physical concepts do not apply to Him. There is nothing whatsoever that resembles Him at all.
- אני מאמין באמונה שלמה. שהבורא יתברך שמו אינו גוף. ולא ישיגוהו משיגי הגוף. ואין לו שום דמיון כלל.
- Four** | I believe with complete faith that G-d is first and last.
- אני מאמין באמונה שלמה. שהבורא יתברך שמו הוא ראשון והוא אחרון.

*This text is a prosaic rendition of *Rambam's Thirteen Principles* found in Ashkenazic prayer books. The authorship of this text and its date are unknown and it has some significant inconsistencies with *Rambam's* original statements. See *Ha-Ma'or*, vol. 1, by Rabbi Elazar Meir Preyil (Jerusalem 5689), sec. 7; *Ha-Nusach ve-ha-Nikud be-Sidur Admor ha-Zaken* by Rabbi Baruch Oberlander, ch. 7, in *Ha-Siddur* (Heichal Menachem Monsey, 2003), p. 232ff.

- Five** | I believe with complete faith that it is proper to pray only to G-d. One may not pray to anyone or anything else.
- Six** | I believe with complete faith that all the words of the prophets are true.
- Seven** | I believe with complete faith that the prophecy of Moshe is absolutely true. He was the chief of all the Prophets, both before and after him.
- Eight** | I believe with complete faith that the entire Torah that we now have is that which was given to Moshe.
- Nine** | I believe with complete faith that this Torah will not be changed and that there never will be another given by G-d.
- Ten** | I believe with complete faith that G-d knows all of man's deeds and thoughts, as the verse states, *"He has molded every heart alike. He knows all their deeds"* (Psalm 33:15).
- Eleven** | I believe with complete faith that G-d rewards those who keep His commandments and punishes those who transgress His commandments.
- Twelve** | I believe with complete faith in the coming of Mashiach (the Messiah). Even though he takes time, I eagerly await his coming every day.
- אני מאמין באמונה שלמה. שהבורא יתברך שמו לו לבדו ראוי להתפלל. ואין ראוי להתפלל לזולתו.
- אני מאמין באמונה שלמה. שכל דברי נביאים אמת.
- אני מאמין באמונה שלמה. שנבואת משה רבנו עליו השלום הייתה אמתית. ושהוא היה אב לנביאים. לקודמים לפניו ולבאים אחריו.
- אני מאמין באמונה שלמה. שכל התורה המצויה עתה בידינו היא הנתונה למשה רבנו עליו השלום.
- אני מאמין באמונה שלמה. שזאת התורה לא תהא מחלפת ולא תהא תורה אחרת מאת הבורא יתברך שמו.
- אני מאמין באמונה שלמה. שהבורא יתברך שמו יודע כל מעשה בני אדם וכל מחשבותם. שנאמר היצר יחד לבם המבין אל כל מעשיהם.
- אני מאמין באמונה שלמה. שהבורא יתברך שמו גומל טוב לשומרי מצותיו ומעניש לעוברי מצותיו.
- אני מאמין באמונה שלמה. בביאת המשיח. ואף על פי שיתמהמה. עם כל זה אחכה לו בכל יום שיבוא.

Thirteen | I believe with complete faith that the dead will be brought back to life when it will be the will of the Creator, blessed be His name and exalted be His remembrance forever and ever.

אני מאמין באמונה שלמה.
שתהיה תחית המתים בעת
שיעלה רצון מאת הבורא
יתברך שמו ויתעלה זכרו לעד
ולנצח נצחים.

THE 6th PRINCIPLE

ה' סוּד ה' ש' ש' י

THE 6TH PRINCIPLE: PROPHECY

Rambam
Commentary to
the Mishnah

The *Sixth Principle* is prophecy. Namely, that a person should know that among human beings there are found individuals endowed with character traits that are extremely refined and high in caliber to a great degree of perfection, and their souls are primed to receive pure intellectual form. Consequently, their human intellect merges with the Active Intellect,* from which profound emanation flows to it. Such people are prophets, and this is the phenomenon of prophecy.

A thorough explanation of this Principle would be very lengthy, and it is not our intention to present a philosophical demonstration of each of the Principles, nor to clarify the means of comprehending each one, for that would involve every branch of wisdom. Rather, we will give them a mere brief examination.

There are numerous verses of the Torah which give testimony about prophecy issued by prophets.

וְהִיְסוּד הַשְּׂשִׁי – הַנְּבוּאָה, וְהוּא:
שִׂדְע אָדָם, שְׁזֶה מִיַּן הָאָדָם
יִמְצָא בָהֶם בְּעֲלֵי טְבָעִים מִמְדוֹת
מְעֻלּוֹת וְזִכּוֹת מְאֹד וּשְׁלֵמוֹת
גְּדוֹלָה, וְנִפְשׁוּתֵיהֶן נְכוֹנוֹת עַד
שֶׁהֵן מִקְבְּלוֹת צוּרַת הַשֶּׁכֶל. וְאַחַר
כֵּן יִדְבַק אוֹתוֹ הַשֶּׁכֶל הָאֲנוּשִׁי
בְּ"שֶׁכֶל הַפּוֹעֵל" וְנֶאֱצֵל מִמֶּנּוּ עָלָיו
אֲצִילוֹת נִכְבְּדָה – וְאֵלֶּה הֵם
הַנְּבִיאִים, וְזוֹ הִיא הַנְּבוּאָה, וְזֶהוּ
עֲנִינָה.

וּבְאוֹר יִסוּד זֶה עַל בְּרִיּוֹ יֶאֱרָךְ
מְאֹד; וְאִין כּוֹנְנָנוּ לְהִבְיֵא מוֹפֵת
עַל כָּל יִסוּד מֵהֶם וּבְאוֹר מְצִיאוֹת
הַשְּׂגָתָה, לְפִי שְׁזֶה הוּא כָּלֵל
הַחֲכָמוֹת כָּלָן; אֲבָל אֲזַכְרֶם דְּרָךְ
סְפוּר בְּלִבְךָ.

וּמִקְרָאֵי הַתּוֹרָה מְעִידִים עַל
נְבוּאֹת נְבִיאִים הַרְבֵּה.

* According to *Rambam's* metaphysics, the Active Intellect (*Sechel ha-Po'el*) is the last rung in a hierarchy of transcendent, incorporeal entities that are subordinate to

Points to Remember...

- ✓ Prophecy occurs when the human mind is primed to receive pure intellectual form.
- ✓ At that point, the human intellect merges with an emanation of Divine intellect.
- ✓ This can only take place with individuals who are endowed with extremely refined character traits.

G-d. The Active Intellect continually “emanates” a whole range of abstract human thoughts which the human mind can then tap into, according to the individual’s mental disposition. While the Active Intellect is the immediate source, the emanation does, in fact, come from G-d, who is found at the upper end of the hierarchy. Prophecy occurs when a human mind receives the emanation of the Active Intellect in a particular manner. See *Guide for The Perplexed* 2.4; 3.8.

LESSON I

PROPHECY AS A PRINCIPLE OF FAITH

IN THIS LESSON

- ▶ Why is prophecy so central to Judaism?
- ▶ The dynamic of prophetic revelation.
- ▶ The purpose of prophecy.

CLASSIC QUESTION

Why is belief in prophecy a Principle of Faith?

Rambam, Guide for the Perplexed

Belief in the concept of prophecy precedes belief in the Torah, for if there is no prophet then there is no Torah (Part III, chapter 45).

Sefer ha-Ikarim

I consider the belief in the Divine authorship of Torah a Principle of Faith and prophecy a mere subsidiary of it.... For prophecy [is not] experienced by men in order for people to know matters of personal interest that will occur in the world, or to prove a particular point miraculously....

[Rather,] it is in order for man to distinguish those things which are desired by G-d from those things which are not desired....The purpose of the phenomenon of prophecy is so

וּכְבָּר נִדְעַ שְׁפָנַת אֱמוּנַת הַנְּבוּאָה וְקֹדֶמֶת לְאֱמוּנַת הַתּוֹרָה, שְׂאֵם אֵין נְבִיא – אֵין תּוֹרָה.

מְנִינוּ תּוֹרָה מִן הַשָּׁמַיִם עֵקֶר וְהַנְּבוּאָה שְׂרֵשׁ מִסְתַּעֵף מִמֶּנּוּ ... שְׂאֵם הִיְתָה הַגַּעַת הַנְּבוּאָה אֶל הַמִּין הָאָנוּשִׁי כְּדֵי שֶׁעַל יְדֵהּ יִדְעוּ הָאָנָשִׁים הַדְּבָרִים הָאִישִׁיִּים הַמִּתְחַדְּשִׁים בְּעוֹלָם, אוֹ כְּדֵי שֶׁיִּתְחַדְּשׁוּ עַל יְדֵהּ אוֹתוֹת וּמוֹפְתִים עַל עֲנֵן פְּרָטִי ...

