

THE THIRTEEN PRINCIPLES OF FAITH

A collection of essays on the
Rambam's thirteen
emunah imperatives that will
empower you
to a deeper awareness of the
EXISTENCE, PURPOSE and DESTINY
of the universe

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לע"נ ר' **ברוך גד** בן **יוסף הלוי** ז"ל

נפטר יז אדר ב' תשע"ט

This sefer is lovingly dedicated in memory of Mr. Bert Schonbach z"l, a man of sterling character, wisdom, and insight.

A loving husband, father, grandfather, and uncle, he epitomized kindness, integrity, and sense of responsibility. While he himself was a man of few needs, he always made sure that his family had the best that life could offer.

A loyal friend, Bert was always there for anyone who needed him, and he earned the admiration and respect of his contemporaries. The massive crowds at his levaya and subsequent shiva were a testament to this.

In his quiet and unassuming way, Bert touched and changed the lives of many. No one will ever forget how he enlivened each simcha and event with his gift of song and sense of humor.

A learned and dedicated Jew, he always had a Torah insight to share and took the utmost pride in the fact that his children embodied the ideals that he and Yaffa had instilled in them. This was his greatest joy.

May this sefer play a role in eternalizing his legacy.



יהי זכרו ברוך
ת.נ.צ.ב.ה



Dedicated by

Dr. David Schreiber and **Rabbi Moshe Gelbein**

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שלו' ראובן פיינשטיין
ראש ישיבה
ישיבה ד'סטעטן איילנד

ט' שבט תש"פ

לכבוד האברך היקר הרב קלמן שליט"א בן תלמידי החביב הרה"ג ר' משה גאלדבערגער שליט"א

איזה שמחה ונחת היא לי לראות שהגדיים נעשו תיישים, לקבל הגליונות מספרך שאתה עומד להוציא לאור על הי"ג עקרים. וידוע ומפורסם שהכל מבוסס על האמונה כמו שאמרו חז"ל סוף מסכת מכות בא חבקוק והעמידן על אחת וצדיק באמונתו יחיה. והיא מהדברים שצריכים חיזוק ובפרט בימינו שנתרבו הפירצות ונתמעטו הדעות. ומהמעט שראיתי הוא מלא וגדיש בדברי חכמה ודעת מבוסס על דברי חז"ל ונכתב באופן צה וקל לעורר ולשמח הלבבות ובודאי שיהיה לתועלת גדולה להרבות אמונה ויראת ה'.

ע"כ באתי לחזק אותך ולברכך לראות הצלחה רבה מזה הספר ומכל מעשה ידיך ללמוד וללמד לשמור ולעשות ולקיים ללון בעומקה של תורה מתוך מנוחת הנפש והרחבת הדעת ובריאת הגוף עם פרנסה בשפע ונחת ממשפחתו ביחד עם רעיתך החשובה עד ביאת מלך המשיח במהרה.

הכו"ה לכבוד התורה ולומדיה והעומדים לחזק אמונתינו הטהורה



9 Shvat 5780

Dear R' Kalman *shlita*, son of my beloved *talmid*, Harav Moshe Goldberger *shlita*

I feel such *simcha* and *nachas* when I see that the "*gedi'em na'asu tayashim*, kid goats have become bucks," upon receiving the manuscript of your *sefer* which you are planning to publish, on the thirteen principles of faith. As is well known, everything stands on *emunah*, faith. *Chazal* at the end of *masechta Maakos* have stated, "Chavakuk came and established it [the entire Torah] on one [principle], 'The righteous one lives due to his emunah.'" This topic requires strengthening, especially in our times when the deviations have increased and true knowledge has diminished.

From the sample I have seen, your *sefer* is overflowing with *divrei chochma* and *da'as*, words of knowledge and wisdom, based on the words of *chazal*, our Torah authorities, and it is written in a clear, easy to read, inspiring and exciting manner. This *sefer* will certainly be of great benefit to increase *emunah* and fear of Heaven.

Therefore I commend you and *bentch* you that you merit great success with this *sefer* and in all your future endeavors, and that you merit to study, teach, fulfill, and immerse yourself in the depths of Torah study with peace of mind, tranquility and good health. May you have abundant *parnassah* and *nachas* from your family together with your esteemed wife until the speedy arrival of *Melech Hamoshiach*.

Written and signed in honor of the Torah and its students and those who strengthen our pure faith

Shalom Reuven Feinstein

Rabbi Zev Leff

*Rabbi of Moshav Matityahu
Rosh HaYeshiva—Yeshiva Gedola Matityahu*

הרב זאב לף

ט"ס

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Dear Friends,

I have read portions of "The Thirteen Principles of Faith" by Rabbi Kalman Goldberger. The author offers a comprehensive presentation of the Rambam's Thirteen Principles of Faith that form the foundation of Torah Judaism.

The author explains in detail each of the principles, combining his own ideas and explanations with quotes from an impressive array of sources and weaving them into an informative, enlightening, inspiring and interesting presentation.

I commend the author on a quality presentation that will enhance the understanding and appreciation of the principles both to the novice and the the learned readers.

I pray that Hashem Yisborach bless the author with life, health and the wherewithal to continue to merit the community with additional Torah works.

Sincerely,
With Torah blessings



Rabbi Zev Leff

RABBI MOSHE GOLDBERGER

STATEN ISLAND, NEW YORK

Lkvod Rav Kalman Shlita

Thanks for your gevaldika Sefer we are enjoying it very much.

It gives the opportunity to study a few pages a day to think and practice Emuna one of the 6 Mitzvos that are constant 24/7. Living with thoughts of Hashem elevates a person to connect and cling to Hashem which makes life sweet and Gishmak.

Hashem is our very best Friend and the more we think about Him, He rewards us with infinite benefits. May you merit to be a Mazakeh es horabim in many meaningful ways.

From your loving Parents.

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Foreword

A Tzaddik Lives With His Faith

**Rav Moshe Gelbein - Rosh Kollel
Nachlas Moshe, Kiryat Sefer**

Chavakuk Taught that Mitzvah Observance Depends on *Emunah*

The Gemara (*Makkos* 23b-24a) writes in the name of Rav Simlai that 613 mitzvot were given to Moshe Rabbeinu at Har Sinai. However, each subsequent generation grew increasingly distant from *Matan Torah*, and the Jews' spiritual level therefore declined. This made it increasingly difficult for them to fulfill all of the mitzvos. To rectify this, Dovid Hamelech established eleven principles upon which all of the mitzvos were dependent. His generation was meant to focus on these principles and practice them (See *Rashi* *ibid.*). As the generations continued to decline, Yeshayahu Hanavi modified the number of principles from eleven to six. The *navi* Michah later modified the number of principles to three, until Chavakuk eventually based all of the mitzvos on one principle alone – “*Tzaddik b'emunaso yichyeh, A tzaddik lives with his faith*” (*Chavakuk* 2:4).

Roots and Branches

It goes without saying that these lofty *tzaddikim* did not detract a single mitzvah from the Torah, *chas v'shalom*. We must therefore

understand the aforementioned Gemara's intention. The *sefer Ma'alos HaTorah* explains that there are not really 613 (*taryag*) mitzvos, for in truth, there are an infinite number of mitzvos. When we delve into the Torah, we realize that with every action, word and thought, a person can perform the Will of Hashem. Rather, he explains, the *taryag* mitzvos are the ***shorashim***, the **roots** of all the other mitzvos. Analogous to a tree, which has roots, a trunk, branches, twigs, leaves, and fruits, so too, does the Torah have myriad categories. The *Ma'alos HaTorah* additionally explains that all of the mitzvos are rooted in each individual mitzvah. Just as each part of a tree is interconnected and, therefore, essentially includes the entire tree, so too, does each mitzvah include all the other mitzvos.

But what does it mean that there are 613 *shorashim*? Rav Yehonatan Salem *shlita* in *Maagal Hashanah* cites Rav Shach *zt"l*, who, based on the Rambam, explains that if a Jew would be able to keep just one of the 613 *shorashim* perfectly, without any ulterior motives, it would enable him to keep the Torah in its entirety. This is the way that the earlier generations were able to flawlessly adhere to the entire Torah. However, as the generations declined spiritually, it was no longer possible to reach perfect adherence to the entire Torah by choosing just any one of these 613 *shorashim* and advancing from there. Thus, Dovid Hamelech, in his great wisdom, modified the roots from 613 to eleven. By doing so, Jews in his time were still able to attain perfection in Torah observance. However, the generations continued to decline, and the subsequent Torah leaders continued to modify the *shorashim* for the sake of the Jewish Nation. Finally the *navi* Chavakuk focused on but a single branch, which when grasped, would link a Jew to the Torah's infinite mitzvos – this branch was *emunah*.

We now understand clearly that none of the aforementioned *tzaddikim* detracted an iota from the Torah. Rather, each one's objective was to instruct his generation how to achieve perfection in Torah observance. They therefore gave them the keys to make the Torah and all of its mitzvos accessible to them.

The Entire Torah Stands on *Emunah*

Chavakuk taught us that the mainstay of the entire Torah is *emunah*, faith in Hashem. Everything is built and predicated upon this, as the *Rishonim* explain¹.

Emunah is the basis of our *avodas Hashem*. The *pasuk* (*Divrei Hayamim* 1 28:9) states, “*Da es Elokei avicha ve’avdeihu*, Know the G-d of your father and serve Him.” When one recognizes Hashem and understands that He is the ruler of the world, he will be able to accept the yoke of Divine service upon himself.

Ma’aminim Bnei Ma’aminim

That being said, it certainly behooves us to expend every effort in strengthening and deepening our faith in Hashem. The question, of course, is – how?

1. See *Rambam*, beginning of *Yad. Rabbeinu Yonah (Derashos Parshas Yisro)* writes on the first commandment, “*Anochi Hashem Elokecha asher hotzeisicha me’eretz Mitzrayim*,” that belief in G-d and His Divine Providence is the basis for all the mitzvos. If one does not believe in this first commandment, one cannot perform any mitzvos. The *Behag* understands that *emunah* is so fundamental and basic to the Torah, that it cannot be considered a separate mitzvah. Rather, it is the foundation upon which all the other mitzvos are based.

Let us attempt to answer this question by first posing a question about the wording of the *pasuk* mentioned above, *Tzaddik be'emunaso yichyeh*, "A tzaddik lives with his faith." What does it mean that a tzaddik lives with his faith? Would it not have been sufficient to simply state that a tzaddik "lives with faith?" "His faith" implies that faith is already in his possession – what does this mean?

Perhaps this can be explained based on a teaching that our holy *seforim* reveal. They explain that *emunah* is not something that a Jew must work to *acquire*; rather, he already has it, deep inside the recesses of his soul and etched into his very genes.

Jews are *ma'aminim b'nei ma'aminim* (*Shabbat* 97a), in possession of an innate faith, which they inherited from the Forefathers. This began with Avraham Avinu, who exerted super-human effort to discover Hashem and spread his knowledge to the world. His being was so surged with *emunah* in Hashem that it became an innate trait that could be passed down to his descendants in each subsequent generation, until the end of time. Understood as such, we see that *emunah* is not something we must acquire – rather, *it is something we must take care not to dull by acting sinfully and immorally, chas ve'shalom*. Acting sinfully has the power to make us forget the obvious and ignore our very spiritual constitution. Rav Moshe Wolfson *shlita* alluded to this idea in the *pasuk* *Anochi Hashem Elokecha*, which the Rambam enumerates as the mitzvah to believe in Hashem. He pointed out that this mitzvah was not spoken in the form of a command, like the other mitzvos. This is because *Anochi Hashem Elokecha* is not a command; a Jew need not be commanded to believe in Hashem – he has already inherited *emunah* from Avraham Avinu. Rather, *it is a reminder* that Hashem is our G-d. Once recalled, our innate *emunah* resurfaces. There is no need to exhort us to believe, for we already believe. We just need

to be reminded and then take great care to keep all the mitzvos and not sully our souls and dampen our faith.

Perhaps this can be alluded to in the words *tzaddik b'emunaso yichyeh*. We asked what it means that a tzaddik lives with **his** faith. Based on the above, we can understand *be'ezras Hashem*. We mentioned that the key to success in *avodas Hashem* in our generation, its very foundation, is *emunah*. How does one obtain *emunah*? The answer is that he already has it – it is already **his** faith, one that was bequeathed to him by the Avos. His job is merely to tap into the recesses of his being and discover the treasure that was always there and waiting to be rediscovered.

Yet while the roots of faith are imbedded within each Jew, there are infinite levels of *emunah* and no end to the *avodah* that a Jew must invest to enhance, further, and strengthen his faith. This is where the *sefer* before you comes in. Brilliantly written by Rabbi Kalman Goldberger, a great *talmid chacham* and *eved Hashem*, it delves into the Rambam's 13 Principles of *Emunah* and explains them in a way that not only enables the reader to further his understanding of these tenets of Judaism, but to apply them to his day to day life as well. After years of intensive research and consistently writing *divrei Torah* for Kollel Nachlas Moshe, a work of tremendous magnitude has emerged; one that will awaken the roots of faith in the reader and help draw him grow closer to His Father in Heaven. This *sefer* is a true *kiddush Hashem* and will ensure the fulfilment of Chavakuk's holy words, "*tzaddik b'emunaso yichyeh*," in their fullest sense, *be'ezras Hashem*.

On behalf of Nachlas Moshe, I would like to express our deepest gratitude to my lifelong friend, Dr. David Schreiber *shetichyeh*. Dr. Schreiber so graciously dedicated this volume in memory of his family's

close friend and my dear uncle, Mr. Bert Schonbach z"l. This sefer is an expression of Dr. Schreiber's value for our Nation's sacred heritage and to spreading the light of Torah and *chessed*. It will be a source of merit for him and his family *shetichyu* for generations to come, *im yirtzeh Hashem*.

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With praise and thanks, I am eternally grateful to the *Ribbono shel Olam* for all of the good that He has showered upon me and my family, all of our lives. The greatest kindness He has given me is that He allows me the greatest privilege possible — to study Torah full-time in *kollel*. May He help me further to “sit in the house of Hashem all the days of my life” (*Tehillim* 27:4), and may the entire *Klal Yisrael* merit increasing their connection and devotion to *limud Torah*. In particular, I would like to thank Hashem for giving me the opportunity to study the *Yud Gimmel Ikrim* (the Thirteen Principles of Faith) over the past few years and for the opportunity to prepare a series of essays that clarify the principles of *emunah*, faith, and draw practical lessons from them.

Any large undertaking is not possible without the help of many individuals. Therefore, I would like to take the opportunity to acknowledge and thank the following people.

Much thanks to:

My wife, for enabling me to devote my time to Torah learning, and for even allowing extra time for this project, besides for all the tremendous help she gives me.

My parents, Rav Moshe, *shlita*, and Mrs. Chana Beila Goldberger, and to my grandfather, Rav Menashe (Milan) Goldberger.

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All my siblings, and especially Akiva, for learning a large portion of the material of these essays with me, and Menucha, for getting me started on writing essays on the topic of *emunah*. A special mention is due to Rav Eytan Berman, who also got me to learn this topic in depth, when we had a *vaad* to learn *inyanei mussar v'hashkafah* together.

A special mention is due to Rav Moshe Gelbein, *shlita*, the *Rosh Kollel* of Kollel Nachlas Moshe in Kiryat Sefer, for his encouragement and support of these essays, as well as for arranging this publication and agreeing to grace this sefer with his beautiful foreward. Much thanks to Rav Aryeh Friedman as well.

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I would like to express my appreciation to the authors of the *sefarim* that I often used to prepare these essays: Rav Moshe Shapiro *zt"l*, author of *sefer Re'eh Emunah*; Rav Shimshon Pincus *zt"l*; *yibadel* Rav Bentzion Epstein *shlita*, author of *sefer Yud Gimmel Ikrei Emunah (im peirush hakdamos v'she'arim)*; Rav Ehud Rakowski *shlita*, author of *Da'as Emunah*; Rav Halpern *shlita*, author of *sefer Chemdah Tovah* and Rav Yoel Sperka, amongst other authors. I must also mention that I gained immeasurably from the *sefarim* and tapes of Rav Avigdor Miller *zt"l*.

May Hashem bless all of them, as well as the entire *Klal Yisrael*, with true *brachah* and *hatzlachah* in all matters, and especially to raise children to be *gedolei Torah* and *ovdei Hashem*. They should merit good health, *nachas*, and *parnassah* with peace of mind and *menuchas hanefesh*. May we all be *zocheh* to raise the banner of the Torah.

It is my *tefillah* to the *Ribbono shel Olam* that by reading these essays, people will increase their *emunah* — namely, their awareness that Hashem is running the world, as well as increase their *ahavas haTorah*.

Additionally, when they sit down to learn Torah, they will have an increased awareness and feeling that they are now learning the *Ribbono shel Olam's* Torah. When they devote as much time and effort to *limud haTorah* as they can, they will understand that it is the greatest form of attachment to the *Ribbono shel Olam*, and the greatest *nachas* that they can give Hashem.

May Hashem grant that we should have pure *emunah*, and that we should merit raising generations of pure and proud believers, loyal and steadfast to our glorious *mesorah*. May they merit following the guidance of the *gedolei Torah* of our times. May we be *zocheh* that we, our children and all of our descendants, should spend our lives immersed in *ameilus baTorah*. May we and they be totally committed to *ahavas haTorah* and *tznius* — the greatest of mitzvos. These are the greatest source of happiness and contentment for ourselves, and the greatest *nachas* for the *Ribbono shel Olam*. Finally - may we greet Moshiach speedily in our times.

Kalman, the son of *Hagaon* Rav Moshe **Goldberger** *shlita*

Teves 5780, Kiryat Sefer

FOREWORD – INTRODUCTION TO EMUNAH, FAITH IN HASHEM (PART ONE)

The famous *Mashgiach*, Rav Chatzkel Levenstein zt”l, was once asked, “Why does the *Mashgiach* invest so much time and energy into *chizuk ha’emunah*—strengthening his level of *emunah*, faith in Hashem? What about all the other parts of the Torah?” He answered, “When I come before the *Beis Din shel Ma’alah*, the Heavenly Court, after I leave this world, they will also ask me the same question. I will, *b’ezras Hashem*, answer that since *emunah* is the foundation of the entire Torah, it therefore comes before anything else¹.”

The Rambam, in his commentary on the *Mishnayos* (end of *Maseches Brachos*), writes: “More precious to me than all the other topics, is to teach about *ikrei daas v’emunah*, the fundamentals of Judaism and *emunah*!” The Rambam, our great teacher, whose teachings encompass the entire Torah, is telling us that the subject most important for him to disseminate is *ikrei daas v’emunah*. In fact, the Rambam is the one who organized and delineated the famous thirteen principles of *emunah* in *Perek Chelek* in *Maseches Sanhedrin*. Later on, they were made popular

1. As heard from Rav Yisrael Ginsburg, *shlita*, a grandson of the *Mashgiach* and a *maggid shiur* in the Yeshivah of Staten Island.

in the famous *Ani Ma'amins* and in the *Yigdal tefilah*, which are in the *siddur* and based on the Rambam's thirteen *ikrei emunah*.

The thirteen *Ani Ma'amins* can be divided into three groups. The first group is comprised of principles relating to Hashem's existence. These include: 1) Believing that Hashem exists; 2) Believing in His Oneness, i.e., that He is not comprised of parts; 3) He is not physical or tangible; 4) He always existed and is eternal; 5) We serve Him alone.

The second group is comprised of principles relating to His communication with us and our relationship and obligations towards Him. These include: 6) *Nevuah*, prophecy; 7) Moshe Rabbeinu's prophecy; 8) *Torah min haShamayim*, Torah is Divine; 9) The Torah is unchanging.

Finally, the third group is comprised of principles relating to purpose, destiny, and eternity. These include: 10) Hashem observes and directs the world; 11) Reward and punishment; 12) Anticipating the arrival of Moshiach; 13) *Techiyas Hameisim*, Revival of the Dead — the real and ultimate life.

The Gemara in *Makkos* (24a) states that due to the decline of the level of the later generations, the great leaders of *Klal Yisrael* pinpointed a few central mitzvos and Torah attitudes to focus on. These mitzvos and themes encompass and lead to the greatest amount of perfection in Torah observance, when an individual focuses especially on them. Finally, Chavakuk came and said that *emunah* is the one central all-encompassing mitzvah which leads to the greatest perfection in keeping the entire Torah. As the *pasuk* states (*Chavakuk* 2:4) “*Ba Chavakuk v'he'emidan al achas: 'V'tzaddik b'emunaso yichyeh'* — Chavakuk came and established them [the entire Torah] on one [fundamental principle]: ‘The *tzaddik* will live due to his *emunah*.’”

In fact, the mitzvah of *emunah* — to believe that Hashem, the Creator and Controller of the entire world, exists — was the first of the *Aseres Hadibros – Anochi Hashem Elokecha*, “I am Hashem, your G-d” (*Shemos* 20:2). The entire *Klal Yisrael* — approximately three million people — heard these words directly from Hashem by Har Sinai, through a phenomenal supernatural revelation and a high level of prophecy experienced by the entire nation [See *Ramban, Parshas Yisro*, 20:2, and the beginning of the Chofetz Chaim’s *Sefer Hamitzvos Hakatzar*; also see the *Rambam* and the *Ramban* in the *Sefer Hamitzvos*, regarding the well-known dispute whether *emunah* qualifies as a positive commandment or not.]

Especially in our time, a time which the *Gedolei Yisrael* have repeatedly said is surely the period of *ikvasa d’meshicha* — the final period and preparation time before Moshiach arrives and reveals himself — it is, all the more so, vital to work on *chizuk ha’emunah*, strengthening our faith.

As many *Gedolim* have said, strengthening our *emunah* is the main area of Divine service and the primary *nisayon*, trial, that we will be tested with in this time period before the coming of Moshiach. We can see this in the *Midrash (Yalkut Shimoni, Hoshea, remez 519)*: “The ingathering of the exiles will only be in the merit of *emunah*; so too, the Jews only left Mitzrayim due to the merit of *emunah*.”

We also see this from the Chofetz Chaim in the beginning of his *sefer Taharas Yisrael* (part of *Kol Kisvei Chofetz Chaim*), where he writes the following: “*Chazal* have said, ‘*Chavakuk* came and established them [i.e., the mitzvos] on one [fundamental principle]: ‘The *tzaddik* will live due to his *emunah*.’ Meaning, he saw with *ruach hakodesh* that in the *acharis hayamim*, at the end of days, observance of the Torah essentially

depends entirely on *emunah*. If the *emunah* in the foundations of the Torah will be strong, then the whole Torah will be upheld. However, if, Heaven forbid, this principle will be weak, then the entire Torah observance will be shaky.”

Rav Nosson Wachtfogel, zt”l, writes in his *haskamah* to the *sefer Yud Gimmel Ikrei Emunah (im peirush Chazan Yoel)*, as follows: “We have a tradition that was transmitted from the *Gedolei Hadoros*, namely, that in the *ikvasa d’meshicha* there will be frightening *nisyonos* — trials and tribulations, in matters of *ikrei emunah*, principles of faith!”

There are two different approaches to studying *emunah*. One way is to analyze logical and philosophical proofs of *emunah*. A second way is to learn the facts of *emunah* and review the information on the topic, thus internalizing it and deepening our awareness of it. In addition, we can organize the information well and learn the *pshat* — the straightforward and primary explanations of the various sources that deal with this topic. The first method can be termed the “whys” of *emunah*. The second method is internalizing the “whats” of *emunah*. The second approach is the way that is widely encouraged and generally practiced by the *Gedolei Yisrael* and the Torah educators of our generation and in the past generations². This collection of essays does not engage in logical proofs of *emunah* for the most part.

It can be said that even from a logical viewpoint, the most powerful proofs of *emunah* can be simple logic and not sophisticated dissertations or deep, complex scientific discussions. We have merited a very clear and reliable tradition. Secondly, we are the only ones who can boast of excellent results. In a world gone mad by the pursuit of freedom and

2. *Chazon Ish* Letters, volume 1, letter 15; *Steipler, hakdamah to Chayai Olam*; Rav Matisyohu Salomon; Rav Moshe Shapiro.

happiness (violence, hedonism, and technological and psychological breakdown of all morals), the Torah observant are an “island” of purity, morality, contentment, and happiness. This is clearly a result of guarding the directives for life given by the Creator of the World on Har Sinai some 3,300 years ago³.

The Chofetz Chaim writes (*Kol Kisvei Chofetz Chaim, michtavei Chofetz Chaim, michtav* 18) that it is very important to recite the thirteen *Ani Ma’amins* every day after *davening*, and that this was always the *minhag* in *Klal Yisrael*, going back a very long time. Rav Michel Yehudah Lefkowitz writes in many places about the great obligation and importance of learning and reciting the *Ani Ma’amins* regularly⁴. Doing so will obviously strengthen our *emunah*.

The Rambam, after he establishes the *ikrim* in his *Peirush Hamishnayos* (*ibid.*), writes the following: “Know them and succeed with them. Review them many times. Contemplate them well. If your heart and mind convince you that you already know them from learning them once or even ten times, Hashem knows that they are fooling you. Therefore, do not learn them quickly.” The *sefer Shevet Mussar* (24) writes that as soon as a child starts talking, his mother should train him to say certain *pesukim*. She should teach him *emunah* and she should get him used to staying the thirteen *ikrim*! In fact, the Rambam (*ibid.*)

3. Based on an audio series given by Rav Yisrael Belsky, *zt”l*, entitled *Da Mah Shetashiv*. Rav Shlomo Wolbe, *zt”l*, also made this point. He especially pointed out the *Gedolei Yisrael* who reached such levels of perfection by following the Torah faithfully (*Igros U’ksavim* of Rav Wolbe, volume 2, letter 440, page 199).

4. *Imrei Da’as*, volume 1, letter 55, page 289; and in his *haskamah* to the *sefer Yud Gimmel Ikrim* (*im biur Hakdamos V’she’arim*).

writes that to be considered a Jew, and to have a portion in *Olam Haba*, a person must know and live by the thirteen principles of *emunah*.

Rav Matisyohu Salomon, in his *haskamah* to the *sefer*, *The Heart of Emunah*, writes about the importance of *chinuch* in a positive manner — doing mitzvos and learning Torah with enthusiasm and joy, and separating ourselves from worldly desires. This will bring out the light of *emunah* that is implanted within the heart of every Jew. He writes regarding education for *emunah*, that the main thing is to instill in the hearts of our children and students the subjects of *yiras Shamayim*, fear of Heaven, *kedushah* - holiness, *taharah* -purity, *emunah* in Divine *schar v'onesh* - reward and punishment, and *hashgachah pratis* - Divine Providence.

We also find that certain mitzvos and *middos* are especially helpful or are a *segulah* for maintaining and deepening our *emunah*. The Chofetz Chaim (*Z'chor L'Miriam*, chapter 21, included in *Kol Kisevei Chofetz Chaim*) writes that to strengthen our *emunah* we should learn the *parshah* with *Rashi* very well each week, and we should also learn *Neviim* and *Kesuvim*. The Steipler Gaon, Rav Yaakov Yisroel Kanievsky *zt"l*, in his *sefer Chayei Olam* (chapter 27), writes that humility is the foundation of *emunah*. In part two, chapter eight, he writes that an increased commitment to be *shomer Shabbos* strengthens a person's *emunah*. It is well known that hearing or reading stories about *Gedolei Yisrael* and about *mesirus nefesh*, self-sacrifice, for Torah and mitzvos greatly strengthen *emunah*, in addition to all the other benefits that we can gain from doing so.

Being secure in our *emunah* on a logical level is not enough. Rav Gershon Weiss, in the beginning of *The Holocaust Haggadah* (“Letter to My Children”) writes that he once realized this when he managed

to convince someone logically about our *emunah*, and the person just stopped there and did not change his ways. He then started wondering: What is the reason for the fact that Shavuos, the Yom Tov on which we celebrate *Kabbalas HaTorah*, is a one-day Yom Tov, while Pesach, the Yom Tov on which we celebrate *Yetzias Mitzrayim*, is a major seven-day Yom Tov? Furthermore, why are we obligated to remember *Yetzias Mitzrayim* constantly, on a daily basis, with various mitzvos and in our *tefillos*? Why is it so important and fundamental?

Rav Weiss explained that the answer is that with the power of reasoning, a person can easily become convinced and secure in his *emunah*. However, a person's emotions fight this because people don't want to limit their physical urges, nor do they want to be subservient to Hashem. Therefore, to establish *emunah* in *Klal Yisrael*, Hashem had us witness His *hashgachah*, Providence, in *Mitzrayim*. When the Jews initially submitted to their physical desires, they suddenly found themselves in a terrible *galus*, exile. But when they *davened* to Hashem, they were redeemed. When the ten *makkos* occurred, they saw that there is a Creator, Who knows and controls everything, and rewards and punishes. In addition, by witnessing the way Hashem spoke to them and to Pharaoh through Moshe, they developed *emunah* in *nevuah*, prophecy, thus paving the way for the giving of the Torah through Moshe Rabbeinu.

To motivate the Jews to carry out His Will, Hashem showered them with miracles. Seeing the many benefits they gained from *Yetzias Mitzrayim*, enjoying the status as the Chosen Nation, and especially experiencing the depth of Hashem's love for them, they naturally felt powerful gratitude toward their Benefactor. Thus, they committed themselves to serving Hashem and accepting His Torah. Just knowing that the Torah is from Hashem is not ample basis for *emunah*. It needs

to be coupled with the experience of *Yetzias Mitzrayim* for it to be a solid *emunah*, a faith that carries a person even on an emotional level. Therefore, it is vital for us to analyze and internalize the *Yetzias Mitzrayim* experience, and this is what we do on Pesach, as well as on a regular basis in so many ways. This way, *b'ezras Hashem*, we are able to develop a solid *emunah* and commit ourselves to *avodas Hashem*, as well as to withstanding the trials of life.

Rav Avigdor Miller, *zt"l*, writes (*Awake My Glory*, page 101, number 336): “The quality of *emunah* (translated as “belief” in the *Tanach* and in the *mesorah*, tradition, of *Klal Yisrael*) is a national characteristic of the Jews. Hashem said to Moshe, ‘They shall believe in you forever’ (*Shemos* 19:9). ‘There is still no one of the Jews who does not act even now as if Moshe were present and ready to punish him if he should do anything that is indecent’” (*Josephus Ant. III, 15, 3*).

Rav Miller continues, “But actually, *emunah* means steadfastness and loyalty. It comes easy for a Jew to believe in the history of his people. The contentions of the nations, old or new, are preposterous, and they require excessive belief. The tried, reasonable and well-founded traditions of the Jews are in themselves easy to believe when a Jew is loyal to his people.⁵”

Rav Shimshon Pincus, *zt"l*, writes that *emunah* does not mean “knowledge of Hashem.” *Emunah* means *dveikus*, an attachment, a relationship with Hashem (*Nefesh Shimshon, emunah*, page 13).

5. For more elaboration and for sources that the primary translation and virtue of *emunah* is “loyalty and steadfastness” and that “belief” is only a secondary definition, listen to Rav Miller’s recorded *shiurim* (tape number 10, 23 minutes into the tape).

Rav Wolbe, *zt”l*, writes that *emunah* is not knowledge, it is a *middah* — a character trait that we need to tap into and develop and maintain (*V’tzaddik be’emunaso yichyeh, vaad one*, page 17).

Rav Moshe Shapiro said that *emunah* is not a logical conclusion; it is a certain experience, an inborn feeling. It can be compared to the feeling of life; a person does not look for proof or for definitions for the fact that he is alive – he senses it intuitively and identifies it naturally. It is therefore something that we merely need to tap into and maintain (*Sefer Afikei Mayim, Shavuot, inyan alef*, page 79; also see *The Heart of Emunah*, at length).

On a basic and practical level, it’s true that the term *emunah* means knowledge of the facts of Hashem’s existence, and a certain logical conclusion of His existence; the word *emunah* is often used this way. However, Rav Miller points out that the real definition for *emunah* is “loyalty and steadfastness.” So too, we see that other *Gedolim* and *marbitzei Torah* have given various other definitions to the word, or have given a finer nuance for the term and the concept of *emunah*^{6 7}.

6. It follows that often a perceived, or even a real weakness in *emunah*, is usually not a result of a lack of knowledge of logical proofs of *emunah*. Rather, it is a result of exposure to secular books and other sources of spiritual danger. It may also stem from *middos ra’os*, negative character traits, and at times, from emotional weakness. Many *Gedolei Yisrael* have said and written that we need to realize that a Jew has a natural, inborn *emunah* — it just needs to be brought out. Obviously, if a person feels a weakness in *emunah* he should discuss it with a competent Rav or Rebbetzin.

7. Perhaps this can explain the phenomenon that during the Spanish Inquisition and expulsion the women, as well as those who lacked extensive Torah knowledge, sacrificed their lives *al kiddush Hashem*, whereas a number of intellectual Jews, who, although possessing philosophical and sophisticated ideas of *emunah*, were

FOREWORD – INTRODUCTION TO EMUNAH (PART TWO) – EMUNAH AND TORAH

Rav Shlomo Wolbe, *zt”l* (*B’emunaso Yichyeh, sichah 2*, page 141), discusses a seeming contradiction. The Gemara in *Makkos* (24a) writes that *emunah* is the *yesod* — the foundation of all the rest of the mitzvot — as the *pasuk* states (*Chavakuk 2:4*), “The tzaddik will live due to his *emunah*,” meaning that the *tzaddik* lives through the *chiyus*, the potency of his *emunah*. On the other hand, in *Avos* (6:7), *Chazal* say that Torah study is the foundation of all the mitzvot. This is as the Mishnah says, “*Gedolah Torah shehi nosenes chaim l’oseha b’olam hazeh u’baolam haba.*” This means that the greatness of the Torah is that it is the true source of life, in this world and the next. How do we reconcile this?

Rav Wolbe answers that really *limud Torah* is the foundation for all the mitzvot. However, for the Torah to be effective, it requires that the person learning it already has an *emunah* that is alive and vibrant.

When a person is young, his *emunah* is not truly “alive” - it is by rote. A person needs to invest a lot of work to ignite his *emunah* and make it real and alive. A person does this by learning *sefarim* about *emunah*,

willing to forgo their heritage to save their lives, *rachmana litzlan* (see *The Chassid Ya’avetz*, in the *sefer Ohr Hachaim*, chapters 2 and 5).

and the *parshiyos* in the Torah that deal with *emunah*. Furthermore, each individual needs to find his path to real *emunah*, be it through contemplation of the wonders in the world or some other Torah approach. Then, when he learns Torah, he will actually feel that he is learning the *Ribbono shel Olam's* Torah! Eventually, this will lead him to find the approach to *avodas Hashem* that is most suited for him.

In *Parshas Vayishlach* (32:24) the Torah relates that Eisav's *malach* — the *Satan* — came and battled Yaakov Avinu. There was a struggle, which Yaakov won. However, the *Satan* temporarily injured his thigh, and this would have great ramifications for the future. Eisav's *malach* represents the forces of evil, and this was a power struggle for Yaakov's right to live a life of purity and bear generations of purity. Rav Elchonon Wasserman, in the section at the end of *Koveitz Ha'aros* (*Aggados* 6:6) asks: Why did the *Satan* wait until Yaakov Avinu to strike? Why did he not battle against the very root of *Klal Yisrael* — Avraham Avinu or at least Yitzchak Avinu?

Rav Elchonon answers as follows: *Chazal* say (*Yerushalmi Chagigah* 1:7), “Hashem overlooked the *aveiros* of *avodah zarah*, adultery and murder, but He did not overlook the *aveirah* of *bitul Torah* (wasting time that could otherwise have been spent studying Torah)!” *Chazal* (*Kiddushin* 30b) teach us that Hashem says, “I created the *yetzer hara*, and I created Torah study as an antidote for it.” There is no other way to overcome the *yetzer hara*; only Torah study is effective (see *Mesillas Yescharim* 5). Similarly, we find that *Chazal* say (*Yerushalmi Chagigah* *ibid.*) that even if a person would forsake the *mitzvos*, and even Hashem, Heaven forbid, if he would continue to learn Torah, it would bring him back to Hashem!

Now we can understand why the *Satan* left Avraham Avinu alone and did not fight him — because Avraham was the pillar of *chesed*; this was the primary trait with which he served Hashem. Similarly, Yitzchak was the pillar of *avodah*, Divine service (prayer and *korbanos*, sacrificial offerings). They did not pose such a threat to the *Satan*. However Yaakov Avinu was the *amud* of Torah in the world, and therefore the *Satan* put all of his efforts into stopping him. *Baruch Hashem*, he was not successful, but we still suffer from the injury he inflicted to Yaakov's thigh. The thigh represents the supporters of Torah, or the youth. The *Satan* tries with all his might to discourage people from supporting Torah, and he tries very hard to make sure that the youth don't commit themselves to a life of *limud Torah*.

Perhaps we can add to this idea. Avraham Avinu is also known as the *rosh hama'aminim* — the “head of the believers,” the *foundation* of *emunah* in the world. Even so, the *Satan* does not feel so threatened by that. It is Torah and Torah alone which he realizes is his main enemy.

Rav Elchonon (ibid.) brings an amazing quote from his *rebbe*, the Chofetz Chaim: “The *yetzer hara* prefers that a person spends his day fasting, crying and *davening*, as long as he is not learning Torah!”

Rav Elazar Menachem Shach, *zt"l*, writes in the introduction to his *sefer Avi Ezri* (volume 1, *hakdamah* to *mahadurah tinyana*) that even though the Gemara writes in *Makkos* (24a) that *emunah* is the foundation of all the mitzvos and it requires our primary focus, nevertheless, studying Torah as well as supporting and enabling Torah study is our greatest calling in life. It is *limud Torah* that requires our greatest attention and dedication above all other areas of Divine service. He brings this in the name of the Chofetz Chaim as well.