שֶׁהַהִכָּרַח הַמְבִיא אֶל הַמַּצָּא הַנְּבוּאָה הוּא כְּדֵי ... שֶׁיִּדְעוּ עַל יְדֵהּ הַדְּבָרִים הַנִּרְצִים אֲצֵל הַשֵּׁם יִתְבָּרַךְ מֵהַבְּלָתֵי נִרְצִים ...

*Sefer
ba-Ikarim*
(cont.)

that G-d's directives should reach man, namely the "Torah from heaven." Therefore, it is fitting to count "Torah from Heaven" as a Principle of Faith... but prophecy is a subsidiary of it (3:12).

שְׁתַּכְלִית הַמְצֵא הַנְּבוּאָה הוּא
כְּדֵי שְׁתִּגִּיעַ עַל יְדֵה הַיִּשְׁרָה
אֱלֹהִית לְמִין הָאָדָם, שֶׁהִיא תּוֹרָה
מִן הַשָּׁמַיִם, רְאוּי שִׁימְנָה תּוֹרָה
מִן הַשָּׁמַיִם עֶקֶר ... נְבוּאָה שְׂרָשׁ
מִסְתַּעֵף לַתּוֹרָה.

*Divrei
Yirmiyahu*

It is one of the Principles of Faith to know that "prophecy will not [rest on a person unless he is extremely wise, a master of his emotions], etc.," in order that one should not be misled to believe in imposters and vain dreamers whose troubled spirits mislead themselves and others (ibid.).

וְנִרְאָה כִּי "וְאִין הַנְּבוּאָה" וְכוּי כָּל
כֶּךָ לִידַע הוּא מִיסוּדֵי הַתּוֹרָה,
לְמַעַן לֹא נִתְעָה לְתַת אֲמוּן בְּאֲנָשֵׁי
מִרְמָה הוּזִי שְׂוֹא, וּלְפַעֲמִים רוּחָם
יִתְעַם וּמִתְעִים אַחֲרֵיהֶם.

CLASSIC QUESTION

By what means is prophecy received?

*Rambam,
Guide for the
Perplexed*

Know that prophecy essentially and in truth is a flow coming forth from G-d—*May He be honored and exalted!*—through the agency of the Active Intellect* (part 2, ch. 36).

דַּע, כִּי אֲמַתַּת הַנְּבוּאָה וּמְהוּתָהּ
הוּא שֶׁפַע הַשְּׁפוּעַ מֵאֵת הַיְתֵדֶדֶר
וְיִתְרוֹמֵם בְּאֲמַצְעוֹת הַשֶּׁכֶל
הַפּוֹעֵל.

*Drashos
ba-Ran*

There is no doubt that these qualities [of intellectual and character refinement] bring perfection to the soul, and separate it from the lower realms. This enables it to bond with the upper realms to the extent that this person is fit for prophecy.

וְאִין סִפֵּק כִּי הַמַּעֲלוֹת הָאֵלוּ
יִשְׁלִימוּ הַנֶּפֶשׁ וְיִפְרִידוּהָ מִן
הַתַּחְתּוֹנִים, וְיִהְיֶה דְבָקוֹת בִּינָה
וּבִין הָעֲלִיוֹנִים, עַד שֶׁיִּהְיֶה הָאִישׁ
הַזֶּה רְאוּי לְנְבוּאָה.

*Avodas
ba-Kodesh*

Since the prophecy flows from the powers within the Great Name [of G-d]... therefore certain prerequisites were demanded from the prophet (see

וּלְפִי שֶׁהַנְּבוּאָה נִשְׁפַּעַת מִהַכּוֹחוֹת
הַנִּכְלָלִים בְּשֵׁם הַגְּדוֹל ... לָזֶה
הִתְנִיגוּ בְּהַ אֱלֹהֵי הַדְּבָרִים ... שֶׁהֵם
שְׁלֵמוֹת הַמְרַכְבֶּה הָעֲלִיוֹנָה,

*See p. 3.

Lesson 4), because these qualities represent the perfection of the “Heavenly Chariot” and the prophet must be a reflection of them. Thus, when he will achieve perfection in these areas he achieves *imitatio dei*, as these Heavenly qualities will shine through him. At that point, prophecy rests on him (4:20).

Arizal | [The prophet] should contemplate and have intent to receive light from the ten *sefiros* (Divine attributes), from the point where the root of his soul is attached....

Then he should have intent to draw that light and flow back down, level by level, until it reaches his “intellectual soul” in his body. From there it reaches the “animating soul” and its faculty of imagination. There, through his imagination, these revelations will take on a physical form and he will understand them as if he saw them with his own eyes (*Sha'arei Kedushah* 3:5).

והנביא צריך שיהיה בדוגמא זו ... וכששתלם בהם הנה הוא דומה לעליון, כי מאירים בו הדברים ההם, ואז הנבואה שורה עליו.

יחשוב ויכון לקבל אור מן העשר ספירות, מאותה הנקודה אשר שרש נשמתו נאחזת שם ...

ויכון להוריד דרך ירידה ממדרגה למדרגה עד שגיע האור והשפע ההוא אל נפשו השכלית שבגופו, ומשם תגיע עד נפש החיה וכח המדמה שבו, ושם יצטירו הענינים ההם ציור גשמי בכחו המדמה, ואז יבינם כאלו רואה אותן בעין ממש.

🌀 TORAS MENACHEM

PROPHECY AS A PRINCIPLE OF FAITH

The *Sixth Principle of Faith* requires us to believe in the phenomenon of prophecy.

In searching for a definition of this Principle, we could take a number of different approaches:

- a.) *Prophecy is a means by which G-d communicates with man.*
- b.) *Prophecy is a means by which man communicates with G-d.* I.e., when a person wishes to be given direction from above he poses his question to a prophetically inspired individual.
- c.) *Prophecy is the belief in exceptional human talent.* Namely, that extraordinary men and women are to be found who are suitably endowed to be able to communicate with G-d.

Of course, all of these statements are true. The question here is: Which of the above points was *Rambam's* emphasis when defining the *Sixth Principle*?

If we start with a process of elimination, approach 'b' is the easiest for us to exclude first of all. For *Rambam's* key discussion of "man approaching G-d" through prophetic means to resolve his personal questions is not found in his *Laws of Foundations of the Torah* (but in the *Laws of Temple Apparatus*—see p. 143). This indicates that the notion of man's approaching G-d through prophecy is not essential to the notion of prophecy as a Principle or "Foundation" of Judaism, for otherwise this discussion would have been incorporated into the *Laws of Foundations of the Torah*.

If we turn to the *Commentary to the Mishnah*, which is the first and most succinct statement of the *Principles*, *Rambam* seems to favor approach 'c,' that we are speaking here of a belief in exceptional human talent:

"The Sixth Principle is prophecy. Namely, that a person should know that among human beings there are found indi-

viduals endowed with character traits that are extremely refined and high in caliber, to a great degree of perfection, and their souls are primed to receive pure intellectual form.”

However, in *Rambam’s* definition of the Principle in his legal Code, the *Mishneh Torah*, he appears to emphasize approach ‘a,’ that prophecy is a means by which G–d communicates with man:

“It is one of the Principles of Faith to know that G–d communicates with man through prophecy.”

Being that the *Mishneh Torah* represents *Rambam’s* later, authoritative decision recorded as a halachic ruling, we can therefore conclude that the definition of the *Sixth Principle* follows approach ‘a,’ that is, belief in Divine communication directly to man.

☞ WHY IS PROPHECY CRUCIAL?

Now that we have a working definition, we can ask *why* the belief in Divine communication is so crucial to Judaism such that it merits the special status of a *Principle of Faith*?

The answer seems, at first glance, to be quite obvious. We might be able to manage on a day-to-day basis without the active presence of a prophet, but if there had never been any prophets we would not be in possession of Divine Law, the Torah, which is the basis of all our religious activity—as *Rambam* writes, “*If there is no prophet then there is no Torah*” (*Guide* III:45). So it seems that the institution of prophecy is indispensable to Judaism as a whole.

Nevertheless, as *Sefer ha-Ikrim* has shown, this argument does not appear to confer any *independent* significance to prophecy, sufficient to render it as a *Principle of Faith* in its own right. Divine revelation to the human mind is only significant here as a means to an end, to receive the law, and beyond that it ceases to be indispensable. Therefore the *Eighth Principle* (Divine authorship of the Torah) automatically includes the phenomenon of Divine revelation. And, beyond that, prophecy appears to be a religious luxury rather than a necessity.

The peripheral relevance of prophecy is apparent from *Rambam's* own words:

"The prophet does not come to establish law. He comes for no other purpose than to instruct people to observe the Torah and to warn them not to transgress it" (Laws of Foundations of the Torah 9:2).

As beneficial as it may be to have a G-dly man guiding us through the difficulties of daily Torah observance, clearly this is something that we can survive without. A *Principle of Faith*, on the other hand, is, by definition, something which is fundamental to every aspect of Judaism, at every time and in every place.

In the same passage, *Rambam* makes it clear that the prophet's function in guiding the people in non-religious matters is also a secondary role:

"Also, if the prophet issues commands in non-religious matters, such as, 'Go to such-and-such a place,' or, 'Do not go,'... it is obligatory to follow him" (ibid.).

It is only "if he issues commands in non-religious matters," which he may or may not do, then "it is obligatory to follow him." But this is not his primary purpose.

So what, then, is the overwhelming importance of prophecy as an institution in itself? Beyond a mere support to Torah law, and guidance in non-religious matters, what other significant role does it carry such that "one of the *Principles of Faith* is to know that G-d communicates with man through prophecy"?

Divrei Yirmiyahu suggests that prophecy is a *Principle of Faith* due to the extreme importance of distinguishing a genuine prophet from a false one. A mistake in this area could prove far-reaching, as the false prophet is likely to lead a person completely astray and could inspire others to follow him. So we are not speaking here about a mere detail in the Jewish religion, but something that is necessary to preserve the entire system of faith.

However, this argument is difficult to accept. A *Principle of Faith* is, by definition, a logical foundation on which Judaism is *built*, and not something which merely protects the religion from poten-

tially corrupting outside influences, serious as they may be. *Divrei Yirmiyahu's* explanation fails to demonstrate how prophecy is crucial to the internal dynamic of Jewish belief.

Finally, *Rambam* writes explicitly that the requirement to follow the words of a prophet constitutes nothing less than a direct Biblical command: “*It is a mitzvah to follow him, as the verse states, ‘You must listen to him.’*” (*Devarim* 18:15; *Laws of Foundations of the Torah* 7:7). So if the Torah already requires us to identify and heed the words of a true prophet by force of a Biblical command, what is added by referring to prophecy as a *Principle of Faith*?

☞ THE EXPERIENCE OF PROPHECY

When a person writes down his ideas and thoughts with a pen, his intellect is channeled through his fingers onto paper. But could we say that the fingers had a meaningful participation in the communication of these ideas?

Obviously we would have to concede that at some level all of the ideas “passed through” the fingers on their journey from mind to the written word, and the fingers therefore played a significant role. We might argue further that in contrast to a person’s toes which cannot, generally speaking, write text, the fingers of the hand demonstrate a particular affinity with an intellectual flow in that they can jot down words and sentences.

But, clearly, all of these arguments fail to demonstrate any real intellectual involvement on the part of the fingers. At the most they are a channel through which ideas flow, but the fingers neither understand what they are writing nor contribute to the structure or coherency of the ideas.

The brain, on the other hand, does not merely act as a suitable channel through which ideas pass from the soul; rather, it actively grasps each intellectual concept, molding and shaping it in the process according to its own understanding. If somebody explains an idea to you, and you subsequently explain it to a friend, it will inevitably undergo some sort of transformation as you express the concept in your own terms. The brain always *interacts* with an idea; it cannot remain an entirely passive communicator, like the fingers.

🌀 The Last Word 🌀

RAMIFICATIONS OF THE SIXTH PRINCIPLE

In *Toras Menachem* we elaborated upon the idea that prophecy is an interactive experience where a sublime revelation is refracted through the mind of a prophet. Essentially, this has a twofold implication:

a.) The Divine emanation which the prophet receives is garbed and veiled to the point where a human mind could have a meaningful interaction with it.

b.) The prophet's mind needs to be suitably prepared and attuned to receive the emanation.

In other words, for the human and Divine "minds" to merge there has to be a reduction and dimming of the Divine emanation and a corresponding elevation of the human intellect.

In fact, these two criteria are directly proportional. The greater the intellectual capacity of the prophet and the higher his transcendental state, the greater (and less garbed) is the Divine emanation that he can receive. Conversely, if his intellectual refinements are lower in scale, then a greater dimming and veiling of the Divine emanation must take place.

Thus: "*The prophets are of various levels. Just as one sage is greater in wisdom than another, so too, with regard to prophecy, one prophet is greater than another*" (*Laws of Foundations of the Torah* 7:2).

Likewise, there are many difficulties associated with receiving prophecy, as reaching the necessary level of transcendence is a feat in itself: "*Even when they focus their minds properly it is possible that the Divine Presence will rest upon them, but it is also possible that it might not*" (ibid. 5).

And since the mind alone is a suitable receptacle for the Divine emanation of prophecy, all the other faculties of the body must be disowned: "*All of them, when they receive prophecy, have trembling limbs, a weakening of the body and their senses are confused. But their minds remain attuned to comprehend what they perceive*" (ibid. 2).

All of this represents limitations imposed by point 'b' above, the suitability of the "receptacle." But there are also limitations imposed by point 'a,' the need to dim and veil the Divine emanation. Thus we find that even when a prophetic revelation was successfully received it was "*communicated to him in allegorical form.... All the prophets prophesied in allegories and riddles*" (ibid. 3).

An allegory is a form of "indirect light" used when a "direct exposure" to an idea would be confusing and overwhelming. The allegory borrows terms from a more mundane world which reflect a higher or more subtle truth that might otherwise be missed.

A "riddle" represents an even greater concealment, where concepts are merely hinted to with vague and sometimes perplexing imagery.

But despite all of the above limitations, the result is an extremely powerful one, namely, that revelation reaches man *on his own terms in a way that he can relate to*. In an unlikely converging of worlds the human mind has embraced the Divine in the most real and tangible way possible.

(Based on *Ma'amar of Shabbos Parshas Shemini* 5715, par. 3; *Likutei Sichos* vol. 39, p. 149; vol. 23, p. 86; *Ma'amarei Admor ha-Emtzoie, Drushim le-Pesach* p. 326)

With the above in mind, we can now ask: Is a prophet comparable to the fingers, which loyally transmit a message without modifying it in any way? Or does the prophet's brain actively grasp the revelation received from above and then articulate it according to how it was understood, inevitably introducing a certain subjective, interpretive contribution?

In a number of key passages, *Rambam* indicates that the prophet's mind *does* have an active involvement in the prophetic process. For example, when defining the *Sixth Principle* in his *Commentary to the Mishnah*, *Rambam* writes:

“Among human beings there are found individuals endowed with character traits that are extremely refined and high in caliber to a great degree of perfection, and their souls are primed to receive pure intellectual form. Consequently, their human intellect merges with the Active Intellect, from which profound emanation flows to it.” (*Commentary to Mishnah*, cited above p. 3).

The idea which clearly emerges from this description is that prophecy is an experience involving the intellect. We are taught of a “merging” of the human and Divine intellect, through which “pure intellectual form” is received (see also *Guide for the Perplexed* cited in *Classic Questions*).

A similar emphasis is made in the *Mishneh Torah*:

“When a person is full of all these qualities, and he is bodily intact; and he enters the contemplative ‘orchard’ to deliberate upon great and obscure matters, having a penetrating intellect to understand and grasp them and... his mind is constantly attuned heavenward, bound to the Throne of Glory, to comprehend holy and pure forms; and he contemplates the wisdom of G–d, from the First Form to the center of the earth, and from this he knows G–d’s greatness—then immediately the prophetic spirit will rest upon him.” (*Laws of Foundations of the Torah* 7:1).

The prophet is totally devoted to the contemplation of spiritual existence and thereby elevates himself to the point that his mind can “merge” with the Divine intellect.

An important consequence of this experience is that the prophet is tangibly influenced and changed by it. Our fingers are not

affected by the ideas that flow through them, but our minds certainly are—as *Rambam* continues:

“He will be transformed into a different man. He will understand that he is no longer as he was before, and that he has surpassed the level of all other wise men—as it is written of Shaul: You will prophesy with them and be transformed into a different person” (1 Samuel 10:6; *ibid.* 2).

Reading all of this we are left with the impression that receiving prophecy is an *interactive* experience: a sublime revelation is refracted through the mind of a prophet, which inevitably makes some sort of impression on the messages that are received. Of course, the very hallmark of prophecy is that it is considered to be G-d's word and not man's, but *Rambam* makes it clear that the prophet's mind is most definitely not a passive communicator of Divine revelation.*

Rambam prefaces this entire discussion with the words: “*It is one of the Principles of Faith to know...*,” making it clear that:

a.) A general awareness that Divine revelation occurs to man is insufficient; a person must “know,” i.e. have a substantial understanding, of the prophetic process such that he appreciates how the prophet's mind *interacts* with the Divine revelation.

b.) This appreciation of the dynamic of prophecy is “*one of the Principles of Faith*,” as distinct from the requirement to identify the true prophet and follow him, which is a Biblical command.