The Steipler Gaon (Rav Yaakov Yisrael Kanievsky zt”l) wrote an entire *sefer* dedicated to strengthening *emunah*, called *Chayei Olam*. At the end of the first section, he writes that people who merit spending their days learning Torah do not need this *sefer*, for the holiness of their Torah study will ensure that they have a solid *emunah*. The *sefer* is mainly intended for the majority of Jews, who spend a large percentage of their time engaged in earning a living. It would seem that even a working man, by increasing the amount of time he studies Torah, will strengthen his *emunah*.

The Alter of Kelm (*Chochmah U’mussar*, volume 1, page 247) writes that although our main focus and efforts need to be to learn *Shas* and its commentaries, there are still many opportunities to work on *chizuk ha’emunah*, strengthening *emunah*. A prime example of this is *tefillah*. *Davening* is full of opportunities for strengthening one’s *emunah*.

We can add to this that if people bother us, instead of getting angry at them, we can realize that Hashem is in control. This will strengthen our faith in Hashem. When it comes to earning a livelihood, there are plenty of opportunities to remind ourselves that Hashem decides how much we will earn, and how honesty and integrity will only increase our income. We can imbibe a lot of *emunah* by contemplating the wonders and the *hashgachah pratis*, the Divine Providence, in the world around us. So many other ways are available as well.

So on the one hand, Torah study and supporting Torah is man’s greatest calling in life. For women, modesty, *middos* refinement and enabling their husbands and children to learn Torah is their life calling¹.

1. What is a woman’s greatest mitzvah? The Vilna Gaon writes in *Iggeres HaGra* that *tznius*, *middos tovos*, *mussar*, and *shmiras halashon* are women’s most important mitzvos and others as well. The Chazon Ish said that *tznius* and *middos*

On the other hand, there are ample opportunities to devote a lot of time and effort to strengthening, as well as adding vitality and life, to our *emunah*.

tovos are their most important mitzvos (*Imrei Da'as* on *Iggeres Hagra*). In *Lev Eliyahu, Parshas Ki Savo*, it states that enabling and assisting their husbands and sons to learn Torah is a woman's greatest mitzvah.

FOREWORD – INTRODUCTION TO EMUNAH (PART THREE) – EMUNAH AND LOVE FOR TORAH

One of the greatest qualities that we aspire to is the *ma'alah* of *ahavas haTorah* — to develop a love and a passion for *limud Torah* and for those who study it. *Chazal* state (*Kallah Rabbasi, braisah, perek 3; Derech Eretz Zutah, perek 1*), “Love Torah and honor it.” In *Tanna D’bei Eliyahu Rabbah* (28) it says, “Just as Hashem loves *Klal Yisrael* and the *talmidei chachamim* even more, so too, a person should love Jews, and he should love the *talmidei chachamim* even more.” The *Smak* writes in *mitzvas talmud Torah*, “One should constantly think about the praises of Torah; this way he will come to love the Torah.”

We can add to this that since the greatest obligation and mitzvah of all is *limud Torah*, and in order to devote a lot of time and energy to learning a person must have *ahavas haTorah*, it follows that *ahavas haTorah* is the greatest quality possible.

Regarding the supremacy of Torah study, we see in the Mishnah in the beginning of *Maseches Peah* that “*Talmud Torah k’negged kulam*,” and the *Yerushalmi* there explains this to mean that learning Torah is greater than all the other mitzvos combined. The Vilna Gaon writes that

this applies to learning even one word of Torah!¹ We find in the Gemara in *Sanhedrin* (99b) that it says, “A man was created to toil in Torah.” And we find in *halachah* (see *Rambam, Hilchos Talmud Torah* 3:4 and *Shulchan Aruch HaGraz*) that *limud Torah* overrides all other mitzvos as long as they can be done by someone else. This includes even to studying portions of the Torah which are not practically applicable nowadays, for example, much of *Seder Taharos*. The Gemara writes (*Megillah* 16b) that *limud Torah* is even greater than saving lives!

We find that in order to study a great amount of Torah, we need to learn to enjoy it. This is as we recite in the *birkas haTorah*, “Please make the words of Your Torah sweet in our mouths.” In contrast, we don’t request this in the other *brachos* that we recite over mitzvos. So too, we say in *davening*, “*Ki heim chayeinu ... u’vahem nehgeh yomam valaylah* — For they are our very life... and we will contemplate them day and night.” We find that Dovid Hamelech says (*Tehillim* 119: 40), “*Mah ahavti sorasecha*, how I loved Your Torah, *kol hayom hi sichasi*, the entire day it is my speech.” We see from here and from other places as well, that the prerequisite for *hasmadah*, diligent Torah learning, is a love for Torah.

How can we develop *ahavas haTorah*? The *Smak* writes, “By constantly thinking of its praises” (*ibid.*). Another known method is that through toiling in Torah we gain a love for it (*Zahav Mishebah, Parshas Shlach*). The *Chovos Halevavos* (*cheshbon hanefesh, perek 3, cheshbon 25*) writes that by limiting our excitement about the mundane, we increase our enthusiasm for the spiritual. This certainly applies to *limud Torah* as

1. See *sefer Binyan Olam* 1:9 as well as the section entitled *Divrei Chain* 1:19 and *Mishnas Reb Aharon* (*Mussar* - volume 1 page 27).

well. Davening to Hashem that He should give us love for Torah also increases our love for Torah study.

In the *sefer Igros Chazon Ish* we find a revelation about this. The Chazon Ish, who was well known for his amazing love for Torah, writes in a letter (volume 1, letter 14): “Because I constantly arrange my life in accordance with the certainty, and confidence [regarding the truths of life] that I have derived from the thirteen principles of *emunah* — in which *Klal Yisrael* is rooted — as a result, I have acquired *ahavas haTorah* beyond all limits!” Further on in the letter he implies that it also brought him to tremendous love for *Iomdei Torah*, those who study Torah. This is an amazing revelation. Constant application of the *Ani Ma’amins* to his life was a prime source for the Chazon Ish’s great love of Torah learning!

By constantly reflecting and applying the thirteen *ikrei emunah*, a person gains more and more clarity and conviction that this world has a Creator, Who gave us a Divine Torah with exact directives for life. He recognizes that Hashem will reward those who keep His Torah, the ultimate pleasure being *Techiyas Hameisim*, the Revival of the Dead, and *Olam Haba*. We realize that the way to maximize our potential, our contentedness and our happiness all depends on our complete commitment and devotion to learning Hashem’s Torah. This is because knowing the Torah is the way to know His Will in every situation, and *Chazal* revealed that this is the greatest way of connecting with Hashem, now and for all eternity. It follows that absorbing and applying the fundamentals of *emunah* gives a person a love for Torah beyond limits.

A TRANSLATION OF THE THIRTEEN PRINCIPLES OF FAITH INTRODUCTION

Every Jew is obligated to know the thirteen principles of *emunah* that are cited by the Rambam in his commentary to the *Mishnayos* (*Sanhedrin, Perek Chelek*), and to believe in them. In fact, it is well known that Rav Chaim Soloveitchik, *zt”l*, (otherwise known as “Rav Chaim Brisker”) said¹ that we see from the Rambam that a person who does not know the thirteen principles of faith, even by mistake, forfeits his portion in the World to Come!²

1. There are various interpretations of Rav Chaim’s intention. His exact words in Yiddish were “*nebach ahn apikorus is oich ah apikorus*,” an unfortunate heretic is also considered a heretic. We will elaborate on this shortly, *be”H*. Furthermore, there are others who disagreed with Rav Chaim’s opinion. See the footnotes that follow for more on this point.

2. See *Nefesh Shimshon, sha’arei emunah*, page 98; *Kovaetz Ha’aros*, end of *sefer*, 12:8; letter from Rav Yisroel Elyah Weintraub, end of the *kuntrus Udecha Seiseh*; *Sha’alos U’tshuvos Shevet Halevi*, volume 8, 165:4; *Chemdah Tovah*, pages 13 and 61; and *sefer Da’as Emunah*, volume 1.

Rav Weintraub writes in his letter (*ibid.*) that Rav Chaim Brisker means only that if when learning about the thirteen principles, a person makes a mistake, then he is classified as a *apikorus* — a heretic, but if someone was not taught the principles, and he did not think about the topic, he is not considered a heretic.

Rav Shimshon Pincus, *zt"l*, (*Nefesh Shimshon, sha'arai emunah*, page 130) points out based on this that it is of utmost importance to teach the thirteen principles of faith to people who do not yet know them. He writes that you can have a person who observed all of the mitzvos of the Torah, with fear and love of Hashem, and they even learned a lot of Torah, but if this person is lacking knowledge of even one of the principles of *emunah*, he is considered separated from the Jewish Nation, and he does not have a portion in the World to Come!

Furthermore, the Chofetz Chaim (*michtav* 18) writes that every person should recite the thirteen principles every day after *Shacharis*. Therefore, I will now list the thirteen principles of faith as they appear in the *siddur*; there they appear as the *Ani Ma'amins*. The *Ani Ma'amins* were not written by the Rambam, but are based on the Rambam's principles.

I will also bring the points that the Rambam made that don't seem to be included in the *Ani Ma'amins*, based on the *sefer Chazon Yoel*. Furthermore, it is noteworthy to mention that the *Ani Ma'amins* include certain points which the Rambam does not seem to include in the thirteen principles and some points which he may even disagree with.

However, the *Sefer Ha'ikrim* (1:2) writes that if a person made a mistake because he misunderstood the topic, then he is not an *apikorus* (Rav Weintraub is making an additional point that one who never contemplates this topic is also not a heretic).

Others say that only if a person had the opportunity of learning the principles but didn't, then he is an *apikorus*, even if it was by mistake, or because he was raised with ignorance (as brought in *Chemdah Tovah* *ibid.*)

THE ANI MA'AMINS

1. *I believe with complete faith that the Creator, may His Name be blessed, is the Creator and the Controller of all the creations, and that He alone makes everything happen, in the past, present and future.*
2. *I believe with complete faith that the Creator, may His Name be blessed, is One, in every sense, and nothing can compare to His Oneness in any way, and He alone is our G-d in the past, present and future. (Meaning that there is only one Hashem, and He is not composed of parts.)*
3. *I believe with complete faith that the Creator, may His Name be blessed, is not a physical (corporeal) being, and that all of the limitations governing physical beings don't apply to Him, and that Hashem has no tangible appearance.*
4. *I believe with complete faith that the Creator, may His Name be blessed, is the first and final Being.*
5. *I believe with complete faith that the Creator, may His Name be blessed, is the only One that it is appropriate to pray to, and it is wrong [forbidden] to pray to anything else.*
(In the Rambam, the focus of this principle is that it is forbidden to worship anything or anyone other than Hashem [this constitutes avodah zarah — serving false gods and manipulating various “powers”].)
6. *I believe with complete faith that the words of the prophets are all true.*

(In the Rambam, the focus of this principle is that there exists a concept of prophecy, and that there were prophets.)

7. *I believe with complete faith that the prophecy of our teacher Moshe, a”h, was true, and that he was the “father” of all the other prophets, whether before or after his time (meaning that he was greater in prophecy than all the other prophets, and³ he is the source or conduit for the ability of all the other prophets to prophesize).*

(The Rambam includes in this principle the differences between the prophecy of Moshe and that of the other prophets. They are: a) The other prophets prophecy came through a medium [an angel or a dream]; therefore, their prophecy was in allegorical or cryptic form, whereas Moshe’s was without a medium and therefore explicit. b) The other prophets received their message only while sleeping — in a dream or in a dreamlike state, whereas Moshe prophesized while awake and standing. c) Regular prophets experienced a great fear during their visions, whereas Moshe was completely calm. d) Moshe could access prophecy whenever he decided to, whereas a regular prophet was solely dependent on Hashem’s decision to grant prophecy.)

8. *I believe with complete faith that the entire Torah that we have, was given to Moshe, our teacher (meaning that our Torah was faithfully transmitted to us).*

(The Rambam, in the standard edition, in this principle puts the focus on the fact that our entire Torah is of Divine origin and that

3. This point was brought to my attention by my father, Rav Moshe Goldberger shlita.

nothing was introduced by Moshe. In other editions, the Rambam makes both points: a) faithful transmission of the Torah, and b) Divine origin of the Torah.)

9. *I believe with complete faith that this Torah will never be changed, and we will not receive a different Torah from the Creator, may His Name be blessed.*

(The Rambam includes in this principle that the Torah will never have additions or concessions.)

10. *I believe with complete faith that the Creator, may His Name be blessed, knows all of the actions and thoughts of every person, as it is written (Tehilim 33:15), “He created their hearts, together, and He understands all of their actions.”*

(Many commentators on the Rambam’s thirteen principles include in this principle the fact that Hashem controls the world.)

11. *I believe with complete faith that the Creator, may His Name be blessed, gives good rewards to those who observe His commandments, and He punishes those who transgress His commandments.*

(The Rambam includes in this principle that we need to know that the greatest reward is Olam Haba, the World to Come, and that the worst punishment is kareis —when the soul is cut off and suffers eternally.)

12. *I believe with complete faith in the coming of Moshiach, and even if his arrival is delayed, nevertheless, I anticipate his arrival each and every day.*

(The Rambam includes in this principle that we need to believe that Moshiach will be a greater king than all the other kings who

ever existed, and that he must descend from Dovid HaMelech and Shlomo HaMelech.)

13. *I believe with complete faith that there will be a resurrection of the dead, at the time that the Creator will desire to do so, may His Name be blessed and may His remembrance⁴ be exalted, forever and ever.*

By learning these thirteen principles of faith, a person avoids the greatest tragedy possible—losing his portion in the World to Come.

Besides for the principles being a ticket to the World to Come, they are also the ticket to our present, material world (*olam hazeh*). When a person absorbs these principles, he realizes that this world is full of purpose and meaning, and there is no greater sense of fulfillment and happiness than that.

Furthermore, the Chayei Adam (one of the foremost practical halachic authorities) writes at the beginning of his *sefer* that a person must give up his life and endure torture, Heaven forbid, to resist denying our faith. Rather, we proudly proclaim our *emunah*, no matter what, and in fact, for ages our people willingly underwent torture and gave up their lives not to renounce our faith. There is a saying, “If you know what to die for, then you have what to live for!”

How fortunate we are that we have true ideals, true purpose and true meaning in our lives. Let us end with an anecdote. A *Gadol*, a Torah giant, was on the plane with his son. His seatmate expressed amazement at the respect the son had for his father. The *Gadol* responded, “Your philosophy is that people descend from monkeys; thus, each earlier generation is a step closer to the monkey and deserves less respect

4. See *Targum Shemos* 3:15.

accordingly. Our tradition is that each previous generation is a link closer to the glorious Divine revelation at Sinai! At Sinai we were given our faith and for some 3,300 years we are proud to maintain our beautiful and meaningful tradition. Since I am closer to the great revelation at Sinai, my son great has great respect for me.”

THE FIRST PRINCIPLE

THE EXISTENCE OF HASHEM

What is the most important piece of information that one needs to know? The answer, in the words of the Rambam, is: “The foundation of all foundations and the pillar of all knowledge and wisdom is to know that there exists a first Being, and that He created all that exists.” The Rambam continues to build on this fundamental. Let us bring some of the points he mentions: The Rambam writes, “If Hashem would not exist, then nothing else would exist. If nothing besides Hashem would exist, Hashem would still exist. All of existence needs Hashem to exist, but Hashem does not need anyone to exist.” This means that all elements of creation need Hashem to maintain their continuous existence. The Rambam continues, “Hashem is the Master of the whole world, and with His unlimited power, makes the sun, moon, stars and the like revolve constantly.”

The Rambam concludes that this knowledge constitutes the mitzvah of *emunah*, which is learned from the *pasuk* (*Shemos* 20:1), “*Anochi Hashem Elokecha*, I am Hashem, your G-d” (*Rambam, Yesodei HaTorah* 2, 1-6).

This is the most important information that one needs to know — that there is a G-d of the world. He made the world and the world needs Him to maintain its existence, but He does not need the world in

order to exist. This is also the first of the thirteen principles of *emunah*, which the Rambam establishes in *Perek Chelek* in *Maseches Sanhedrin*.

The Chofetz Chaim, in his *Sefer Hamitzvos Hakatzar* (*aseh* 1), includes additional details in the mitzvah of *emunah*. One such detail is that we also need to believe that Hashem made the world because He decided to on his own (*micheftzo*) and not because anything compelled Him to do so. Another point is that Hashem runs the world (*hashgachah*). [The Rambam does not include *hashgachah* in the first *ikar* of *emunah*. However, the author of the *Ani Ma'amins* (which was accepted by *Klal Yisrael* as the basic text of the thirteen principles) does include it.]

The Chofetz Chaim continues, “This [*emunah*] is *yesod hadas*, the foundation of our religion (which implies that the Chofetz Chaim holds that all the aforementioned details are also part of the *ikrei emunah*). One who does not believe this is a *kofer b'ikar*, a heretic in the main tenet of the entire Torah. He does not have a portion or merit in *Klal Yisrael*.”

Continues the Chofetz Chaim, “We are obligated to give up our lives and all of our money not to deny this foundation of Judaism. The way to do this mitzvah is mainly to etch it into our souls that this is the truth — and that it is unfathomable otherwise.” This means that we need to ingrain it deeply into ourselves. He concludes that this is an obligation every second for both men and women.

Rav Avigdor Miller, *zt”l*, would frequently say over the following anecdote: The Kedushas Levi once told his *gabbai*, “Go to the shul, bang on the *bimah* and announce, ‘There is an *Eibershter* (G-d)!” Meaning, of course, everyone knows that Hashem exists; however, we need to constantly deepen our awareness of and connection to Hashem (Rav Avigdor Miller - *His Life and His Revolution*, page 276).

Rav Dessler writes (*Michtav Me'Elياهو*, volume 3, page 161, *emunah*), “The Jews are *ma’aminim bnei ma’aminim* (believers and the sons of believers). They know that Hashem created and constantly manages the world. However, there is a specific mitzvah to constantly work on one’s *emunah* — i.e., the mitzvah of *Anochi Hashem Elokecha*, the first of the *Aseres Hadibros*. The *Ridvaz* writes, ‘The obligation and the mitzvah of *emunah* is to constantly ingrain it into yourself.’ One who does not constantly work to clarify for himself and teach himself *emunah* in Hashem *Yisbarach* will not truly know it, and he is not fulfilling the mitzvah of *emunah* properly.” (Rav Dessler goes on to bring five ways to fulfill the mitzvah of *emunah*.)

There are many ways to fulfill the mitzvah of *emunah*, and to strengthen oneself in *emunah*. One popular method is to absorb *emunah* through the holiness of Torah study. In general, Torah learning is the greatest mitzvah and is the lifeblood and defining factor of a Jew, as Rav Saadya Gaon famously writes, “The Jewish Nation has no other core identity and culture other than the people who study and uphold the Torah.” Many *Gedolei Yisrael* and leading Torah personalities recommend strengthening *emunah* through *limud Torah*. A person who maintains steady learning sessions will increase his *emunah* constantly. This is especially true for one who is *amal baTorah*, toils in Torah, expending time and effort to study Torah.

The *kedushas haTorah* imbues a person with a deep sense of awareness of the presence of Hashem. The great revelation of Har Sinai is encapsulated in the words and experience of Torah study. When we learn, we connect with the ongoing “voice” of Hashem at *Matan Torah*. The *pasuk* in *Parshas Va’eschanan* (5:19) states, “[Hashem spoke to the Jewish Nation with a] *kol gadol* - a loud voice, *v’lo yosof*, which *Targum*

Onkelos translates as “[a voice] that will never stop.” The voice of Har Sinai — never stops.

The study of the mitzvos and the teachings of Hashem have a great power to bring a person close to Hashem (*Mesilas Yescharim* 5). The Gemara teaches (*Kiddushin* 30b) that Hashem said, “I created the *yetzer hara* and I created the Torah as a *tavlin*, an antidote.” The *Mesilas Yescharim* points out that we see from this that there is only one antidote for the powerful enticements of the *Yetzer Hara* – Torah. It follows that by consistent Torah learning a person cleanses himself from foreign ideas and imbues himself with pure *emunah*¹.

The Vilna Gaon in Iggeres HaGra writes that for women, *tznius* — modest dress and behavior — coupled with *middos tovos*, *mussar*, *shmiras halashon* and avoiding over-indulging in the pleasures of *Olam Hazeh*, are in place of *Torah tavlin*. The *Chazon Ish* said that acting with *tznius* and *middos tovos* are in place of Torah study for women (brought by Rav Michel Yehudah Lefkowitz *zt”l* in his *sefer Imrai Da’as* on the *Iggeres HaGra*). Rav Eliyahu Lopian *zt”l* wrote that by assisting their husbands and sons to learn Torah, women receive the amazing power of *kedushas haTorah* (*Lev Eliyahu, Parshas Ki Savo*). It follows

1. This idea is taught by many *Gedolei Torah*, each one with his own nuance. Here are some of the sources: Rav Ahraon Kotler’s *Mishnas Rav Aharon*, volume 1, page 34; the Steipler Gaon, Rav Yaakov Yisroel Kanievsky’s *Chayei Olam*, pages 9 and 14, and at the end of *chelek* 1, page 196 [new edition]; Rav Shmuel Razovsky in *Shiurei Reb Shmuel, Makkos* 24a and *Zichron Shmuel, sichos, ma’amar Hu Yiftach Libeinu B’Soraso*; Rav Dessler in *Michtav Me’Eliyahu*, volume 3, *emunah*, page 162 [or 176, new ed.]; Rav Avigdor Miller’s *Rejoice O’ Youth!*, the fifth day, page 346, number 791; Rav Shimshon Pincus in *Nefesh Shimshon, emunah*, page 15; also see Rav Dovid Cohen’s *sefer Maskil L’Dovid on Derech Hashem*, page 77 where he elaborates on the topic.

that these are the mitzvos with which a Jewish woman can strengthen her *emunah*².

B'ezras Hashem, if we keep thinking about Hashem, and we constantly review *ani ma'amin be'emunah sheleimah sheHaborei Yisbsrach Shemo Hu borei u'manhig l'chol ha'beruim v'hu l'vado asah v'oseh v'ya'aseh l'chol hama'asim*, I believe with complete faith that Hashem is the Creator and the Controller of the entire universe, plus we tap into the amazing power of *kedushas haTorah*, we will merit fulfilling the mitzvah of *emunah* properly.

2. The *sefer Orchos Chaim* (from *Rabbeinu Aharon Hakohen M'Loniel*), in the section discussing the mitzvah of *bris milah*, writes that a woman receives the *kedushah* of those mitzvos which she is not commanded to fulfill by absorbing her husband's teachings and attitudes. He adds that the husband makes the aura of the mitzvos permeate the entire household.

Rav Elyah Ber Wachtfogel *shlita* said in the name of *Rabbeinu Chaim Vital zt"l* that women are naturally on a higher level of *emunah* and *kedushah*, therefore they don't need constant *limud Torah* and fulfillment of mitzvos like men do, to maintain their spiritual level (see *The Heart of Emunah* by Rav Reuven Schmelczer, chapter 22, *Kiddush Hashem — A Way of Life*, page 199).

THE FIRST PRINCIPLE

THE EXISTENCE OF HASHEM – THE PRACTICAL FULFILLMENT OF THE MITZVAH OF EMUNAH

The first principle of *emunah* is to believe in the existence of Hashem, meaning that there is a G-d, Who created and maintains the world; everything needs Him in order to exist; and His existence does not depend on anyone or anything. This is a *mitzvas aseï*, a Positive Commandment, and it is the first of the *Aseres Hadibros*, the Ten Commandments, which were told by Hashem to the Jews at Har Sinai.

Rav Avigdor Miller zt”l (*Awake My Glory*, chapter 19, page 323, number 1050) wrote that *emunah* means to be convinced of the truths of the Torah, and then to become more and more deeply aware of them. The first of the *Aseres Hadibros* is “I am Hashem your G-d,” (*Shemos* 20:2) which means “to know that there is a first Being, Who brought everything into existence” (*Rambam, Yesodei HaTorah*, 1:1,6). We are commanded to acquire this knowledge in the various ways that are available to us, and to continue being mindful of it always.

Many *Gedolim* have emphasized that we need to realize that every single Jew is by nature a *ma’amin*. It is an inborn and innate knowledge, feeling and experience that we live with. Yet there is a mitzvah to blow the coals and fan the flames to make it an *emunah* which is passionate and alive. The Gemara says that Chavakuk came and established that the whole Torah rests on this one mitzvah of *emunah* (*Makkos* 24a). The

Chofetz Chaim and other *Gedolim* stressed how in the *Acharis Hayamim* — the final period before the coming of Moshiach — our entire *avodas Hashem* rests on our efforts and achievements in raising the level of our *emunah* (*Kol Kisvei HaChofetz Chaim, Taharas Yisrael* 1).

It is in our hands to reach a high level of *emunah* — to really know and feel it. We can achieve this by working on the different methods of fulfilling the mitzvah of *emunah*, and the different ways of strengthening *emunah*, plus by receiving *siyatta d'Shmaya*, Divine assistance. There are many levels in *emunah* and each one is significant. Let us bring a list of various ways to strengthen *emunah*, as brought in many different works.

1. *Tefillah: davening to Hashem to give us complete emunah (Beis Halevi, end of Parshas Bo).*
2. *Sifrei Emunah: making set times to learn works that deal with emunah, especially sefarim that explain the thirteen principles¹.*
3. *Mesorah, tradition: contemplating our reliable and glorious mesorah and the fact that the story of the founding of the Jewish Nation is so sensible and unparalleled. We have an unbroken chain dating back to Ma'amad Har Sinai. It is only around 3,300 years and not more than a hundred generations long. There are thousands of chains of parents to children and Gedolei Torah and tzaddikim to their students².*

1. Rav Michel Yehudah Lefkowitz zt"l in his *haskamah* to the highly recommended *sefer* on the *yud gimmel ikrim* entitled *Yud Gimmel Ikrim, Hakdamos V'shearim* by Rav Bentzion Epstein *shlita*.

2. *Sefer Hachinuch* (introduction); Ramban, *Va'eschanan* 4:9 and *Bereishis* 10:5; also see *Ramban's Drashas Toras Hashem Temimah*; *Kuzari* 1:25; the Chofetz

There is also a direct chain going back to Adam Harishon — the very first man (see Ramban, end of Parshas Bo).

4. *Limud Torah: Keeping steady learning sessions imbues a person with emunah*³.
5. “In-depth” learning sessions: *Limud Torah in depth especially strengthens emunah* (Rav Shimshon Pincus zt”l, *Nefesh Shimshon, emunah*, page 17).
6. *Limud Torah with interest and excitement has a special power to strengthen emunah* (Rav Dessler, *Michtav Mi’Eliyahu*, volume 3, page 162).
7. *Niflaos Habriah, the wonders of creation: Contemplating the complexity, wisdom, order, and interdependent systems of the creation imbues a person with emunah*⁴.
8. *U’Mibsar echzeh Eloka — “And from my own flesh I see Hashem” (Iyov 19:26): Contemplating the wonders of man and the various kochos hanefesh, the inborn psychology of man, strengthens*

Chaim’s *Taharas Yisrael* 1, and *Nidchei Yisrael* 43; Rav Avigdor Miller’s *Rejoice O’ Youth*, chapter 1, number 71, page 34.

3. Rav Aharon Kotler in *Mishnas Rav Aharon*, volume 1, page 34; Rav Shimshon Pincus in *Nefesh Shimshon, emunah*, page 15; Steipler Gaon’s *Chayei Olam*, page 9, new edition; Ramban, *Sefer Hamitzvos, mitzvos lo sa’aseh sheshachach haRav* 2.

4. *Chovos Halevavos, shaar ha’bechinah*; Rav Elchonon Wasserman’s *Kovetz Ma’amarim, ma’amar al emunah*; Chazon Ish in the beginning of *Emunah U’Bitachon*; Steipler Gaon, in the beginning of *Chayei Olam*; Rav Dessler’s *Michtav Mi’Eliyahu*, volume 3, page 161; Rav Shlomo Wolbe’s *Iggros U’kesavim* volume 1, page 8, letter 5.

emunah. For example, contemplating the conflict between the yetzer tov and the yetzer hara, the conscience, the drive for achievement and honor, and the drive for a connection with the Divine strengthen emunah (see Rav Dessler, Michtav Mi'Eliyahu, volume 3, page 162).

9. *Act it out — act as if you feel it: Say baruch Hashem, b'ezras Hashem, thank You Hashem, and the like; daven and do the mitzvos. This will eventually awaken your emunah (ibid. volume 3, page 161).*
10. *Mental and verbal expression and review: Contemplate your emunah to deepen it; speak out your beliefs as well. Clearly express it in words to others and declare your emunah openly even in front of sceptics, when challenged. This reinforces what you already know and further ingrains it inside yourself (Sefer Hachinuch, mitzvah 25).*
11. *Emunah discussion: Discuss emunah; say and listen to divrei Torah about emunah. Tzaddikim found a hint for this in the pasuk (Tehillim 116:10), “He'emanti ki adaber, I believed that which I had spoken.” This can be explained homiletically — I believe because I say words and ideas of emunah often⁵.*
12. *Stories: Tell and listen to stories about emunah, miracles, ruach hakodesh (Divine inspiration) and about the lives of the Gedolei*

5. Rav Shimshon Pincus, *Nefesh Shimshon, emunah*, page 15; Rav Mordechai of Lechovich said that to ingrain *emunah* into your heart it is not sufficient to think thoughts of *emunah* alone, you also need to verbalize it (see *Toras Avos* 149, quoted in *Beurei Chassidus on Nach 2, Kesuvim* page 89 - Chasidah)

Yisrael (*The Heart of Emunah*, pg. 249-250 quoting the Steipler and Brisker Rav).

13. *Constant tefillah: Before everything you do, even before simple things like buying bread, milk or shoes, first ask Hashem to help you. Speak out the details; this will ingrain in you a firm and lasting emunah⁶.*
14. *Look out for and keep track of the hashgachah pratis, the Divine Providence, in your life and in the world around you. Also discover it in the history of the world and especially Jewish history (see Rejoice O' Youth, page 140, number 256; also heard in the name of Rav Shlomo Wolbe zt"l).*
15. *Hisbonenus: Contemplation, mental imagery, mental and verbal review of emunah information. Learning and reviewing emunah sources in the Torah and in Chazal (Rav Chatzkel Levenstein zt"l, Ohr Yechezkel, Emunah, page 202, and in many other places in his sefarim).*
16. *Contemplate that Hashem is Borei uManhig, i.e., that He is the Creator and Manager of the world (ibid.).*
17. *Contemplate Brias Ha'olam, the creation of the world, and constantly review the pesukim in Parshas Bereishis about the creation (Me'ir Einei Yisrael, volume 6, page 332, in the name of the Chofetz Chaim and Rav Shach).*
18. *Contemplate Yetzias Mitzrayim (Rav Chatzkel Levenstein ibid; Ramban at the end of Parshas Bo).*

6. The Chazon Ish told this to Reb Eliezer Tzadok Torchin, mentioned by the well-known speaker Rav Elimelech Biderman shlita in *Be'er Ha'parsha*, Parshas Bamidbar.

19. *Contemplate Kabbalas HaTorah (Rambam in Iggeres Teiman; Rav Chatzkel Levenstein).*
20. *The Chovos Halevavos writes that there is a Torah obligation to learn and contemplate philosophical and logical proofs of emunah. However, many Rishonim and Achronim argue and say that it is not a mitzvah and it can lead to great spiritual harm. In recent times, it was discouraged greatly by the Chazon Ish, the Steipler Gaon and most recently by Rav Matisyohu Salomon, the Mashgiach of the Lakewood Yeshivah⁷.*
21. *Become familiar with some basic logical proofs of emunah and write down for yourself the ones that you understand (Rav Shlomo Wolbe, Alei Shur, emunah, volume 2 page 288; Rav Matisyohu Salomon, Hearts Full of Faith page 236).*
22. *Bitachon: Acting with bitachon increases your level of emunah (Michtav Mi'Eliyahu, volume 3, page 163).*
23. *Dveikus (clinging to Hashem) and shivisi Hashem l'negdi samid (placing Hashem in front of you constantly): Attach yourself to Hashem by thinking about Him and your relationship with Him constantly (Rav Dessler, Michtav MiEliyahu, volume 3, page 163).*
24. *Self-control: Train your intellect to take control over your material desires (ta'avot). Use the pleasures of the world to live and function and do so l'sheim Shamayim, for the sake of Heaven, but don't grow accustomed to extras and luxuries. Doing this with the intention of preventing the influence of material desires from*

7. *Chayei Olam, hakdamah; Imrei Da'as, volume 2, page 372; The Heart of Emunah has a letter from Rav Matisyohu Salomon on this point and discusses this matter at length.*

swaying your mind is a fulfillment of the Positive Commandment of emunah (Rav Elchonon Wasserman, Kovetz Ma'amarim, ma'amar al emunah).

25. *Work on the middos of truthfulness and faithfulness (Rav Dessler, Michtav MiEliyahu, volume 3, page 162).*
26. *Improve your level of Shabbos observance. Maybe you need to learn the halachos again, or perhaps there is a certain leniency which you should reconsider (Chayei Olam, page 249, new edition).*
27. *Work on the middah of humility and diminish your ga'avah, haughtiness (Steipler Gaon, Chayei Olam 110, new edition).*

These are many of the ways to fulfill the mitzvah and strengthen your level of *emunah*. There are more brought in various *sefarim* as well. We live in a time when the streets are full of influences that weaken our *emunah*. It is a time when there are many threats to our safety in general. It is imperative now, more than ever, that we invest ample time and effort to work on our *emunah*. By doing so, we will merit vitality, good life and *chayim nitzchi'im* — eternal life — as is hinted to in the words of the navi Chavakuk (2:4), “*V'tzaddik be'emunaso yichyeh, the tzaddik lives with his emunah.*” *Chaim*-life means a life of vitality, good life in *Olam Hazeh* as well as eternal life. So too, by constantly bolstering our *emunah* we will merit the *geulah sheleimah*, as the *Midrash* says (*Mechilta, Beshalach*), “*With emunah we will go out of this galus.*”

THE SECOND PRINCIPLE

HASHEM ECHAD (HASHEM IS ONE) – GOY ECHAD BA'ARETZ (THE JEWISH NATION IS ONE) - PART ONE

The Rambam codifies the fundamentals of the Jewish faith in thirteen principles. Every Jew is obligated to know and believe these principles. One of the more difficult principles to comprehend is the second one — the principle of the Oneness of Hashem. Let us start the discussion on this topic with a disclaimer that this is a very deep concept. Furthermore, this matter could be easily misunderstood. It is best that one should discuss this idea in person with a Rav to have the right clarity, but, *b'ezras Hashem*, we will certainly shed light on this important principle. Some of the aspects of this concept are in the realm of ideas that are vital to know; however, it's not wise to dwell on them nor philosophize about them too much.

The Jews throughout the millennia proudly gave up their lives with the words “*Shema Yisrael... Hashem Echad*” on their lips. These words mean that there is one Creator and Master Controller of the entire world and all of existence. Hashem is one; Hashem is unique; Hashem is unparalleled. Let us explain four points about the Oneness of Hashem.

Firstly, Hashem is the one and only G-d. There is only one Creator and Master Controller of the entire world. This is proclaimed by all Jews twice daily and again before going to sleep. Today, even many non-

Jews, *l'havdil*, recognize the truth and importance of this fundamental fact of life. In fact, this principle is the foundation of absolute rights and wrongs. Since there is only one G-d, His ideas and directives are the absolute truths and ethics of the world! Without subscribing to this, the result would be chaos and violence, *chas v'shalom*. When Moshiach comes (hopefully very soon) the whole world will recognize this beautiful and amazing truth. This point about Hashem's Oneness is pretty basic and understandable — there is one G-d and no other.

The second point is much deeper — that Hashem is the only “real” and solid existence, the only self-sustaining existence. All other beings and items need to be constantly willed into existence and don't have a “real” or independent, self-sustaining existence. The creations are all *yesh mei'ayin (ex nihilo)*, which means that we were created out of *ayin*, nothingness. This “nothingness” is our deep essence and it was developed somehow by Hashem to become “us.” This was coupled with the Will of Hashem to create, sustain and maintain our existence as it is. One can ask, therefore, that since this is the case - what are we? The answer is that we are an expression of Hashem's Will and nothing more (*Ritzono Yisbarach uma'amaro hakadosh*).

Of course we are “here” and “real” *according* to the rules and systems created for us by Hashem, but in a sense we don't truly exist; rather, only as long as Hashem supernaturally causes us to continue to exist in the way that we do, then we can be said to exist. The rules of our existence are very *real*, and we are very much accountable for how we lead our lives, but our essence is merely an expression of the Will and declaration of Hashem.

This is a deep concept describing the Oneness and unique individuality of Hashem because, as discussed, He is the *sole* “true” and real existence.

The third part of Hashem’s Oneness is also very deep: Hashem is called a *metzius pashut*, a “simple” existence, while our essence is *murkav*, meaning that we are comprised of various parts that together form our makeup. For example, our “selves” and our wisdom are two distinct parts of us. However, Hashem does not have any “parts,” He is a unified, self-contained¹ Being. All the aspects of Hashem’s being are *one* complete, indivisible entity. We can’t even imagine, picture or explain this, because it is not one of the concepts that Hashem enabled mankind to grasp, but we are taught and believe that Hashem is a *metzius pashut* — an unparalleled Oneness (see Rav Shimshon Pincus in the beginning of *sefer Breichos B’cheshbon*).

Let us summarize these three points. Hashem is: 1) one entity and not two; 2) the only “real,” absolute, true and self-sustaining Being; and 3) indivisible — He is not comprised of parts.