In other words, an awareness of the *fact* of prophecy is a legal requirement, whereas understanding the *dynamic* of prophecy is a faith requirement.

*In fact this point is stressed by a variety of texts, such as *Drashos ha-Ran*, *Avodas ha-Kodesh* and *Sha'arei Kedushah* of the Arizal (see *Classic Questions*).

☞ THE SIXTH PRINCIPLE

Why is an understanding of what happens inside the prophetic mind so crucial and far-reaching, such that *Rambam* deemed it to be a *Principle of Faith*?

The answer to this question lies in an earlier discussion about the *First Principle of Faith*, that man must be aware of G–d. *Rambam's* position is that a general *belief* in the fact of G–d's existence is insufficient; a person must come to a relatively detailed *knowledge* of G–d (*Laws of Foundations of the Torah* 1:1ff). We are required to come to an appreciation of the nature of His existence, which is “necessary” and not “contingent,” and how the world's existence is utterly dependent on Him (see our discussion of the *First Principle*).

Here we might ask a similar question: Why is it not sufficient simply to believe that one G–d exists? Why do I have to know how the world's existence is intricately tied up with G–d's existence, such that, “*He brings into being everything that exists... and everything that exists only exists by virtue of the truth of His existence*” (ibid.)? Isn't the point here the supremacy of G–d's existence and not the fragility of the world's existence?

Evidently, *Rambam* saw it important not only to be aware of G–d's existence as an isolated fact; Judaism requires us to appreciate how G–d's existence takes expression through our existence—“*everything that exists only exists by virtue of the truth of His existence.*” Monotheism does not merely teach us that there is One G–d up in heaven; its purpose is to show the Divine identity that lies at the core of all existence.

With this in mind we can appreciate that the *Sixth Principle* (prophecy) is essentially a logical progression from *Principles* 1-5 which discuss the existence of G–d. Just as the first *Principles* require us to understand how G–d is expressed through the world's existence, the *Sixth Principle* continues this theme, requiring us to appreciate how G–d is openly revealed in the mind of a prophet.

“To know that there is a First Existence” and “To know that G–d communicates to man through prophecy” are thus both exercises in comprehending the dynamic by which G–d relates to His world.

The first five *Principles* teach us how G-d is at the core of all existence, at every time and every place; and then the *Sixth Principle* discusses the phenomenon of revelation, i.e., those instances where G-d's underlying existence takes overt expression. But while the circumstances may differ, the theme remains the same: the world is a tool by which we can come to know our Creator.

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 23, p. 85ff; vol. 20, p. 94; vol. 31, p. 158;
Ma'amar of 19 Kislev, 5730)

Points to Remember...

- ✓ *Rambam's Sixth Principle* teaches us that we must understand the *dynamic* of Prophecy, which is an *interactive* Divine communication directly to the human mind.
- ✓ The mind of a prophet is totally engaged with this revelation to the extent that there is a “merging” of the human and Divine mind. The level of prophecy will depend on the success of this merging.
- ✓ Prophecy is not merely an agent to transmit Divine law (Torah); rather, it is significant in itself as an overt expression of G-d within this world.
- ✓ Prophecy is the peak of human intellectual perfection.
- ✓ The foretelling of future events is not central to the function of a prophet.
- ✓ The first five *Principles of Faith* clarify how G-d's existence is manifested through the world's existence. The *Sixth Principle* continues this theme, informing us how Divine revelation occurs within the human mind.

THE 13 PRINCIPLES: A HISTORICAL NOTE*

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In 1168, Rambam completed his first major work, the *Commentary on the Mishnah*, in which he reproduced the entire text of the Mishnah and appended a commentary in Judeo-Arabic. Besides being the first extensive commentary to the Mishnah,¹ this work also became known for its three lengthy introductions which discuss a number of fundamental topics systematically.² Their substantial contribution to Jewish thought has rendered these introductions as works in their own right.³ They are: a.) A general introduction to the Oral Law which traces its history and sources. b.) The “Eight Chapters,” an introduction to the *Ethics of the Fathers* discussing the philosophy of the soul, dealing with topics such as virtue, vice, ethics and free will. c.) An introduction to the tenth chapter of Tractate *Sanhedrin* in which Rambam makes known his views on immortality⁴ and formulates *Thirteen Principles of Faith*, which, he argues, are crucial prerequisites for the soul to be immortalized.⁵

Rambam devotes, on average, a few paragraphs to a brief overview of each principle,⁶ and they could be summarized as follows: 1.) G-d exists; 2.) G-d is one; 3.) G-d is incorporeal; 4.) G-d precedes everything; 5.) only G-d may be worshipped; 6.) prophecy occurs; 7.) the superiority of Mosaic prophecy; 8.) the Torah was Divinely authored; 9.) the Torah will

* A full introduction to the *Thirteen Principles* will appear in the first volume of this series.

1. Rashi's commentary to the Mishnah, which preceded that of Rambam, is relatively brief, since it was written for a readership who intended to study the Talmud's commentary.
2. A quality uncharacteristic of rabbinic texts in general, but a hallmark of Rambam's treatment of any subject, as his later works were to demonstrate.
3. Thus we find that the introductions have been published as separate texts. For example, *Rambam le-Am, Hakdamos* (Mosad ha-Rav Kook, 1994, 14th printing), with commentary by Rabbi Mordechai Dov Rabinowitz; *Hakdamos ha-Rambam le-Mishneh*, Rabbi Yitzchak Shilat (Jerusalem 1996); *Hakdamos ha-Rambam le-Perush ha-Mishneh*, Rabbi Nechemia Shmuel Roth (Machon Yerushalayim, 2005).
4. For a lengthy discourse on immortality, written by the Rebbe, drawing from rabbinic, Kabbalistic and Chasidic teachings, see *Igros Kodesh*, vol. 1, p. 141.
5. For the status of one who inadvertently fails to meet these criteria, see: *Igros Kodesh* vol. 22, p. 33-4; *Likutei Sichos* vol. 15, p. 79; *ibid.* vol. 35, p. 29; *Sichas Yud-Tes Kislev* 5712. See also *Shogaig be'Ikrei ha-Das* by Rabbi Shimon Vizthandler in *Kovetz ha-Yovel (Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim ha-Merkazis, 2000)*, vol. 1, p. 189ff.
6. The full text of each *Principle* as it appears in the *Commentary to the Mishnah* is cited in this series, at the beginning of each section.

never change or be annulled; 10.) G-d knows what man does; 11.) the righteous will be rewarded and the wicked punished; 12.) Mashiach (the Messiah) will come; 13.) the dead will be resurrected.⁷

For those who have some knowledge of Judaism, none of these *Principles* appear to be alarming or radical in their own right. In fact, any person familiar with Jewish liturgy will note that these themes form the focus of many prayers and psalms. Nevertheless, as the first⁸ self-contained statement of the fundamentals of Judaism since the Torah was given in 1312 BCE, Rambam's Principles inevitably generated controversy.

The fact that no formulation of the beliefs of Judaism had been made until this point is not difficult to understand when one bears in mind that there was a general prohibition to write down even the legal parts of the Torah, and that the Mishnah and Talmud were only recorded out of dire emergency, to save them from being lost altogether.⁹

In the case of esoteric wisdom, Jewish law is even more conservative. The Mishnah rules explicitly that mystical rites known as “the Account of Creation,” and “the Account of the Chariot,” may be taught only to those capable of appreciating such wisdom, and even then it must be done only in private.¹⁰ Today we understand that these “Accounts” refer to Kabbalistic¹¹

7. All of the Principles were restated in *Rambam's Code*, the *Mishneh Torah* (in *Laws of Foundations of the Torah* and *Laws of Teshuvah*), though not as a thirteen-point list, and as part of a strictly halachic text they become a more authoritative statement (see *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Acharei* 5730). In the *Guide*, Rambam also elaborates on many of the Principles at length.

For an explanation as to why *Rambam* did not include all Thirteen Principles in his *Laws of Foundations of the Torah*, see above, p. 277ff.

8. Sa'adia Ga'on, in the tenth century, was the first to discuss the principles of Judaism philosophically, and an extremely brief formulation of “four elements” of belief in G-d necessary for salvation was made by Rabbenu Chananel (c.975-1057), in his commentary to *Shemos* 14:31. Rambam, however, was the first to compose a complete, systematic list of Principles.

9. See *Guide for the Perplexed* 1:71

10. *Mishnah, Chagigah* 2:1.

11. As its name suggests—Kabbalah means “tradition”—Jewish mysticism is part of the corpus which was revealed to Moshe on Mount Sinai, and handed down faithfully through an unbroken chain of tradition.