The fourth point about Hashem’s Oneness can be understood with a nice, “down-to-earth” approach to apply this principle in practice, one that I once heard in the name of Rav Yitzchak Berkowitz, *shlita*. We believe that all that happens in the world stems from *one* source — *Hashem echad*. We need to know and understand that even things that seem to be “bad” stem from Hashem, Who, in His infinite wisdom and kindness, arranges everything that happens anywhere and everywhere all the time. He alone arranges every aspect and situation in our lives

1. There is nothing outside and separate of Hashem that contributes to the perfect and absolute Oneness of Hashem.

for our maximum benefit. Both “good fortune” and “misfortune” all stem from one source — *Hashem echad*.

There is an interesting and practical point that applies to this discussion of the Oneness of Hashem. We will mention it briefly here; it is elaborated on further in the next section. We find that there is a connection and correlation between the Oneness of Hashem and the unity and oneness of *Klal Yisrael*. The Jewish Nation is called a *goy echad* and an *am echad* — a unified nation and people — and this is connected to the concept of Hashem’s Oneness. We say in the *mincha Shemoneh Esrei* on *Shabbos*, “*Attah echad, You, Hashem, are one, vShimcha echad, and Your Name is one, u’mi k’amcha Yisrael goy echad ba’aretz, and who can compare to the Jewish Nation, who are ‘one in the land.’*”

The *Manos Halevi* (*Esther* 3:8) writes as follows: Hashem has the quality of Oneness, as it says in the Torah (*Devarim* 6:4), “*Hashem echad,*” and Avraham Avinu has the quality of oneness, as taught in *Yechezkel* (33:24), “*Echad hayah Avraham*” (see also *Yeshayah* 51:2). Since Hashem and Avraham Avinu are the sources and roots of the Jewish Nation, it follows that the Jews also have uniqueness and the quality of oneness in their very essence and being. In fact, the Torah calls the Jews *goy echad*, a unified nation (see *Shmuel* II, 7:23). In some sense, all Jews are *one unit!* Various *sefarim* discuss how all Jews are just parts of one whole.

However, it is up to us to maintain our oneness by acting with *achdus*, togetherness, with other Jews. The ultimate final redemption — the *geulah sheleimah* — depends on us reuniting and developing our *achdus*. Our exile today is because of baseless, unwarranted hatred towards each other. Unfortunately in both past and present times

there were and are rifts in *Am Yisrael*. We need to correct these rifts to merit the *geulah* and greet Moshiach, speedily in our time.

THE SECOND PRINCIPLE

HASHEM ECHAD – GOY ECHAD BA'ARETZ (PART TWO)

In the previous chapter we discussed the concept of the Oneness of Hashem. We mentioned the idea written by the *Manos Halevi* that since the Jews stem from Hashem and Avraham Avinu, who both have the quality of oneness, therefore, the Jewish Nation is also “one” — a unified entity. Let us continue to elaborate on this topic, *b’ezeras Hashem*.

We say in the *tachanun* prayer, “*Shomer goy echad shmor she’eiris am echad v’al yovad goy echad hamiyachadim Shimcha Hashem Elokeinu Hashem echad*, Protect the Jewish Nation who are one ... who proclaim the Oneness of Your Name, Hashem our G-d, Hashem is One.”

In the *minchah* prayer on Shabbos we say, “*Attah Echad* - You, Hashem, are One, *v’Shimcha Echad* - and Your Name is One, *u’mi k’amcha Yisrael goy echad ba’aretz*, and who can compare to Your nation, Yisrael, who are one nation in the land.” From these words we can clearly see that there is a connection and link between the Oneness, the “*echad*” status of Hashem, and that of the Jewish Nation. What is the meaning and underlying message of this?

Rav Dovid Cohen, *shlita*, in his *sefer Yimei Purim (ma’amar 9)*, sheds light on this topic, based on many holy *sefarim*. It is a deep topic, but the

first step is to at least understand the basic meaning of the sources he quotes and with effort and *siyata diShmaya*, we will gain better clarity.

As previously mentioned, the *Manos Halevi* writes that the sources of the Jewish Nation, Hashem and Avraham Avinu, have the quality of oneness. So too, he writes, as a result, the Jewish people possess the quality of oneness.

The Maharal writes in various places that Hashem bestowed the quality of oneness specifically upon the Jews, and this oneness is a result of the Oneness of Hashem.

Rav Yitzchak Issac Chaver (*drush Parshas Shekalim*) writes that the Jews stem from an upper spiritual sphere which is called *sitra diyichuda* — the side of unity and Oneness—whereas the non-Jews, *l'havdil*, stem from a place called *olam hapirud* — the world of separation.

Rav Chatzkel Levenstein (*middos*, page 122) and the *sefer Sifsei Chaim* (*mo'adim* 2, page 197) discuss the correlation between the Oneness of Hashem and that of the Jews. They write that since we Jews are unified towards one common goal, this unites us as “one,” and it gives us the status of *nefesh echad*, one soul.

(The basic meaning of *nefesh echad* is mentioned in *Chazal* regarding the descent of Yaakov Avinu and his family to Egypt. They were referred to as *nefesh* — soul — in the singular, because they were essentially unified. The basic explanation is that they were “one” unified group of people; they were united with one goal and aspiration. Let us explain this with a deeper approach. *Chazal* here are also referring to the unified *neshamah* of the Jewish Nation. This means to say that in the upper spiritual realms and roots of our simpler physical realm, there is one unified *neshamah* which encompasses all the Jews together.)

Since as Jews our main role is to proclaim and reveal the unique “oneness” of Hashem in the world, this unites the entire Jewish Nation even more. Perhaps in this light we can understand a statement of Chazal, that since Jews have a *Keil Echad* and a *Torah echad*, therefore we are an *am echad*. It is a unified goal, and especially our primary goal of revealing the Oneness of Hashem, which joins us together and brings out our intrinsic oneness.

The Maharal (in the beginning of his *sefer Ner Mitzvah*) writes that the main praise that we give Hashem is proclaiming His Oneness. He cites a *pasuk* which states that the whole purpose of creation is to praise Hashem, “*Am zu yatzarti li, tehillasi yisapeiru*, This nation I have created for myself, so that they should relate my praise” (*Yeshayah* 43:21).

This means that our primary goal in life is to proclaim and praise the Oneness of Hashem — that *ein od milvado*, there is none besides Him. Everything that exists is just an expression of His Will. Our goal is to constantly bring more *kiyum ritzono* — fulfillment of His will — to fruition.

(Perhaps we can also say that when we are unified here in the *olam ha’asiyah* — the world of action and physicality — this in turn affects our source in the upper spiritual worlds, and we are unified over there as well [see the *Sefer Chareidim*, chapter 7, which is a possible source for this thought].)

This is a very deep subject and requires much thought along with serious analysis of the sources. Hopefully, our elaboration on the topic clarified it somewhat and made it more understandable.

We mentioned the amazing words of the Maharal (beginning of *Ner Mitzvah*) that the purpose of creation was for the creations to praise Hashem. Which praises are they meant to praise Him with? The main

praise is to sing praise about the Oneness of Hashem. Who is fit for this role? Since the Jews have the quality of oneness, says the Maharal, therefore *they* are the only ones who can really fulfill this role! It is thus our obligation, role and privilege to proclaim and reveal the Oneness of Hashem in the world.

Rav Dovid Cohen, *shlita*, explains that there exists what is called the *ha'arah* of Hashem, meaning the Divine intervention of Hashem. This is specifically a reference to the *hashra'as haShechinah*, the Divine Presence of Hashem. It includes the *hanhagah*, the specific guidance and control, of Hashem in and of our world.

The Ramchal in *Ma'amar Hachochmah* writes: “Hashem has the quality of Oneness and His *ha'arah* — His Divine intervention and bestowal of goodness and His kindly, Heavenly inspiration and gifts — are not given to anyone besides those who unite; those who have the quality of oneness. The Jews, even though they are many individuals, are a *goy echad*, a unified nation. Therefore, this bestowal of Hashem comes only to them and to others who subjugate themselves to the Jews.”

The Vilna Gaon writes that the *hashra'as haShechinah* only rests on the Jews when they are united with one another (*Gra, Mishlei 6:19*).

What are some practical applications of this discussion? It requires us to make efforts not to quarrel, and instead, to pursue peace. This applies in our homes, communities and beyond. Say “no” to *machlokes* — controversy and disrespectful disagreements – and spread peace.

What is the source of *machlokes*? The *Ya'aros Dvash* (*drush 1*, brought in *Alei Shur, peirush tefillah*) writes that the source of *machlokes* is anger. We need to tame and erase our anger, and that will diminish and remove, *b'ezras Hashem, machlokes* from our midst.

Rav Yitzchak Issac Chaver in his *drush* on *Parshas Shekalim* (*Siach Yitzchak*) writes that the source of *machlokes* is arrogance and false pride, as well as a lack of respect and acceptance of other people. We need to be very careful with the desire and pursuit to be right, on top, better than others, and self-righteous. We need to learn to appreciate every Jew for who he is; every Jew is precious. Each and every member of the Jewish nation is a beautiful flower and a diamond. Together we are a beautiful garden and a crown of glory for Hashem. Next time you find yourself looking down on a fellow Jew, *chas v'shalom*, think: *How do I know what Hashem expects from him on his level? Am I doing what I should be doing on my level and according to my level of expectation?*

Perhaps we can put these two approaches together as follows: The root of *machlokes* is arrogance, but when the quarrel starts, anger is the fuel that keeps it burning. Let us work to better our *middos* and improve our *achdus*, our unity. This will reveal the Oneness and unity of Hashem and give us the safety of *hashra'as haShechinah*. With this we will surely herald in a time when all will call out together in unison, “*Hashem echad!*”

THE THIRD PRINCIPLE

INVISIBLE PROFUNDITY

The third principle of our faith, as taught by the Rambam in his *Peirush Hamishnayos (Sanhedrin 11)*, is that we have absolutely no grasp of the essence of Hashem – not an inkling. We have no descriptions or definitive characteristics to attribute to His essence, His very being. Anything we can imagine about His essence — *atzmuso Yisbarach*, as it is referred to in our holy *sefarim* — any description or appearance or even concept that we attempt to conjure up in our minds, is surely not true (*Ramchal, Da'as Tevunos*, number 46, page 35, Rav Friedlander edition).

Hashem does not take up space (*makom*). He does not have a clock or timeline, meaning that there is no present, past and future in His personal world, so to speak. Anything that is said about Him in this respect, even in *pesukim* in the Torah, is merely borrowing the terminology of us mere mortals so that we can relate to what is being conveyed (*Rambam, Yad Hachazakah, Yesodei HaTorah, 1:11-12*) or describing His *hanhagah*, His control of the world. For example, if the Torah states that Hashem is angry, it means that He is exhibiting *Middas Hadin*, Strict Judgment, with the world. As far as Hashem's essence is concerned, performing actions or feeling emotions do not exist (*Rambam ibid. 1:11*), for these, by their very definition, are definable and tangible and expressions of change, and are therefore inapplicable to Hashem, who is indefinable

and unchanging. This is a very deep concept; however, we need to know this because it is a fundamental principle of Judaism. Even to say that His essence is similar to the spiritual essence of the angels or to an intellectual concept such as “one plus one equals two” is a vast understatement and nothing more than a mortal’s feeble attempt to do the impossible.

Hashem is all-able, all-powerful and is the Creator, Controller and manager of the entire world. He is obviously very real — so much so that He created and maintains what we call “reality.”

The Rashba in his *teshuvos* (5:52) writes that this is what we hint to in the *brachos* we recite. For example, when we recite the blessing of *shehakol* every time we drink a glass of water, we say, “*Baruch Atah Hashem, You are the source of all blessing Hashem.*” In other words, we are addressing Hashem Himself in first person! We then continue, “*shehakol nihiyeh bidvaro, for everything was brought into being by His word.*” This seems puzzling - why the drastic shift from first-person to third person? The Rashba enlightens us and explains that there are two great foundations in Judaism. The first is to know that Hashem’s existence is very true and real, so real that it cannot cease to exist nor be minimized in any way or form (*mechuyav hametzius*). On the other hand, we have no idea or grasp - not even the merest inkling - of His essence.

This is very much a part of our daily *avodas Hashem*, i.e., to continuously internalize and gain an awareness of the Presence of Hashem in the world and in our lives. We must develop the awareness that He is the Master and Controller of the world and all events that transpire, yet at the same time realize that He does not have a body nor the physical power of the human body (*lo guf v’lo koach baguf*). There is no

corporeality, not even spiritual “matter,” that is in any way tangible. This is also to say that Hashem has absolutely no limitations. Every physical body and fathomable matter has limitations, endures wear and tear, and finally comes apart at some point. Hashem is totally unlimited, totally immune to all weaknesses and is never lacking anything. There can be no picture of Hashem in our minds and no comparison to any other item or concept.

Even the spiritual essence of the holy Torah, the *neshamah*, and the *malachim* are vastly separate, different and distant from His essence. They are all creations *yesh mi'ayin* (*ex nihilo* — something out of nothing). Hashem is vastly removed from them all because He is the Creator of everything else and has no tangible essence that can be grasped by our feeble and limited frame of reference and capabilities (see *Nefesh Shimshon, Emunah*, page 118 and *Sifsei Chaim, Biurei Tefillah*, page 77, *Birkas Atah kadosh*).

This topic is very deep and is also based on a few other principles. They are: 1. *Metzius Hashem*, Hashem's existence; 2. *Yichud Hashem*, Hashem's Oneness; 3. *Kadmus v'nitzchiyus*, meaning that Hashem always existed; He created the entire existence and is timeless and eternal; 4. *Issur avodah zarah*, The prohibition against idol worship.

It is imperative that one does not tangle himself in a web of doubt when dealing with this topic. If one has a lack of clarity, it is best to stay with the basics [as we have tried to present in this chapter] and discuss these matters with a qualified Rav.

In the recently published biography on Rav Avigdor Miller, *zt"l*, there is a section entitled, “His Best Friend.” The author, Rav Yaakov Y. Hamburger, *shlita*, an accomplished and renowned *talmid chacham* and *marbitz Torah*, describes there how Rav Miller made it clear to all

that Hashem was literally his best friend. Rav Miller exhorted everyone to build this beautiful and profound relationship. So, while in one sense we have no understanding of Hashem's essence, on the other hand, Hashem reveals His unlimited powers and abilities to some extent in the beautiful and vast world in which we live. Rav Miller teaches us, through the Torah and the teachings of Torah and *mussar* in each generation by the *Gedolim* and Torah educators, how we should relate to Hashem and how we should cultivate our relationship with Him. He explains how we can actually experience what it means to have Hashem as our best friend. Hashem is not just our loving Father and the one with whom we have the deepest, most meaningful and loving relationship with, as delineated in the Torah and specifically in *Shir Hashirim*. He, the King of all Kings, the Source of everything, whose Will sustains us every second, is, simply put – our best friend.

THE THIRD PRINCIPLE

NO BODY– PROPER RESPECT

The Ramchal in *Mesillas Yescharim* (*chassidus* - chapter 19), also discusses the topic of *yiras Shamayim*, fear of Heaven. He establishes that our main focus ought to be achieving *yiras haRomemus*, namely, awe of Hashem's greatness and might. Let us bring some of his words and glean valuable insights from them. By doing so, we will be able to put some practical applications of the third principle of the *Ani Ma'amins* [the prohibition of inappropriate attribution of tangibility to the essence of Hashem] into practice.

The Ramchal writes as follows: When a person *davens* or does a mitzvah, he should contemplate that he is in the immediate presence of Hashem. This is as it states in *Maseches Brachos* (28b), "When you *daven*, know before Whom you are standing!" One should focus on three ideas to internalize *yiras haRomemus*.

The first idea is to think about the fact that he is literally standing before Hashem. Additionally, he should contemplate that he is actually having a real "give-and-take" with the Creator (*nosei v'nosein imo*). The Ramchal points out that we are unable to see Hashem with our eyes and, therefore, we need to realize that it is very hard to vividly imagine something which is not tangible to any of our senses. However, one who is accustomed to utilizing the wonderful gift called *seichel*, intellect, which offers man the ability to reason and contemplate, can

— with a relatively small amount of focus and introspection — gain a clear awareness of the fact that he is interacting with Hashem in a very real sense. He can thus gain awareness and even feel that he is actually “spending time” with Hashem. He will sense that there is an earnest “discussion” taking place between him and his Father in Heaven. It will be amply clear to him that he is discussing his problems with Hashem, pleading with Him for relief, and that Hashem is listening carefully with full attention to his every word. It can be compared to a person discussing an important matter with a close friend! This is the first step of *yirah*, Heavenly fear — to gain awareness of the realness of one’s “meeting” with Hashem.

The second idea is to contemplate the immense, awe-inspiring greatness and might of Hashem. One needs to realize that Hashem is far greater than any praise he can sing about Him.

Finally, one should contemplate his human frailty and lowly earthly tendencies, and his many mistakes and sins. These are the three components of developing the right frame of mind for *yiras haRomemus*. The Ramchal continues and writes that in addition to feeling humility and bashfulness in Hashem’s presence, there is another aspect to *yirah* — exhibiting *kavod*, the proper respect for Hashem and His mitzvos. See the words of the Ramchal inside for his elaboration on this matter.

It can be suggested that this topic of *yiras haRomemus* sheds light on practical applications of the third principle of *emunah* — the impossibility to fathom the essence of Hashem. By gaining awareness of our inability to perceive Hashem’s vast greatness and intangible essence, we will thus humble ourselves and negate our opinions and desires in the face of Hashem and His Will. This is in a certain sense the same, or very

similar, to the *avodah* of *yiras haRomemus*, specifically, dwelling on the greatness of Hashem and our feeble selves in comparison.

Rabbeinu Yonah (*Avos* 3:14) points out the following: Hashem loves each and every Jew very much and this is a catalyst for *dvekius* — a heightened sense of closeness with Hashem and a spiritual cleaving to Him. Nevertheless, we must keep a safe distance, know our place and not become “casual” with Him, *chas v’shalom*. Rabbeinu Yonah explains: One should not think of himself as being a great *tzaddik* nor a big *rasha*, but rather, somewhere in the middle. We all have our mistakes and need to know our status and place in our relationship with Hashem. Rabbeinu Yonah concludes that the main objective is to keep doing good deeds.

Rav Wolbe *zt”l* (*Alei Shur*, volume 2, page 153) brings these words of Rabbeinu Yonah and derives the following lesson from them: A person should not base his Divine service on his instinctive feelings, i.e., the spiritual closeness he feels to Hashem. Rather, it should be based on *da’as*, on balanced thought and introspection leading to logical decisions. The inner drive for a spiritual high is often an expression of a selfish pursuit to feel good and satisfy one’s ego. It generally does not lead a person to *avodah l’sheim Shamayim*, Divine service for the sake of Heaven alone, nor to excel in interpersonal areas of spiritual self-improvement. One shouldn’t check his “spiritual high pulse” too often or force this state of spiritual ecstasy. Instead, through humility, constant balanced self-improvement and doing all the mitzvos properly, a person will reach true spiritual heights and true connection with Hashem.

There is a fine line between misplaced religious fervor and “spiritual highs” versus honest yearning for closeness with Hashem. The

latter is coupled with balanced, thought-out *avodah* — true spiritual development and devotion. Usually, one needs a Rav or friend¹ to guide him in his area. Rav Yerucham Levovitz, the famed *Mashgiach* of the Mir Yeshivah in Poland, would often caution, “Just don’t grab *malachim*, angels.” On a lighter note, the Beis Halevi has been quoted as saying, “So-and-so tried to become a *malach* — half the job is already done - he no longer acts like a *mentch* (a decent human being).” We need to realize our place in our relationship with Hashem, and to exercise the right self-nullification and humility in the face of His immense greatness.

Rav Shimshon Pincus *zt”l*, in his famous *sefer*, *She’arim B’tefillah* (*chilui*, page 156), points out the following: On one hand, it’s true that we approach Hashem in a very direct manner when we *daven*. In fact, we get very close, personal and even intimate in our *tefillos*. However, we must not forget that the essence of Hashem is totally removed from our perception. Practically, this requires us to adhere to the various details of halachic protocol. We need to pay careful attention to even the seemingly dry and small details regarding *tefillah* and all the mitzvos. We need to be careful not to manipulate the system, so to speak, with the self-conceived notion that we can reach higher and get closer to Hashem that way.

One place in the Torah where we learn this lesson is by the tragic story of Nadav and Avihu. In their greatness, they erred in not taking guidance from Moshe Rabbeinu how to properly fulfill the *halachos* of *avodah* in the Mishkan, which resulted in their untimely deaths. A strong yearning for closeness with Hashem, without adherence to the

1. Very often, all it takes is a good friend to point out our bias or unbalanced attempt at growing.

“dry” halachic guidelines, can lead to tragic results. At the very least, it will hinder *siyata diShmaya*, Divine assistance.

In a similar vein, Rav Pincus (ibid. page 155) points out (regarding *nusach hatefillah*) that we need to be careful in choosing our words when we talk to Hashem. It’s usually better to use the words of *Chazal*, *Tehillim* and the many *tefillos* that were composed by great Torah personalities. Of course, we should add personal words and feelings, but the Torah greats understood which style will best find favor in Hashem’s eyes, as it were.

With Hashem’s help, by internalizing the third principle, i.e., that Hashem does not have a body nor its limitations, and that we have no image or picture of Hashem’s essence, we will come to *yiras haRomemus*, proper respect and awe for Hashem, His words and His Will.

THE FOURTH PRINCIPLE

KADMUS HASHEM AND ZMAN (HASHEM'S PRECEDENCE TO THE CREATION OF THE WORLD AND THE CONCEPT OF TIME)

Let us discuss the fourth *Ani Ma'amin*, *b'ezras Hashem*. It is a deep subject and hopefully we will be able to elucidate and clarify some points, at least on our level. This principle is the fundamental of *kadmus Hashem* (Hashem's precedence to the creation of the world), and it is a *yesod*, foundation, of our *emunah*. The main points of this principle are: 1. Hashem always existed; 2. our world was created by Hashem out of nothing. Beforehand there was a complete lack of existence, besides for the existence of Hashem; 3. Hashem created our world by dint of His own *Ratzon*, His Will, and nothing compelled Him to do it. The author of the *Ani Ma'amins* adds another point to this principle — that we must know that Hashem will always be – He is forever and nothing will outlive Him.

The Rambam in his *Peirush Hamishnayos on Sanhedrin (Perek Chelek)* writes as follows: “We are obligated to believe that the one and only Hashem is totally *kadmon* (meaning “first” or “always existed”) and everything else did not exist as early as He existed.” There are many sources for this in *Tanach*. We see this fundamental principle in the *pasuk* in *sefer Devarim (33:27)* where it states, “*Me'onah Elokei kedem...*

[The Heaven called] *Meonah* [was chosen as a dwelling place by] G-d, who preceded all other perceived powers.”

The Rambam, at a later point in his life, after writing the *Moreh Nevuchim*, added on an additional point to this fourth *ikar*¹. He wrote, “And you should know that the greatest fundamental of the entire *Toras Moshe Rabbeinu* is the fundamental of *chiddush ha’olam* — creation *ex nihilo* — that Hashem created and formed our world after there was a complete absence of existence. And the reason behind the opinion of the philosophers regarding the world’s origins is discussed at length in the *Morah Nevuchim* only because it adds clarity to the foundation of Hashem’s existence (*metzius Hashem*).”

The Abarbanel, in his *sefer Rosh Amanah* (chapter 16), explains that in this principle the Rambam is teaching us two points. The first is that Hashem always existed. On a deeper level, it’s not just that Hashem always existed, but rather, that He created *zman* — time. This means that the whole concept of “first and last” only exists in our world — a world of time, space and matter – the physical world. Part of the creation of this world was the creation of time. However, before Hashem created time, nothing could be said to have been created first or last. Even after Hashem created time, He is not bound by it, and for Him, time just does not exist. Therefore, when we say Hashem was first, it really means that He existed before time was created.

The second point of this fundamental is what is called *chiddush ha’olam*. This means that the entire existence was willed into existence by Hashem out of nothing, after a complete absence of all existence

1. This addition is brought in the amazing three-volume *sefer, Da’as Emunah* by Rav Rakowski, in the beginning of the fourth *ikar* in volume one, and is first brought in the Rambam’s *Peirush Hamishnayos, Mahaduras R’ Kapach*.

besides for Hashem Himself. This includes knowing that *zman*, time itself, is also one of Hashem's creations. The *sefer Da'as Emunah* (volume 1, page 361) points out that the Abarbanel understood the Rambam to be saying that the belief in *chiddush ha'olam* is included in this principle of faith, even though he did not see the later addition of the Rambam. (In fact, the *Sefer Ha'ikrim* [Rav Albo] asks and discusses why the Rambam leaves out *chiddush ha'olam* from the thirteen *ikrim*.) From this we see that it is not clearly delineated in the fourth *ikar*.)

Each and every day during *davening* (*Baruch She'amar*) we say *baruch oseh* (the One who makes) *bereishis* (the creation). What does this praise mean? If we would say *asah ma'aseh bereishis*, we would understand that it means that we are praising Hashem, who performed the acts of creation during the six days of creation. However, the reference to making *bereishis* is hard to understand.

The *Siach Yitzchak* (*Siddur Ishei Yisrael*) poses this question and answers the following: All the elements in our world need time (*zman*) to maintain their existence. Therefore, an integral part of *briah ha'olom*, the creation, was the creation of time. Before creation there was no such thing as time; thus, time limits, beginnings or ends could not exist. When Hashem created time, that's when it first became possible to have a beginning of a world that is constantly moving along a pattern of time, along with all the creations which depend on time to exist.

With this we can go back and explain the *nusach hatefillah* mentioned above. When we say Hashem made *bereishis*, we are saying that Hashem made "the beginning" (*bereishis* literally means "in the beginning") and that which follows subsequently as well — meaning that Hashem made *zman* itself. He made time; He created a beginning, a continuation, a future and the possibility of a finishing point.

With this, the Siach Yitzchak explains the famous beginning of the *Chumash* in a new light. He writes that “*Bereishis bara Elokim es hashamayim ve’es ha’aretz*” can be translated to mean that by creating *zman*, Hashem made it possible to have the creation of *shamayim* and *aretz*, the heaven and earth. This also explains the words we say in *Aleinu*, “*laseis gedulah l’Yotzer bereishis*” — we attribute greatness to Hashem, who created time (see also *Sifsei Chaim*, *tefillah*, *baruch she’amar* and *aleinu*).

Time, like every other created phenomenon — was made by Hashem out of nothing — *yesh mei’ayin*. Hashem *Yisbarach* is above and beyond time. It is not just that He always was and existed before everything else; rather He exists at a point where there is no before and after. He created past, present and future.

The *sefer Da’as Emunah* points out that *zman* requires other created phenomena in order to exist and cannot exist alone.

The concept of time is a very deep one. One can learn more about it in the wonderful *sefer Da’as Emunah* (volume 1, *ikar* 4) mentioned above. He writes that one practical lesson about time is that fulfilling our purpose in this world depends on it. We need to use our present time to prepare for the afterlife in *Olam Haba*. Our lives are one big process, a culmination of constant building, input, effort and growth. *Avodas Hashem* is a gradual process; we constantly plan and build ourselves and our *Olam Haba*, one step at a time.

The *sefarim hakedoshim* teach that the *gematria*, the Hebrew numerical value of *zman*, is the exact same as *adam* and *beheimah* — man and animal — together. We can suggest a lesson from this *gematria* as follows: The *pasuk* says (*Iyov* 11:12), “*Pera adam yeveled, a person when born is [likened to] a wild animal.*” We have tremendous

energy and drive, but it's raw and unorganized. If we plan right and use our time properly, we will change this *beheimah* into an *adam hashaleim*, a completely refined human being. He will become a person, who despite a modest beginning, having been formed from *adamah*, dust of the earth, can proclaim *adameh l'Elyon*, that he has uplifted the *adamah* within him until he has reached the level of emulating (*adameh*) the Sublime One, Hashem. We will then merit hearing the future announcement, "*Mezumin* (which also includes the word *zman!*) *I'chayei Olam Haba*, [You are] invited to *Olam Haba!*"

THE FOURTH PRINCIPLE

CHIDDUSH HA'OLAM (PURPOSEFUL CREATION) AND YESH MI'AYIN (EX NIHILO)

The fourth *ikar* of our *emunah* is to believe that Hashem always existed and, furthermore, to know that Hashem created our world out of nothing. In the words of the Ramban, as brought in the *sefer Da'as Emunah* (volume 1, page 394): “*Hakadosh Baruch Hu* created (*bara*) all the creations (*nivra'im*) out of absolute nothingness and a complete void (*afisa muchletes*) ... the only way to say such a thing, bringing things forth (*yesh*) out of nothingness (*mi'ayin*) is with the word *bara*” (Ramban, *Bereishis* 1:1). This topic is very deep, but let us discuss a few points and, *b'ezras Hashem*, we will grow in our understanding of this fundamental of our *emunah*.

As is very well known, the Torah in *Parashas Yisro* (20:8-11) establishes and teaches us about the gift of Shabbos. It states, “... to observe the uniquely special Shabbos.” We learn from the *pasuk* that we always need to keep the Shabbos day in mind. We should not think about mundane things on Shabbos. We abstain from *melachah* on Shabbos. What is the *yesod* of Shabbos? The *pasuk* says, “It is to show that Hashem created the whole world in six days and He rested on Shabbos.”

The Chofetz Chaim, in his *hakdamah* to *Mishnah Berurah hilchos Shabbos* and in other places too, elaborates on the topic of Shabbos. Let us bring some of his words and elaborate on them. The Chofetz Chaim

writes: “The Torah is teaching us in these *pesukim* that essentially, Shabbos is the *shoresh*, the foundation, of our *emunah*. Which aspect of *emunah*? The *emunah* that the world is *mechudash* — that Hashem created the world out of nothing and after an absolute void - *ex nihilo*; that Hashem decided to make a world, and He created it *yesh mi’ayin*. Now, since Hashem created the entire existence, it follows that He is the boss over everything. We are His servants and are totally obligated to serve Him. We are always obligated to carry out His Will. We must serve Him with all our abilities — physical, spiritual, emotional and monetary — because everything is His.”

“Since Shabbos is the foundation of our *emunah*,” continues the Chofetz Chaim, “the Torah repeats twelve times the importance and obligation to keep Shabbos. This also explains why keeping Shabbos is considered equal to keeping the entire Torah and, in contrast, a breach in *shmiras Shabbos*, Heaven forbid, undermines the entire Torah — because as mentioned, Shabbos is the *yesod* of our entire faith.

“This is why the consequence for *chillul Shabbos* is harsher than for any other *aveirah* — a *mechallel Shabbos* is stoned. So too, unlike most other *aveiros*, a *mummer* regarding Shabbos observance — i.e., one who freely and publicly desecrates the Shabbos, Heaven forbid — acquires the status of a *goy* for various *halachos* of the Torah. Again, this is because *chillul Shabbos* is a denial of Hashem’s creation of the world *yesh mi’ayin*.”

The Chofetz Chaim is telling us very clearly that Shabbos makes us internalize and connect more deeply with *emunah* in *chiddush ha’olam* and that this is the very root and foundation of *emunah* of the entire Torah. Rav Shimshon Pincus *zt”l* discusses and explains this concept at

length in his *Shabbos Malkesa* (*chelek 2, perek 1*). Here are some of his points:

Rav Pincus explains that Shabbos shows us that Hashem created the world out of nothing. He shows how Shabbos enables us to avoid the mistaken thought that things just always existed. It makes us realize that before the creation, Hashem was all alone and He decided to create our world, each and every part of it, even the most raw and original substance of it – all out of complete nothingness. Rav Pincus explains that by ceasing to create on Shabbos, Hashem showed that He was the one who *started the creation*. He started it with His Will and decision and then He chose to stop on Shabbos. Each and every Shabbos we deepen our connection with this tremendous fundamental of our Judaism.

Another important point is that we must realize that when it comes to matters of *emunah*, we need to put aside our *ga'avah*, our arrogance, and acknowledge that, honestly speaking, we know very little about Hashem's amazing powers and His creation of our world. We should just step back in awe, humiliation and admiration for Hashem's majestic power and the tremendous beauty and intricacy of His creation. Let us learn and review again and again the special *pesukim* in *Parshas Bereishis*. This will help us absorb and internalize the facts and details of *brias ha'olam*, giving us intimate knowledge of the six days of creation — those six days when Hashem created everything that exists in the most amazing and wonderful world that we enjoy and benefit from so much (See *Ramban* in *Bereishis* 1:3; *Rashi*, *Chagigah* 12; *Rosh Hashanah* 11a; *Bamidbar Rabbah* 14:7; and the *sefer Chaim Be'emunasam* by Rav Reuven Schmelczer.)

Another important point made by the Rambam and others is that *emunah* in *chiddush ha'olam* is a necessary prerequisite for *emunah* in *nissim* — the fact that Hashem made and makes *nissim*, supernatural miracles. On a simple level this can be explained that since Hashem made the world, He also controls it and can maneuver it however He wants. Another point is that since He started the creation out of nothing, it follows that nothing is automatic; rather, everything is guided and controlled by Hashem, down to the tiniest details. Therefore, He can change nature whenever and however He chooses to. (See *Rambam*, end of *Bo*, where he writes that the opposite is also true — *nissim* show that Hashem made the world out of nothing and as a pure result of His Will.) (See *Da'as Emunah*, volume one, page 363 and the *Rambam* in *Iggeres Teiman*.)

We can suggest that the next time we sit by our Shabbos table and bite into the delicious Shabbos food, surrounded by our wonderful family, we should stop and pay attention to the words we say in *Kiddush* and its message to us — that Hashem created all this out of nothing, for us to enjoy, so that we should recognize Him, emulate Him and aspire ever higher in our *avodas Hashem*.

THE FIFTH PRINCIPLE

YEDIDUS, FRIENDSHIP – KEEPING AWAY FROM ZARUS, UNFRIENDLINESS AND AVODAH ZARAH

The Rambam in his *Peirush Hamishnayos (Sanhedrin Perek Chelek)* teaches as follows: The fifth principle of the thirteen principles of faith is *lo livado ha'avodah*. True *avdus*, worship is only to Hashem; Divine service must be directed to Hashem alone and not to any other perceived powers. Included in this is: We serve Hashem, we glorify Him (*l'gadlo*), we publicize His greatness, and we perform His mitzvos (commandments). It is forbidden to conduct ourselves in such a manner to anyone or anything else. This includes *malachim* (angels), the stars, galaxies (*galgalim*) and the *yesodos* — the various building blocks of Hashem's creation (*esh, ruach, afar* and *mayim* — fire, wind, dust and water). We must realize that all of these do not have any independent powers or decision-making abilities. Hashem is the only independent and Almighty power, and He alone is the source of all energy, matter and movement. He is completely in control of all aspects of the entire world.

So too, continues the Rambam, it is forbidden to serve any of Hashem's creations as a form of intermediary between us and Him; rather, we must focus our Divine service only and directly to Hashem Himself, disregarding all the other creations. The Rambam concludes

that this principle is really the prohibition against *avodah zarah* (idol worship) and that this *aveirah* is repeated many times in the Torah.

In the *Ani Ma'amins* in the *siddur*, this *yesod* is taught regarding prayer, i.e., that we must focus our prayers to Hashem alone and not to any other perceived powers.

Now, the obvious question is that idol worship doesn't seem to pose much of a temptation for the average Jew in today's day and age¹. So what practical message could a present day Jew learn from this principle? It would seem that the thirteen principles should have far reaching practical applications, pertinent in every generation, since the Torah's lessons are eternal. Furthermore, a large portion of *Tanach* deals with idol worship, and the Gemara in *Megillah* (14a) teaches that only the prophesies which were applicable for future generations were recorded.

Let us suggest the following, *b'ezras Hashem*: It's well known that one of the basics of Judaism is *tikkun hamiddos* — character development and self-improvement. Rav Chaim Vital, in the beginning of his *sefer Sha'arei Kedushah*, writes that *middos tovos* are a prerequisite and foundation for all the mitzvos of the Torah.

There is one *middah* which seems to be singled out as a very important aspect of *middos* refinement. *Chazal* equate anger with the transgression of *avodah zarah*. They say (*Zohar Bereishis* 27b), “*Kol hako'es k'ilu oved avodah zarah* — anyone who becomes angry is as if he served idolatry.”

1. In truth, there are certain forms of alternative medicines and energy healing which contemporary *poskim* have ruled to be forms of *avodah zarah* and other related prohibitions.

The basic explanation for this is that one who gets angry is worshipping himself. He thinks that he is so high and mighty that everything has to go his way. Another basic explanation is that getting angry indicates that he views the thing or person that triggered his anger as an independent force and, Heaven forbid, not an act of Hashem's *hashgachah*. We will now bring a different and deeper explanation. We will see how anger, which is a form of *avodah zarah*, presents a very integral part of our *nisyonos hachaim*, our life challenges, and is a very fundamental concept in Judaism indeed.

Rav Shlomo Wolbe zt"l [in his *sefarim Alei Shor* (part 2, page 82), and *Bein Sheishes La'asar*, and in the first section of *Ma'amarei Yemei Ratzon* (*Da'as Shlomo*), and especially in the *ma'amar* that he printed in the *sefer Beshvilei Harefuah*] discusses this concept and establishes the following fundamental idea.

If we were to give a concise, definitive description of *Toras Yisrael*, it would be *olam hayedidus* — the world of friendship. There is a great connection and closeness between the Jews and Hashem. We normally don't approach Hashem as if He were an aloof, important visitor; but rather, in the manner that a child approaches a devoted and loving father. Let us elaborate on this point.

The *Gemara* in *Menachos* (53a) says, "Yavo yedid ben yedid v'yivneh yedid l'yedid b'chelko shel yedid v'yiskapru bo yedidim." The basic translation for this is, "Let the friend, the son of the friend, come and build the 'friend,' in the portion of the friend, and it will be a place of atonement for the friends." The *Gemara* explains that the six *yedidim* (friends) mentioned here are referred to as such based on *pesukim* from *Tanach* and *divrei Chazal*. The "friends" *Chazal* are referring to are Hashem, Shlomo Hamelech, Avraham Avinu, the *Beis Hamikdash*,

Binyamin, and the Jews. *Chazal* are saying as follows: Let Shlomo Hamelech, the descendant of Avraham Avinu, come and build for Hashem the *Beis Hamikdash* in the portion of Binyamin, so that the Jews can have a place for atonement.

The *Gemara* is describing a beautiful world of *yedidus* — friendship, closeness and connection — starting with Hashem and Avraham Avinu, continuing with Shlomo Hamelech and manifesting itself in the *Beis Hamikdash*, the place of *yedidus* for the Jewish Nation.

This close relationship is not one-sided. Avraham Avinu and the following generations of Jews came close to Hashem and Hashem came close to us. He gave us His precious Torah and rested His *Shechinah*, the Divine Presence, in our midst. We can clearly feel the *kirvas Hashem*, closeness of Hashem, which we call the *Shechinah*, accompanying us in all the various eras throughout our history. In all our exiles, Hashem accompanies us (see *Megillah* 29a). *Kirvas Hashem* is a very real and tangible aspect of our lives; even our physicality is uplifted by it.

Yedidus also plays a role between man and his fellow man. *Chazal* (*Shabbos* 31a) relate the famous lesson that Hillel taught a convert, encapsulating the entire Torah while “standing on one foot” - “Don’t do to others what you don’t like done to you. This is the entire Torah; the rest is commentary.” From this we see that there is one central, underlying concept in the whole Torah — friendship, to be closely connected to all other Jews. Rav Wolbe elaborates that included in this concept is that even when *yedidus*, in the true sense, is inappropriate, we must still respect and relate positively to others and even to various elements of creation. We interact with non-Jews with various *darkei shalom*, peaceful relations, enacted for us by *Chazal*. We also treat animals with the proper care and sensitivity (*tza’ar ba’alei chaim*). This

can be summed up by the *mishnah* in *Avos* (4:3), “Don’t scorn and belittle people and things, for every person has his time and every object has its place.”

The Torah life is a world of *yedidus* — positive connections, living with an overall attitude of friendliness and appropriate closeness and connection, and at least respecting and caring for everyone and everything that we come into contact with.

This is not an abstract theory; it actually obligates us to perform many specific actions delineated to us by the Torah, the *Shulchan Aruch* and the *sifrei mussar* in great detail. The Torah gives us a whole spectrum of mitzvos, and all the mitzvos either stem from *yedidus* or lead to *yedidus*! There are even special laws to treat cardinal sinners in the correct manner — justice tempered with mercy as the *pasuk* states (*Bamidbar* 35:25), *v’hitzilu ha’eidah*, the “assembly,” meaning the *beis din*, Jewish court of law, should [attempt to] save him [the murderer]”²!

The mitzvos are the framework of how we create and maintain the correct relationships between man and Hashem, man and his fellow man, and man and himself. These can be included in the famous three pillars of the world: Torah, *avodah* — Divine service, and *gemilus chassadim* – acts of kindness. Torah refers to man’s relationship towards himself³; *avodah*, to man’s relationship with Hashem; *gemillus chassadim*, to man’s relationship with his fellow man.

2. There are many details involved, but this is not the framework for elaboration on this matter.

3. The Gemara in *Kiddushin* (30b) teaches that Torah study resolves the inner moral conflict in man [it is the *tavlin*, the antidote for the *yetzer hara*]. The *pasuk* in *Tehillim* (19:8) states that Torah [study] restores the soul (*meshivas*

The Torah is full of *kirvah* — vibrant, warm and “live” interactions and relationships. One who enters a shul is [ideally] mesmerized by the obvious “real” conversations taking place between the silent swaying men and their Creator. The humble and sincere supplications to Hashem and the realness of the meeting with Hashem that is taking place is *tangible*. We can also experience the realness and live connection with Hashem in the vibrant *batei midrash* – seeing the fiery discussions when learning *Gemara*, as well as at the many vibrant *Yiddishe simchos*. Our Torah is not a bunch of rules and pompous ceremonies, but a real “live” and vibrant *olam hayedidus!*

The importance of *lev* [literally meaning “heart,” a phrase utilized by the *baalei mussar* and *chassidus* to imply incorporating emotion into our *avodas Hashem*] is very much taught and discussed in many *sefarim*, and was especially stressed by the masters of *mussar* and *chassidus*.

Every Jewish child is brought into the *olam hayedidus* at his *bris milah*, when we make special mention of his status of *yedidus*, saying, “*Asher kideish yedid mibeten ... Keil chai chelkeinu tzavei l’hatzil yedidus shi’areinu mishachas*, [Hashem] who sanctified the friend from the womb... therefore, our living G-d, our portion, command to save our beloved relative from destruction.” All this is but a small window into the beautiful, warm world of the *olam hayedidus*, the world of *Toras Yisrael*. Learn about it and you will see the many beautiful aspects of this wonderful world. [Rav Wolbe’s *sefarim* have an extensive discussion on this topic.]

On the other hand, there is an opposite, corresponding force in a person called *zarus*, disconnection. The *Gemara* in *Shabbos* (105b)

nafesh), and it makes the simple one wise (*machkimas pessi*). The *seforim hakdoshim* teach that Torah study purifies and perfects a person.

teaches, “One who tears clothing or breaks dishes or throws out money in his anger, it is as if he is engaging in *avodah zarah*, idol worship!” This is the method of the *yetzer hara*. In the beginning he says do this and this, and then he moves on to worse things, until he convinces a person to serve idols. The *Gemara* brings a source from *Tanach* for this, as it says (*Tehilim* 81:10), “*Lo yihyeh bicha eil zar v’lo tishtachaveh l’eil neichar*, you should not have within yourself a false god nor should you bow to one.” Which *eil zar*, false god is inside a person? The answer is – the *yetzer hara*.

The *Gemara* is defining the essence of evil (*ra*) as the force of “*zarus*” in a person. A person is comprised of many natural feelings and deep emotions such as love, fear, and many others. These are called “*kochos*.” The natural feeling, impulse and drive that brings a person to disconnect and causes distance between the various feelings and drives in a person is called *zarus*, from the word *zar*, strange. Eventually, this *zarus* causes separation and disconnection between a person and other people, and ultimately, even creates a rift between him and Hashem! By referring to the *yetzer hara* as *eil zar*, *Chazal* and the *Torah* are telling us the source of his power — the ability to utilize the *koach* of *zarus* to create an imbalance in the person and to “disconnect” him. This happens when a person grows extremely angry and it can happen with other *middos ra’os*, negative character traits, as well (see *Niddah* 13b). It seems that it’s more prone to occur with anger, and thus *Chazal* actually consider anger to be a form of *avodah zarah*!

Instead of using all of the various impulses, drives, emotions, feelings, traits and states of mind in a balanced, unified way, according to the *Torah*’s guidance and the *seichel ha’adam*, human intellect, the angry person uses the power of *zarus* disproportionately, causing a rift and

a disconnection. He is no longer in touch with himself or with other people, and most unfortunate of all, he loses his connection to Hashem.

Serving idols is a severe expression of disconnection from Hashem and animosity, as it were, towards Him. Thus, the underlying cause of anger (and extremely negative *middos*) is the same underlying feeling of the idol worshiper. Now we can understand how anger leads a person to the ultimate low of *avodah zarah*.

If a person doesn't live in the *olam hayedidus*, he will slowly develop the opposite traits — the *zarus*, the apathy, the coldness and disconnection. This develops gradually, first as contempt and indifference to other people, then leading to cruelty and selfishness, and finally to various forms of cruelty — complete *zarus*, when the person completely loses touch, even with himself.

This is a very deep topic, and it is wise to look inside the sources to understand it properly. What we have written is just a glimpse into the topic.

With Hashem's help, let us inspire ourselves to develop this aspect of the thirteen principles, and to fully distance ourselves from all forms of idol worship and *zarus*. Let us develop and build the *olam hayedidus* of the Torah. Let us appreciate, respect and connect, to really be in touch with ourselves. Let our Torah teachers, Torah knowledge and our intellect guide all the aspects of our personalities and emotions, to balance our wide range of feelings and drives. Let us connect and build the right relationship with our inner world and with other people. Most of all, let us shun all of the perceived yet illegitimate intermediaries and develop a close, warm and vibrant connection directly with Hashem.

THE SIXTH PRINCIPLE

NEVUAH (PART ONE)

The sixth principle of our *emunah* as delineated by the Rambam is the concept of *nevuah* — prophecy.

There is an interesting paradox in this concept. On one hand, we find that it is perhaps the most widespread supernatural and abstract idea and that most people don't seem to have difficulty with the concept. On the other hand, it is one of the most difficult of all ideas and concepts to discuss and explain — how the Almighty, Omnipotent G-d, Master, Creator and Controller of the entire world, whose essence is beyond all description, and who is totally intangible to our frame of reference, communicates in a very direct manner with a mere mortal, a being of flesh and blood.

The Ramban in *Parshas Yisro* (19:9) emphasizes how the Jews always believed in *nevuah*. He writes, “For the descendants of Avraham Avinu do not have any doubts regarding *nevuah*, for they received the belief in *nevuah* from their parents and ancestors.” The Ramban continues and addresses a difficulty regarding this. If the Jewish Nation already believed in *nevuah*, then why, before *Kabbalas HaTorah*, did Hashem say that through the great event at Sinai the Jews will come to believe in the *nevuah* of Moshe? This implies that they doubted *nevuah*. The Ramban answers that Hashem was telling them that He will show them *nevuah* firsthand; they will experience *nevuah* themselves, as opposed

to just hearing about it from others. Furthermore, they will be shown that Moshe Rabbeinu is on a greater level of *nevuah* than they are.

We see how shortly after *Yetzias Mitzrayim*, despite being exiled in Egypt for over two hundred years, despite over eighty years of slave labor and oppression, and after being exposed to the worst depravities practiced by their hosts and taskmasters, still, every single Jew believed in *nevuah*, having been raised with this firm belief. This serves to illustrate how *nevuah* was always widespread and common knowledge, and perhaps it explains why even today it is so, because it was always a strong part of our *mesorah*. [Incidentally, *l'havdil*, millions of *goyim* always believed in *nevuah* (Rav Avigdor Miller, Rav Laurence Keleman).]

On the other hand, *nevuah* is one of the most difficult concepts to fathom, as we can see from the Rambam. The Rambam writes in *Peirush Hamishnayos (Sanhedrin, Perek Chelek)* that this particular principle of faith would require a lengthy explanation, and to discuss the method for attaining *nevuah* is the totality of all wisdom. (Also see *Ohr Hachaim, Parshas Yisro*, “*v’gam b’cha ya’aminu*”).

The reason that *nevuah* is a fundamental principle of *emunah* is obvious, perhaps more than many of the other thirteen. Every system in the world tries to base their theories on truth and practicality as much as they can. They wish they could have some Divine guidance to lay the groundwork of their beliefs and axioms of life. In fact, many people invented fake stories and pretended to be prophets or messengers from G-d to garner and bolster the support of a following. Obviously, nothing could be better than G-d-given advice.

Nevuah means that the Master, Creator and Controller of the world communicated with humans. *Nevuah* was with complete clarity. The

navi had no doubts that Hashem was communicating with him and knew and understood exactly what was being conveyed to him (see *Derech Hashem, chelek 3, 4:1*, and see also the entire fourth *perek*¹). Hashem gave the *navi* clear guidance and expressed His Will on all matters of life. Since there was *nevuah*, and with all the *nevuos* that were preserved to guide us, we can rest assured that our lives are molded in accordance with the words of Hashem, through the Torah and the *nevi'im*, and that they are of maximum productivity and successfulness. We have the absolute truth exactly as delineated by the Will and word of the *Ribono Shel Olam* to us.

1. Also see *Rambam Yesodei HaTorah* 7:3.

THE SIXTH PRINCIPLE

NEVUAH – THE BIRTHRIGHT OF EVERY JEW

The *Kuzari* writes that *Am Yisrael* is an *am segulah*, a unique nation, different than all others. The *Kuzari* explains this as follows: There are four categories in the world: 1. inanimate (such as stones); 2. Plant life; 3. animals; and 4. people. Each category is essentially different. A flower is not a rock-plus; it's a whole different category.

The *Kuzari* goes on to prove that there is a fifth category — *Am Yisrael*. We see this from the extreme greatness of Moshe Rabbeinu; his greatness reflects, to some extent, that the essence of all Jews must be of an entirely different nature than that of the nations of the world (1:27-1:43).

It is popular to explain that one of the main aspects of Moshe Rabbeinu's greatness, which establishes the great essence of every Jew, was his *nevuah*. Every Jew is a potential *navi*, and is greatly empowered because of his *nevuah* potential (see the *peirush Otzar Nechmad* on this point). Rav Mordechai Neugroschel adds to this idea that the *Kuzari* holds that only a Jew can be a *navi*, and that even a *ger*, a convert, cannot become a *navi*. (The *meforshim* discuss how Ovadiah became a *navi* despite having been a *ger*.)

This is an amazing idea — that the greatness of (potentially) receiving *nevuah* is a defining factor of the essence of each and every Jew. The more we learn about *nevuah*, the sixth principle of *emunah*, the more

we can gain a glimpse into the essential greatness and potential of every Jew.

Rav Yaakov Kaminetzky, *zt”l* (*Emes L’Yaakov, Parshas Shemos 2:7*) is quoted to have said that the *Rema* in *Yoreh Deah* (81-7) rules that a Jewish child should not be nursed by a non-Jewish woman, because of her impure milk. One source given for this is the *Midrash Rabbah* (*Shemos 1:25*) which relates that Moshe Rabbeinu, as a baby, refused non-Jewish milk. “Hashem said, ‘The mouth that is destined to speak with Me should nurse from impure milk?’” Since Moshe Rabbeinu was destined for *nevuah* it was not appropriate that his mouth should nurse impure milk. The implication of this source is astonishing. We see that every Jewish child can reach this lofty level — to be groomed being worthy of *nevuah* — and thus he should not nurse non-Jewish milk! This is the proper attitude towards raising any Jewish child — that he is “the mouth that is destined to speak with Me.” Every Jew is a potential *navi*.

Rav Shlomo Lorencz, *zt”l*, once proposed to the Chazon Ish, that perhaps they should make special yeshivos for gifted and promising students, and other yeshivos for mediocre students. The Chazon Ish was adamantly opposed to the idea, saying, “Each Jewish child can be a *gadol!*” (*In Their Shadow*, pg. 26)

It is important to realize and internalize that we have tremendous greatness dormant within us. We just need to believe in it more and work harder than we have in the past in order to bring it out.

In the beginning of the *sefer Yonas Ileim*, Rav Yonah Minsker (Karpilav), *zt”l, Hy”d*, brings an amazing idea from Rav Yerucham Levovitz, *zt”l*, the

famous Mirrer *Mashgiach*.¹ On the one hand, we have within ourselves tremendous greatness; yet on the other hand, each new level that we ascend to in our *avodas Hashem* is, in essence, a *bri'ah chadashah* — a new creation. It is our role in life to constantly bring out these deep and hidden new powers from within ourselves.

Yes, we have great potential, and we need to become more aware of it. Rav Wolbe *zt"l* said over in the name of his great *Rebbe*, Rav Yerucham, “Woe to a person who does not acknowledge his faults, double woe if he does not realize his good qualities and abilities.”

The *Chovos Halevovos* in *cheshbon* 21 of *Cheshbon Hanefesh* writes as follows: “A person should make sure that he is doing all that he is able to do in *avodas Hashem*. So too, he should yearn to be given new heights and abilities to accomplish even more than his present abilities. We see from this how important it is to strive for great heights and to realize that we can go so much higher. Certainly, at least when it comes to our children and to others, let us believe in them and give them the greatest opportunity to really shine.”

The *Tanna D’bei Eliyahu* (25) writes, “Every single Jew is obligated to say, ‘When will my actions reach those of my forefathers Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov?’” This *Midrash* is urging us to strive for the loftiest levels, even that of our great *Avos*. This certainly indicates our great and vast potential for growth.

The famous *Rosh Yeshivah* of Yeshivas Kaminetz, Rav Baruch Ber Leibowitz, *zt"l*, said over from his great *Rebbe*, Rav Chaim Brisker, *zt"l*, the following: “It is the obligation of parents to raise their children to

1. Rav Yonah was known as the greatest of all the *yeshivah bachurim* in pre-war Europe and was tragically murdered by the Nazis, *yemach shemam*.

be *Gedolim!*” In fact, my grandmother Mrs. Rivkah Freedman *a”h* used to always wish us grandchildren, “You should be a *Gadol b’Yisrael.*”

Let us learn about the greatness of a *navi* and realize our potential greatness. Let us remind ourselves time and time again that yes, we can become much greater than we are now. Each and every Jew can achieve true *gadlus*. It’s true that, on one hand, we need to feel happy with our achievements and appreciate our efforts, yet we must never yield in our dreams and aspirations for *gadlus*, whether for ourselves or others.

May we merit seeing the words of the *Tanchuma, Mikeitz (2)* come true. There it states, “Hashem said, ‘In this world only specific individuals have *nevuah*; in the World to Come *nevuah* will be given to everyone.’”

THE SIXTH PRINCIPLE

NEVUAH, PROPHECY (PART TWO)

The sixth principle of our *emunah* is to believe in *nevuah*, prophecy – that Hashem communicates in a clear and direct manner with certain people at different times in history. Even though *nevuah* has ceased, we still have the words of those *nevuos* that are pertinent for us, preserved for us to learn from. Let us elaborate on this topic *be'ezras Hashem*, if even just a little bit.

What level does it take for a person to become a *navi*, prophet or to receive *nevuah*? Here is a loose translation of the Rambam's description of the greatness of a *navi* (*Yesodei HaTorah* 7:1): A *navi* needs to be a very wise person. Here must have exceedingly good character traits. He is to be on the level that he never succumbs to the evil inclination. Rather, he has complete self-control over the various temptations of the *yetzer hara* and the like. He needs to have amazing intellectual capacity in a very real and practical way [it does not suffice to be an intellectual genius, it needs to manifest itself in his ability to apply it in his actions and behavior as well]. He needs to be *shaleim b'gufo*, healthy and fit in a manner that allows him to enter what is called *Pardes* [the ability to achieve lofty and deep mystical states of being and understanding]. He needs to be holy and to separate himself from mundane and physical pursuits and involvement. He needs to develop self-control over his thoughts, not to think unproductive thoughts and

to only engage in lofty thoughts. The *navi* attaches himself to Heavenly spheres and concepts.”

The *navi* is one who can see all the vast wisdom that Hashem allows to be seen. He can visualize and understand from the very first thing that Hashem created until the final points of creation. Rav Shimshon Pincus *zt”l* (*Nefesh Shimshon, Emunah* page 167) explains this to mean that the *navi* knows the purpose of every single creation, including its vast details and dimensions. When the *navi* reaches these great levels then a Heavenly spirit rests upon him. The *navi* then becomes an entirely different and angelic being, and he perceives that he is now on a lofty and entirely different level than regular people. This is truly amazing, albeit just a small and basic glimpse of a *navi*’s spiritual level.

Let us elaborate with some more points about *nevuah* from the Rambam’s *Yad Hachazaka* (*Yesodei HaTorah perek 7*). The *navi* either has a dreamlike nightly vision or a vision by day, after being in a sleep-like state (7:2). During a *nevuah* the *navi*’s limbs tremble and shudder, and his physical body and normal faculties cease to function. Yet his ability to understand and absorb knowledge remains intact and free to be able to absorb what he is being shown by Hashem (see *Bereishis* 15:12 and *Daniel* 10:8, *Rambam* 7:2).

During *nevuah*, a *navi* experiences fear, panic and a sense of collapsing (7:6). The *navi* is shown a *mashal*, allegory, and its interpretation (7:3). The *navi* receives *nevuah* by means of a *malach*, angel, and that is why it comes through an allegory¹.

1. 7:6; see *Ramban Bereishis* 18:1, and *Aderes Eliyahu, mahadurah 3, Parshas Balak* 22:30.

Let us mention a few points about *nevuah* from the *Ramchal's sefarim Derech Hashem* and *Da'as Tevunos*. He writes that the *navi* experiences a very high level of *dveikus* (a sense of attachment) with Hashem. The *navi* clearly realizes during *nevuah* that he is in the direct presence of Hashem. The *navi* gains a very clear picture of the presence of Hashem and of Hashem's *hanhaga* – His ways of running our world. *Nevuah* is a greater form of communication than *ruach hakodesh* or regular dreams and, of course, Heavenly or sudden inspiration that can fall into the mind at times.

There is a certain lack of clarity that a regular *navi* (unlike Moshe Rabbeinu) experiences. Yet, the *navi* knows exactly what he is being shown by Hashem as well as its interpretation. There are different levels of clarity and different factors that can determine the ability to fully comprehend the prophesy. It can be compared to seeing something through a window that is smudged or clouded up somewhat. Another example given is of seeing a reflection in a mirror or a number of mirrors reflecting off one another. Obviously the great revelations that the *navi* sees in his mind's eye are revelations of Hashem's *hanhagah*, the way He conducts our world, and not *Atzmuso* – revelations pertaining to His very essence. This is as the Rambam writes in the third principle, that Hashem has no tangibility and is therefore beyond our frame of reference. However, the *navi* has a direct communication with the one and only indivisible G-d of the world, and he knows this clearly without a doubt (see *Derech Hashem* and *Da'as Tevunos* for further elaboration).

THE SEVENTH PRINCIPLE

NEVUAS MOSHE RABBEINU, MOSHE RABBEINU'S PROPHECY

The seventh fundamental of *emunah* is belief in the *nevuah* of Moshe Rabbeinu. *Nevuah*, prophecy, is when Hashem communicates directly with a person. Adam Harishon was a *navi*. Noach, Avraham Avinu and Sarah Imeinu received *nevuah*. In the past, *Klal Yisrael* had millions of *nevi'im* (*Megilla* 14a). The seventh fundamental is that Moshe Rabbeinu was the greatest *navi* that ever was and that ever will be. Furthermore, his level of *nevuah* was different and higher than that of all the other *nevi'im*.

This fundamental is especially important because Moshe Rabbeinu was the messenger of Hashem to teach the Jews the entire Torah. So the more we become clearly aware of the awesome level of Moshe's *nevuah*, the more we will be motivated to absorb the words of the Torah with ever more dedication.

The Rambam in *Peirush Hamishnayos* (*Sanhedrin, Chelek*) writes that there are four differences between the *nevuah* of Moshe Rabbeinu and that of other *nevi'im*:

One: other *nevi'im* received their message via a *malach*, whereas Moshe was addressed by Hashem directly. (The Ramban disagrees and

writes in *Vayeira* 18:1 that every *navi* receives a direct *nevuah* without a *malach* in between.)

Two: other *nevi'im* received their *nevuah* only when sleeping and in a dreamlike state, whereas Moshe received his *nevuah* while he was awake and standing on his feet.

Three: other *nevi'im* were in a tremendous state of fear and trembling from the awesomeness of the *nevuah*, whereas Moshe was able to stay calm, without fear and trembling.

Four: other *nevi'im* could not prophesize whenever they wanted, whereas Moshe was able to choose to receive *nevuah* at any time.

The Ramchal in *Derech Hashem* (3:5) differs with the Rambam on certain points:

He adds an additional distinction — that a regular *navi*, although he knows exactly what Hashem is telling him, still receives the message in a somewhat unclear manner, whereas Moshe received his *nevuah* with perfect clarity.

Furthermore, the Ramchal omits mention of a *malach* being a medium of *nevuah* for any *navi*, which would imply that every *navi* receives a direct *nevuah* without a *malach* in between.

Rav Shimshon Pincus, *zt"l*, (*Nefesh Shimshon, Emunah* page 183) stresses that Moshe Rabbeinu's great level was a G-d-given gift — a miraculous level of *gadlus* and *nevuah*. Rav Yitzchak Leib Kirzner, *zt"l*, in his *sefer* on the thirteen principles of faith *Ma'oz L'tam*, points out that great levels of spirituality reflect a great level of *avodas Hashem* and cannot simply be attained as a result of a Divine gift. He writes that the greater the level of a person, and the more a person perfects himself, the more he can be a conduit for the word of Hashem and for greater

levels of closeness to Hashem. So on the one hand, Moshe Rabbeinu was indeed given Heavenly gifts and powers, but at the same time, he obviously worked constantly to grow higher and closer to Hashem. He, thus, reached tremendously high levels, which were reflected, as a result, in the clarity of his *nevuah*. So too with us, the more we grow and improve our spiritual level, the more closeness to Hashem we will experience (see *Ohr Hachaim*, beginning of *Parshas V'zos Habrachah*).

One particular *middah* which the Torah teaches us about Moshe Rabbeinu is about his *middah* of *anavah* — humility and tremendous patience. I heard in the name of Rav Shlomo Wolbe, *zt"l*, that a good opportunity for everyone to improve their level of *anavah* is during *davening*. When we *daven*, we constantly remind ourselves of Hashem's greatness and of our dependency on Hashem for all of our needs.

Another one of Moshe's qualities that were singled out was his *middah* of being *nosei b'ol Im chaveiro*, to have genuine empathy for others (to translate literally: to share your friend's burden). This point is made by the Alter of Kelm, Rav Simcha Zissel Broide *zt"l* (beginning of *Chachmah U'mussar*, volume 1). He writes that this *middah* of feeling another person's feelings is the root of Moshe Rabbeinu's greatness.

Rav Yerucham Levovitz, *zt"l*, the famed Mirrer *Mashgiach*, in his *sefer Da'as Chochmah U'mussar* (volume 2, page 3), elaborates on this. When Moshe was a young prince, he would leave the comforts of Pharaoh's palace. He would go out and share in the pain and burden of the slave labor of his fellow Jews. Rav Yerucham describes that just like a person shifts a heavy burden from one shoulder to the other, thus easing the aching shoulder, so too, Moshe would go and shoulder the burdens of the struggling Jews, feeling their suffering as if it were his own!

May Hashem help us gain more awareness about the *nevuah* of Moshe Rabbeinu, and to learn from Moshe's path to greatness to improve ourselves in the *middos* of *anavah* and *nosei b'ol chaveiro*, which will bring us ever closer to Hashem and His Torah.

THE SEVENTH PRINCIPLE

NEVUAS MOSHE RABBEINU AND KORACH'S REBELLION

We all know the story of Korach. He was an *adam gadol*, a very great man — and he lost it all when he started up with Moshe Rabbeinu. There is a very powerful question here. The Torah relates that Hashem guarantees that after the amazing revelation at Har Sinai, no one will ever deny the greatness and reliability of the *nevuah* of Moshe Rabbeinu, as the *pasuk* states, “*V’gam b’cha ya’aminu la’olam*, And also in you they will always believe” (*Yisro* 19:9, see also *Rambam, Iggeres Teiman*). If so, how do we explain the fact that a short while later Korach rebelled against the *nevuah* of Moshe Rabbeinu?¹

Let us bring two approaches to answer this, *b’ezras Hashem* (as quoted in the *sefer Yud Gimmel Ikrim, Hakdamos V’shearim* by Rav Epstein). The Steipler Gaon answers that the guarantee was only on a logical level. Korach’s denial of Moshe’s greatness did not stem from a logical mistake; he did not err intellectually. Rather, it was a result of his *middos ra’os*, poor character traits. For this there was no guarantee.

Logically, *nevuas Moshe* is foolproof, as the *pasuk* in *Parshas Yisro* tells us (*ibid.*). The Ramban in *Yisro* (*ibid.*) and the Rambam (*Hilchos Yesodei*

1. See *Parshas Korach*, and see *sefer Yud Gimmel Ikrim, Hakdamos V’shearim* by Rav Bentzion Epstein, page 133, *ikar* 8.

HaTorah) explain that the Jews were raised to such a high level that they themselves experienced *nevuah* and heard with a crystal-clear *nevuah* that Moshe Rabbeinu was Hashem's *navi* and messenger to teach the entire Torah and to lead *Klal Yisrael*.

Korach had a problem with *chemdas hakavod*, glory seeking, and *kinah*, jealousy. He had a lust for honor and this caused him to tumble down. He became an *apikorus*, a heretic, and denied the *nevuah* of Moshe Rabbeinu (*Mesilas Yesharim* 11). He had it all — he was great in Torah and he was very wealthy — and he lost it all because of *middos ra'os*.

Rav Elchanan Wasserman, *zt"l*, *Hy"d* (at the end of the *sefer Koveitz He'aros, siman alef*), points out that *emunah* in general is obvious. It is our bad *middos* that blind us and make us come to deny clear and absolute truths. Let us take a lesson from this. Let us learn *mussar seforim* on a regular basis. Such *seforim* include *Chovos Halevavos*, *Mesillas Yeshorim*, *Orchos Tzaddikim* or any other *mussar* work that motivates us to improve. This will protect us from *middos ra'os* so that we should not, *chalilah*, stumble.

A second approach is given by the Gerrer Rebbe, the great *Imrei Emes*. He says an astonishing thing. There was a great *rasha* whose name was Nimrod. *Chazal* tell us that he was *yodei'a es Boro u'michavein limrod bo*. He knew his Creator, yet he spitefully rebelled against Him. Korach also knew the truth, and yet he anyway spitefully rebelled against it! He knew that Moshe only spoke the word of Hashem, yet he fought him and accused him of distorting the Divine message.

This concept needs much clarification. It's one thing for a person to be blinded by intense desires and ignore the truth. But how can a person at the same time know the truth clearly and still rebel, which means to

spitefully go against the truth? (For example, how can a rational and normal person knowingly walk in front of a speeding bus? Starting up with Moshe Rabbeinu was suicidal!)

Perhaps we can suggest as follows: The Steipler Gaon (*Birkas Peretz, Parshas Noach*) brings Chazal's² statement about Noach that he was a "small believer." This is as Rashi writes based on Chazal, "*Noach m'ktanei amanah haya ma'amin v'eino ma'amin*, Noach was a small believer; he believed yet he did not believe." In other words, his level of faith was lacking. He did not enter the *teivah*, the ark, until the flood's waters forced him inside. This is puzzling, for Noach obviously was a great believer; so much so, that he built the *teivah* for 120 years, despite the great derision he suffered from the people of his time. Furthermore, how can a person believe and also not believe simultaneously?

From here we see, says the Steipler, that there are two types of *emunah*. One is in the *seichel* — the intellect. The second is called *emunah chushis* — an *emunah* that is felt. It is so vivid, it is felt and is as real as one's senses; it is a practical *emunah* which brings to action.

Maybe with this we can explain that Korach had *emunah sichlis*; however, he was lacking in *emunah chushis*. This discrepancy is what caused him to rebel against Moshe, despite having clear knowledge of his truthfulness. By Noach, the discrepancy just caused him to be considered lacking in *emunah* — *m'kitanei emanah* — but by Korach it went much further, bringing him to rebel.

We can explain that these two approaches (that of the Steipler Gaon and of the Gerrer Rebbe) have a common ground. In the words of the *ba'alei mussar*, there is a great distance between the mind and

2. *Midrash Bereishis Rabbah* 32:6, also quoted by Rashi, *Parshas Noach* 7:7.

the heart, so much so that they can be considered as if they are two separate people. According to this understanding though, there can be two different types of problems. According to the approach of the Steipler Gaon, the *ta'avah*, desire, blocks the mind and the person commits *aveiros* to fulfill his desires (*l'tei'avon*). According to the Gerrer Rebbe's approach, because of the distance between the mind and the heart, a person commits *aveiros* out of spite, rebelliously. This is a much more severe offense, and perhaps can be explained as being a result and an expression of arrogance and/or anger.

There is an antidote for both of these pitfalls: learning *mussar*. The *Mishnah Berurah* (*Orach Chaim* 1:4) and the *Chayei Adam* (*klal* 143) write that it is an obligation to learn *sifrei mussar* every day. The *Ya'aros Dvash* (*drush* 12) writes that it is an obligation for both men and women, day and night.

Let us improve our commitment to *limud hamussar*, to review, contemplate, and excite ourselves with words of *mussar*. This will bridge the gap between our mind and heart, and with this we will be able to achieve our purpose in this world, *b'ezras Hashem*.

THE EIGHTH PRINCIPLE

THE FIRE OF SINAI

Rav Shach, zt”l, would often tell over the following story: There was a group of Jews in Auschwitz. They were standing and waiting to be shoved into the death chambers. One of them called out, “*Yidden*, today is Simchas Torah, we must celebrate.” Everyone looked at him quizzically. “What do you mean? Don’t you realize that we’re about to be killed? We don’t have a *Sefer Torah*. We don’t have any *schnapps*. We are not even dressed. We have nothing to celebrate with. Even our *tzelem Elokim*, our G-dly image has been taken from us.”

Then, despite their horrific situation, those holy Jews found the answer deep inside themselves. Yes, we can be happy; yes, we can dance. We have the *Ribbono shel Olam* with us. The Nazis, *yimach shemam*, can never take Him away from us — and with that they broke into a lively dance.

Rav Shach would vividly describe the way they danced to the gas chambers with the *simchah atzumah*, intense joy, of being together with Hashem. And he would comment, “All the *simchah* in the world pales in comparison to their *simchah*. I am jealous of their happiness in those final moments of their lives” (*In Their Shadow*, page 297).

How are we to understand the *simchah* of those Jews in such trying circumstances? I think the answer lies in the following words of the

Chofetz Chaim in his *sefer Nidchei Yisrael*¹. The Chofetz Chaim discusses strengthening *emunah* and appreciation of the *kedushas haTorah* — the value and holiness of the Torah. He writes that this particularly applies in a time and place where people are undermining the *kavod* of the Torah, and many are leaving the Torah path when they see the temporary success of the wicked versus the downtrodden plight of many steadfast *shomrei Torah*. This causes many simple and well-meaning people to weaken in their adherence and respect for Torah. The Chofetz Chaim writes that for most people, fancy intellectual arguments and proofs will not help. Instead, he appeals to simple rationale and emotion. Let us bring some of his warm, inspiring words.

Says the Chofetz Chaim: When we see the amazing *mesirus nefesh* of *Am Yisrael* throughout the years of this long and hard *galus*, we wonder where they get their strength from. When we see the way Jews throughout the generations perform all the mitzvos with great happiness, even when it entails money, effort and pain, we wonder where it comes from. For example, the *Midrash* says in *Parshas Emor*² (brought in the introduction of *Nidchei Yisrael*), “[One Jew said to another Jew,] ‘Why are you being taken out to be stoned?’ ‘Because I gave my son a *bris milah*.’ ‘Why are you being burned alive?’ ‘Because I kept Shabbos.’ ‘Why are you being taken out to be beheaded?’ ‘Because I ate matzah.’ ‘Why are you being whipped and beaten?’ ‘Because I made a *sukkah*... because I shook the *lulav*... because I wore *techeiles*... because I performed the Will of my Father in Heaven...!’

1. Essays 43-44, and in the *hakdamah*, also see the beginning of the *sefer Taharas Yisroel*.

2. See *Midrash Vayikra Rabbah* 32:6, *Mechilta D'Rebbe Yishmael* 20:6 and the Ramban, *Shemos* 20:6.

‘What are these beatings you are getting?’ ‘These beatings are making me beloved to my Father in Heaven.’”

Another example: When the *goyim* came into the *Beis Hamikdash* to destroy it, the *Kohanim* were in the middle of bringing a *korban tamid*. The *goyim* started hacking at them with swords, killing them left and right. This did not stop the *Kohanim*’s devotion to the *avodah*. As soon as one *kohen* was beheaded, another grabbed the blood of the *korban* and brought it closer to the *mizbei’ach*. This happened a few times until they succeeded in bringing the *korban* with their own lifeblood. When, finally, the wicked intruders set the *Kodesh Hakedoshim* aflame, eighty thousand young *Kohanim* jumped into the raging fire to offer their very souls up to Hashem. Where does all this *mesirus nefesh* come from?

The Chofetz Chaim explains that obviously the reason is because *Am Yisrael* absorbed a very deep *emunah* and devotion to Hashem and the Torah from their *mesorah*, tradition, which includes all the wondrous *nissim* of *Yetzias Mitzrayim*, in addition to the tremendously clear Heavenly revelation on Har Sinai. This naturally imbued *Am Yisrael* with a deep awareness of the truth of the Torah, as well as with deep *emunah* and devotion to Hashem. Furthermore, it gave them *b’ofen seguli*, supernaturally, a deep *emunah* embedded in their very hearts and *middos* — *ad sof kol hadoros*, until the end of time. Additionally, their devotion and *emunah* only grew stronger with all the additional miracles that Hashem showed them throughout the ensuing years.

There are two points here: One is that *Am Yisrael* was always very strong in their *emunah*, because they had a strong *mesorah* of what was witnessed in earlier times.

The second point is that we draw strength from the way Jews acted throughout history, because it shows us unmistakably that the

miraculous historical events that we learn about in *Chazal* and have received by tradition actually happened, openly and clearly. We realize that they were clear, public knowledge for millions of Jews throughout the ages, because if not, no one would be willing to endure suffering and invest self-sacrifice for such an ideology. The very fact that they gave their lives, money, and every ounce of effort for their beliefs is powerful evidence that they knew their miraculous history to be the absolute truth and worth the sacrifice.