The Kabbalah, is an extremely valuable and extensive discussion of G-d, creation, revelation and redemption, and contains substantial commentary on all of the ideas mentioned in Rambam's list of Principles. Its ideas, however, did not enter general circulation until as late as the seventeenth century, through the efforts of the famed Kabbalist of Tzefas, Rabbi Yitzchak Luria (1534-1572).

Until the late twelfth century, the Kabbalah was virtually a total secret. Even the *Zohar* itself, the core text of the Kabbalah authored by the Tannaic Sage Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai (2nd century), was only made known at the end of the thirteenth century.

teachings¹² about creation and G–d, which explains why, as the generations diminished in their intellectual capacities,¹³ even the private dissemination of esoteric wisdom became less prevalent. It is no surprise, therefore, that no texts delving into the principles of faith were produced for public consumption.¹⁴

To understand what prompted Rambam to define Judaism philosophically, one needs to appreciate the historical circumstances prevailing at the time. The Moslem invasion of Spain in 711 brought significant change to a large segment of the global Jewish community who resided in these lands or subsequently immigrated to them. During this “golden era,” which lasted until the 12th century, Jews enjoyed much more freedom and opportunity than under the previous Christian rule, and the Arabic culture made a lasting impact on Sefardic cultural development. The Arabs ruled much of the area around the Mediterranean where Greek philosophy was popular, which resulted in philosophy spreading throughout all the Arabic lands. The Moslem philosophers Alfarabi (870-950), and later Avicenna (980-1037) and Averroes (1126-1198), adapted the works of Aristotle and Plato into the Arabic language, which resulted in Greek philosophy becoming very much in vogue. Inevitably, the Jews who had integrated into the culture became strongly influenced by it.

This presented two seemingly insurmountable problems for which the rabbinic leadership of the time were forced to find a solution:

a.) While Aristotle did affirm the existence of One G–d, many of his conclusions were inconsistent with Jewish beliefs.¹⁵ For example, he main-

Earlier still, Ramban (Rabbi Moshe ben Nachman, “Nachmanides,” 1194-1270) had authored a popular commentary to the Torah which openly incorporates Kabbalistic ideas. But, Rambam, who was active primarily in the second half of the twelfth century, wrote at a time when the Kabbalah was still a totally secret rite. See note 18.

12. *Likutei Sichos* vol. 1, p. 150. See also *Talmud Bavli*, Schottenstein edition, *ibid.* note 33.

13. “*The minds of the earlier scholars were like the entrance to the Temple Hall, but ours are like the eye of a needle*” (Erwin 53a).

14. As for why the Torah itself (i.e. the Pentateuch) does not address theological issues formally and systematically, see *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Devarim* 5746, par. 38:

Why did the Torah only allude to the coming of Mashiach, in the prophecies of Bilam, or through a proof from the command to “add three further cities” (Devarim 19:9; see Laws of Kings 11:1-2)? One would imagine that the Torah would have stated this belief clearly and explicitly, as indeed we find it is articulated in the books of the Prophets.

However, the Torah is, by definition, a text of practical halachah. Therefore, it would be inappropriate to discuss such a matter directly, and it is only mentioned in connection with a practical law, the addition of three additional cities in the future.

15. Abarbanel notes that this is reflected in the sequential organization of the Thirteen Principles: Principles 1-3 are fully consistent with Aristotelian philosophy; Principles 4-6 are partially consistent; Principles 7-9 are outside the scope of Aristotelian

tained that the world always existed and he denied the phenomenon of Divine providence.¹⁶ Consequently, study of the Islamic Aristotelian works resulted in a crisis of faith¹⁷ among a large segment of the Jewish community. Many Jews remained outwardly observant, but their minds and hearts were loyal to philosophy and its conclusions.

b.) Being a purely rational system, Aristotle's metaphysics was extremely convincing, and, armed with no system of formal Jewish theology whatsoever (since Kabbalah remained a hidden science), Jews were offered no alternative way of thinking. Furthermore, the intellectual stimulation of philosophy and the profundity of its subject matter gave Jews the feeling that this was true spirituality. As time passed, the laws of the Torah and its narratives became increasingly belittled in their eyes, to the extent that they were wont to say, "Moshe gave us the exoteric law, but Aristotle gave us the esoteric law!"

In the 10th, 11th and 12th centuries, the prospect of openly revealing the Kabbalah,¹⁸ Judaism's own esoteric wisdom, was out of the question,

philosophy and would be neither accepted nor rejected by it; and Principles 10-13 would be completely denied by Aristotle. See *Rosh Amanah*, chapter 10.

16. "Worse still are the heretics who do not believe in G-d's unity at all, like Aristotle and his associates, who are more terribly evil than the idol-worshippers. They at least acknowledged G-d's unity, referring to Him as 'the G-d of gods' (end of tractate *Menachos*)" (*Toras Chaim, Bereishis* of the Mittlerer Rebbe. 78c; See also *Ma'amarei Admor ha-Emtzoie, Bamidbar* vol. 2, p. 802 and sources cited loc. cit.)

17. Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi notes that the term *emunah* ("faith") is not employed throughout the entire Bible and Talmud as a reference to *general* belief in G-d, but only to faith in specific Divine promises. This, he argues, indicates that throughout the Biblical and Talmudic eras, faith in G-d was never doubted and was held to be self-evident, like the existence of the soul.

But as a result of the school of philosophy, which demands proof for the existence of G-d and opposes the notion of creation etc., the term "emunah" was used in reference to G-d's unity, i.e. to believe in G-d's unity in the absence of proof. This was not the case in prior generations when no view was espoused that denied creation, even among non-Jewish nations (Meah She'arim, p. 32a; Ma'amarei Admor ha-Zakein ha-Ketzarim p. 444)

18. Contrary to what many scholars maintain, it appears that Rambam had been exposed to the Kabbalah since he testifies (in his introduction to *Mishneh Torah*) to having read all the halachic treatises of the Ge'onim, many of which make numerous Kabbalistic references, such as the works of R' Hai Ga'on, and R' Sherira Ga'on (*Sichas Shabbos Parshas Acharei Kedoshim* 5745, par. 24.). Furthermore, many passages in the *Mishneh Torah* are uncannily similar, if not word for word translations, of the Zohar (See *ha-Rambam ve-ha-Zohar* by Rabbi Reuvain Margolios, in *Sinai* issues 32 and 34; *Likutei Sichos* vol. 26, p. 116). There is also a view that Rambam became familiar with the Kabbalah near the end of his life (See *Migdal Oz* to Laws of Foundations of the Torah ch. 1-2; *Maharam Alshakar*, responsa no. 117; *Avodas ha-Kodesh* 2:13; and see *Shomer Emunim* 1:13; Rabbi Moshe Botril, commentary to *Sefer Yeztirah* 4:3).

However, none of Rambam's works make any overt reference to the Kabbalah. Evidently, Rambam wrote at a time where public discussion of the Kabbalah, especially in works with a broad intended readership such as his own, was out of the question.

for a number of possible reasons: i.) In all likelihood, people were so drawn to Aristotle's philosophy, both culturally and intellectually, that it was not an immediately realistic goal to wean them off it. ii.) The Kabbalah had probably not been sufficiently formulated and developed to a point where it could be digested by the ordinary person.¹⁹ iii.) Perhaps no Jewish leader felt sufficiently authorized to publicize the Kabbalah, despite the extenuating circumstances.

Whatever the case, during this period an alternative path was trodden, that of generating a parallel Jewish philosophical literature. This would, on the one hand embrace the thought-system of the Arabic Aristotelians and the rational approach to life, but on the other hand, offer powerful arguments against those conclusions that were at odds with Jewish belief. (The most famous and influential of these works was Rambam's own *Guide for the Perplexed*).

Such a stance was, of course, highly apologetic.²⁰ It meant that traditional Judaism was forced to embrace foreign elements and claim them to be its own. It also downgraded the spirituality of Judaism to intimate that truth is subject to ratification by the intellect. And the rabbis were forced to find logically palatable reasons for even the suprarational commands of the Torah out of fear that these precepts might otherwise be rejected by philosophically inclined Jews.²⁰

Furthermore, in order to make it clear that Aristotle did not have something to offer that surpassed Judaism, Rambam argued that the Greeks had in fact based their ideas on the ancient philosophy of the Jewish Sages, which had since been lost. Rambam taught that the "Account of the Chariot" mentioned by the Mishnah—which Jews had heard of, but were unfamiliar with what it referred to—was essentially synonymous with the core ideas of Greek philosophy.²¹ In this way, Jews felt comfortable that by studying philosophy they were in fact immersing in a Jewish form of spirituality and not a secular one.

(Inevitably, such a path led to controversy. In French lands where Aristotle's thought had not reached the masses, the Rabbinic leadership was horrified to discover an apologetic Torah literature which embraced rational philosophy as part of the Jewish tradition. These events have been chronicled elsewhere and there is no need to repeat them here.^{21*})

19. This was, of course, one of the significant innovations of Chasidic thought, especially the Chabad school. See at length *Communicating the Infinite* by Naftali Loewenthal (Chicago University Press, 1990).

20. See *Igros Kodesh* vol. 7, p. 134; *Sichah* of Second Day of *Shavuot* 5743, par. 31-35, and *Shabbos Parshas Naso* *ibid.*, par. 16-24.

21. *Guide* 1:71, 2:11; *Commentary to the Mishnah, Chagigah*, *ibid.*

21*. An extensive bibliography is found in: Rosner, Fred (trans.), *Wars of the L-rd and the Maimonidean Controversy* (Haifa: The Maimonides Research Institute, 2000).

It was amid this backdrop of events that the *Thirteen Principles* were composed. As a simple formulation, they were clearly aimed at familiarizing the masses with basic philosophical truths.

Our attitude towards the *Principles* therefore depends, to some extent, on the way Jewish medieval philosophy is to be perceived now that it has outlived its immediate usefulness, several hundred years after Aristotelian thought lost much of its credibility in secular culture.

On the one hand, one might imagine that, being it is essentially a compromise of pure Torah truth, texts such as the *Guide* have little validity nowadays. Now that the Kabbalah has been revealed we know that the “Account of the Chariot” did not, after all, refer merely to rational philosophy but to our own esoteric tradition, what value is there in an apologetic text of yesteryear when the “apology” is no longer needed?

In truth, however, the *Guide*, together with all the Jewish works of rational philosophy, constitute genuine Torah literature for a number of reasons:

i.) They were composed by genuine Torah scholars who feared G-d and wrote their words under the guidance of Divine inspiration.²² Even if the immediate source of their subject material was secular, they only incorporated ideas that were not antithetical to Torah, and they sanctified these ideas by incorporating them into Torah literature.

ii.) More importantly, even from a Kabbalistic perspective the conclusions reached by the philosophers were, in fact, true. While G-d intrinsically defies intellectual comprehension, the Kabbalah teaches that there nevertheless exists a certain realm where G-d has emanated Divine attributes which *can* be grasped, to some extent, by the mind. When the philosophers rigorously applied logic to fathom truths about G-d, they succeeded in actually knowing G-d as He exists in this projected, emanated state.²³ Thus we find that Kabbalists and Chasidic Rebbes studied Jewish rationalist works, and even composed commentaries on them.²⁴

22. See sources cited on p. 48.

23. See *Tanya* ch. 2, author's note. Thus, the limitations ascribed to G-d by the philosophers as a result of their rational approach are in fact correct in the context of this contracted emanation (see *Likutei Sichos* vol. 27, p. 252. See also above p. 194).

24. Such as *Sefer ha-Chakirah* of the *Tzemach Tzedek* (Kehos Publication Society, revised edition 2003). Thus, the Rebbe was critical of those who did not perceive the *Guide* as a genuine work expressing Torah truths (*Sichah* of 20th of *Teves* 5745, par. 14; *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Va'eira* 5748, addendum to par. 6. See discussion in *Kovetz Ha'aros u'Biurim Oholei Torah*, issue 855, p. 82ff.)

One apparently troubling feature of medieval Jewish philosophy is its lack of continuity with biblical and rabbinic Judaism, for the philosopher will often propose a rational interpretation which is totally unprecedented. However, it is noteworthy that this quality is not unique to philosophy and is also shared by the approach of *peshat*, the literal interpretation of scripture (see *Succah* 6b and *Tosfos* s.v. *ve-Rebbi*; *Likutei*

So, certainly, all the conclusions of Rambam's *Thirteen Principles*, even those which are based on philosophy, are true from a Torah perspective. Furthermore, of all the different formulations which followed from the other medieval philosophers,²⁵ it is Rambam's that ultimately gained universal acceptance.²⁶

Nevertheless, it is important to bear in mind that there is more to Jewish theology than the *Principles* alone. Aside from the fact that they are in any case a relatively brief text, they speak from the somewhat limited viewpoint of rational philosophy. Since Rambam's times, however, much traditional Jewish thought (rooted in Sinaitic revelation) has been uncovered in the works of Jewish mysticism, which frames the topics of G-d, Torah, reward etc., in a more profound and more traditional light. So while the Principles might act as a first base for any theological investigation,²⁷ a thorough appreciation of these ideas requires study of a wider range of texts, especially the expansive treatment of the subject in Kabbalah and Chasidus.²⁸

Sichos vol. 16, p. 529), i.e. it is acceptable for an interpretation of scripture at the level of *peshat* to be at odds with its traditional or *halachic* interpretation (for a number of examples see *Torah Shlaimah* by Rabbi Menachem Kasher, addendum to vol. 27, sec. 8).

25. In the centuries following the composition of the *Principles*, Jewish philosophers debated the meaning of the term "principles" and whether Rambam was correct in asserting that there are thirteen of them. Notable works in this field include *Magen Avos* by *Rashbatz* (Rabbi Shimon ben Tzemach of Duran, c. 1361-1441); *Ohr Hashem* by Rabbi Chisdai Crescas (1340-1410); *Sefer ha-Ikarim* of Rabbi Yosef Albo (1380-1444); *Derech Emunah* by Rabbi Avraham Bibago (d. c.1489) and *Rosh Amanah* of Rabbi Don Yitzchak Abarbanel (1437-1508).

26. See *Sichas Acharon Shel Pesach* 5722 (*Sichos Kodesh* 5722, p. 379).

The popularity of the principles is evidenced by the fact that most editions of the prayerbook contain the Thirteen Principles in poetic form (*Yigdal*, by Daniel ben Yehudah of Rome, or perhaps Immanuel ben Shlomo of Rome, both 14th century), and as the *Ani Ma'amin* series of faith declarations, "I believe..." (authorship unknown. See *Ha-Nusach ve-ha-Nikud be-Sidur Admor ha-Zaken* by Rabbi Baruch Oberlander, ch. 7, in *Ha-Siddur* (Heichal Menachem Monsey, 2003), p. 232ff.) For an explanation as to why *Yigdal* and *Ani Ma'amin* were omitted from Arizal's *siddur*, see *Igros Kodesh* vol. 12, pp. 18-19.

However, while *Rambam's* thirteen-point definition did gain universal acceptance, the consensus of later authorities did not necessarily favor every *detail* expressed in *Rambam's* formulation. For example, *Rambam* maintained that the ultimate perfection of mankind which will be enjoyed at the end of history, long after the resurrection, will be for souls without bodies, but the consensus of *Ramban* and the later authorities (and the position of Kabbalah and Chasidus) is that the soul will endure in a body (see *Igros Kodesh*, vol. 1, p. 141). Likewise, *Rambam's* assertion that the Messianic Era will not herald miraculous changes to the world order was rejected by latter authorities (See *Sicha* of *Acharon Shel Pesach* 5748, note 76).

27. See *Igros Kodesh* vol. 15, p. 377, where in response to the question "What beliefs are necessary for a person to have?" the Rebbe referred the person to the Thirteen Principles.

28. See *Igros Kodesh* vol. 22, p. 34.

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Judaism. His glosses to the Talmud are included in the standard Vilna edition.

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Midrash Tehilim—Agadic teachings of the Sages arranged according to the verses of the book of Psalms. Also known as *Midrash Shochoer Tov*.

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- Otzar Midrashim**—An anthology of two hundred minor Midrashim, edited with introductions and notes by Rabbi Yehuda David Eisenstein (New York, 1915).
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- Perush**—Anonymous commentary to the first four chapters of *Rambam's Laws of Foundations of the Torah*. Attributed by some to *Ritva*. See *Ritva*.
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- Pirkei Avos**—Tractate of Mishnah in Order of *Nezikin* (damages) devoted to the ethical teachings of the Sages.
- Pirkei de-Rabbi Eliezer**—Midrashic work by the school of Eliezer ben Hyrcanus (c. 100). First published in Constantinople in 1514.