The Chofetz Chaim makes mention of many of these groundbreaking, *emunah*-inspiring events of *Am Yisrael*. Let us bring a loose translation of some of his words:

Klal Yisrael witnessed the miracles of *Yetzias Mitzrayim*. They witnessed how Hashem led them through the desert for forty years, keeping them safe from the elements and the wild animals. They saw the wondrous pillar of clouds that guided them and the pillar of fire which illuminated the nights. They saw the *maan*, Heavenly bread, fall each and every day — exactly the right amount for everyone, with a double portion falling on Friday and none falling on Shabbos. They drank water from the rock and lacked nothing in the middle of the desert. They witnessed the shocking event of Korach, Dasan and Aviram being swallowed alive by the ground. They saw all the miracles described in *Parshios Va'eschanan* and *Eikev*³.

3. The Torah there makes reference to many past miracles and future miracles (the exodus, the giving of the Torah, the destruction of the idol worshipers, the destruction of Og and Sichon and their lands, the *tzirah* (a poisonous insect used against the enemy supernaturally), the guarantees to take over Eretz Yisroel, etc.

They also experienced many miracles in subsequent years, in the days of the *Shoftim*, Shaul Hamelech, Dovid Hamelech and Shlomo Hamelech. In the time of Chizkiyahu they saw how Hashem sent a *malach* who killed 185,000 of their enemies in the camp of Ashur in one night! They lived through the *nissim* of Purim and Chanukah. They saw the *nissim* in the *Beis Hamikdash*: In the eleven *amos* (around twenty feet) where the *Yisraeilim* were allowed to stand in the *azarah*, tens of thousands would stand during the *regalim*, holidays! Furthermore, when they stood it was crowded, but when they prostrated there was ample room for everyone. They saw a Heavenly fire on the *mizbei'ach*, all the time. It would miraculously burn up an enormous amount of *korbanos* in an unbelievably small amount of time. In addition, there were ten constant miracles in the *Beis Hamikdash*, which were witnessed by all.

The most powerful of all was the amazing revelation on Har Sinai (see *Teshuvos HaRashba* [4:234], who writes that this was the most convincing of all the *nissim*). The Chofetz Chaim brings the amazing words of the Rambam in *Iggeres Teiman*, who says that Hashem guaranteed, and stands as a guarantor, that all those who are descendants of the Jewish Nation will definitely believe in Moshe Rabbeinu and the Torah he taught until the end of time. We can see their *emunah* in Moshe from the *pasuk* in *Parshas Va'eschanan* (5:24), "The Jewish people said to Moshe Rabbeinu, 'You should speak to us and tell us whatever Hashem our G-d will speak to you. Then we shall hear and we shall do.'"

The Chofetz Chaim gives a basic description of *Ma'amad Har Sinai* (in the beginning of essay 43, page 120). The tremendous value and *kedushah* of Torah became clear to all during that amazing event. Hashem Himself, as it were, in all His [perceivable] glory, descended on Har Sinai. He came amidst *kolos*, thunder, and *vrakim*, lightning, to

teach His nation the Torah and the mitzvos. The heavens and earth roared with the voice of Hashem. It resonated like piercing flames. The Jews were overawed and *malachim* came to help them draw close⁴. Hashem descended in His *merkavah hakedoshah*⁵, Divine chariot, on Har Sinai. He opened up the heavens and the depths of the earth, and all the Jews saw the complete Oneness of Hashem. They understood completely that *ein od milvado* — He is the One and the only G-d of the entire universe. They all saw *ohr pnei Hashem*, the light of the face of Hashem, as it were [meaning a unique spiritual awareness of Hashem, similar to what is written in *Parshas Va'eschanan* (5:4), “Face to face did Hashem speak with you.”] The revelation was so clear and great that they were able to perceive how the Torah is the source of life for the whole world. As we say in *Shemonah Esrei*, “*ki b'or panecha nasatah lanu Hashem Elokeinu Toras chaim*, for with the light of Your face You gave us, Hashem, our G-d, the Torah of life” — a Torah which is the true source of life.

The Chofetz Chaim, in a different paragraph, in order to bolster our *emunah*, offers encouragement and gives us clarity, by continuing to elaborate on *Ma'amad Har Sinai*: He writes that we should know and understand that the Torah was not given secretly; rather, it was given in front of 600,000 men between the ages of twenty and sixty, besides for the huge amounts of elderly Jews, women and children. They all accepted the Torah and said *na'aseh v'nishma*, we will do and we will hear. They then kept the Torah against all odds, which is a sure sign of the truthfulness and eternity of the Torah and the Giver of the Torah

4. Chazal write that *malachim yidodin*, which means that the *malachim* brought the frightened Jews close (*Shabbos* 88b).

5. This refers to a deep kabbalistic concept.

– Hashem. Obviously, there is one long and glorious chain, extending from generation to generation, passing on the great events of Sinai as taught in *Parshas Va’eschanan*.

Ma’amad Har Sinai was *gadol v’norah* — great and awe-inspiring. There were 600,000 men there, as well as myriad others, as mentioned above. They all saw the great and awesome spectacle, including the thunder, flames, the smoke rising from the mountain, and the voice of Hashem talking to them from amidst the flames. It was so awe-inspiring, they just about died⁶ and had to be revived. They also heard the voice of Hashem speaking to Moshe Rabbeinu saying, “Moshe, Moshe, go and tell them...” All this caused a profound *emunah* to become embedded in their hearts and minds. *Emunah* in Hashem, the Torah and in the prophecy of Moshe Rabbeinu. This is as it is written in *Parshas Yisro* (19:9), “Behold! I come to you in the thickness of the cloud, so that the people will hear as I speak to you, and they will also believe in you forever.”

Hashem did not merely rely on the love that parents have for their children as a motive to teach their children about the event of Har Sinai. For indeed, transmitting the *mesorah* of *Matan Torah* to their children would be the greatest expression of their love, for it would be the source for their greatest success in life, leading them to live lives of *emunah* and commitment to Hashem and the Torah. Rather, Hashem established it as a *mitzvah* of great importance, obligating the Jews to transmit the story of Har Sinai to their children and grandchildren and to remind themselves of this great event, every single day (see *Parshas Va’eschanan* 4:9).

6. Some sources say that they actually died, however the Chofetz Chaim takes the approach that they almost died.

Since knowledge of *Ma'amad Har Sinai* and the miracles of *Yetzias Mitzrayim* and beyond are such widespread knowledge amongst the Jewish nation, it is impossible for them to be forgotten. It therefore serves as a source of strength and *emunah* throughout the generations. This is the source of our great *mesirus nefesh* for Torah and mitzvos throughout the ages. Perhaps this explains the great joy that the Jews expressed when sanctifying the Name of Hashem at the hands of the barbaric Germans, in the horrific death camps. They realized that Torah, love for Hashem and *Olam Habah* are the absolute truths of existence and that their *neshamos* would live on for eternity, long after the Nazi butchers will have faded into oblivion.

The Chofetz Chaim bemoans the fact that there were people who not only weakened their ties to the Torah, they even tried dulling the *emunah* of others with derision and mockery of everything holy. The Chofetz Chaim explains that this is only possible because they sunk into the pursuit of hedonistic desire and developed the terrible *middah* of *chutzpah*, as well as other bad *middos*. Slowly but surely, this caused them to be overwhelmed with *tumah*, impurity.

The Chofetz Chaim exhorts the *ehrlicheh Yidden* to imbue themselves with the memory of all the great miracles of their history. This especially applies to perhaps the most phenomenal and inspiring miracle of all — the continuous survival and existence of the Jewish Nation, long after all their aggressors have disappeared from the face of the earth.

The Chofetz Chaim also writes that the best way to safeguard ourselves from negative influences and maintain our *emunah* is to have serious Torah-learning sessions; to totally involve ourselves in Torah learning to the greatest degree possible. This, together with the mitzvah of remembering *Ma'amad Har Sinai*, will enable and inspire

us to attach ourselves with renewed vigor to the glorious chain of *Am Yisrael*, who sang and danced no matter how bleak the situation. “*Ashreinu mah tov chelkeinu*, how fortunate are we; how good is our lot!” (*siddur, shacharis L’olam Yhei Adam*)

THE EIGHTH PRINCIPLE

MA'AMAD HAR SINAI

The eighth principle of *emunah* is that the entire Torah which we have today (*Torah Shebichsav*, the Written Torah and *Torah Sheb'al Peh*, the Oral Torah) was given by Hashem to Moshe Rabbeinu on Har Sinai (*Ani Ma'amin — siddur*).

Since it is a great mitzvah and a fundamental of Judaism to constantly remember *Ma'amad Har Sinai* and teach it to our children and grandchildren (*Va'eschanan* 4:9, *Ramban* *ibid.*, *Rambam* in *Iggeres Teiman*), the following is a summary of many, if not all, of the central points and descriptions of *Ma'amad Har Sinai*. This will help us learn and review and, *b'ezras Hashem*, internalize this great fundamental:

1. In the year 2448 from *Brias Ha'olam* (*Avodah Zara* 9b), less than two months after *Yetzias Mitzrayim* (*Yisro* 19:1; *Bo* 12:14, *Rashi*), on the seventh of *Sivan*, which was on *Shabbos* (*Shabbos* 86b), Hashem gave the Jewish Nation the Torah. At that time, the Jews perceived Hashem like never before.
2. *Ma'amad Har Sinai* took place in the desert of *Sinai*, when the Jews were en route from *Mitzrayim* to *Eretz Yisrael*.
3. A huge crowd was present at *Har Sinai*. There were 600,000 men between the ages of twenty and sixty (*Bo* 12:37). Based on that amount, the *Steipler Gaon* estimates that we can assume that

also present were an additional 40 percent of males, who were younger than twenty and older than sixty. This resulted in a million men and boys in total. Since the Gemara in Yevamos (118a) states that there are an equal amount of girls born as there are boys, we can assume that there were around a million women and girls as well — totaling around two million people (Chayei Olam 14).

4. The Sifri in V'zos Habrachah (pasuk 33:2, also see Parshas Mishpatim 24:7) states that before approaching the Jews, Hashem first approached the goyim and offered them the Torah. The descendants of Eisav said that *lo sirtzach*, the prohibition of murder, was too hard for them to accept. The descendants of Lot, Amon and Moav, said they couldn't live without adultery. *Lo signov*, the prohibition of theft, was too challenging for the descendants of Yishmael, the Arabs. This was in stark contrast to Klal Yisrael who, with hearts full of faith, called out together as one, "Na'aseh v'nishmah, We will do and we will hear!"
5. Hashem told Moshe Rabbeinu to tell the Jews: If you will agree to accept the Torah and enter into a *bris*, a covenant, to heed its directives, you will be a special nation to Me. You will be an *am segulah*, a beloved treasure from amongst all the other nations. You will be a *mamleches kohanim*, a kingdom of ministers. You will be a *goy kadosh*, a holy nation. In short, you will be chosen, special and be the role model for all of mankind. The Jews agreed and became the *am hanivchar*, the Chosen Nation. This took place on the second day of Sivan, a few days before *Kabbalas HaTorah* (Yisro 19:3-8; Rashi 19:3, 19:8). The Steipler Gaon points out that we should realize that the Jews did not rush into *Kabbalas HaTorah*, but went into it calmly, with presence of mind, advance notice and three days of special spiritual preparations (Chayei Olam 17).

6. *Klal Yisrael asked for a direct revelation from Hashem instead of through Moshe Rabbeinu (Yisro 19:9, Rashi).*
7. *Hashem agreed and said that the Jews need to prepare themselves to be on the proper madreigah, spiritual level (ibid. 19:10, Rashi).*
8. *Hashem miraculously cured all of the Jews before Kabbalas HaTorah. This included the blind, mute and deaf Jews (ibid. 19:11, 20:15, Rashi).*
9. *The Midrash says that all handicaps were healed; even mental illness was cured (Shir Hashirim Rabbah 4:15 on pasuk 4:7).*
10. *The Gemara states that the impurity which came as a result of Adam Harishon's sin was removed from the Jews, bringing them to great heights of spiritual purity and high levels of kedushah (Shabbos 146a, see also Nefesh Hachaim 1:6).*
11. *Before Kabbalas HaTorah, Hashem lifted Har Sinai over the Jews and told them to accept the Torah or else the world will cease to exist (Yisro 19:17, Rashi).*
12. *Tosfos points out that even though the Jews had already committed to accept the Torah, perhaps they would get scared away because of the awesome revelation on Har Sinai; therefore, it was necessary to lift the mountain over them and force them to accept the Torah. Years later, Klal Yisrael willingly and wholeheartedly accepted the entire Torah after experiencing the amazing nissim of Purim (Shabbos 88a). Alternatively, the Midrash Tanchumah writes that their commitment of "naaseh v'nishmah" was solely for the Written Torah, whereas the coercion was for the Oral Torah.*

13. *Hashem guaranteed Moshe Rabbeinu that because of the revelation on Har Sinai the Jews throughout the generations would always believe in his nevuah and in the nevuah of all future nevi'im as well (Yisro 19:9 and Rashi, see Rambam's Iggeres Teiman and Yad, Yesodei HaTorah perek 8).*
14. *Besides for the awesome prophecy and revelation of Hashem's Presence that was witnessed at Har Sinai, there was an amazing otherworldly display of awe-inspiring phenomena. This took place mostly before the words, Anochi Hashem, were spoken by Hashem, because once they were spoken, there was utter silence, as the Midrash describes (Shemos Rabbah 29:9).*
15. *During the amazing event, Klal Yisrael miraculously saw kolos — thunder, vrakim — lightning, and different types of clouds, both regular and thick ones (see Teshuvos HaRashba 4:234). They heard very powerful shofar blasts, and they shuddered (Yisro 19:16, 20:18).*
16. *There were billows of fire and smoke, and the whole mountain shuddered (ibid. 19:18, Rashi; 20:15; Va'eschanan 4:11).*
17. *There was a "darkness" (choshech) together with the clouds and the fire (Va'eschanan ibid.).*
18. *In summary, there was thunder, lightning, fire, flames, billowing smoke, clouds – heavy and thick ones, darkness, an increasingly loud shofar blast, and the mountain was shuddering as well. Then, when Hashem proclaimed before 600,000 men, "Anochi Hashem..., I am Hashem your G-d, who took you out of Mitzrayim..., " the entire world became utterly silent.*

19. *“The Jewish people stood at the foot of the mountain and the mountain was burning with fire up to the heart of heaven; there was choshech — darkness, anan — cloud, v’arafel — and thick cloud” (ibid. 4:11). These were like three mechitzos, partitions, around Har Sinai, and in the middle was the fire (Chayei Olam 17).*
20. *The Jews saw with their own eyes and heard with their own ears the fire, kolos and the flames. They saw Moshe Rabbeinu enter the clouds (arafel) and heard the voice of Hashem speaking to him. They were listening to this and Hashem told Moshe, “Moshe, Moshe, go and tell them etc.” (Rambam, Yesodei HaTorah 8:1). The Steipler Gaon (Chayei Olam 17) writes that the Jews actually witnessed Moshe entering the fire on top of the mountain.*
21. *It is explicit in the Torah that all of the Jews heard Hashem’s holy words from Heaven, as it states, “Atem re’isem ki min haShamayim dibarti imachem, You saw that from Heaven I spoke with you” (Yisro 20:19, see Chayei Olam ibid.).*
22. *“Hashem will descend in front of the eyes of the Jewish people” (Yisro 19:11). The Ramban points out that this means that the Jews were able to clearly sense the presence of Hashem and experience a very clear prophecy, as well as a high level of comprehension of the aspects of Hashem’s hanhagah, interaction, with the world. (See Ramban, Yisro 19:11, 20:7; V’zos Habrachah 34:10, and other meforshim.)*
23. *The Sforno says that the Jews had a very high level of nevuah, while their senses and physical body were still intact and conscious (Yisro ibid.).*
24. *The Jews heard all of the Aseres Hadibros from Hashem at one time — but they didn’t understand them. Afterwards, Hashem*

repeated the first two Dibros in a clear, understandable way. Then Moshe Rabbeinu explained the other eight. Hashem raised Moshe's voice in a miraculous way (Yisro 19:19, Rashi; Yisro 20:1, Rashi, Sifsei Chachamim; Gemara Makkos 24a).

25. The Ramban explains that Hashem told the Jews directly and clearly the first two Dibros — *Anochi Hashem Elokecha* and *Lo yihyeh lecha elohim acheirim* — because these two are the main fundamentals of the whole Torah: having emunah in the existence of Hashem, and abstaining from *avodah zarah*, worshipping false “powers.” Therefore, it was important that the entire Klal Yisrael should have a direct, clear *nevuah* of these two Dibros, as opposed to hearing them from Moshe Rabbeinu (Ramban, Yisro 20:7).
26. The Jews responded “yes” to the positive commandments and “no” when hearing the negative commandments (Yisro 20:1, Rashi).
27. These are the ten Dibros that were heard on Har Sinai: 1. *Anochi Hashem Elokecha* — the commandment to believe in Hashem as the only G-d; 2. *Lo yihyeh lecha elohim acheirim* — the prohibition against idolatry; 3. *Lo sisa es Sheim Hashem Elokecha la'shav* — not to utter the Name of Hashem without a valid reason and not to make oaths in vain; 4. *Zachor es yom haShabbos* — observe the Shabbos; 5. *Kabed es avicha v'es imecha* — honor your parents; 6. *Lo sirtzach* — the prohibition against murder; 7. *Lo sinaf* — the prohibition against adultery; 8. *Lo signov* — the prohibition against kidnapping; 9. *Lo sa'aneh b'reiacha eid shaker* — the prohibition against bearing false witness; 10. *Lo sachmod* — the prohibition against coveting that which belongs to one's fellow man (Yisro 20:1-14; Va'eschanan 5:6-18).

28. *The Aseres Hadibros are general rules that include all the mitzvos of the Torah (Rashi, Mishpatim 24:12). The Rambam in Tamid (5:1) writes that they are yesodos, fundamentals, for the entire Torah (ikar hadas v'reishiso).*
29. *The Midrash writes that Hashem taught the entire Torah with all its details to Moshe Rabbeinu on Har Sinai. Simply put, it would seem that this includes the forty days and nights (and the following two sets of forty days — 120 days in all) during which Moshe remained on Har Sinai after Kabbalas HaTorah (see Midrash Rabbah 47:1 and 47:7 and Eitz Yosef's commentary, and see the Sforno in the end of Parshas Mishpatim). The Rambam in Peirush Hamishnayos (Sanhedrin Perek Chelek) writes that we are obligated to know that the entire Torah Shebichsav and Torah Sheb'al Peh was taught by Hashem to Moshe Rabbeinu, and Moshe Rabbeinu taught it to the Jewish Nation.*
30. *By each subsequent commandment, the Jews retreated twelve mil (a mil is an 18-minute walking distance) and malachim helped them return (Rashi, Yisro 20:15).*
31. *When Hashem said Anochi, all the Jews died from the awesomeness of it. Hashem then performed techiyas hameisim (Shir Hashirim Rabbah 6:3; Tanchuma Vayikra 1; see also Shabbos 88b and Maharsha there).*
32. *The grand event of Ma'amad Har Sinai was only around 3,300 years ago. Between then and now — there are less than 100 people in the "chain of generations" connecting us back to Sinai. Parents transmitted the story to their children, grandparents to grandchildren, Gedolei Yisrael and rebbeim to talmidim (see hakdamah to the Sefer Hachinuch).*

33. *This topic is very vast and very important. Everyone is encouraged to study all the pesukim about Matan Torah, to be able to clarify for themselves this important and vital knowledge. (See Parshas Yisro 19:1-20:19, Parshas Mishpatim 24:1-24:18, Parshas Va'eschanan 4:9-20, 4:32-36, 5:1-30.)*
34. *The Rambam in Iggeres Teiman emphasizes the importance of internalizing and constantly reviewing the event of Ma'amad Har Sinai. He writes that this is the main message that we are meant to impart to our dear children — that the entire Am Yisrael witnessed the grand revelation of Matan Torah. They also witnessed Moshe being appointed the navi of Hashem to teach us the entire Torah, each word the very word of Hashem.*

Clearly aware of these truths, we will, *b'ezras Hashem*, proudly serve our Father in Heaven, the Giver of the Torah, in all circumstances, through fire and water, *ashreinu mah tov chelkeinu*.

THE EIGHTH PRINCIPLE

EMUNAS CHACHAMIM (FAITH IN TORAH SCHOLARS) - PART ONE

The eighth principle of *emunah* is that the entire Torah we have today was given by Hashem to Moshe Rabbeinu. One of the ideas included in this principle is the concept of *emunas chachamim*.

Hashem not only gave us the Torah, a book of laws and guidance (aside from being a text of study which binds us with Hashem and imbues us with holiness), He also gave us, and gives us in every generation, great people who are teachers of the Torah. They explain to each generation how to fulfill and apply the mitzvos and guidance of the Torah. They also make *takanos*, enactments to maintain the spirit of the Torah in every time and place¹.

The Rambam in *Yad Hachazakah (Hilchos Teshuvah 3:8)* writes as follows: There are three types of *kofrim baTorah*, heretics. The first is someone who, *chas v'shalom*, claims that some of the words of the Torah are not G-d-given. The second is one who, *chas v'shalom*, denies the validity of the *Torah Sheb'al Peh*, the Oral Torah. The third is one who, *chas v'shalom*, claims that Hashem made changes in the Torah after it was given to the Jews.

1. See *Sefer Hachinuch, Parshas Shoftim*, mitzvos 495, 496, and *Sefer Hamitzvos Hakatzer, lo sa'seh* 158.)

According to one version of the *Rambam*, there are actually two subtypes of the second type. It reads as follows: “*V’chein hakofer b’peirushah v’hi Torah Sheb’al Peh, v’hamakchish maggideha k’gon Tzaddok uBaisos*, and so too one who denies the authenticity of the Divine Oral Interpretation of the Torah, which is referred to as *Torah Sheb’al Peh*; additionally, one who denies the authority of the teachers of the Torah like Tzaddok and Baisos.” Both of these deniers (i.e., of the Torah’s interpretation and its teachers, or even one of them) are guilty of heresy regarding the Torah’s Divine origin and authenticity. (The version of the *Rambam Frankel* edition is “*v’hikchish maggideha*.”)

If rendered *v’hamakchish*, the *Rambam* is writing two separate things: 1) One who, *chalilah*, denies the truthfulness of the *Torah Sheb’al Peh*; for example, someone claims that a particular piece of Gemara is the personal opinion of Rav Ashi and not a concept taught by Hashem (see beginning of *sefer Chayei Adam*). 2) Someone who denies the validity of the *maggidim* of the Torah — the teachers of Torah — meaning that he lacks *emunas chachamim* — the willingness to accept and follow the rulings and teachings of the *Gedolei Torah*, *rabbanim* and *talmidei chachamim*. Such a person is, sadly, also a *kofer baTorah*, a heretic. This obviously also includes the teachings of later-day *chachamim*; otherwise, they [the teachers of Torah] would have been included in *Torah Sheb’al Peh* itself.

Furthermore, it’s important to point out that *emunas chachamim* is not just for explaining the directives of the Torah and for ruling on practical *halachah*. It also includes *hashkafah* and related enactments. We can also add that included in *emunas chachamim* is the awareness that the *chochmei haTorah* are giants of mind and are acutely perceptive. They are selfless and are Heavenly-inspired, coupled with immense *siyatta diShmaya*. It follows that their advice in all matters, even mundane

matters, is accurate, practical, reliable and true, and it should be followed².

Emunas chachamim is one of the forty-eight ways to acquire Torah (*Avos, perek 6*). Obviously, it is extremely important to invest much time and energy to acquire all the *kinyanim* of Torah. In fact, Rav Matisyohu Salomon writes that this particular *kinyan* is far more fundamental than the other ones (*Matnas Chaim — Kinyanim, page 203*).

Rav Dessler (*Michtav Mi'Eliyahu, volume 1, page 75*) writes explicitly that the *pesukim* in *Parshas Shoftim (17:11)* which say that we must listen to the *chachamim*, applies to the *Gedolei Torah* of his times as well. It follows that it also applies to the *Gedolei Torah* of every generation. It would also apply to *poskim* and *talmidei chachamim*. Rav Dessler writes at length about the importance of *emunas chachamim* and concludes: A lack of *hisbatlus* (submissiveness) to our *Gedolim* is the source of all *aveiros* and destruction. Greater than any *zechuyos*, merits, is the source of all good — *emunas chachamim!*

The Chofetz Chaim in *Sefer Hamitzvos Hakatzar, lo sa'aseh 158*, writes as follows: The prohibition not to disobey the *beis din hagadol (Shoftim 17:11)* applies to the *Gedolim* of every generation — regarding whatever they explain to us as being the meaning of the Torah. This includes the following: 1) *Torah Sheb'al Peh*; 2) things that are derived by using the thirteen *middos* (for example, a *kal v'chomer*); 3) *seyag laTorah* — safeguards for the Torah — the various *takanos* that they enacted to protect adherence to the actual laws of the Torah.

The great importance of *emunas chachamim* and following *da'as Torah* is well known and is something our parents and teachers tell

2. See *Chinuch* *ibid.*; *Michtav Mi'Eliyahu, volume 1, page 59* and *page 75*.

us about constantly. Let us strengthen ourselves in this area, to ask questions and happily listen to the answers of *da'as Torah*. This will surely guarantee us great success in this world and the next.

THE EIGHTH PRINCIPLE

FAITH AND RESPECT FOR TORAH SCHOLARS

The eighth principle of *emunah* is that we have a Torah which was given to us by Hashem. This includes the Written and Oral Torah. In each and every generation, there are *Gedolei Torah* — great Torah authorities and leaders — who are qualified to explain and interpret the Torah according to the circumstances at that point in time (e.g., electricity on Shabbos, etc.). This is called *emunas chachamim* — faith in the sages. It is one of the forty-eight ways with which a person acquires the Torah, as taught in the sixth chapter of Avos. In fact, in the *sefer Mishnas Chachamim* (the twenty-third *ma'alah*), it says that this *kinyan*, method of acquisition, is the most important of all the forty-eight methods. Furthermore, he writes that our entire faith depends upon our *emunas chachamim*!

The Chazon Ish writes in his letters (*Koveitz Igros*, volume 1, letter 182) as follows: “We have faith in the words of the *chochmei haTorah*, the Torah authorities, because we have faith in the fact that Hashem gave us His Torah. It is impossible to determine the correct meaning of the Torah without the interpretations rendered by living Torah sages.” Meaning, since we believe that Hashem gave us the Torah, and since the true understanding of it can only be transmitted to us by living *talmidei chachamim*, it follows that we believe the words of our present-day, qualified *talmidei chachamim* faithfully.

The Chazon Ish in his *sefer Emunah U'Bitachon* (chapter 3, page 39) writes the following: “We are obligated to believe that the *Gedolim* and the true *talmidei chachamim* do not have any biases, and that they are completely objective in all their decisions.”

The Chazon Ish, in a different letter, writes as follows (volume 3, letter 92): “[There are] those who maintain that there are two different sections of Torah, one being *halacha* [for example, meat and milk questions], and another being *hashkafah* and *takanos* [the Torah worldview on general and community issues, and related safeguards and guidelines]. They feel that regarding *halacha* they must listen to *da’as Torah*, while for *hashkafah* and guidelines they can do as they wish. This is exactly what the *maskilim* — the ‘enlightened’ defectors from Judaism in Germany — believed, and it led all of them away from Judaism, until nothing remained of them. To make such a distinction is a distortion of the Torah, and it is a form of disrespecting Torah scholars. One who believes this is from those who lose their portion in the World to Come (*Olam Haba*) and is disqualified from being a kosher witness.”

In *Parshas Shoftim* (17:11), the Torah writes that we are obligated to listen to the *beis din hagadol*. A person who disregards their rulings and decisions transgresses a *lo sa’aseh*, negative commandment — of *lo sasur*, the prohibition of not straying [from the directives of Torah scholars]. The Chofetz Chaim writes that this also obligates us to keep the entire *Torah Sheb’alPeh*, the Oral Torah, as well as the interpretations of the Torah and the enactments taught and instituted by our Sages. The Chofetz Chaim then writes, based on the *Sefer Hachinuch*, that this also obligates us to follow the decisions of the *Gedolei Yisrael* — the Torah leaders of each and every generation, including our present-day Torah leaders (*Sefer Hamitzvos Hakatzar, lo sa’aseh 158*).

Chazal say that whoever follows the counsel of the elders will not err (*Shemos Rabbah* 8:3).

Rav Chaim of Volozhin writes (*Ruach Chaim perek 6, mishna 9*) that the answer to every dilemma can be found in the Torah, and one who takes his advice from the Torah will surely succeed and not stumble. It follows, then, that the Torah leaders and the Torah scholars, who are the ones who are properly equipped to render *da'as Torah* on all matters, should be the ones consulted when faced with a quandary.

We can add to this what one of today's esteemed *Roshei Yeshivos* said: "Considering the *Gedolei Torah's* vast Torah knowledge, their brilliance, profound integrity, and their devotion to *Am Yisrael*, not following their *da'as Torah* on all matters is nothing less than arrogance and utter foolishness!" He added, "Who else will you follow? Party leaders and politicians whose agendas are power, prestige and monetary gain?"

Rav Doron Gold (*Gadlus Hakadmonim*, page 80) brings the following statement from Rav Yosef Liss *zt"l*: The main cause for the downfall of the *maskilim*, the "enlightened" Torah renegades, was that they did not practice the following dictum: "*Chazal* say (*Shabbos* 112b) that if we relate to the earlier generations as to angels, then we can consider ourselves humans, but if they are just humans, then we are simply animals!" The *maskilim* viewed the great people of the past and of *Tanach* as normal, regular people. This caused them to totally misinterpret the Torah, and to have a complete disregard for the authentic Torah viewpoint and directives. We have to realize, said Rav Liss, that this dictum is one of the principles of our faith, perhaps even more fundamental than all the thirteen principles of faith!

Perhaps we can apply this idea to having the proper appreciation for the greatness of our *Gedolim*, and for how small and puny we are

compared to them. If our Torah leaders and authorities are angels then we are human beings, but if they are human beings...

The Gemara in *Gittin* (57a) writes that Yoshka Hanotzri, *yimach shmo*, is being punished in *Gehinnom* in boiling excrement, because whoever disrespects the Torah sages is punished this way. For in addition to his infamous, revolting sin of starting a new religion, he was also guilty of disrespecting the Torah sages. The Maharal (*Netzach Yisrael* 5) explains that even though he persuaded people to leave Judaism and become heretics, and was guilty of *avodah zarah*, nevertheless, disrespecting the sages is a form of heresy, and is even worse than *avodah zarah*! (Let us add to this that his misdeeds were also what caused terrible persecution for the Jewish Nation for over a thousand years, as most cruelty towards the Jews was based on ideas that came from his religion and his followers — yet still, his punishment is for the disrespect he exhibited to the Torah sages!). It would seem from this that besides for disrespecting sages being worse than idolatry, it is probably a root cause for it as well.

A number of years ago, there was a Rabbi who came up with a “loophole” to legitimize a *mamzer*, a child born of certain forbidden relationships. Most Torah leaders protested this vehemently. Rav Moshe Feinstein *zt”l* was asked if it was permissible to show this Rav respect in extenuating circumstances. He responded, “No!” — but not because of the *heter* for the *mamzer*, but because this Rabbi had been disrespectful to another Rabbi! [When that other Rabbi was applying for a Rabbinical position, the first Rabbi tried disqualifying him because of old age. Rav Moshe said, “We never heard of a Rav being disqualified because of old age!”] [As heard from R.M.Y., who heard it firsthand.]

Rav Dessler writes in a letter to someone (*Michtav Mi'Eliyahu*, volume 1, page 75), "... *Gedolei Yisroel* — the Torah leaders of our generation — are very great. They act solely for the sake of Heaven, without any personal or side interests. They are geniuses of mind and are exceedingly generous. When they make halachic rulings or other decisions 'Hashem's Presence' is with them (*Hashem nitzav ba'adas keil*). It seems that you think that the *Gedolei Yisrael* made a serious mistake, *chas v'shalom*. It is impossible for such a thing to happen with the Jewish Nation. It is forbidden to hear such talk and, all the more so, to speak this way..."

Rav Dessler continues, "I knew some of the *Gedolim*, and I was present at some of their meetings. Even to people of little understanding such as myself, their cleverness and foresight was astounding. With their deep and penetrating genius, they saw to the depths of every matter. For us simple people, it was impossible to grasp their clear-minded decisions properly.

Furthermore, it was evident to anyone who witnessed their meetings, that when they discussed and decided on public matters, it was done totally for the sake of Heaven, and with a tremendous sense of responsibility. It was truly an awesome sight and nothing could compare to it. It was obvious that the Divine Presence of Hashem, the *Shechinah*, rested on their endeavors, and that they had special Divine inspiration (*ruach hakodesh*) the entire time..."

Rav Dessler concluded, "*Chazal* teach us that we need to accept the words of the Torah leaders and authorities, even if they would tell us that left is right. Certainly, one should not say, 'They must have erred, since "little me" sees clearly. As a matter of fact, with my own senses, I can say that they are wrong.' Rather, my senses are to be negated

in light of their genius, clarity, and their unique, Heavenly-inspired success (*siyatta diShmaya*). There is a rule that a Rabbinical court may not dispute a different court that is greater than them in wisdom and number of members. Furthermore, even without that, what our senses perceive as fact can quite possibly be our imagination or our mind playing tricks on us; perhaps it is the *yetzer hara* confusing us. This is the Torah's definition of *emunas chachamim*, faith in the sages ... A lack of nullification to the *Gedolim* is the root of all sin and destruction, may Heaven have mercy. All the merits in the world do not equal the source of all good — *emunas chachamim*.”¹

Rav Chaim Shmulevitz quotes from a *midrash* that *Klal Yisrael* without *Gedolim* is like a bird without wings, which can't accomplish anything. This happens when the Jews do not respect the *Gedolim* properly; it diminishes their ability to lead the Nation².

The Gemara writes in *Shabbos* (119b), that there is no cure for someone who disparages a *talmid chacham*. The Gemara writes in *Sanhedrin* (99b) that disparaging a *talmid chacham* is heresy! The Chofetz Chaim writes in *sefer Chofetz Chaim* (8:4) that this does not just mean the *Gedolim* of two hundred years ago; rather, it applies even in present times regarding anyone who is qualified to render *halachic* rulings and toils in Torah.

There is a rule that *middah tovah merubah* — reward outweighs punishment by far. From seeing the horrible and devastating results of

1. See also *Ramban, Parshas Shoftim* 17:11 and *Biur HaGra, Mishlei* 16:10; also see *Sefer Hachinuch, mitzvos* 78 and 496, and *Drashos HaRan, drush* 11, pgs. 436-440.

2. When this happens, Heaven forbid, it is a fulfillment of the worst situation possible — that which is mentioned in *Chagigah* 14a, see there; *Sichos Mussar, ma'amar* 61, page 258.

disrespecting *talmidei chachamim*, we can be sure that the benefit of respecting all *talmidei chachamim*, and especially the *Gedolim*, is beyond words. By giving them the honor they deserve, and by following their *da'as Torah* loyally, we will gain tremendous good in this world and the next. If only we would at least commit ourselves to avoid making “comments” about *Rabbanim*, or to listening to such talk, we would see tremendous *siyatta diShmaya* and *brachah* in everything we do.

Rav Avigdor Miller, *zt”l*, writes³ that after the murder of Gedaliah ben Achikam the Jews fled to Egypt. This was against the prophecy of Yirmiyahu Hanavi. To justify their disobedience, they claimed that the “politician” Baruch ben Neriah had swayed the old *navi*. Rav Miller points out that this is, in fact, a standard method of evading the duty of following the *da'as Torah* of the *Gedolim*. [In the footnotes we bring two stories that are examples of the frightening Heavenly punishment for disrespecting Torah scholars⁴].

3. *The Torah Nation*, chapter 1, number 9, page 16 (new edition).

4. The following is a story from the *sefer Chut Hameshulash* (page 247) and from the *sefer Otzros HaTorah, Parshas B'ha'aloscha* (page 117), which illustrate the aforementioned point.

In Slavita, Russia, there were two brothers, *tzaddikim* and *talmidei chachamim*, who owned a printing business. They published a beautiful *Shas (Talmud)* and received exclusive rights for printing the *Shas* for ten years. This patent was signed by many *Gedolim*, including the *Gadol Hador*, Rebbe Akiva Eiger *zt”l*. Before the ten years were up, Rebbe Akiva Eiger decided that under those particular circumstances, according to *halachah*, it was permissible for another printing house to publish a new *Shas*. He thus gave permission to the printing house in Vilna (the Rum family) to print a *Shas* of their own. The brothers from the Slavita printing house were very upset, and they accused Rebbe Akiva Eiger of deciding without checking into the pertinent facts. They also claimed that he was

already old, and that his decision was based on his son telling him what to say. Besides for this being a terrible insult to Rebbe Akiva Eiger, it was totally untrue. When Rebbe Akiva Eiger found out what they said, he stood up and proclaimed, “Hashem, I teach people Your Will as I derive it from Your Torah; these people are undermining Your Torah. For my personal honor I can forgive, but Your honor cannot be forgiven, and so too, for my son’s honor, I cannot forgive!” He also wrote a letter to the Slavita printers, saying that they could not be forgiven for this.

That very night, a worker in the Slavita printing company took his life by hanging himself in the printing house. The *maskilim* (members of the “enlightenment”) were only too happy to go to the authorities and accuse the Slavita printers of killing him (they were upset about all the *sifrei kodesh* that they printed). The Russians jumped at the opportunity to persecute Jews, and had the printers locked up in jail with hardened criminals under terrible conditions for three long years. Each and every day they interrogated them about the incident. After three years they issued their verdict: They would need to run the gauntlet and be given 1,500 beatings by wooden clubs, as they walked between two rows of club-wielding soldiers, 250 in each row. They would need to pass back and forth three times, with just their *yarmulkes* on their heads, and their hands tied. If they survived, they would be sent to exile in Siberia for life.