- Pri Etz Chaim**—Kabalistic work of Arizal written by his student Rabbi Chaim Vital. See *Arizal*.
- R' Reuven Margolies**—(1889–1971) was well versed in all aspects of the written Bible, Oral Law and Kabbalah. Author of over 55 books on various Jewish topics, displaying originality in thought, and a wide range of knowledge. His works include *The Rambam and the Zohar*, demonstrating correlations between the *Mishnah Torah* and the *Zohar*.
- R' Shneur Zalman**—See Alter Rebbe
- R' Yehudah ha-Chasid**—(1150–1217) *Rosh Yeshivah* in Regensburg, Germany. Author of a *Sefer Chasidim*, a classic work of ethical and halachic instruction.
- Ra'avad**—Rabbi Avraham ben David of Posquieres (c.1120–c.1197), talmudist, halachist, and Kabbalist. Author of critical notes on *Rambam's Mishneh Torah* and numerous other works.
- Rabbi Chaim of Brisk**—Rabbi Chaim ben Yosef Dov Soloveitchik (1853–1918), *Rosh Yeshiva* in Volozhin who later succeeded his father as Rabbi in Brisk. Developed a popular, conceptual approach to Talmudic studies.
- Rabeinu Tam**—Rabbi Yaakov ben Meir (1100–1171), whose Talmudic discourses served as the basis for the *Tosfos* commentary to the Talmud. He often challenged *Rashi's* interpretations, offering original and brilliant insights. Rabeinu Tam was also a successful wine merchant and financier.
- Radak**—Rabbi David Kimchi of Provence (1160–1235), leading Bible commentator and author of grammatical works.
- Radvaz**—Rabbi David ibn Zimra (c.1480–1573), Chief Rabbi of Egypt. Authored a commentary to *Rambam's Mishneh Torah* and extensive responsa.
- Ralbag**—“Gersonides,” acronym for Rabbi Levi ben Gershom (1288–1344). Author of rationalistic commentary to the Bible.
- Ramak**—Rabbi Moshe Cordovero, preeminent Kabbalist of 16th century Tzefas. Student of Rabbi Yosef Caro. Author of numerous works, including *Pardes Rimonim*. See *Pardes Rimonim*.
- Rambam**—“Maimonides,” Rabbi Moshe ben Maimon (1135–1204), halachist, philosopher and leading Torah scholar of the Middle Ages. His major works are: *Sefer ha-Mitzvos* (Book of Commandments), *Commentary to the Mishnah*; *Mishneh Torah (Yad ha-Chazakah)*, a comprehensive code of Jewish law, and *Moreh Nevuchim*, “Guide for the Perplexed,” a primary work of Jewish philosophy.
- Ramban**—“Nachmanides,” Rabbi Moshe ben Nachman of Gerona, Spain (1194–1270), one of the leading Torah scholars of the Middle Ages. Author of an important commentary to the Torah and numerous other works.
- Ran**—Rabbenu Nissim (1308–1376). Authored an important commentary to the Talmud, published in most major editions.
- Rashab**—Rabbi Sholom Dovber Schneerson of Lubavitch (1860–1920), grandson of the *Tzemach Tzedek* and fifth Rebbe in the Chabad dynasty. See *Hemshech Ayin Beis*, *Hemshech Samech Vav*.
- Rashba**—Rabbi Shlomo ibn Aderes, Rabbi of Barcelona, known for his Talmudic commentary and many responsa (1235–1310).

- Rashbatz**—Rabbi Shimon ben Tzemach of Duran (c. 1361-1441). Left Spain in the aftermath of the 1391 massacres and moved to Algiers, where he later became Chief Rabbi. Author of the *halachic* treatise *Tashbetz*, and *Magen Avos* on *Pirkei Avos*.
- Rashi**—Rabbi Shlomo Yitzchaki (1040-1105), author of fundamental commentary to the Bible and Talmud.
- Recanti**—Rabbi Menachem ben Binyamin Recanti (13th century), of Italy. Author of commentaries on the Torah and the *Siddur*, and Kabbalistic works on the deeper meanings of the commandments.
- Rema**—Rabbi Moshe Isserles (1530-1572), Rav and Rosh Yeshiva of Cracow. Author of many works including annotations to Rabbi Yosef Caro's *Shulchan Aruch*, which transformed this predominantly Sefardic work into a universal Code of Jewish Law.
- Ritva**—Rabbi Yom Tov Ibn Isvili (1248-1330), important Talmudic commentator and halachist.
- Rogatchover Ga'on**—See *Tzafnas Pane'ach*.
- Rosh Amanah**—Systematic defense of Rambam's codification of the *Thirteen Principles of Faith* from his critics, by Rabbi Don Yitzchak Abarbanel. See *Abarbanel*.
- Rosh Hashanah**—Talmudic tractate in Order of Mo'ed (Festivals).
- Sa'adia Ga'on**—(882-942) Author of works in many areas of Torah, including the philosophical work, *Emunos ve-Deos*. See *Emunos ve-Deos*.
- Sanhedrin**—Tractate of Talmud in Order of *Nezikin* (Damages).
- Sdei Chemed**—Multi-volume *halachic* encyclopedia by Rabbi Chaim Chizkiyahu Medini (1832-1904), Rav of Karasubazar in Crimea, Russia, and later Chief Rabbi of Chevron in the Land of Israel. Revised edition by the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, New York, (Kehos Publication Society, 1949-1953).
- Seder ha-Doros**—A chronology of events and personalities from creation until 1696, based on Rabbinic sources, by Rabbi Yechiel Heilprin (1660-1746) Lithuanian rabbi, Kabbalist, and chronicler. First published in 1769.
- Seder Mishneh**—Commentary to Rambam's *Mishneh Torah* by Rabbi Binyomin Ze'ev Wolf Boskowitz (c1740-1818) of Hungary.
- Sefer Charedim**—by Rabbi Elazar ben Mordechai Azkari (1531-1600), a Kabbalist and great expounder of the Torah. Author of the *Yedid Nefesh* prayer.
- Sefer ha-Chakira**—Philosophically oriented writings Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Lubavitch (1789-1866), first printed in Paltova, Ukraine in 1912. Also known as *Derech Emunah*. See *Tzemach Tzedek*.
- Sefer ha-Chinuch**—Compendium of basic explanations on the 613 *mitzvos* by an unknown Spanish author among the *Rishonim* of the 13th century.
- Sefer ha-Ikarim**—See *Ikarim*.
- Sefer ha-Ma'amarim Melukat**—Chasidic discourses of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, in six volumes, published by *Vaad le-Hafatzas Sichos* (Kehos), 1987-1992.

- Sefer ha-Mitzvos**—Codification of the commandments and their basic sources by *Rambam*. See *Rambam*.
- Sefer ha-Sichos**—Public addresses of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, from the years 1986-1992, published by *Vaad le-Hafatzas Sichos* (Kehos) in 12 volumes.
- Sefer ha-Yashar**—Responsa and novellae on the Talmud by Rabbi Ya'akov ben Meir Tam (c. 1100-1171), Tosafist and grandson of *Rashi*.
- Sha'ar ha-Yichud ve-ha-Emunah**—Second section of R' Shneur Zalman's *Tanya*, discussing the unity of G-d. See *Tanya*.
- Sha'arei Kedushah**—Kabalistic work of *Arizal*, compiled by his student Rabbi Chaim Vital. See *Arizal*.
- Sha'arei Teshuvah**—Chasidic discourses by Rabbi Dov Ber of Lubavitch (1773-1827). First published in Zhitomir in 1864.
- Shabbos**—Talmudic tractate in Order of Mo'ed (Festivals).
- Shaloh**—*Shenei Luchos Habris* ("The Two Tablets of the Covenant"), an encyclopedic compilation of ritual, ethics, and mysticism by Rabbi Yeshayah Hurwitz (1560-1630).
- Shem Tov**—Commentary to *Rambam's Guide for the Perplexed* by R' Shem Tov ibn Shem Tov (15th century).
- Shemoneh Perakim**—Philosophical treatise of *Rambam*, discussing the ills and cures of man's soul, prophecy, reward and punishment, free will, and the rule of the "golden mean."
- Shemos Rabah**—The section of *Midrash Rabah* on the Book of Exodus. See *Midrash Rabah*.
- Shemos**—The Book of Exodus.
- Sherira Ga'on**—Rabbi Sherira bar Chanina (906-1006CE), Talmudist, halachist and Kabbalist. Head of Talmudic academy in Babylonia, who provided authoritative answers about Jewish law to world Jewry. Many of his rulings became a source of normative Jewish practice.
- Shiurim be-Sefer ha-Tanya**—The *Tanya* of Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi elucidated by Rabbi Yosef Wineberg. (Kehos Publication Society, 1980-1986, in 4 volumes). See *Tanya*.
- Shiurim le-Zecher Aba Mari**—Scholarly lectures delivered by Rabbi Yosef Ber Solveitchik (1903-1993), Rosh Yeshiva of Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary, New York.
- Shulchan Aruch**—Universally accepted Code of Jewish Law encompassing all areas of practical halachah, by Rabbi Yosef Caro (1488-1575).
- Sichos Kodesh**—50 volumes of public addresses by the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, delivered 1950-1981 in Yiddish. Published in 1985-7.
- Siddur**—Set order of daily prayers, including core passages composed by the Biblical prophets and Sages of the Second Temple era to which later texts were appended.
- Ta'anis**—Talmudic tractate in Order of *Mo'ed* (Festivals).