They ran the gauntlet, and during the terrible ordeal one of the brothers dropped his *yarmulke*. In his great *tzidkus*, piety, he stood still despite the extra beatings he endured, until one of the soldiers returned it to his head. The brothers survived the gauntlet with some permanent injuries, and were sent to Siberia. Their father, who was also involved in the story, died shortly after, because of the terrible punishments his sons had to endure. After scores of efforts on behalf of the two brothers, they were transferred from Siberia to a somewhat easier jail in Moscow. After being in jail for about twenty years (including the first three years), the Czar died, after which they were freed.

(At one point, one of the brothers asked Rebbe Akiva Eiger why they were punished so severely — after all, they were also *talmidei chachamim* and their

Although it's axiomatic that we follow *da'as Torah* faithfully, perhaps, by sharing some points on the matter, we will increase our faithfulness to the *Gedolim*, to the *Roshei Yeshivah* and to the *Rabbanim*. The Ramban in *Parshas Shoftim* (17:11) writes that the sages will not err, because Hashem will protect them from erring. The Vilna Gaon in *Mishlei* (16:10) makes the same point.

The *Sefer Hachinuch* (mitzvos 78 and 496) writes that even if they *do* err, Hashem still wants us to follow them, so that there will be Torah leadership and unity.

honor was terribly diminished. Rebbe Akiva Eiger, the quintessential *anav*, humble man, responded by saying, "I am the *kavod haTorah* of this generation."

All along, as the brothers went through their torturous ordeal, they repeated over and over that this was a punishment from Hashem which they deserved, as the *Mishnah* in *Avos* teaches (2:10), "Warm yourself with the fire of the *chachamim*; however, take care not to be burned by their coals, for their bite is the bite of a fox, and their sting is like a scorpion's; they can also be compared to a certain snake which cannot be charmed, and all their words are fiery coals."

In the *sefer Otzros HaTorah, Parshas Devarim* (page 18) as well as in the *sefer Sh'al Avicha*, (volume 1, page 80), the following story is told. The *Ridvaz* was the *Rav* of *Slutzk*. One time, the five members of the board brought in someone else to serve as an unofficial *Rav*, without permission from the official *Rav* — the *Ridvaz*. In front of the congregation, and in the presence of *Rav Shalom* of *Eisheshok* and *Rav Isser Zalman Meltzer*, the *Ridvaz* proclaimed: "They hired a new *Rav* to start up with me. *Ribbono shel Olam*, if I would be *Yaakov Dovid* the shoemaker, would they have grievances against me? If I was a carpenter, would they find fault with me? Rather, it is because I learn Your Torah; therefore, please stand by my side." Then he announced that those five people would not live out the year. Sadly, they all died within a few months.

Rav Shimshon Pincus, zt"l, (*Nefesh Shimshon, Torah V'kinyaneha*, page 323) quotes what Rav Saadiah Gaon writes regarding prophets, that since they are in a leadership position, it is evidence that Hashem put them there purposely — because they are qualified and capable. They will also be totally loyal to their duty, with complete honesty and integrity. The same thing applies to the *Gedolim* and the Torah authorities, says Rav Pincus.

It is well known that people who help and respect *Gedolei Yisroel*, Rabbanim and *talmidei chachamim* merit great *brachah*, *hatzlachah* and *siyatta diShmaya*. Furthermore, it is one of the best *segulos* for raising good children who will be a source of *nachas*. How fortunate we are that Hashem gave us Torah leaders and *Rabbanim* who are the eyes of the nation, and who selflessly devote their time and energy, day and night, to our wellbeing and success, in this world and in the next.

THE EIGHTH PRINCIPLE

EMUNAS CHACHAMIM (FAITH IN TORAH SCHOLARS) - PART TWO

The eighth principle of *emunah* is *Torah min haShamayim*. Hashem gave the Jews the *Torah Shebichsav* and the *Torah Sheb'al Peh*. Included in this fundamental is the awareness that the *Gedolei Torah* are the guardians and teachers of the Torah. They are the ones who pass the Oral Torah down from generation to generation, which explains the meaning of the Written Torah. They can also make enactments and prohibitions to safeguard the continuity of the Torah. So too, in every generation the *Gedolei Torah* are the ones who guide *Klal Yisrael*. They maintain the Torah attitudes and atmosphere for *Klal Yisrael*, with their teaching and their enactments¹.

One good way to increase our *emunas chachamim* is by reading stories about *Gedolim*. When we see their amazing *middos*, *ahavas Yisrael*, honesty, integrity and pleasantness; when we read about their great perception and insight into human nature, coupled with their tremendous and palpable level of *yiras Shamayim* and sheer genius, this will surely bolster our *emunas chachamim* significantly. This will enable us to deepen our commitment to listen to them and trust them

1. See *Sefer Hachinuch*, mitzvah 496, and *Sefer Hamitzvos Hakatzar*, *lo sa'aaseh* 158, and *Matnas Chaim Kinyanim*, *kinyan emunas chachamim*.

in their roles as guardians and teachers of Torah and *ratzon Hashem*, Hashem's Will. Furthermore, we will get a *chizuk* in *emunas chachamim* when we see their obvious *siyatta diShmaya*, *ruach hakodesh* and the miracles that Hashem allows them to effect².

Let me share an observation on this matter. Let us try to remember a time when we experienced a spiritual high. Maybe it was at a wedding or a *chuppah*; maybe a Simchas Torah or a Purim. We felt so connected to Hashem, so far removed from *taivos olam hazeh*, the desires of this world. We had such a positive feeling about ourselves and others. That is a mere glimpse into the everyday feelings of *Gedolei Yisrael!*

Let us remember a time when we were extremely focused and able to think deeply and analytically in a very calm way. Maybe while saying a *shiur* or *drashah*, or after learning a Torah topic for a long time. That can give a glimpse into a *Gadol's* regular depth and breadth of knowledge, coupled with unusual concentration, focus and complete peace of mind.

Let me share a few stories that come to mind to serve as examples of this, and to serve as a source of inspiration.

The *Midrash Rabbah* (*Eikev* 3:3) tells about the extreme reliability and trustworthiness of the holy *Tanna*, Rebbe Pinchas ben Yair. He was once asked to watch a small amount of barley for someone, but the person forgot about it and left town. Rebbe Pinchas ben Yair planted and harvested the barley and eventually, it accumulated into a tremendous amount of produce. Seven years later the owner finally came back to town — and Rebbe Pinchas ben Yair gave him a fortune

2. See the *sefer Chayei Olam* for more elaboration and stories on the greatness of *Chazal*.

of produce! It's amazing to what extent he got involved in a mundane matter with such exertion and appreciation for the potential value of another person's assets.

Rav Efraim Wachsman tells the over following story: There is one *daf* in *Shas* (*Bava Kama* 77a) with an unusually large amount of *Tosfos*; why is this? Many years ago, wicked gentiles put a group of the holy *Ba'alei Tosfos* in jail and told them that they were going to kill them the following morning. The *Ba'alei Tosfos* were concerned about who would transmit all their Torah to future generations. They therefore cut themselves and, with their blood, wrote and wrote the entire night. That is the amazing secret of those long *Tosfos*. The *Gedolim* of every generation were totally devoted and committed, with great personal self-sacrifice, to pass on the holy *mesorah* — our Torah heritage — with the greatest levels of accuracy.

Rav Yitzchak Nosson Kupershtok, *zt"l*, author of *Me'oros Nosson* and one of the famous *tzaddikim* of *Batei Brodie, Yerushalayim*, told me the following story. A rather simple Yeshiva *bachur* once asked a question during the *shiur* of the great Rav Isser Zalman Meltzer, *zt"l*. Rav Isser Zalman said, "Such a strong question refutes the whole *shiur*," and he stopped the *shiur* in the middle. Later, a close *talmid* asked him, "There seems to be a few obvious answers; why did the *Rosh Yeshivah* stop the *shiur*?" Rav Isser Zalman replied, "You're right, but there was a stranger sitting in the *shiur*, and this is the first time this *bachur* ever asked me a question. I therefore assumed that the man was a potential father-in-law checking out this boy, who knew he was being rated. I therefore wanted him to make a good impression." In fact, shortly afterward the man took this *bachur* for a son-in-law. I later heard from Rav Shmuel Tefilinski, *shlita*, that he never heard this story, but all he knew was that

so-and-so had a reputation that he had once stumped Rav Isser Zalman during a *shiur*...

One Thursday, the son of the Alter of Kelm, Rav Nachum Velvel Ziv, *zt"l*, felt that his end was near. He was quite certain he would be *niftar* the following day, on Friday. Since his sister, the illustrious Nechama Leba Broyde, had trouble walking and Friday is a hectic day, he arranged in advance for a wagon driver to bring his sister back and forth from his own *levayah* — and he paid for it in advance!³

Rav Yeruchim Levovitz, *zt"l*, the famous *Mirrer Mashgiach*, was once traveling on a speeding train. Suddenly, one of his gloves fell out of the window. Immediately, he grabbed the second glove and threw it out the window, saying, “Let the finder enjoy a whole set.”

A few students at Mercaz Harav were brutally murdered by Arab terrorists. I was learning at the time in the Lakewood Yeshivah. That Friday, The Rosh Yeshiva Rav Yerucham Olshin spoke about the terrible tragedy in his *Chumash shiur*, shedding bitter tears. I don't think I will ever forget that display of *ahavas Yisrael* and *nosei b'ol im chaveiro*, feeling another Jew's pain.

My *Mashgiach* in the Bayonne Yeshivah, Rav Meir Birnbaum, told over the following story (he heard it from Rav Meir Stern, *Rosh Yeshivah* of Passaic, who heard it directly from the protagonist): A man brought his son to Rav Chaim Kanievsky, *shlita*, for his *upsherin*. Rav Chaim said that the boy seemed too young for his *upsherin*. The father explained

3. This amazing story is brought by Rav Reuven Schmelczer in his book *The Heart of Emunah* (page 179). He heard it from his *Rebbe*, Rav Moshe Shapiro, *zt"l*, who heard it from his father Rav Meir, *zt"l*. Rav Meir was raised by Rav Nachum Velvel. Even though at the time of this story Rav Meir Shapiro was just eleven years old, it made a lifetime impression on him!

that the doctors had given his son a very short time to live, and he was hoping this would give him *zechuyos*, merits. Rav Chaim brought the boy to his house and gave him some wine from his *siyum* on *kol haTorah kulah*, the entire Torah. He told the father to bring his son back when he turned three. By the time the next examination arrived, the doctors could not believe their eyes — the disease had completely disappeared!

Let us strengthen ourselves in our *emunas chachamim*, *Torah Sheb'al Peh*, in the *Torah* educators and the *Gedolei Torah* of every generation. This will help us overcome the trials we face during the *ikvasa d'mishicha* when this is a tremendous challenge. *B'ezras Hashem*, this will enable us to greet Moshiach with *emunah sheleimah*.

THE NINTH PRINCIPLE

THE ETERNAL TORAH (PART ONE)

The clarion call of every Jew throughout the generations is, “I believe with complete faith that our holy Torah will never be changed, nor will it ever be replaced by a new or different Torah.” This is the ninth fundamental of our *emunah* as taught by the Rambam, and as brought in the thirteen *Ani Ma’amins*.

Three thousand years ago and some, Hashem gave us the Torah at Har Sinai. The word “Torah” means instruction or guidance, and true to its name, it is an all-encompassing guide for every aspect of life. The Torah teaches us our obligations and the required attitudes in all spectrums of life. This *Ani Ma’amin* states that the exact Torah given then is the very same Torah we have today, and it is the Torah that will always be.

Hashem gave us the *Aseres Hadibros* on Har Sinai, and for the next forty years in the *Midbar*, Hashem taught Moshe Rabbeinu the entire Torah. Moshe then taught it to *Klal Yisrael*. *Chazal* teach that, in fact, the entire Torah was given in some form at Har Sinai.

In practice, this means that the *Chamishah Chumshei Torah*, *Nach*, *Talmud Bavli* and *Yerushalmi*, the *Midrash*, *Rambam*, *Ramban*, *Rashba*, *Rashi* and the *Tur*, the *Shulchan Aruch*, Rav Akiva Eiger’s writings, the *Pnei Yehoshua* and the Vilna Gaon’s *sefarim*, the *Mishnah Berurah* and all the other accepted great Torah works are all *Toras Hashem*. In truth, all Torah discussions and explanations that are in accordance with the

mesorah's methods of learning are considered *Toras Hashem* as taught by *Chazal*. *Toras Hashem* was taught to Moshe Rabbeinu and transmitted in its complete form throughout the generations until today.

Let us make a very important observation. The Torah teaches every aspect of life. Since Hashem taught us that the Torah will never be changed, it follows that the words of the Torah will guide us in all matters for all time. In every generation, including today, with all the new inventions and newly revealed knowledge, the Torah is still the complete guide to all aspects of our lives.

This is an amazing point, and it is very important to internalize this well. With all the progress in the world, many new questions arise, and we need to turn to the *Gedolei Torah* to guide us in each and every situation. With their complete absorption in the toil of Torah, they are the ones who are able to guide us in how to apply the words of the eternal Torah in every situation.

The Mishnah in *Avos* (*Perek 5*) teaches us, “*Hafoch ba v’hafoch bah dekulah bah*, delve into it over and over again, for everything is contained in it.” Rabbeinu Yonah (brought in *Orchos Yosher, os hei*) writes that *hafoch* means “review.” We need to constantly review the words of the Torah, for all the wisdom of the world is included in it. All matters of the world can be found in the deep waters of the Torah. The Ramban in his preface to *Chumash* writes that Shlomo Hamelech knew all the wisdom of the world, and he learned it all from the words of the Torah.

Our Torah is the *Toras Chaim*, the instruction for life. The *Chovos Halevavos* writes (*Shaar Habechinah 4*) that the Torah teaches us how to have a good and successful *Olam Hazeh*, besides for it being the guide to acquiring *Olam Haba*. The Maggid of Dubno famously writes that the

litmus test of whether a person is keeping the mitzvos properly is if it is pleasurable and flows well with life (*haftorah, Sefer Vayikra*). By learning all the topics of the Torah well, the *Gedolei Torah* can become well-versed in all there is to know about all the matters of the world.

There is also the concept called *sod Hashem l'yerei'av*, Hashem imparts His secrets to those who fear Him. This is a reference to the great Torah scholars – why are they referred to as the ones who fear Hashem? It can be explained as follows. We find that we recite the *bracha, asher chalak mi'chachmaso l'yerei'av* — “He imparts from His wisdom to those who fear Him” on great Torah scholars. The *Nefesh Hachaim* (4:4,5) elaborates about how *yiras Shamayim* is the “storage house” for true Torah greatness; thus, we call a *Gadol baTorah* a *yarei* — one who fears Hashem.

Furthermore, the true and higher level of *yiras Shamayim* is *yiras haromemus* — fear and awe of the grandeur of Hashem. This includes a sensory awareness and closeness to Hashem, which includes an understanding of many of Hashem’s deep secrets, so to speak. Thus, the *Gedolei Torah* have a keen understanding of the deep secrets of the world and its inner workings.

Another important point to make is that *Chazal* tell us (see *Nefesh Hachaim* 4:10), “*Histakeil b'Oraisa u'bara alma*,” meaning that Hashem looked into the Torah and with it, created the world. The Torah is the blueprint of the world (*ibid.*). Furthermore, the Vilna Gaon writes that everything that will transpire in the world until the end of time is hinted to in the words of the Torah, down to the minutest details¹. Based on this, it is understandable that those who spend their lives

1. Brought in *sefer Yud Gimmel Ikrim im biur hakdamos v'she'arim*, page 147, *yesod ha'asiri*.

immersed in the depths of Torah are knowledgeable and well-versed in all the wisdom of the world, and their advice on every subject is full of brilliance and clarity.

Rav Chaim Kanievsky in his *sefer Orchos Yosher (os hei)* brings many sources that underscore that *Gedolei Torah* are privy to vast amounts of knowledge and to many secrets in all areas. Besides for their otherworldly level of Torah knowledge, they know a tremendous amount in many “worldly” subjects, such as science, medicine, finances, social intricacies and much more.

The Chazon Ish, on various occasions, wrote exact diagrams for surgeries on the brain, heart and more. Even after great doctors had given up, he guided them with surprising clarity (see *sefer Ma’aseh Ish* by R’ Tzvi Yabrov²). Throughout the ages, *Gedolei Torah* were known to have a clear grasp on many thorny issues in all areas of life.

“*Toras Hashem temimah* — Hashem’s Torah is complete” (*Tehillim* 19). Of course, there are many different levels of *da’as Torah* and Torah-based knowledge. But each person, according to his level of Torah knowledge, can glean a tremendous amount of clarity and wisdom in all areas, solely through their connection to true Torah study. The true *talmid chacham* also has the clarity and integrity to send people to others for their advice when necessary³.

2. See *Ma’aseh Ish* volume 1, page 208 (5759 edition) and volume 3, pages 232 and 234 (5760 edition).

3. We do not always merit Torah scholars of the Chazon Ish’s caliber. However, the point we are making is that Torah scholars have tremendous insight and receive great *siyata diShmaya*, Divine assistance, regarding countless topics across the spectrum. Furthermore when informed about the main points on any important topic, they are far more perceptive than many experts in the field. Additionally,

The more we immerse ourselves in Torah, and the more we follow the advice of the *Gedolei Torah*, the more we will find clarity in navigating the often-confusing maze of this world.

we have countless writings and traditions from *gedolei Torah* throughout the ages, which illuminate for us many topics even in today's times.

THE NINTH PRINCIPLE

THE ETERNAL TORAH (PART TWO)

The ninth *Ani Ma'amin* is that our Torah will never be changed, nor will we be given a new or different Torah. Included in this is that in the past 3,300 years, since the grand revelation at Sinai, no one made any changes to our Torah and got away with it, nor did Hashem introduce any changes to our Torah since then. So too, no changes were introduced and accepted in any of the teachings of the Torah, or in how we follow the mitzvos of the Torah.

This *ikar* still applies today, and no one can come and make changes or additions to the Torah.

We can also include in this *ikar* that the Torah will be binding and relevant always and forever. Not only will there never be any changes, but the Torah's relevance will never diminish, *chas v'shalom*.

An important point pertaining to this *ikar* is that *Klal Yisrael* and the *Gedolim* have always been wary of any innovations or changes in the accepted ways of learning Torah and doing mitzvos, and even in Torah attitudes. The Chasam Sofer famously commented, "*Chadash assur min haTorah* — New things [a play on words on the halachic term of *chadash* applying to new grains] are forbidden from the Torah."

Although certain new ideas and nuances in *avodas Hashem* and in learning styles were introduced over the years by great leaders of

Klal Yisrael, on the whole these innovations faced fierce opposition by other *Gedolim*, and at the very least a very suspicious attitude toward them until they were finally accepted (this topic is beyond the scope of this book. It goes without saying that certainly no changes were made to any mitzvos or *Torah* obligations, *chas v'shalom*).

It goes without saying that *Torah Shebichsav* is transmitted very carefully to ensure that no words are changed, *chas v'shalom*. For example, *halachah* requires a *sofer* writing a *sefer Torah* to read from a different *sefer* as he writes, and not write by heart. *Torah Sheb'al Peh*, too, is transmitted with utmost care and accuracy. Even in recent generations there was a lot of stress placed on repeating the exact phrases said by earlier *Torah* giants. The way we do mitzvos is given over very specifically, and even *minhagim*, customs and traditions that are not *halachah* per se are guarded carefully.

This adds to our confidence that our *Torah* has stayed the same for the past 3,300 years since *Kabbalas HaTorah*, when two million Jews received the *Torah* from Hashem.

One of the most prominent *Torah* families in America is the Shustal family. Many of the family members are great *Torah* leaders. It is told that one of the children of Rav Simcha Shustal, *zt"l*, the late *Rosh Yeshivah* of the Stamford Yeshivah, was once at his grandmother's house on Chanukah. He was surprised to see that she used cottonseed oil and not the *halachically* preferred olive oil for the Chanukah *menorah*. When he asked about it, she replied, "Zeidy said that since in Europe this type was used because of the rampant poverty there, it's worth continuing to use it even now, when olive oil is easily accessible. Why? Because if we make changes even for the better, who knows which changes will be made for the worse?"

The Chofetz Chaim writes in his *sefarim* about people who were lax in mitzvah performance, and even ridiculed the Torah, claiming that it was, *chas v'shalom*, outdated. In the beginning of his seforim *Taharas Yisrael* and *Nidchei Yisrael* (43, 44) he discusses at length various points that show the reliability and absolute truthfulness of our Torah and our *emunah*, and the eternal *kedushah* of the Torah. One strong point he makes is that we have a powerful *mesorah*. From Har Sinai until today, each generation transmitted the Torah with much care. Each and every generation was *moser nefesh*, sacrificed much, to learn the Torah thoroughly, and to keep all the mitzvos at any and every expense. Many gave their lives to keep the Torah. This clearly demonstrates that all these people had no doubts whatsoever about the truth of the Torah — that it is the exact words of the Creator and Controller of the world, and that it is the source of life in this world and the next. It is therefore obvious that it is a true and eternal Torah.

Rav Friedman of Ramat Shlomo told over the following story: In the ghetto during World War II, despite the terrible conditions and starvation, a certain Jew sat and studied Torah diligently. He was immersed in a different world, in the sweet words of Abaye and Rava. Suddenly, he realized sadly that a whole page of the Gemara *Eiruv* was missing. He tried remembering it by heart and was able to recall almost the entire *daf*. However, there was one *Tosfos* which, try as he might, he just could not remember, and it bothered him terribly. He went searching for a different Gemara *Eiruv*. Finally, to his excitement, he found one — but the price was one week's worth of bread! He happily agreed, trading his earthly sustenance for the Divinely sweet and otherworldly energizing words of Torah.

Throughout the years, Jews have given their all to be able to immerse themselves in Torah learning. The Torah was given over with exactitude,

every word transmitted with extreme precision, great love and a deep sense of responsibility. The Chayei Adam wrote in the introduction to his *sefer* that in former times parents were never concerned with their son's future livelihood. Rather their sole concern was for him to develop into a true *talmid chacham*!

Klal Yisrael never allowed any changes to the Torah and mitzvos, and the Jews always devoted their lives to *limud haTorah* and to keeping all of the Torah's mitzvos with great self-sacrifice and exactness. By contemplating this, our *emunah* that – *zos haTorah lo tehei muchlefos*, this is the Torah, and it will never be changed – will be strengthened, *be'ezras Hashem*.

THE TENTH PRINCIPLE

HASHGACHAH PRATIS, DIVINE PROVIDENCE (PART ONE)

The tenth of the thirteen fundamentals of faith is *yedias Hashem* — Hashem’s knowledge of all the world’s events — and *hashgachas Hashem* — Hashem’s complete management of the world (Rambam, *Peirush Hamishnayos, Sanhedrin, Perek Chelek*¹).

This means that Hashem knows all of our actions and thoughts all the time (Ani Ma’amin, siddur); He knows everything — past, present and future. Although this is fairly well known, it requires constant review and internalization (see Mesilas Yeshtarim, hakdamah).

A number of *seforim* that elaborate on the *ikrei emunah* (see *Da’as Emunah*) place the focus of this *ikar* on Hashem’s management of the world. This is called *hashgachah*, which we will now discuss. For the most part, we will go with the approach generally known as the approach of the Vilna Gaon and the Baal Shem Tov².

In the *siddur Ishei Yisrael* (otherwise known as *Siddur HaGra*), in the commentary of the *Siach Yitzchak* on *Hodu*, there is a very fundamental

1. See *Ani Ma’amin, siddur*; *Da’as Emunah* by Rav Rakowsky; and *Sefer Yud Gimmel Ikrim (Hakdamos V’she’arim)*.

2. See *Ya’aros Dvash*, volume 2, *drush* 6, in the name of the Ramban.

and most amazing discussion pertaining to our topic. Let us bring some of his points.

At times, the *yetzer hara* attempts to confound us with gloomy thoughts: “What have I accomplished in life, and what future in *Olam Haba* can I hope for?” When faced with these thoughts, a wise person takes comfort in the fact that he is a descendant of the great Avos, our Forefathers, and that he is a member of the Chosen Nation. This, in and of itself, is a great success and deserves a great afterlife. In a similar vein, a great *tzaddik* once wrote in his will: “I feel completely inadequate; however, I base my hopes on one thing, that at least I am a member of Hashem’s special nation and have always stuck to the path of *emunah*.”

However, at times a person is confronted with a terrifying thought: *Who knows, maybe I am not even deserving of the title ‘Jew’?* Therefore we must understand: what is, in fact, the basic criteria, the identifying characteristics of a Jew? What distinguishes a Jew from, *l’havdil*, a non-Jew, and as such, demands him to be extra attentive and committed?

The *Siach Yitzchak* answers that there are two qualifications that bond a person to the Jewish Nation. The first is believing in *hashgachah pratis*, Divine Providence. This means to believe that Hashem runs every aspect of the world in a very specific, purposeful and detailed way. The second is accepting Hashem’s master plan happily, and to be willing to suffer for Hashem’s sake, if necessary.

This is an amazing revelation — that the defining factors of the Jewish identity are believing in *hashgachah pratis* and being satisfied with Hashem’s master plan. The *Siach Yitzchak* goes on to bring sources for this.

The *Siach Yitzchak* cites a very fundamental comment of the Ramban at the end of *Parshas Bo*. The Ramban discusses how the miracles of *Yetzias Mitzrayim* provide proof of all aspects of *emunah*. He establishes that open miracles are proof that, in general, a person is surrounded all the time by what are called “hidden miracles.” The Ramban then makes a remarkable statement. He says that everything that happens to a person in his life — health, longevity, financial stability and so on — are all hidden miracles. This knowledge is the foundation of the entire Torah. The entire Torah revolves around this point! This means that there are no random occurrences; rather, whatever happens in the world and to us, throughout our entire lives, is Hashem’s on the scene orchestrating, controlling and actually doing everything. It is all connected to and based on our level of commitment to Torah and our observance of the mitzvos. Even when an incident seems totally based on normal explainable phenomena, it is really the Hand of Hashem, concealed by “normal” circumstances. The Ramban says that if one does not believe this, he has no connection with *Toras Moshe Rabbeinu!* The Ramban in his introduction to *Iyov* also elaborates on this³.

From here we see that *emunah* in *hashgachah pratis* is an essential and hallmark quality of a Jew. The *Siach Yitzchak* continues with a second

3. Although it is popular to explain that this *Ramban* is a source that even what one would call *tevah*, so to speak natural phenomena (e.g., a candle burning or the force of gravity), is actually hidden miracles (*nissim nistarim*), Rav Yosef Jacobs *shlita* wrote an amazing *sefer* entitled *Niflaos Ha’Emunah*, which explains otherwise. He writes that after learning this and other pieces of the *Ramban* well, it became clear that the Ramban does, in fact, maintain that besides for *nissim nistarim*, hidden miracles, Hashem has a different system called *tevah*. Rav Jacobs quotes that the Chazon Ish defines *tevah* as Hashem’s constant and consistent *Ratzon*, Will.

source for this point. He cites the *Orchos Chaim L'haRosh* (25), who says as follows:

“Trust in and rely on Hashem. Believe in *hashgachah pratis*. By doing so, you will accomplish with your heart what is called *yichud ha'shalem* [internalizing Hashem's Oneness and the fact that He alone does everything in the entire world]. One does this by believing and internalizing that Hashem's 'eyes' are gazing everywhere on earth, and His 'eyes' are observing all the ways of all people. Furthermore, Hashem discerns what is in a person's heart, and He analyzes man's kidneys [the kidneys are the seat of man's counsel].”

The *Rosh* continues, “If one does not believe that Hashem is the one who took the Jews out of *Mitzrayim* [meaning that He manages the world with *hashgachah pratis*], then it must be that he also does not accept the actual existence of Hashem at all [which we were commanded to believe from the *pasuk*, “*Anochi Hashem Elokecha*,” the first of the *Aseres Ha'dibros*]. If so, there is no *yichud shalem*. For this [*emunah* in *hashgachah pratis*] distinguishes the uniqueness of the Jews from above all the other nations of the world, and this is the foundation of the entire Torah!”

Based on this, says the *Siach Yitzchak*, we are obligated to constantly internalize *emunah* in *hashgachah pratis*. Similarly, we must be especially careful to be honest in monetary matters, which is contingent upon living with the awareness of *hashgachah pratis*. Finally, we need to improve our Shabbos observance, because Shabbos is a reminder of *Yetzias Mitzrayim*, which represents Hashem's massive revelation of *hashgachah pratis* in our lives.

The other basic, defining characteristic of a Jew is accepting Hashem's master plan without complaints, and to be ready and willing to suffer

for Hashem's sake, if necessary. This finds its source in the words of the Ramban (*Devarim* 7:6), where he writes that Hashem chose *Klal Yisrael* to be His special Nation. This is because the Jews have this very quality — that they are ready to suffer for His sake. In fact, our history is replete with countless stories of Jews who gave their all for Hashem in every way.

It would seem that these two qualities highlight a Jew's special, real and personal relationship with Hashem and His Will, as expressed in His Torah.

The Chazon Ish, *zt"l*, told his *talmid*, Rav Torchin, that the difference between great people and simple people is that great people constantly talk to Hashem. They ask Him for help with every little thing, down to the smallest details. This is a practical way to constantly grow in our *emunah* in *hashgachah pratis*.

When we say *Shema*, it is a good time to accept our lot in life, no matter what, as the Will of *Hashem Echad*, Hashem who is One. *Hashem Echad*, besides for being a declaration of Hashem's Oneness, also implies that everything that happens, whether it seems to be good or bad, are all from the one and only G-d. He has my best interests at heart, as it were, and I am even prepared to give up my life for the sake of His honor and the fulfillment of His Will!

THE TENTH PRINCIPLE

HASHGACHAS HASHEM, DIVINE PROVIDENCE (PART TWO)

The tenth fundamental of *emunah* is that Hashem knows everything that transpires and that He manages and controls the world.

Rav Shalom Schwadron, zt”l, told over the following story. A person with special-needs was once standing on the side of a traffic light. When the light was red, he waved to the cars to stop, and when it turned green, he waved that they should go. Rav Shalom commented, “We may find this a bit amusing, but don’t we do the same thing? Hashem decides on Rosh Hashanah exactly how much money we are going to earn the entire year, and yet still we run around and work overtime, thinking that we are bringing in the money!”

The aforementioned point is actually a Gemara in *Beitza* (16a), which states that an individual’s *parnassah* is decided by Hashem on Rosh Hashanah. The Steipler in *Birkas Peretz* (*Parshas Shemos*) points out that a person can alter his decree through *tefillah*, *teshuvah* and *zechuyos*, merits. Additionally, we find numerous references in *Chazal* to Hashem’s *hanhagah*, management and *hashgachah pratis* in the world. Let us bring some of them.

The Gemara in *Yoma* (38b) states that no one can touch something that is meant for his fellow man, even as much as the size of a hairbreadth.

The *sefer Chofetz Chaim al HaTorah (Parshas Mishpatim)* mentions that when Dovid HaMelech was cursed by Shimi ben Geira, Dovid said that “Hashem told him to curse” — in other words, he was saying that even when a different person harms him, he is simply a messenger of Hashem – because everything is *b’hashgachah pratis*.

The Chofetz Chaim brings a source for this from Rashi. The Gemara in *Bava Kama* (85a) asks, “How are we allowed to heal a sick person?” If it is Hashem’s Will that someone should be ill, what right do we have to intervene? The Gemara answers that the *pasuk* states (*Mishpatim* 21:19), “*V’rapeh y’rapeh*, And he shall heal him.” From here we learn that permission is granted to heal the ill. *Rashi* explains that the question the Gemara is addressing is as follows: Since Hashem hurt this person, how can we go and change it? But the Chofetz Chaim asks: What does *Rashi* mean? This *pasuk* is referring to someone who was injured intentionally by someone else – why, then, does *Rashi* refer to it as Hashem’s doing? Explains the Chofetz Chaim, we see from here that even when a person hurts someone else intentionally, it’s all *hashgachah pratis*. Hashem just decided that it should be carried out in such a fashion, but He was truly the one behind it. (This idea can help us cope with difficult situations *lo aleinu*, gaining us the understanding that it was going to happen no matter what, because it was a Heavenly decree.)

The Gemara in *Chullin* (7b) writes that every time a person bangs his toe, there is a prior announcement in *Shamayim* that it should happen. The Gemara in *Avodah Zarah* (55a) writes that all suffering is very exact, down to the precise moment when it should start and when it should stop. Suffering even includes minor inconveniences. We can learn this from the Gemara in *Erchin* (16b), which teaches remarkably that the smallest type of suffering [which can still serve as indication that the person is not, Heaven forbid, receiving his future reward in this world]

is when one attempts retrieving three coins from his pocket and only two come out, necessitating an extra attempt on his part. The Gemara in *Kesubos* (30a) states that even today, when we no longer have the four types of capital punishment, Hashem still arranges it that similar deaths should occur when deserved.

When it comes to marriage, we can't help but notice the obvious *hashgachah pratis* in so many *shidduchim*. We find in the Gemara in *Sotah* (2a) that forty days before a child is born, a Heavenly voice announces, "The daughter of so-and-so will marry so-and-so."

The Gemara in *Bava Basra* (91b) states that all positions held by individuals, even a minor one such as being in charge of water pits, are appointed by Hashem. The *Maharsha* asks: Why does the Gemara not tell us about the fact that even great monarchs are appointed by Hashem, which is a much greater feat? He answers that this Gemara is highlighting the fact that Hashem runs and controls even the minor and insignificant things that take place in the world, all the time.

Rav Shimshon Pincus, *zt"l*, in his *sefer Tiferes Torah (Parshas Noach)* elaborates on the topic of *hashgachah pratis*. Let us bring some of his points: He writes that, of course, Hashem runs every last detail of the world in a very specific way. However, there is a big difference between *Klal Yisrael* and non-Jews, animals and inanimate objects. Hashem's control and interaction with every Jew is very personal, and is for the sake of the individual per se. Hashem deals with each Jew with love and care, like a father deals with his children. There is a connection and a personal relationship with each Jew.

On the other hand, regarding the rest of the world, although Hashem deals with, arranges, runs and directs everything with great detail and precision, it lacks Hashem's "personal" interest, so to speak. It is not

for the sake of a specific person, animal or object; rather, it is for the general maintenance and purpose of the entire group or species as a whole.

Rav Shlomo Wolbe, *zt"l*, writes that there is a major difference between the secular viewpoint as opposed to the Torah perspective and reality of the observant Jew. Famous non-Jewish thinkers postulate that man's deepest feelings are his various fears. However, says Rav Wolbe, we know from the Torah and from our experience, that the deepest motivating feelings and the innermost emotions are *bitachon* — trust and reliance on Hashem — and *yedidus* — an intimate closeness with Hashem¹.

How do we tap into this *bitachon* and *yedidus*? With *emunah* in *hashgachah pratis*. Look around, see all the open *hashgachah pratis* in your life, around you and in history. The more you look, the more you will notice it. This will foster a tremendous amount of *bitachon* and *yedidus*. By constantly praying with *kavanah*, proper intent, and with consistent thanks and praise to Hashem, we also tap into *hashgachah pratis*, *bitachon* and *yedidus* with Hashem.

Rav Moshe Feinstein, *zt"l*, writes (*Igros Moshe*, YD 3:76, volume 6) that the main focus of *chinuch* is to teach our children *emunah* in Hashem's existence and in the truth of the Torah, and to teach them that everything that we give them is a present from Hashem. Through this they will come to love Hashem, and, by extension, their parents, who are His Heavenly messengers. They will then easily accept all of their parents' directives as the Will of Hashem.

1. *Bishvilei Harefuah L'Beis Cholim Laniado*, Sivan 5742/1982.

One of the central points of *hashgachah pratis* is that Hashem's level of involvement in our lives depends on our *bitachon*, our *dveikus* – clinging to Him – and our level of commitment to Torah and mitzvos². May we grow in all of these areas and merit a high level of *siyatta d'Shmaya* in everything we do³.

2. See *sefer Maoz L'tom* from Rav Yitzchok Kirzner zt"l; see *Even Shleimah* from the *Gra*, *tosfa'ah likutim*, page 71, *Aggados Bava Kama* 92.

3. For more on this topic, see *Vilna Gaon* in *Yahel Ohr*, *Parshas Shlach*, 157b; Rav Tzadok Hakohen in *Pri Yitzchak*, *Parshas Emor* 3; *Michtav Mi'Eliyahu*, volume 1, *Emunah U'bitachon*, *Hanes V'hateva*, *hateva — hester nissim*; *Ohr Yechezkel*, *emunah*, page 59, *ma'amar 'Hayipalei Mei'Hashem Davar*, as well as pages 55, 99 and 152; and *Einei Yisroel* (Rav Weintraub zt"l) page 406. There is a *sefer* that deals with this topic at length entitled *Sifsei Chaim* (Rav Freidlander zt"l). The Rambam (*Moreh Nevuchim*) seems to have a different approach on this topic. It is discussed by Rav Freidlander and others. As mentioned, these essays present the approach of the Baal Shem Tov and the Vilna Gaon, which is the widely accepted approach.

THE ELEVENTH PRINCIPLE

SCHAR, REWARD (PART ONE)

The eleventh principle of our *emunah* is that Hashem rewards us for every good deed we do, and punishes us for every wrong deed. Let us discuss the topic of *schar* — Heavenly reward for our mitzvos, *b'ezras Hashem*.

An important point about *schar* in general is that it is not about results; it is about the effort. The Mishnah in Avos (end of chapter 5) teaches, “*I'fum tza'ara agra,*” meaning that the level of reward earned for performing a mitzvah is determined by the difficulty involved in performing it. *Chazal* also teach (see *Avos d'Rebbe Nosson* 3:6), “*Tov pa'am echad b'tza'ar mi'meah pe'amim shelo b'tza'ar,* it is better to perform a mitzvah once with difficulty than a hundred times without difficulty.” For example, if a person learns one *daf* of Gemara or gives five dollars to *tzedakah* when it's difficult to do so, it is the equivalent of learning one hundred *dapim* and giving five hundred dollars easily!

Another point about *schar* is that we need to constantly review and ingrain in ourselves the vast amount of *schar* that we generate for each and every mitzvah we do, for every word of Torah that we learn, and for every Torah ideal and attitude that we endeavor to aspire to and live by.

This is particularly true regarding Torah study, as the Mishnah teaches (*Pe'ah* 1:1), “*V'talmud Torah k'neged kulam,* Torah study equals all other

mitzvos.” Take for example, Reuven, who does a hundred different mitzvos in one week, including saving lives and marrying off orphans. Yet if Shimon spent that time learning one *perek* in *Maseches Zevachim* (which deals with *korbonos*, and therefore presently inapplicable), Shimon’s accomplishment outweighs Reuven’s (see the beginning of the *Yerushalmi Peah*). Furthermore, even each word of Torah study has this great distinction of *k’neged kulam* — equal to all mitzvos together (see Vilna Gaon, *Pe’ah* *ibid.*).

There is an amazing story about the Chofetz Chaim, which underscores the great reward earned for performing mitzvos. In his time, the yeshivos in impoverished Europe were in dire financial straits. Someone approached the Chofetz Chaim with the following brainstorm. He offered to relinquish his reward for putting on *tefillin* one day, and in return, Hashem should cover the deficit of the yeshivos! The Chofetz Chaim responded, “It is impossible.” Then he explained: The Gemara (*Kiddushin* 39b) says that *schar mitzvah b’hai alma lekah*, meaning that there is no *schar* for doing mitzvos in this world; one is rewarded only in the Next World. The reason for this is because the smallest reward in Heaven is infinitely more precious than all of the valuables of the entire *Olam Haze* combined!

The following story gives an example of this: A wealthy businessman was walking with his son when they passed a candy machine. “Daddy, can you give me a quarter to buy a candy, please?” the son pleaded. “Sorry, son, I only have hundred-dollar bills,” the father answered. Similarly, all the pleasures this world has to offer pale in comparison by far to the smallest amount of Heavenly reward for our mitzvos.

It is told that shortly before the Vilna Gaon passed away, he lifted his *tzitzis* and wept. He said, “In this world, for a few pennies, we can

buy *tzitzis* and amass a fortune of *schar*, but in the Next World it is impossible.”

The *sefarim* say that considering all the good Hashem showers us with in this world all the time we don't really deserve *schar*! (See *Chovos Halevavos*, *shaar bitachon*, as well as numerous other *sefarim*.) Furthermore, the *sefarim* say that really, we should pay for the great merit and pleasure inherent in serving Hashem, and that we should strive to attain at least some appreciation for these ideals. How fortunate are we, that, in addition to all of this, we are also promised a great reward, far greater than all the pleasures of this world, in the World to Come!

THE ELEVENTH PRINCIPLE

SCHAR, REWARD (PART TWO)

The eleventh *ikar* of *emunah* is *schar v'onesh* — reward and punishment. For every mitzvah that we do we get a reward, and for every *aveirah*, a punishment. Let us deal with an interesting and important point about this topic, *b'ezras Hashem*.

The *Kli Yakar* in *Parshas Bechukosai*, based on the *Abarbanel*, deals with the following question: One of the greatest motivations for many observant Jews in their *shmiras haTorah* and mitzvos is probably the desire for a favorable portion in *Olam Haba* — the eternal World to Come. So too, individuals desire a place in the *olam haneshamos*, the world of souls, called *Gan Eden*, where a person's *neshamah* hopefully resides after he leaves this world, before *Olam Haba*. (In truth, most people first go to *Gehinnom* for a spiritual cleansing, and then hopefully go on to *Gan Eden*.) People are ready and willing to invest much time, energy and self-sacrifice to earn a good portion in *Olam Haba*, even many long years of toil.

Now, given their significance, one would expect to find *Gan Eden* and *Olam Haba* mentioned throughout *Chumash* and *Nach* many times. The puzzling truth, though, is that there is not a single clear mention of it in the entire *Torah Shebichsav*, the Written Torah! This begs for an explanation. Furthermore, even when the Torah does mention *schar*, it always refers to earthly and physical *schar* in *Olam Haze*, giving the

false impression that this is the only compensation and reward for mitzvos. Why is this so?

Among many other approaches, the *Kli Yakar* (ibid.) cites the *Abarbanel*, who, based on the Rambam, writes as follows: First of all, in general, there is no *schar* for mitzvos in *Olam Haze*. This point is made by the Gemara in *Kiddushin* (39b). If so, what about all the seeming rewards promised in the Torah for doing mitzvos? The answer is that these are not *rewards* per se; rather, they are just the necessary means needed to continue serving Hashem properly. If a person commits himself to serving Hashem faithfully, Hashem will shower him with good in this world, so that he will have the peace of mind and the physical means to continue serving Him.

We can add a striking example of this. The *Meshech Chochmah* in *Parshas Beshalach* writes that Hashem gave the Jews the *mann* even before they received the Torah. This was to show that even if a person has not yet attained a high level of commitment to Torah study (nor to practicing what he learns) and he only undertakes to accept the *ol haTorah*, the yoke of the Torah, upon himself, he will already merit receiving his livelihood in supernatural fashion!

Now, why are *Olam Haba* and *Gan Eden* — the real *schar* for mitzvos — not mentioned in the *Torah Shebichsav*? The answer is because if they were mentioned it would cause a person to serve Hashem *shelo lishmah*, not for Hashem's sake. A person would do mitzvos to earn *Gan Eden* and *Olam Haba*, and not for the right reasons, as we will explain *b'ezras Hashem*.

If it would have been written explicitly, it would imply that this is the reason and the ideal motivation to do the mitzvos. Therefore, the Torah writes: Do the mitzvos because Hashem commanded you — period.

This makes it clear that the right reason to do mitzvos is not for *Olam Haba*.

(There are various reasons given for doing mitzvos — whether it be because Hashem commanded us to and He is the boss; or because they perfect our character; or to think about Hashem and give Him thanks for His goodness — but this is beyond the scope of this essay.)

The *Kli Yakar* and the *Chovos Halevovos* (*Shaar Habitachon* 4) give many other approaches to answer why *Gan Eden* and *Olam Haba* are not mentioned in the Torah. Let us mention some of them briefly: One approach is that it is too hard for us to relate to such *schar*. Since we live within a physical framework, we cannot fathom spiritual reward.

Another approach is that the Torah only tells us about unusual rewards that our actions trigger, such as rainfall which starts when we do mitzvos and stops when the Jews sin, as opposed to the natural, normal process of the *neshamah* acquiring eternity and the enjoyment of cleaving to Hashem.

Another answer is that from the fact that the Torah writes that for certain *aveiros* the *neshamah* gets severed from Hashem for eternity, we can infer that otherwise the *neshamah* is always attached to Hashem and enjoying such a state eternally. The Torah therefore does not need to mention it explicitly. Similarly, others answer that there are clear enough allusions to the *schar* of *Olam Haba* and *Gan Eden* in the Written Torah, for one to realize it on his own.

Another answer given is that the reason the Torah writes about *schar* is for people to recognize the *hashgachah pratis* of Hashem in our world. This can only be learned from *schar* in this world.

Another answer given is that the Torah is addressing the feelings of people who have a pull towards *avodah zarah*, as was common amongst the generation of those who received the Torah¹. There were those who erred in thinking that idolatry, as opposed to Torah observance, gave them a good *Olam Haze*, *chas ve'shalom*. The Torah therefore mentions the *schar* received in this world, to assure them that by adhering to the Torah, they will have their *Olam Haze* needs amply taken care of.

Another answer given is that the Torah guarantees that a person who keeps the Torah and mitzvos will have *dveikus* with the *Shechinah*, the Divine Presence, in *Olam Haze*. In other words, he will experience closeness with Hashem that is enjoyable and can be felt even in this world. So too, other forms of spiritual fulfillment received in this world are mentioned in the Torah. That being so, we can infer that, all the more so, will a person receive vast rewards after his *neshamah* leaves his body.

The first answer we brought was that the Torah does not tell us about *Olam Haba* so that we should serve Hashem *lishmah*, for Hashem's sake alone. Let us add a point: We should keep in mind that *Chazal* teach

1. So too was the case in the following generations, until the *yetzer hara* of idolatry was tamed in the beginning of the period of *Bayis Sheini*. Rav Moshe Shapiro commented that in our times, the drive for *avodah zarah* is for man to worship himself, climbing the ladder of power and success, which can turn into a drive for arrogance and hedonistic fulfillment of his desires. This makes him into the center of his universe and the so called "master" of his own destiny. (See *Chovos Halevavos*, who writes that people can become so misguided that they make their stomachs their god, their Torah their clothing, and their homes their ethics!)

(*Sotah* 47a) that a person should constantly keep the Torah and mitzvos even *shelo lishmah*, because this leads to serving Hashem *lishmah*. Often, we need to — and we should — motivate ourselves *shelo lishmah*, with less than ideal motives, or even for negative reasons - like gaining honor and respect – because these incentives will lead us to serve Hashem *lishmah* in the long run. If we are honest with ourselves in this respect, it can lead to a much greater level of Torah and mitzvos!

The truth is that the *Torah Sheb'al Peh*, the Oral Torah, the holy *seforim* and our *mesorah*, are full of discussions about the beautiful *schar* the *neshamah* reaps in *Gan Eden* and *Olam Haba*, and we should work on thinking about it all the time. Any time we enjoy ourselves, it would be a good idea to use it as an allegory for *Olam Haba* — to think about the fact that in *Olam Haba* it will be so much better than this earthly pleasure (see *Orchos Tzaddikim*, *Sha'ar Simchah*). At the same time, let us work to continuously increase our level of *l'sheim Shamyaim*, to perform Hashem's Will because He commanded us to do so, and because it is *emes*, truth, and the correct way to live. By doing so, *b'ezras Hashem*, we will merit a beautiful portion in *Olam Haba*.

THE ELEVENTH PRINCIPLE

THE BENEFITS OF CHALLENGE

The eleventh principle is that Hashem rewards us and punishes us according to our deeds. The basic reason why Hashem gives painful punishments is because for most individuals it is the most effective motivator; we will do anything to avoid suffering and pain. However it is plausible to assume that there are also other benefits accrued by experiencing pain.

We all know the saying, “No pain, no gain.” In *Chazal’s* words (*Avos* end of *perek* 5), “*L’fum tza’ra agra*, According to the exertion is the reward.” Let us analyze this statement, *b’ezeras Hashem*.

What is the difference between the following two scenarios? Imagine climbing up ten flights of stairs on a hot, sweltering day to meet a close friend. The pain involved is worth it, and we may even appreciate it, considering our great pleasure in meeting our friend. Or, for example, think about the pain and exertion needed to develop a skill, which may require hard, tedious practice and study. Here, too, we view the pain as worthwhile. Perhaps we even enjoy the effort involved. On the other hand, imagine if someone comes over to you and twists your arm for a few painful, agonizing minutes — and then hands you a thousand-dollar check and leaves. At best, it would be a good compensation, but you certainly would not appreciate — and all the more so enjoy — the pain you feel. Why is this pain different than the pain felt when

climbing steps to visit your friend, or the exertion invested in practicing your desired skill?

Perhaps the answer is as follows: How much do we view the pain as the sole means towards reaching our goal? Perhaps we feel that there really was a pain-free alternative. In the case of climbing the steps, we knew that it could not be avoided. Similarly, when one undergoes a painful medical procedure, *chas v'shalom*, he realizes that this is the only way to be healed and live comfortably once again. However, in the case of the arm twisting, we think, "That was ridiculous! He didn't need to twist my arm to give me all that money!"

The more we can internalize the great axiom of *l'fum tza'ara agra*, the more we will appreciate it. The simple meaning is that the greater the challenge in serving Hashem, the greater Hashem's reward will be. *L'fum tza'ra agra* can also be explained as alluding to the immense benefits which can be reaped from challenges and suffering in general. It is also important to realize that Hashem designed the nature of a person to appreciate hard work and travail for an ideal.

Let us make the following observation: If a person undertakes a project and has to work very hard, overcoming challenges along the way to bring it to fruition, he can expect that this particular project will make a big impact on him. Accomplishment through challenge and adversity breeds idealism, fortitude, ambition and courage. His goal becomes a part of him! Thus, one who perseveres for a positive ideal and grows through the challenge — this result alone can be considered a great *agra*, reward. Perhaps this can be an alternative interpretation of the aforementioned words of the Mishnah, which states that according to the pain will be the *agra*, reward.

In a certain sense it may be easier to appreciate the suffering of our world than to appreciate the suffering meted out in *Gehinom* and when the world reaches eternity. This is because we can relate and understand some of the benefits in this world as we experience them, as taught by *Chazal* and the *sifrei mussar*. Suffering helps us not to get swept up in materialism and helps humble us. It helps us experience the pleasure of davening to Hashem. It enables us to boost our *emunah* and *bitachon*, making us feel secure in Hashem's Hands. These are some of the benefits which we can experience and relate to (See *Rabbeinu Yonah* on *Mishlei* 3:11-12, 26).

The suffering of the *neshamah* in *Gehinnom*, and beyond, which cleanses it and purifies it, is much harder for us to appreciate. We need to approach it with *emunah* to gain the right clarity. The more we learn and review the pertinent *Chazal*, the more we will gain intellectual awareness and even emotional appreciation for it¹.

It's a great fundamental of our Torah that suffering purifies a person. That is how Hashem fashioned our existence. We may not understand this, but this is the absolute truth and it's a fact of life. So much so, that the Gemara in *Brachos* (5a) teaches that the greatest gifts — Torah, *Olam Haba* and Eretz Yisrael — can only be acquired through suffering².

1. Certainly the reverse is also true, i.e., that people accept that there is a punishment for misdeeds in this world, but are troubled by the fact that it is common enough to witness evil people enjoying life while righteous people suffer. This is to such an extent, that this confusing phenomena can be considered the greatest test to a person's *emunah*!

2. See *Haggadah Ma'aseh Nissim* — “*mi'tchilah ovdei avodah zarah hayu avoseinu.*”

Let us suggest some of the benefits received by the knowledge of the future suffering of the *neshamah* and of *yissurim*, pain and suffering, in general. First, the fear of the punishment in *Gehinom* is perhaps the most powerful deterrent from sin in this world.

Second, Rav Elya Weintraub, zt"l, said that suffering teaches a person the severity of a sin. It gives us the awareness that the effects of *aveiros* are akin to the great suffering experienced because of the punishment.

Third, suffering for the sake of a cause can be a source of sublime and spiritual pleasure that a person could actually experience here in this world. (This is comprised of myriad different levels, and a person on a high level of self-improvement and spirituality will find this state to be much more accessible than a person of lesser virtue). Perhaps it can be explained that it is a way to express love for the one we are suffering for. We can add to this that it enhances, deepens and solidifies our relationship with the one we are suffering for, merely because we are in pain on their behalf (see *Mesilas Yesharim* 19). I heard of a certain *tzaddekes* who was suffering from a serious illness. The doctors had to perform an extremely painful procedure on her. Afterwards they expressed their doubts about the procedure's success. She encouraged them to try again, as she had experienced a tremendously deep and close feeling of Hashem's presence, especially during the intense pain of the procedure!

The Steipler, in the *sefer Chayei Olam (Parshas Mikeitz)*, teaches us an amazing thing. When we suffer for a mitzvah or learn Torah when it's difficult, we save ourselves from an untold amount of suffering in the Next World. Every person endures his portion of suffering; fortunate is the one who suffers through toiling for the sake of *ruchniyus*, spirituality.

The Chofetz Chaim told of a Jew who worked for a decent *poritz*, landowner, in the Europe of old. The *poritz* had to travel somewhere and asked someone else to fill in for him. The replacement boss was exceedingly nasty and beat the poor Jew often. When the *poritz* returned and heard what happened, he was enraged. He ordered the wicked man to pay the Jew a large sum of money for each lash given. The Jew was quite happy but couldn't restrain himself from thinking, "What a shame! If only I would have gotten more beatings, I would be so much wealthier!" So too, says the Chofetz Chaim, when we come to the World of Truth at the end of our lives; we will bemoan the fact that we did not experience more pain and suffering in this world.

These thoughts will, *b'ezras Hashem*, help us internalize the eleventh *Ani Ma'amin*, that there is *schar v'onesh*. On one hand, there is great reward and pleasure for serving Hashem faithfully. Yet on the other hand, there is great suffering received because of *aveiros*, which serves to purify and cleanse us, making us worthy of eternal pleasure.

May we merit seeing Hashem's great love for us in everything that happens to us in life, and internalizing the maximum level of *emunah chushis*, palpable faith, recognizing that every bit of pain and suffering is for our ultimate benefit.

THE ELEVENTH PRINCIPLE

CONSEQUENCES

A famous technique used by speakers to chastise their listeners is to make a disclaimer that they are really addressing themselves, but others are free to listen in as well. Therefore, in the following essay I take the liberty to use this “speaker’s license.”

On the one hand, I don’t want to hurt you with painful information. Yet, on the other hand, if I don’t share this knowledge with you, I will be guilty of withholding a great deal of success and pleasure from you, so it is with a somewhat heavy heart that I begin.

One of the fundamentals of our *emunah* is that there is reward and punishment. Let us focus now on the topic of punishment. The Vilna Gaon once commented, “Know and understand that there is a punishment for every single *aveirah*, for every single person. Even a great heretic and the most wicked person will be punished for every last *mayim achronim* [the obligatory hand washing after a bread meal before *birkas hamazon*] that they neglected!” (*Hagaon* volume 2, page 560)

Let us bring the penetrating words of Rav Avigdor Miller zt”l, on this matter (*Awake My Glory*, page 309): He writes that “Most of us are unaware of the symbolic significance of pain. Rabbeinu Saadiah Gaon writes: The Creator causes us to feel these forms of pain in order that they serve as a likeness of that which was said of the Great Heat

(*Gehinnom*), ‘Behold, there comes a day that burns like a furnace’ (*Malachi* 3:19), (*Emunos V’Dei’os* IV, 2). This teaches that pain must be utilized to acquire an awareness of *Gehinnom*. Indeed, pain serves as an effective aid in self-preservation, and it is a warning signal that spurs man and beast to take action for their health and safety. But as a *mashal*, symbolically, pain is intended by the Creator as a symbol of great significance, which can bring man to the most urgent form of self-preservation, which is his success in the afterlife.

“Therefore, it is valuable upon experiencing pain, or when learning of the experience of others, to utilize it as a concrete and tangible symbol of *Gehinnom*. Rav Yerucham Levovitz, *zt”l*, stated: ‘Because so many forgot the fact of *Gehinnom* in the afterlife, the Creator brought the *Gehinnom* into this life by means of the Nazis, *yemach shemam*.’

Under this heading we learned, ‘Fire is one-sixtieth of *Gehinnom*’ (*Brachos* 57b). What is called “the Holocaust” (and is so blindly misinterpreted by both the atheists and various other segments of Jews, as of 1980) must be studied as a symbol of *Gehinnom*. When the Eastern European young generation cast away the Torah and threw themselves into the arms of the Zionist-Marxist idolatry, and when the masses turned away from the Torah leaders and gave the authority to the enemies of the Torah, the fires of *Gehinnom* came forth into this life to remind them and us that retribution is inevitable: ‘Behold the day comes that burns like a furnace.’ If, as Rabbeinu Saadiah Gaon declares (and as the statement in *Brachos* 57b implies), the pain of a burn must remind one of the Great Heat of *Gehinnom*, what less could be said of the fierce fires of the crematoria which burned day and night in the *Gehinnom* camps of the Germans?”

The punishment for *aveiros* is very real and painful, but swallowing the bitter pill of knowledge of this matter is the surest way to spur us to avoid doing *aveiros* and to maximize our performance of mitzvos. This will enable us to create a sweet and pleasure filled existence for ourselves. It's far better to know the reality of punishment for sin and have the great benefit of being compelled to live productive lives, than to find out when it's too late. Obviously, everyone needs to know how much they can dwell on this topic in a beneficial way, but no one will gain by ignoring it.

Rav Yisroel Salanter in *Ohr Yisrael* points out various fundamentals regarding Divine punishment and is known to have elaborated and spoken often about *yiras onesh*, fear of punishment. Let us quote an important point that he mentions (see letters 6, 8). One of the great benefits of punishment is that it is a great deterrent from *aveiros*. Therefore, it must be that the pain and suffering received as punishment for an *aveirah* is significantly more than the pain and hardship that one is required to endure to avoid doing the *aveirah*.

For example, if for withholding taxes of \$100,000 a person would be fined \$50,000 dollars, this would not stop him from breaking the law. The penalty would need to be \$150,000 to stop him. Similarly, a person is required to lose his job and livelihood and even give up all of his possessions rather than to speak even one sentence of *lashon hara*. It follows that the pain and suffering for transgressing is far more than the aggravation of losing a job and being reduced to poverty. This idea helps us visualize the price tag of an *aveirah*, instead of just having a vague notion of the suffering of *Gehinnom*. Such thoughts will certainly prevent us from falling to sin.

Rav Chaim Kanievsky, *shlita*, in *Orchos Yosher (Yiras Cheit)* cites a Gemara that mentions *yiras cheit* in addition to *yiras Shamayim*, fear of Heaven. He asks: What is the meaning of *yiras cheit*, and how is it different from *yiras Shamayim* in general? Furthermore, we find that in many places *Chazal* greatly praise one who is a *yarei chait*, one who fears sin. What is the uniqueness of this quality?

Rav Chaim goes on to explain, based on the *sefarim hakedoshim*, that we need to realize that an *aveirah* and its *onesh*, its punishment, are not two independent things; rather, they are one and the same. Hashem warned us against doing certain things and He created their nature – they are like deadly poison for the body and *nefesh*. They destroy and cause great damage.

That is why even an unintentional sinner needs atonement because, bottom line, he did an act which naturally consumes like fire and is poisonous. It's a great *chesed* of Hashem that by bringing a *korban* one's *aveirah* is erased. Even an *ones*, one who is not culpable for his action (for example he was forced to do something against his will), gets *timtum halev* — spiritual impurity, when he transgresses. We need to realize that an *aveirah* is inherently like fire and a poisonous snake. In fact, the Steipler Gaon writes in *Chayei Olam* (2:8) that *chillul Shabbos* is like a disease, and were a person to realize this, he would run from even a doubt of *chillul Shabbos*.

This is the quality of *yiras cheit*, to have an *emunah chushis*, a palpable faith, that a sin is an inherent poison and a destructive fire. Having *yiras cheit* is a sign of a great level of *emunah chushis* and *yiras Shamayim*. Without *yiras cheit* a person cannot succeed in his Torah study, and as a result, grows distant from Hashem. Rav Chaim concludes with the reassurance that the more a person attempts to be careful and fearful

of sin, the more he will have special Divine assistance to be safe from the dangers of sin.

The Torah (*Mishlei* 3:11-12) compares Hashem's punishments to a loving father, who chastises his son for his misbehavior. As Jews we all have *emunah sheleimah*, complete faith, that just like everything Hashem does is for our benefit, so too, Divine punishment is also in our best interests.

Let us end with a small anecdote: A child darted into the street. A passing car screeched to a halt, barely avoiding running over the child. The driver and the passersby started yelling at the child. "What's wrong with you? Be careful...!" The child, frightened and shaken up, started running away from the scene. One of the people there chased after him, running a few blocks. Finally, when catching up with him, he grabbed him slapped him, and gave him a stern rebuke — that person was his father! Only when he was sure that his son realized the severity of the matter did he then hug him reassuringly, speaking soothingly.

THE TWELFTH PRINCIPLE

AWAITING MOSHIACH'S ARRIVAL

The twelfth principle of *emunah* is to believe in the coming of *moshiach*. This means to believe that Hashem will send us a great king and leader who will be an emissary of Hashem and take the Jews out of the long and bitter *galus* in which they are presently languishing. This will herald a glorious era, when everyone will be able to experience the true glory of Hashem, and to serve Him without any hindrances, in complete peacefulness and serenity.

Practically speaking, all are of the opinion that a person is obligated to constantly look forward to, and to wish for, the immediate arrival of *moshiach*. This is a central and very important Torah ideal. The Gemara in *Shabbos* (31a) includes in the few and fundamental questions that will be asked on the great day of judgment, “Did you yearn for the salvation [i.e. the ultimate redemption]?” In fact, according to the *Smak* [*Sefer Ha'Smak Mi'tzurich mitzvah 1*] it is a *mitzvas aseh*, a positive commandment. It can be said that constant yearning for *moshiach*, is and always was, a hallmark quality of the Jewish Nation. Jews always awaited *moshiach's* possible, immediate arrival in a very palpable and tangible way.

That being clarified, let us continue, *be'ezras Hashem*, with the primary topic of this essay. We will discuss and define the minimal obligation of awaiting the arrival of *moshiach* so to not be guilty of *kefira* – i.e.,

heresy in this *ikar* of *emunah*. Is a person obligated to believe in and expect the possible, immediate arrival of *moshiach* even during times when, according to *Chazal's* criteria, it is not opportune or possible for him to come? Is it enough that a person does not give up on *moshiach's* coming, or does he actually need to “await” him on a constant basis?

The Rambam in *Yad Hachazaka* (*Melachim* 11:1) adds an additional point to this principle. He writes that besides for the obligation to believe that *moshiach* will come, we must also await the arrival of *moshiach*. One who does not fulfill either of these two obligations, is guilty of heresy, for he has denied the principle of belief in the coming of *moshiach*^x.

The Chofetz Chaim (*ma'amar Tzipisa L'yeshua* - chapter 2) explains that when the Rambam adds that someone who does not await the arrival of *moshiach* is also a heretic, it refers to a person who believes that Hashem said (in the Torah) that *moshiach* will come, but he has nevertheless given up on him coming^a. For example, he thinks that he already came¹ or that we are so unworthy that he cannot come (these examples are the addition of this writer).

According to this explanation, anyone who believes that a) *moshiach* will come one day, and b) did not give up on him coming at some point in the future, is a believer in the principle of *emunah* regarding *moshiach*.

There is a different approach to explain the words of the Rambam, which is quoted in the name of the Brisker Rav – Rav Yitzchok Zev Soloveichik *zt"l*². The approach is that the Rambam is adding on that

1. See the letter of Rav Weintraub *zt"l* footnote 6.

2. Rav Dovid Soloveichik *shlita* in *Shiurai Rabbeinu Meshulam Dovid Haleivi Al Hatorah* (volume 2 *Parshas Korach*, page 258); Rav Moshe Mordechai

a person must believe that *moshiach* can come each and every day, and every second of the day. Therefore, a person must await his arrival every day and every second of the day [he is awaiting him constantly because he believes that he can always come]. According to the Brisker Rav, if a person decides that *moshiach* cannot come at any given time, and therefore he does not await him at that time, then, sadly, that person is guilty of heresy (*kfira*) in the belief of the coming of *moshiach*.

Rav Dovid Soloveichik and Rav Moshe Mordechai Shulzinger³ add on an additional point in the name of the Brisker Rav. The Rav was once asked how we can be obligated to await the arrival of *moshiach* each and every day, and to believe that he can always come, in light of the fact that the Gemara and *Chazal* seem to say otherwise. The Gemara (*Eiruvim* 43b) and *Midrash (Pesiktah Rabbasi* 36) both say that *moshiach* will not come on *Shabbos*, because his coming must be preceded by the coming of Eliyahu Hanavi, either a day before (Gemara, *ibid.*) or three days before (*Pesiktah, ibid.*). The Brisker Rav replied that, nonetheless, our *emunah* (faith) is as it says in the *siddur*, “*Achaka lo b’chol yom sheyavo*” (in the text of the *Ani Maamins*), meaning that we await his possible, imminent arrival, each and every day, and Eliyahu Hanavi will resolve the question from the Gemara and *Midrash*. According to this,

Shulzinger *zt”l* in his *Toras Zev* (page 96, 1981 edition), *Mishmar Haleivi, Zevachim, siman* 174, first edition), *Chagigah, siman* 50, *Zevachim Tinyana* – at the end of the *sefer, Shabbos, Eiruvim*, page 183, *Shiurei Mishmar Haleivi, Bechoros, Erchin* – after *Masechta Erchin*, and in other *seforim* of his as well; *Matnas Chaim, ma’amarim* (volume 1, page 219); *Koveitz Tzohar, ma’amar* from Rav Moshe Shmuel Shapiro (volume 7, page 499).

3. *Ibid.* In a number of the sources which quote this approach of the Brisker Rav, only the first part is quoted, and not this additional point.

we are obligated to believe in and await *moshiach's* coming, even on *Shabbos*, and even before the arrival of Eliyahu Hanavi, and one who does not believe in this is guilty of heresy in the principle of *moshiach*.

Let us emphasize, that this is only according to this specific approach in understanding the *Rambam*. However, according to the Chofetz Chaim (ibid.) and authorities who understood the Brisker Rav differently, this would not be the case. Furthermore, Rav Elyashiv is quoted as having said (*Shalos U'tshuvos Yashiv Moshe* page 91) that the Brisker Rav's approach is the opinion of the *Rambam*, and it is dependent on the *Rambam's* own opinion in a different place (*Melachim* 12:2), that no one really knows the order of events of the arrival of *moshiach*, because there are contradictions in *Chazal* regarding this matter. Furthermore, the Gemara in *Eirubin* (43b), seems not to be in accordance with the Brisker Rav's approach in explaining the *Rambam*. Additionally, other *Rishonim* argue, and say that we do know the exact order of events of the arrival of *moshiach* and that he cannot come before Eliyahu Hanavi. So if someone knows what is stated in the Gemara in *Eirubin*, but does not know the *Rambam's* opinion, he cannot be considered a heretic. Also, since other *Rishonim* dispute the *Rambam*, one cannot be considered a heretic for not believing according to the opinion of the *Rambam*.

Furthermore, Rav Yisroel Elya Weintraub zt"l had a different approach in explaining the *Rambam* (similar, if not the same, as the previously mentioned approach of the Chofetz Chaim), which we will refer to later. He was of the opinion that the Brisker Rav meant something different than the way we presented it before.

Regarding the difficulty in resolving what the Brisker Rav said with the Gemara in *Eirubin* and the Midrash, which state that *Moshiach* will not

come on Shabbos, Rav Dovid Soloveichik quotes the following (ibid.) approach. In the Gemara (Sanhedrin 98a) and various *seforim* the following point is made. There are two possible times that *moshiach* can be expected to come. One is called *b'ito* – the predetermined time; the second is called *achishena* – “rushed,” so to speak; in other words, before his predetermined time. Based on this, it can be said that the Gemara which states that *moshiach* must be preceded by Eliyahu and that he cannot come on Shabbos, is only referring to the time of *b'ito* – *moshiach's* predestined time. On the other hand, our *emunah* that *moshiach* can always come, and our obligation to await him at all times (according to the Brisker Rav's explanation of the *Rambam*) pertains to *achishena* – the early arrival of *moshiach*. It is the “hurried” arrival of *moshiach* which we can say does not need to conform to the regular order of events, i.e., Eliyahu coming first etc. [See the *Kreisi U'Pleisi*, *siman* 110, at the end of the *kuntres Beis Hasafek*].

It has been suggested that the explanation of the *Rambam* may depend on whether the usage of the word *achaka* means immediate expectancy of *moshiach's* arrival, or if it means that we hope for and want *moshiach* to come as soon as possible. According to the first definition, it is plausible to say that the *Rambam* is explaining the intellectual belief in when to expect *moshiach* – which is at all times, because immediate expectancy means even momentarily. However, if we define *achaka* as to hope, to long, and to look forward to the arrival of *moshiach*, then this would not imply hoping for his immediate arrival exclusively; it could just as well mean to hope and look forward to his future arrival, be it today or in a year from now (which would fit well with the Gemara that says that *moshiach* will not come on *Shabbos* or before Eliyahu Hanavi). This would imply that there are times when he cannot come, yet we long for him even then. [In fact, Rav Shulzinger

assumes that the principle of faith to believe in *moshiach* does not obligate us to want *moshiach* to come soon. It simply means to await him and expect that he may possibly come immediately; that is sufficient (he would surely agree that wanting *moshiach* to come soon is an important Torah ideal and even a mitzvah, it is just not part of the principle of faith)].

Rav Goldwasser *shlita*, in his *sefer Tapuchai Zahav* (Eirubin 43b), writes, that according to the Brisker Rav as brought by Rav Shulzinger, we are obligated to believe in and await *moshiach's* arrival, even if Eliyahu Hanavi did not come yet. Whereas according to Rav Yisroel Elya Weintraub, as long as Eliyahu Hanavi did not come the day before, we do not need to believe in and await *moshiach's* immediate arrival.

Rav Goldwasser writes that according to the Brisker Rav, the *ani maamin* is saying that we await *moshiach's* possible, immediate arrival each and every day. Whereas according to Rav Weintraub, we read it with an alternate understanding, i.e., that each day we await the arrival of *moshiach*, whenever it will be. [The *ani maamin* can be read in two ways – according to Rav Weintraub it reads *achaka lo b'chol yom* – I wait for him daily, *sheyavo* – that he should come whenever it may be.)

Rav Goldwasser concludes that since this is a matter of faith (and heresy), we must be stringent and fulfill all the viable approaches. Based on this essay, that would mean to expect and await the arrival of *moshiach* at all times, twenty four hours a day, seven days a week, even if Eliyahu Hanavi has not yet come! However, Rav Shulzinger (*ibid.*) explains that this does not mean that we should sit and wait and ignore our busy schedules – it means that it is always in the back of our minds. If we are asked about it, we should be able to immediately

reply that we believe and are awaiting the possible, immediate arrival of *moshiach*.

This would also include, longing and looking forward to, the future arrival of *moshiach*, whenever it will be ⁴.

Let us add an important point, that everyone agrees that it is surely a great Torah ideal and possibly a mitzvah as well (see *S'mak* in his *Sefer Hamitzvos* *ibid.*), to want and to *daven* for *moshiach* to come as soon as possible. This intensifies our commitment to increasing *kvod Shamayim*, and it expresses our awareness that revealing *kvod Shamayim* is the true purpose of the world and of our lives. This is because the main reason we await *moshiach* is so that the glory of Hashem should be recognized in its true form by all.

May Hashem finally grant the long awaited arrival of *moshiach*, speedily in our time⁵.

4. The simple meaning of *mechakeh* is “await”; it is only according to Rav Shulzinger’s explanation of the Brisker Rav that the fulfillment of the principle means to believe that *moshiach* can always come, and therefore to constantly await and **expect** his possible, **immediate** arrival.

THE TWELFTH PRINCIPLE

BELIEVING, AWAITING ,AND DESIRING THE UTOPIA OF MOSHIACH

The *mashgiach* of the Lakewood Yeshiva, Rav Matisyohu Salomon *shlita*¹, brought the following idea in the name of the Brisker Rav, Rav Yitzchok Zev Soloveichik *zt”l*. The Brisker Rav asked, what is the reason that the author of the *ani maamins* words the twelfth principle – that of belief in *moshiach*’s arrival – in a question and answer format, something that he did not do by all the other *ikrim*? The wording is, “I believe... in the upcoming arrival of *moshiach* - and even though he tarries? Still in all, I await his arrival...” Why is this principle different than all the others?²

The Brisker Rav answered as follows: The Rambam, in his *sefer Yad Hachazaka* (*Hilchos Melochim* 11:1) writes an amazing *chiddush* – a novel ruling. He writes that it is not enough to just believe in the ultimate arrival of *moshiach*, and in the special period of *yemos ha’moshiach* [the days of *moshiach*]. Rather, one is also obligated to constantly await the possible, imminent arrival of *moshiach*. Both aspects are required not to be guilty of heresy in the fundamental belief in *moshiach*.

1. In *Matnas Chaim, Ma’amarim*, volume 1, page 219, and in the *sefer* With Hearts Full of Love page 277.

2. The simple explanation, it would seem, is that it is not a question at all. It is an affirmation that we will wait for Moshiach even though it may take a long time.

Based on this, the Brisker Rav explained the text of the *ani maamin*. It is not meant to be a question and an answer about the belief in *moshiach* at all. The intention of the author was to present these two aspects of the obligatory belief. The first aspect is the belief that *moshiach* will come, and the second is that we must constantly await his possible, imminent arrival. This was stated in the second part of the *ani maamin* – that even though he tarries, I await him every day. [We can add that according to this approach, the *ani maamin* did not need to be worded in what seems to be a question and answer format, but the author simply chose to word it this way. However, his intention was as explained above].

The Brisker Rav added that truthfully, we need to await the possible, imminent arrival of *moshiach*, not just every single day, but each and every second of the day too! Many people quote the Brisker Rav as saying that this additional point is based on the wording in the blessing of *Shemonah Esrei – es tzemach Dovid*, where we say, “*ki lishuascha kivinu kol hayom*” – we hope that Hashem will send us the salvation – i.e., *moshiach*, the entire day. Rav Moshe Mordechai Shulzinger explained that this does not obligate us to stop all our tasks and sit and wait; rather, it should be in the back of our minds and easily accessible (as noted in the previous essay). It would seem that it would require us to make mention of this belief often, as we normally do when it comes to things that we are constantly looking forward to.

The *mashgiach* added and explained that it is not enough to only have an intellectual belief in *moshiach*; rather, we need to have such a strong belief, that it should become a sensory belief. In other words, the person should feel his *emunah* to the point that he is literally waiting for *moshiach* to come [see *Ohr Yechezkel, Darchei Avodah*, page 99].