- Talmud**—Comprehensive term for the *Mishnah* and *Gemara* as joined in the two compilations known as Babylonian Talmud (6th century) and Jerusalem Talmud (5th century).
- Tanna de-bei Eliyahu**—A Midrash consisting of two parts, whose final redaction took place at the end of the tenth century. The first part is called *Seder Eliyahu Rabah* (31 chapters); the second, *Seder Eliyahu Zuta* (15 chapters).
- Tanya**—Primary Chasidic text authored by Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi. (See *Alter Rebbe*).
- Torah Ohr**—Fundamental Chasidic discourses on Genesis and Exodus by Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi. See *Alter Rebbe*.
- Toras Chaim**—Chasidic discourses on Genesis and Exodus, Rabbi Dov Ber of Lubavitch, the “Mitteler Rebbe,” son and successor of R’ Shneur Zalman as the leader of Chabad. First printed in Warsaw, 1866.
- Toras Shmuel**—Chasidic discourses of Rabbi Shmuel of Lubavitch (1834-1882), the Rebbe Maharash. Published by Kehos Publication Society, 1945–2007, in 16 volumes.
- Tosfos Chadashim**—A compilation of commentaries to the *Mishnah* from authors of the 17th and 18th centuries.
- Tosfos Yeshanim**—Talmudic commentary by the early Tosafists, much of which was published by Yosef ben Wolf ha-Levi in *Sugyos ha-Shas* (Berlin, 1736), and was later incorporated into the standard Vilna edition of the Talmud.
- Tosfos Yom Tov**—Major commentary to the *Mishnah* by Rabbi Yom-Tov Lipman Heller (1579-1654), Chief Rabbi of Prague and later Rabbi in Crakow.
- Tosfos**—Talmudic commentary of the French, German and English rabbis of the 12th and 13th centuries.
- Turei Even**—See *Arba’ah Turei Even*.
- Tzafnas Pane’ach**—Highly original commentary to *Rambam’s Mishneh Torah* by Rabbi Yosef Rosen, Chief Rabbi of Dvinsk, known as the Rogatchover Gaon (1858-1936). He also authored *Responsa* and a commentary on the Torah by the same name.
- Tzemach Tzedek**—Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson of Lubavitch (1789-1866), commonly known as Tzemach Tzedek after the name of his *halachic* responsa. A grandson of the Alter Rebbe, he succeeded his father-in-law, the Mitteler Rebbe, as third Rebbe of the Chabad dynasty.
- Tzlach**—commentary on Talmud by Rabbi Yechezkel Landau (1713-1793), rabbi in Prague and one of the foremost *halachic* authorities. Commonly known after his responsa *Noda bi-Yehuda*.
- Tzur Teuda**—Ethical essays by Rabbi Moshe Aharon Alufin, Rabbi in Lapitch. Printed in Warsaw 1879.
- Urim ve-Tumim**—Halachic commentary on *Choshen Mishpat*, the fourth and last section of the *Shulchan Aruch*, by Rabbi Yonason Eybeschütz (1690-1764), Rabbi in Prague, and later in Altona, Hamburg and Wandsbek. His other works include *Ya’aros Devash* (sermons), *K’reisi u-Pleisi* on *Shulchan Aruch*, and *Shem Olam* on Kabbalah.

- Vayikra Rabah**—The section of *Midrash Rabah* on the Book of Leviticus. See *Midrash Rabah*.
- Vayikra**—The Book of Leviticus
- Vilna Ga'on**—R' Eliyahu ben Shlomo of Vilna (1720-1797) Lithuanian Talmudist, Kabbalist, grammarian, and mathematician.
- Ya'aros Devash**—See *Urim ve-Tumim*.
- Yad Malachi**—Compendium of rules and principles on which various major rabbinic texts are based, by Rabbi Malachi ben Yaakov ha-Kohen. Published in 1767.
- Yalkut Shimoni**—Comprehensive Midrashic anthology, covering the entire Bible, attributed to Rabbi Shimon ha-Darshan of Frankfurt (13th century).
- Yedei Moshe**—Commentary to *Midrash Rabah* by R' Ya'akov Moshe Ashkenazi (17th century).
- Yefey To'ar**—Major commentary to *Midrash Rabah*, by R' Shmuel Yaffa-Ashkenazi, Rabbi in Constantinople, 16th century.
- Yom Tov Shel Rosh Hashanah 5666**—See *Hemshech Samech Vav*.
- Yoma**—Tractate of Talmud in the Order of *Mo'ed* (Festivals).
- Yoreh De'ah**—Second of the four sections of the *Tur* and *Shulchan Aruch*, dealing with laws of *kashrus* and purity.
- Zohar Chadash**—Addendum to the *Zohar*, first printed in Saloniki in 1597.
- Zohar**—Primary text of Kabbalah, compiled by Rabbi Shimon ben Yochai and his disciples in the form of a commentary on the Torah. First published in the late 13th century by Rabbi Moshe de Leon (c.1250–1305), in Spain.

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YIGDAL

THE THIRTEEN PRINCIPLES OF FAITH*

- | | | |
|--------------|---|--|
| <i>One</i> | Exalted be the Living G-d and praised,
He exists—unbounded by time is His
existence. | יגדל אלהים חי וישתבח.
נמצא ואין עת אל מציאותו. |
| <i>Two</i> | He is One—and there is no unity like
His Oneness—inscrutable and infinite
is His Oneness. | אחד ואין יחיד כיהודו.
נעלם וגם אין סוף לאחדותו. |
| <i>Three</i> | He has no semblance of a body nor is
He corporeal—nor has His holiness
any comparison. | אין לו דמות הגוף ואינו גוף.
לא נערוך אליו קדשותו. |
| <i>Four</i> | He preceded every being that was cre-
ated—the First, and nothing precedes
His precedence. | קדמון לכל דבר אשר נברא.
ראשון ואין ראשית לראשיתו. |
| <i>Five</i> | Behold! He is Master of the universe to
every creature—he demonstrates His
greatness and His sovereignty. | הנו אדון עולם לכל (וְכָל) נוצר.
יורה גדלתו ומלכותו. |
| <i>Six</i> | He granted His flow of prophecy—to
His treasured, splendid people. | שפע נבואתו נתנו.
אל אנשי סגלתו ותפארתו. |

*This text is a hymn based on *Rambam's Thirteen Principles* and sung at the conclusion of Shabbos and holiday evening services. Ashkenazim also recite it before the daily morning service. It is not found in the prayer rites of the Lurianic Kabbalists or the Chasidim. Most attribute it to Rabbi Daniel ben Yehuda of Italy (c. 14th century), while some claim it was composed by Rabbi Yechiel ben Baruch (c. 14th century) of Rome. Rabbi Ya'akov Emden (18th century) attributed it to the *Rambam*, but this opinion has been highly questioned.

- | | | |
|-----------------|--|---|
| <i>Seven</i> | In Israel, none like Moshe arose again—a prophet who perceived His vision clearly. | לא קם בישראל כמשה עוד.
נביא ומביט את תמונתו. |
| <i>Eight</i> | G-d gave His people a Torah of truth—by means of His prophet, the most trusted of His household. | תורת אמת נתן לעמו אל.
על יד נביאו נאמן ביתו. |
| <i>Nine</i> | G-d will never amend or exchange His law—for any other one, for all eternity. | לא יחליף האל ולא ימיר דתו.
לעולמים לזולתו. |
| <i>Ten</i> | He scrutinizes and knows our hidden-most secrets—He perceives a matter's outcome at its inception. | צופה ויודע סתרינו.
מביט לסוף דבר בקדמתו. |
| <i>Eleven</i> | He recompenses man with kindness according to his deed—He brings misfortune to the wicked according to his wickedness. | גומל לאיש חסד כמפעלו.
יתן לרשע רע כרשעתו. |
| <i>Twelve</i> | By the End of Days He will send our Mashiach—to redeem those longing for His final salvation. | ישלח לקץ ימין משיחנו.
לפדות מחכי קץ ישועתו. |
| <i>Thirteen</i> | G-d will revive the dead in His abundant kindness—blessed forever is His praised Name. | מתים יחיה אל ברב חסדו.
ברוך עדי עד שם תהלתו. |

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לעילוי נשמות
ר' דוד וזוגתו לאה סלאגער
ר' דוד וזוגתו רינה עטר
זכרונם לברכה
תהיינה נשמותיהם צרורות בצרור החיים



נדפס ע"י
ר' דוד שיחי' סלאגער
וזוגתו מרת לארא תחי'
ובנותיהם:
חנה ושרה מלכה



ולזכות
ר' ראובן שיחי' סלאגער
וזוגתו מרת מרים תחי'

לעילוי נשמות

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