The *mashgiach* went on to elaborate on this topic; let us bring some of his points, *be'ezras Hashem*: a) Firstly, how are we to understand that even though a person truly believes that *moshiach* will come, but if he does not await his arrival, he is considered a non-believer in the coming of *moshiach*? b) Furthermore, why is the mitzvah of waiting for *moshiach* of such great significance, that a lack of waiting for him is heresy? C) Additionally, the Rambam sources his ruling from the *pesukim* in *Parshas Nitzavim* (30:3-5). What is surprising and perplexing about this is that the *pesukim* there do not even hint at an obligation to await the arrival of *moshiach*. Granted, there are other *pesukim* that clearly do command us to await *moshiach* [for example, see *Chavakuk* (2:3), “*Im yisma'meiah chakeh lo*, if he [Moshiach] tarries [continue to] wait for him.” Even so, how would these other *pesukim* serve as a source for the Rambam's ruling, since they do not seem to indicate that it is heresy, and the Rambam did not even refer us to those *pesukim*?

The *mashgiach* answers with a parable: There was a person who was very poor. He was heavily in debt, and no one was willing to extend him credit anymore. He and his whole family walked around in tatters, and they had to make do with the most minimal types of food. They were miserable and suffering from their dire plight.

One fine day everything changed. A famous *tzaddik* came to visit them in their dingy and dilapidated hovel. He came in and got straight to the point, “I had a dream last night,” he related, “and I was informed by a messenger from Heaven that there will come a day when you will awaken to find a great treasure on your table. It will be enough to last you and your family for a whole lifetime in a very luxurious manner. I was not told when, but it will definitely happen.” With that, he went on his way.

The poor man was ecstatic. This *tzaddik* was known as a very pious and reliable man. His words were always very accurate and trustworthy. Each and every morning, immediately upon waking up, he ran to see if the dream had come true yet.

The aforementioned *pesukim* in *Nitzavim* which the Rambam quotes, state that during the era of *moshiach* we will experience the best period that there ever was throughout the entire history of the world. In the words of the *pasuk* (30:5), “*V’heitivcha* – I will do good for you, *v’hirbecha* – and I will give you an increased abundance, *mei’avosecha* – more than what I did for all of your ancestors³.”

It is obvious that included in our belief in the upcoming arrival of *moshiach* is the knowledge of what the period of *moshiach* will be like. It follows that if we do not eagerly await the arrival of *moshiach*, or if we do not desperately await his coming – then we obviously do not really believe that he will come. Alternatively, we do not believe or are ignorant regarding the special time that he will herald in. Therefore, not awaiting *moshiach* is tantamount to heresy in the actual fundamental

3. The Rambam brings the beginning of the *pasuk*, and then he writes *v’chulu*, meaning that he is also referring to the end of the *pasuk*, which says *v’heitivcha...* Rav Moshe Sheinerman in his *sefer Ohel Moshe, Hamikdash V’hagalus*, page 514 writes along the same lines as Rav Matisyahu. He writes that he presented this approach to Rav Dovid Soloveichik *shlita*, who at first objected, because the Rambam merely brings the beginning of *pasuk* 5, which mentions that Hashem will bring us back to *Eretz Yisroel*. That being the case, we see that the Rambam deliberately omitted the end of the *pasuk*, which describes the unique specialness of those days. Then Rav Dovid took out the popular Frankel edition of the *Rambam*, which has the addition of the word *v’chulu*. This indicates that the Rambam’s intention was to include the rest of the *pasuk* – *v’heitivcha...* and Rav Dovid then agreed to the approach.

belief in the arrival of *moshiach*. It reflects that we do not really believe that which the Torah explicitly states – that the days of *moshiach* will be the best period that the Jewish Nation will ever experience.

This can be explained in two ways: 1) Not waiting for *moshiach* shows that you do not truly believe that he will come. This is indeed heresy in the belief of the coming of *moshiach*. The source for this is the very same source as the actual obligation to believe in the coming of *moshiach*. 2) Not waiting for *moshiach* reflects a lack of belief in the *pasuk* from *Nitzavim* (30:5), which we quoted earlier in this essay. There it states that the time of *moshiach* will be the best time ever in our entire history. This is the *pasuk* which the Rambam actually quotes as his source.

The *Mashgiach* adds that if we pay close attention to the text of the *Rambam*, we will find corroboration for this approach. In the *Rambam's* commentary to *mishnayos* (*Sanhedrin perek Chelek*, fundamentals of faith), he seems to be delineating the same two points as in the *Yad Hachazakah* (*Hilchos Melachim* 11:1), and yet he changes the wording. Instead of writing to await *moshiach*, he writes to believe in the outstanding quality of *moshiach*⁷. In Rav Kapach's edition, the wording is not to belittle the matter of *moshiach*. The implication is clear – that the root of the obligation to await *moshiach* is believing in the specialness of *moshiach* and the time period following his arrival⁴.

4. In a different essay [“The Twelfth Principle: Awaiting Moshiach’s Arrival”] we brought an approach to explain the Brisker Rav’s explanation of the *Rambam's* opinion about the principle of belief in *moshiach*. The approach was that the *Rambam* means a) we must believe that *moshiach* will ultimately come, and b) we must believe that he can come every day and every second. Hence, we are obligated to await his imminent arrival every second and every day, even on days that, according to *Chazal*, *moshiach* is not meant to arrive. According to

The *Mashgiach* goes on to say, that based on this idea, we need to learn about, and internalize, the specialness of the time of *moshiach*. *Be'ezras Hashem* we will deal with that in a different essay.

Furthermore, Rav Chatzkel Levenstein (*Ohr Yechezkel, emunah*, page 288) writes, that in order to merit participating in the grand times of *moshiach* [and of *techiyas hameisim*], we need to want it. If not, we will not be allowed to be part of it. This is an additional point, which compels us to learn about and internalize the great times ahead, and thus we will want it with all our hearts. May we merit witnessing this glorious time, speedily in our days.

that approach, the obligation to wait is not an additional aspect of this principle; rather, waiting reflects a belief that he can always come. We brought the opinion that maybe one would not be considered a heretic even if he does not want *moshiach* to come, as long as he awaits him in a dry, intellectual sense. This would also obligate a person to always expect that possibly, *moshiach* could arrive imminently. If he would believe this he would not be considered a heretic.

However, according to Rav Matisyahu Salomon's approach, one must want *moshiach* to come, as the wanting reflects the knowledge that *moshiach* is a very good thing for each and every one of us. Furthermore, it would seem that according to Rav Matisyahu's approach, it would be enough to constantly await *moshiach* even if it is not imminent. It is enough to constantly want and hope for the arrival of *moshiach*, even if there are possible, valid reasons to believe that he will not immediately come. This is a deep subject, which requires a lot of contemplation, and practically it is wise to keep the stringencies of all opinions, or to discuss the matter with a *talmid chacham* who is well versed in this topic.

THE TWELFTH PRINCIPLE

YEARNING FOR THE REDEMPTION

In the previous essay, we quoted the Lakewood *Mashgiach*, Rav Matisyohu Salomon's opinion that we are obligated to believe in the upcoming arrival of *moshiach* and that we need to await him constantly. Furthermore, we need to await *moshiach* eagerly, because the basis of the requirement to await *moshiach* stems from our obligation to believe that the days of *moshiach* will be a utopian time-period for each and every one of us. It follows, says Rav Matisyohu, that we need to understand and internalize the specialness of the time of *moshiach*. Let us shed some light on this topic, *be'ezras Hashem*.

The *Mashgiach* brings the words of the *Rambam* in *Hilchos Melachim* (12:4-5), where he states that included amongst the secondary benefits of the days of *moshiach* are the following: When *moshiach* comes, the Jewish Nation will rule over the entire world, including all of the non-Jews. [The entire globe from America to Australia, each and every continent, and every last island, will be under total Jewish jurisdiction and rule.] All of the nations of the world will greatly respect the Jewish Nation. *Moshiach's* times will be an era of great happiness and rejoicing. No one will cause the Jews trouble anymore. There will be no more famine or war. There will no longer be any selfish and jealous competition. Everyone will enjoy an abundance of material success and pleasure. Delicacies will abound, as numerous as the dirt on the ground.

This is all secondary to the prime benefits of the epoch of *moshiach*, says the *Rambam*. Ideally, the anticipation for *moshiach* should be because it will usher in a time when we will be able to totally and easily devote ourselves to learning Torah and doing mitzvos. It will be a time when we can finally, completely immerse ourselves in the paradise of *avodas Hashem* without hindrance. It will be a grand opportunity to really earn ourselves a prominent place in *Olam Haba*, as a reward for our devotion; for we will then be able to study Torah and perform mitzvos without distractions.

For the days of *moshiach* to be a time of reward, we need to focus now, during the period of *galus*, on using our free will to choose the path of *avodas Hashem*, as opposed to the pursuit of materialism (according to our individual levels, of course). By fulfilling this prerequisite, in the times of *moshiach* Hashem will consider our efforts as if we were investing the same perseverance and free choice needed to serve Him when we were still in *galus*. This will be despite the fact that at that point it will become fairly easy to serve Hashem, says Rav Matisyohu (his words are based on the *Maharal* and Rav Eliyahu Lopian *zt"l*).

Let us emphasize one of the descriptions that the *Rambam* mentioned – that in *moshiach*'s time there will no longer be any jealous competition. We are so disgusted with the all-too common problem of conflict and hatred that abounds in our world¹; when *moshiach* comes, we will finally see the end of all *machlokes*, quarrels.

The *Maharal* (*Netzach Yisrael* 25) writes that some non-Jews asked him, “Why do the Jews fight so much amongst themselves?” The *Maharal* explained that this phenomenon is rooted in the fact that

1. Especially with the advent of modern technology which makes it so easy to get involved in *machlokes* and character assassination.

machlokes is the definitive essence of *galus*. As long as we are in *galus*, there will inevitably be *machlokes* – when the *machlokes* will end, *galus* will have ended too.

It is exciting to think about how, hopefully soon, when *moshiach* comes, everyone will get along. There will be complete *achdus*, unity amongst all Jews, from all walks of life, every color and every stripe. All Jews will respect and love one another. This is a beautiful thing to anticipate. Surely by working on *shalom* and *achdus* now, during *galus*, we will hasten the *geulah* even more.

The *Maharal* adds that this phenomenon actually stems from a positive quality! A Jew has an inherent desire to become great. He has an energy and drive to make something of himself. This is truly an amazing quality – however, the downside of this quality is that, all too often, it becomes the main ingredient of *machlokes*, strife and animosity.

Let us yearn and *daven* for the redemption, which will actually hasten it, as we say in *Shemonah Esrei* in the *brocho* of *Es Tzemach Dovid* - “*ki lishuascha kivinu kol hayom*, for we hoped for Your salvation the entire day.” Specifically when pleading for the *geulah*, we say that we deserve it in merit of our hoping and yearning for it. Let us develop an increased appreciation for the times of *moshiach*. Let us utilize our *bechira* – free choice, to choose Torah and mitzvos, and not materialism. Let us increase our pleasure and sense of vitality when fulfilling Torah and mitzvos. Let us work on *shalom* and *achdus*, and by doing so, finally merit witnessing the true revelation of Hashem’s glory, here in our world.

THE TWELFTH PRINCIPLE

YEARNING FOR KVOD SHAMAYIM, HEAVENLY GLORY

The Chofetz Chaim writes (*Likutei Amarim*, chapter 11, page 16) that if we would really prepare ourselves and await the arrival of *moshiach*, it would compel him to come immediately! This is on condition, however, that we await him for the right reasons – only then will it cause *moshiach* to come.

The reason we must yearn for the arrival of *moshiach* is because then the full glory of Hashem's Kingdom will become revealed and publicized throughout the entire world. As a result of the revelation of *kvod Malchus Shamayim* in the world, our material needs will be met as well. However, if our yearning is focused on alleviating our own personal pain and suffering in this bitter exile, it does not qualify as a reason to bring *moshiach*, nor is it the right reason to long for the arrival of *moshiach*. Furthermore, we will be asked by our final judgment if we hoped for the redemption (*Shabbos* 31a). This means that we will be asked if we wanted an increase in *kvod Shamayim* – that the glory and honor of Hashem should be revealed and publicized. These are the words of the Chofetz Chaim. Let us elaborate on this topic *be'ezras Hashem*.

Obviously, to be able to yearn for an increase in *kvod Shamayim*, we first need to learn about it and work on it now, while we are still in *galus*.

Rabbeinu Yonah in *Sha'arei Teshuva* writes that the purpose of man's creation was so that he should bring honor to the Name of Hashem. This is as the *pasuk* in *Yeshaya* (43:7) declares, "All those who are called by My Name, and for My honor I have created him..."¹. We accomplish this by listening to Hashem and performing His Will. This is especially applicable to the lofty mitzvos which the Rabbeinu Yonah lists in his *Shaarei Teshuvah* (*sha'ar* 3:17).

Rabbeinu Yonah writes that, in particular, this concept applies to being careful not to cause a *chilul Hashem* – a desecration of Hashem's Name, and not to disrespect the words of Hashem (i.e., His mitzvos). Rather, we must accomplish our central calling in life – honoring Hashem and sanctifying Him [*l'chabed es Hashem u'likadsho*- see *sha'ar* 3:143].

Rabbeinu Yonah also applies this concept to showing honor and respect to Torah scholars, being careful to avoid displaying disrespect in any way. This is because one of the ways that we need to make a *kiddush Hashem*¹ is by ensuring that we always act in a way which reflects that the purpose of life is *avodas Hashem*, *yiras Shamayim* – fear of Heaven, and learning Torah². This is as the *pasuk* states (*Koheles* 12:13), that *yiras Shamayim* "is the whole [purpose] of man." Therefore, it is vital to show proper respect for Torah scholars, because they are our role models, who show us that man's primary task in life is serving

1. It seems from Rabbeinu Yonah that giving *kavod* to Hashem and making a *kiddush Hashem* are synonymous, or at least parallel one another.

2. See *Alei Shor*, volume 2, page 445.

Hashem. Furthermore, they are the ones who guide us, showing us the correct way to keep the Torah (*sha'ar* 3:148).

Rabbeinu Yonah concludes, that since the purpose of creation is bringing glory to the Name of Hashem, therefore a person is obligated to constantly make sure that his actions increase Hashem's honor and sanctify His Name – making a *kiddush Hashem* in all of his endeavors. So too, he should always exalt the name of Hashem, and constantly thank and bless Him. Additionally, when a person spends time with others, he should be very careful to make a *kiddush Hashem* with his speech – to praise the service of Hashem and to discuss the importance of *yiras Shamayim*. Furthermore, he should praise individuals who devote themselves to *avodas Hashem* and *yiras Shamayim*. One who adopts this practice will easily merit tremendous reward – and he is fulfilling the purpose of his existence (*sha'ar* 3:148).

Rav Shlomo Wolbe (*Alei Shor*, volume 2, page 236) writes the following: The *tachlis* – purpose and goal of the world, is the revelation of the Oneness and Unity of Hashem. This will take place by the final redemption (upon *moshiach's* arrival), when the forces of evil will finally be nullified. That is when the *yichud* – Unity of Hashem, will be revealed. In other words, that is when the *kavod* – glory of Hashem, will be made known to the entire world.

However, *Klal Yisroel* can already attain this level now, during the *galus*, and that is the purpose of our existence. We say this in *davening* every day, “*Baruch Elokeinu she'baranu lichvodo!*” – Blessed is Hashem that He created us to bring honor to His Name. A Jew's greatest fortune and his aspiration in life, is to merit in his lifetime to be at least a small “spark” in the revelation of Hashem's glory, with his thoughts, his words and his actions – this is the mission of a lifetime. Then Rav

Wolbe goes on to quote the words of Rabbeinu Yonah, which we quoted earlier in this essay.

Rav Wolbe, in a different place (*Alei Shor*, volume 2, page 225), explains the general concept of *kavod* – honor. On page 235 he applies it specifically to *kavod Shamayim* – honoring Hashem. Briefly speaking, he explains that by giving someone or something honor, he reveals the value and quality of that person or item. To honor Hashem is to reveal the presence and manifestation of Hashem in our world. Furthermore, the word *kavod* means weight and seriousness. This implies that showing *kavod* means to treat someone or something with the correct level of seriousness and appreciation for its value.

We can stress an additional point – that when we glorify, respect and honor something or someone, it causes us to learn from and emulate that person or concept.

Rav Moshe Shapiro zt”l (*sefer Re’eh Emunah* page 51-53 and page 69) explained the concept of *kavod Shamayim* on a deeper level. In short, he brings the text of the *tefilla* (*birkas krias shema*) that *tov yatzar k’vod lishmo*, meaning, Hashem the “Good One” [out of His goodness to mankind], created the concept and opportunity to bring honor to His Name (or for His sake). [See the *Siddur Ishei Yisroel, HaGra* (in the commentary *Avnei Eliyahu*) for the basis of Rav Shapiro’s approach]. Hashem wanted to bestow good, so He created a concept called *Malchus*, Majesty. *Malchus* necessitates (as it were) created beings, who will complete the *Malchus* by recognizing the *Melech*. This is done by either positively bringing honor to His name, or negatively – then unfortunately getting punished for desecrating the honor of the King – Hashem.

In other words, Hashem revealed to us that the only way it is possible for us to exist and be recipients of His good depends on whether we are creations who manifest the glory of Hashem by the way we live our lives. Rav Shapiro added that we should recognize that Hashem does not need us. However, He created a system in which He expressed His Will that we should live and act as if He does need us to bring honor to His Name. This is so that there will be a revelation of *Malchus Shamayim*, and this way He can bestow His benevolence upon others.

Let us add in simple language, that of course it is a great honor and privilege to be given permission by the King to bring honor to His Name. This is similar to what we find amongst human beings, who will do anything to have the privilege of meeting with an important personage and the opportunity to honor him.

The Chofetz Chaim quotes from a *Midrash*, that doing any of the mitzvos is a form of honoring Hashem (*Maamar Kvod Shamayim*, introduction). We see from the *Gemara* in *Yoma* (86a) and the *Rambam* (*Yesodei HaTorah* 5:11) that *kiddush Hashem* which is synonymous with *kavod Shamayim*, is especially applicable to the way a Jew or Torah scholar acts publicly; this visibly gives people an either positive, or *chas ve'shalom* negative, impression of Hashem and His Torah.

Let us work on increasing our involvement in generating *kavod Shamayim* and *kiddush Hashem*, now, while still in *galus*. Let us devote and dedicate ourselves to our purpose of existence – increasing *kvod Shamayim*. Finally, let us yearn for the arrival of *moshiach*, so that the glory of Hashem should become publicized in the whole universe, speedily in our times.

THE TWELFTH PRINCIPLE

KVOD SHAMAYIM, HEAVENLY GLORY AND TZAAR HASHECHINA, PAIN OF THE DIVINE PRESENCE

The Chofetz Chaim writes (*Likutei Amarim*, chapter 11, page 16), that it is not enough to just yearn for *moshiach*, we have to yearn for the right reasons. We have to yearn for *kvod Shamayim* – the glory of Hashem that will become revealed and publicized when *moshiach* will come. The greatest thing that a person can accomplish is to give up his life *al kiddush Hashem* – to sanctify the Name of Hashem. It has been said though, that for a person to live a life committed to *kiddush Sheim Shamayim* can be considered an even more difficult challenge; perhaps a greater endeavor than even dying for the sake of Heaven. By constantly yearning for *moshiach*, so that *kvod Shamayim* and *kiddush Sheim Shamayim* should be revealed in its full glory, we will be able to remain focused on this goal – to live lives dedicated to *kvod Shamayim*. Furthermore, if we learn to appreciate the concept now, then we will be able to yearn for *moshiach* the right way, which in turn will hasten the *geulah*.

Let us present one practical and commonly found application of *kiddush Hashem* that we can aspire to. Rav Moshe Feinstein zt”l, writes the following ruling (*Igros Moshe*, volume 8, Y.D., page 224). The Rambam is of the opinion that it is not permissible for a person

to accept charity to be able to devote himself to Torah study; rather, he must work to earn a living¹. However, Rav Moshe explains that, in truth, the Rambam would say this only for someone who, while holding down a job, is still capable of learning well in his remaining time.

However, somebody, who because of his efforts to earn a living, will not be able to focus enough on his Torah learning, then, such a person, is actually obligated to accept gifts and charity, so that he can devote himself to studying Torah with clarity –even according to the Rambam. This person is highly qualified to receive *tzedakah* funds. Furthermore, says Rav Moshe, about such a person we can apply the Rambam's words in *hilchos rotzeiach* (chapter 7), that for a Torah scholar and a seeker of Torah, to be without Torah is tantamount to death!

Rav Moshe makes a very powerful statement about this. He says that a person who is willing to embarrass himself and accept gifts and charity to be able to devote himself to Torah study, is making a tremendous *kiddush Hashem*. Rav Moshe writes that there is no greater *kiddush Sheim Shamayim* and honor to the Torah than this. This is the greatest form of sanctifying the Name of Hashem and of giving honor to the Torah. This person is showing people that it is worth humiliating oneself to be able to learn Torah properly.

Each one of us can take a share in this massive display of *kiddush Hashem*, by helping a full-time Torah learner financially. Furthermore, each and every one of us can forgo certain time consuming pastimes, and instead devote more time to learning Torah, even though it may come at the expense of some sort of embarrassment (like turning down a good business deal or social invitation, etc.).

1. This ruling is not accepted *l'ma'aseh* (practically) as is explicit in *Igros Moshe*, Y.D. 2, *siman* 116, page 190 (volume 5).

Every single Jew was created with a mission and a mandate – to bring honor to the Name of Hashem – with his specific abilities and according to how he lives his life (Rabbeinu Yonah, *Shaarei Teshuva* 3:7). That being said, let us make the following observation:

Out of around 7.5 billion people in the world², there are only about 15.5 million Jews³, which is twenty one percent – about two in a thousand.

Out of the 15.5 million Jews in the whole world, only 2.1 million of them are orthodox.

It follows, that out of the 7.5 billion people in the world, only three percent are contributing their share to *kvod Shamayim*. That means that just 3 out of every 10,000 people are honoring Hashem.

Of the 6 million Jews living in America today, only ten percent of them are following Hashem's Torah and consider themselves orthodox Jews⁴.

2. It is popularly assumed that there are 7 or 8 billion people in the world.

3. In the Israeli *Yated Ne'eman*, in June 2018, it was quoted from the *va'adat ha'aliah v'haklita* of the Israeli Knesset, that there are 5.7 million Jews in the U.S.A., and 2.7 million in other countries, and that in *Eretz Yisroel* there are more than 6 million. There is a popular assumption that there are 7 million Jews in *Eretz Yisroel*.

4. In the Israeli *Yated Ne'eman*, in December 2018, it was quoted from the Pew research, that in America 10-11 percent of the Jews are orthodox, and another 8-9 percent are semi-traditional (they affiliate with *Chabad* but don't consider themselves religious). 50 or 60 percent are entirely unaffiliated with Judaism. Reform comprises another 15 percent and Conservative 12-13 percent.

Of the 6.5 million Jews living in *Eretz Yisroel* today, only a mere twenty percent are Torah observant Jews⁵.

Of the 3 million Jews in the other parts of the world, we can assume that not more than five percent of them are actually orthodox Jews.

In conclusion, out of the 15.5 million Jews in the world, only 2.1 million are bearing the torch of *kvod Shamayim*. In the U.S.A., only 1 in every 10 Jews is a *mekadesh Sheim Shamayim*. In *Eretz Yisroel*, the “King’s palace” itself, only 2 out of every 10 Jews is loyal to bring honor to their Father, the King. Although this is a sobering and shocking observation, sometimes we need to look the truth in the eye, to shock ourselves into action.

Imagine the following “story.” There was a couple that got married. They settled down, and as usual, eagerly waited to be blessed with a child. Unfortunately, the heavenly gift was not quick in coming. They waited and they waited. The years went by. They tried everything, leaving no stone unturned. They visited every doctor and experimented with every treatment available. They wept copious tears in *tefilla* to Hashem, and tried every possible *segulah*. Sadly, it just seemed like all of their efforts were in vain.

Finally, after waiting twenty long and painful years, their dreams suddenly came true, and their *tefillos* were answered. They were blessed with not just one child, but with four healthy, adorable children. They had two boys and two girls. They were ecstatic and it was the talk of the town. As the children grew older, their parents and whole community delighted in each achievement, every step of the way.

5. Based on popular assumption, I have also heard that 2 million Jews are orthodox.

When the quads smiled their first smiles – wow, what *nachas*, what a joy! They crawled, they stood up, they took their first steps and finally they walked and got their first pairs of shoes. What a celebration it was! When they started talking, their parents' joy knew no bounds.

Finally it came time for the boys' bar mitzvahs; it was such a *simcha*. The preparations were a whirl of excitement. Everyone pitched in and everyone wanted a part in this amazing event.

It was just a few short days before the bar mitzvah, and the quads were getting a ride somewhere, when suddenly a truck which was coming the other way, lost control. There was a terrible accident – sadly only one girl out of the four quads survived...

Hashem, in His great benevolence, created a magnificent and beautiful world – a paradise. He waited to have a child, who would deserve to be the recipient of His generosity. After waiting almost two thousand years, finally Hashem had a child – Avraham Avinu (1948). Around another 500 years elapsed, and finally Hashem's special Nation, His dear children, were born at *yetzias mitzrayim* – the exodus from Egypt (2488).

Then followed the glorious era, the forty years of the *Dor Hamidbar* the Generation of the Desert, when Hashem groomed His children to become a kingdom of princes. After that, in the year 2488, Hashem finally brought us into His palace, *Eretz Yisroel*. Then around 450 years later things peaked in the era of Shlomo Hamelech. We were a real source of *nachas* to Hashem for the 410 years of the first *Beis Hamikdash* (2928-3338), which sadly came to an end with its destruction as a result of our rebelliousness. It was only around fifteen hundred years after *yetzias mitzrayim*, that a great tragedy occurred. The Jews sinned so severely, that Hashem allowed His beloved children to suffer the

destruction of the second *Beis Hamikdash* – they were exiled, and the Jewish Nation and their loving Father in Heaven were plunged into mourning (3828). They suffered a spiritual death, and sadly it has lasted, so far, for around 2,000 years.

Now, towards the end of the bitter *galus*, the majority of Hashem’s children are buried in the dirt of materialism, and are chasing the false illusions of the world. Just a mere two percent of Hashem’s children, are “alive” and proudly bearing the Name of Hashem, proclaiming their loyalty to *kvod Shamayim*. Therefore, we yearn deeply for the coming of *moshiach*, when the glory of Hashem will finally reverberate throughout the entire world.

Besides for the lack of *kvod Shamayim* that has resulted due to the fact that there are so many Jews who do not follow Hashem’s Torah, there is also a tremendous *tzaar haShechina*, pain felt by the Divine Presence, *keviyachol*. The Divine Presence of Hashem is in exile, and is mourning her lost and wayward children, as it were.

The *Shlah Hakadosh* (*Likutei Shlah, Shavuos*, page 359-360) tells the story of a *Shavuos* night in *Tzfas* some 350 years ago. A Divine voice revealed itself. It told of how proud it was that a group of Torah scholars had gathered and stayed up at night to learn Torah, in all of its holiness. This Heavenly voice described to them the tremendous pain of the Divine Presence during *galus*.

“...For it is already many long years that My crown has fallen from My head, and I can find no consolation. I have been thrust into the dirt, and I find myself hugging the garbage heaps. Now, finally, you have returned My crown, like in the days of old... If you would only imagine a billionth, an iota, of My suffering in this *galus*, you would not be able to experience any joy or give even one smile your entire lives. Especially

considering the fact that this suffering is because of your deeds, sins, and lack of *teshuva* all these years.”

Let us yearn for the *geulah*, to really want *kvod Shamayim*, and wipe away the heavenly tears – the pain of the *Shechina*, once and forever. Rav Nosson Wachtfogel had a tradition⁶ that all those who succeed in staying away from the gentile culture will merit greeting *moshiach*. Perhaps the reason is because those who are proud to act Jewish and keep away from non-Jewish values are saying, “Hashem we are Your children, and we want to give You *nachas* – we want Your glory to be revealed to all.” Let us say “*al kein nekaveh lecha*, therefore we hope and long for You...” in *Aleinu* with feeling, and let us participate in the *kaddish tefillah* with all our hearts, as these are expressions of our heartfelt desire that the glory of Hashem’s Name should finally be revealed.

Rav Sheinerman (*Ohel Moshe, Hamikdash V’hagalus*, page 526) relates the following story– the tale of a Jew who had already lost his wife and children to the Nazi butchers. Now it was his turn to meet his fate. He called out in a loud voice – the collective cry of the Jewish Nation in *galus*, “*Tatteh!* I will not ask you for children or for life, nor will I ask you for sustenance. I am already passed all that. I just ask for one thing – *yisgadel v’yiskadesh Shmei Rabbah*, may the glory of Your Name become exalted and sanctified forever!”

6. *Meir Einei Yisroel* (volume 5 page 284), based on *Leket Reshimos Chanukah*.

THE TWELFTH PRINCIPLE

AN EVERLASTING BOND OF LOVE

The Rambam writes (*Peirush Mishnayos, Sanhedrin, Chelek*) that the twelfth fundamental is to believe in the coming of *moshiach*. The *Sefer Ha'ikrim* (1:4 and 4:42), and the *Chasam Sofer* (in his *teshuvos* at the end of Y.D.) write that they do not understand why this should be considered a fundamental of *emunah*. Let us quote the answer of Rav Shimshon Pincus zt"l to explain the opinion of the Rambam.

Rav Pincus writes the following in his introduction to his *sefer* on *chumash*, entitled *Tiferes Torah*: Let us ask ourselves the all-important questions: What are we here for? What is life and *yiddishkeit* all about? What are our goals, and what should be our focus in this world? It is true that the final goal and result – the ultimate purpose – is that we should earn *nitzchiyus* – eternity for ourselves; this is the true *schar* – reward. By earning it through our own perseverance, we will be spared the embarrassment of taking handouts in the World to Come. This world is the place where we work hard to earn this reward that we will receive in *Olam Haba*. However, we are asking a different question – what is the focus and the main objective, here and now, in our world, the world we call *olam hazeh*?

The answer to this, says Rav Pincus, is three words in *lashon hakodesh*. These three words are the entire objective of our lives and of Judaism. They are *krisas bris ahavah*. This means that Hashem made a covenant

of love with *Klal Yisroel*. Hashem committed Himself to *Klal Yisroel*, to a bond of intimacy between Him and them. Our mission statement in life, is to tap into our closeness with Hashem, to maintain it, and to constantly increase the intensity of it.

Rav Pincus continues and explains that essentially this is the underlying point of *Olam Haba* as well. We spend our lives connecting with Hashem, and we elevate ourselves to develop our self, our identity and our very essence, to become intimately close with Hashem. We make ourselves the “children,” and even the “spouse,” of Hashem, so to speak, which is in fact our core and inner essence. After this, we are ready for *Olam Haba*, to bask in the presence of Hashem, and enjoy being with Him without any shame. We will not feel like we received a handout, because we have such a close relationship of love, one which we developed during our stay in *olam hazeh*.

This covenant of love, this intimate bond between Hashem and the Jewish Nation, was forged by *Har Sinai*. It was a bond that was to manifest itself in *olam hazeh*, especially in *Eretz Yisroel*, and even more so, in the *Beis Hamikdash*.

A covenant – a *bris* in the real sense – is eternal. If it would, Heaven forbid, be possible for Hashem to decide to disown or divorce the Jewish Nation at some point in time, then that would relegate the Torah and the mitzvos to merely an arrangement – a deal – of work and compensation. However, a covenant – a bond of love – it would not be. Even if the separation would be because we betrayed Hashem, it would still reflect that there was not really a covenant, just a “work” relationship, similar to an employer and his employee.

Our faith in the coming of *moshiach* is a fundamental of our *emunah*, because it reflects and underscores this bond of love that we have with

Hashem. Hashem will certainly return us to *Eretz Yisroel* and to the *Beis Hamikdash*, while still in our present *olam hazeh* world, so that we can have the true manifestation of our bond of love. This is fundamental, because this defines the here and now, and it is not based on future implications. This defines our present relationship with Hashem, which is the entire focus of Judaism and our life. This is the amazing answer of Rav Pincus. (It is greatly encouraged to see his brilliant words and elaboration on the sources.)

Let us add to Rav Pincus's explanation, the amazing words of the *Maharal* (*Netzach Yisroel* 11). He writes that the love that Hashem has for *Klal Yisroel* is unconditional! Therefore, we can rest assured that Hashem will not leave us in *galus* forever.

We may feel that who are we that we should merit the *geulah* – are we really deserving? Let us quote Rav Pam *zt"l* from his *sefer Atarah Lamelech* (page 140) about *moshiach* in general, and about this point specifically:

We are obligated to await the arrival of *moshiach*, like a person who is eagerly awaiting something, and he hopes and expects it to happen in the near future. We should not, Heaven forbid, entertain the thought that it is true that he will come, but the time is just does not ripe yet. In fact, the *navi Malachi* (3:1) prophesied regarding *moshiach*, “And suddenly he will enter his chamber (*heichel*), the master (*adon, moshiach see Radak*) who you desire.” So said Rav Pam *zt"l*.

It is true that, ideally, we need to be on a high spiritual level to deserve the coming of *moshiach*. However, we will quote sources that say that even when the Jews are on a very low level, they can also expect the immediate arrival of *moshiach*.

In *Parshas Ha'azinu* (32:36-41), the Torah describes how there will be a time that all of the Nations of the world will be against the Jews. The Torah then foretells that even in that situation, Hashem will come and save the Jewish Nation. The *Ohr Hachaim* explains the *pesukim* as follows. Hashem will look at the tremendous suffering of the Jews. He will take particular notice of the pain of the *tzaddikim* – the righteous individuals. He will contemplate the fact that they were killed, burned, and even skinned alive, during the long and bitter *galus*. In the merit of their suffering, Hashem will reconsider, as it were, and say, “They suffered enough; it is time for the *galus* to end.”

Furthermore, when Hashem will see that the Jews are unable to save themselves from the *galus* in their own merit, and that they no longer have leaders who are able to influence them to mend their ways and keep the Torah properly, it will cause Hashem to hasten the *geulah*. These are the sad, yet comforting words of the *Ohr Hachaim*.

After *Klal Yisroel* suffered so much in the recent Holocaust, and since the power of the Torah leaders has been greatly diminished, we certainly have good reason to expect *moshiach* ever so soon. Furthermore, since the spiritual level of *Klal Yisroel* is in decline, this is all the more reason for Hashem to hasten the *geulah*. If He waits, Heaven forbid, He will not have whom to redeem anymore.

The *Sforno* in *Parshas Vayeitzai* (28:14) writes the following. “When the Jewish Nation will reach rock-bottom – that is when the *geulah* will take place.” Rav Pam wrote that the Holocaust was certainly a fulfillment of this condition¹.

1. We can add to this the dismal low that the Jews are witnessing now with the serious illnesses that are so rampant and the *shidduch* crisis. Additionally

The *Midrash Rabbah* states (*Shir Hashirim* 2:8), “That Hashem redeemed the Jews from *Mitzrayim* in the merit of the *tzaddikim*. This was despite the fact that most of the Jews were undeserving in their own right.”

We too, can expect that Hashem will redeem us from our present day *galus* in the merit of the *tzaddikim*, and in the merit of those who devote themselves to Torah study, despite great challenges.

Furthermore, Hashem guaranteed us that even if we do not mend our ways on our own, He will awaken in us a spirit of repentance (see *Yechezkel* 36:25).

In *Melachim* II (14:24) we see that even when the Jews are doing *aveiros*, if the enemies of the Jews will want to totally destroy them, this is sufficient enough reason for Hashem to come and save them and grant them success.

The Chofetz Chaim said that in his times already, and today it is even more applicable, all the prerequisite signs for *moshiach* had already come. We can thus be assured that we are very close to the *geulah*.

Furthermore, the quickness in which events and changes are taking place in more recent times is an indication that the end of the *galus* is near, because when we come to the final phase of *galus* all the “accounts” need to be finished up before the end. Therefore things are happening much more rapidly. People are earning and losing fortunes overnight. The world has become a small hamlet with air travel and technology. Country and political leaders are coming and going at a dizzying pace. Standards of morality have taken a dramatic plunge.

troubling, are the families that are being tragically destroyed as a result of technology and other issues.

This is happening in order to provide reward and punishment, and to present everyone with their tailormade challenges and tribulations, which will then shape their destiny and posterity.

Additionally, before the *geulah* there will be a dramatic and terrifying increase of *tumah* –spiritual contamination in the world, which we are sadly witness to.

We can add that this is especially true today, with the terrible spiritual decline brought on by technology, the terrible rates of intermarriage, and people who are leaving the path of Torah. We also suffer from a dramatic increase of disrespect for *talmidei chachamim* and *Gedolim* and of *machlokes* – strife. Additionally, authentic and traditional Jewish values are being attacked on all fronts – both by the Israeli government, as well as by many prominent world governments. Therefore, we have all the more reason to expect *moshiach* very soon.

One of the greatest obstacles to the *geulah*, is relying on the nations of the world to be our saviors. We need to place our trust only in the *Ribbono shel Olam*, because He is the only one who has the ability to save us from *galus*.

Rav Pam concluded his *ma'amar* by writing that we have to make the following preparations and efforts to bring the *geulah*:

First and foremost, *tefilla* is a prerequisite for the *geulah*. Additionally, we need to increase our commitment to learning Torah and doing *chessed* (see *Sanhedrin* 98b). Furthermore, we should support and encourage people who are willing to learn and teach Torah full-time, as doing so is *kodesh kedoshim* – holy of holies.

Those who spend the bulk of their days earning a living, need to stay focused on the fact that earning money is only a means to an

end. It is not a goal in its own right. Torah study must be established as the prime focus in one's life. One's occupation is only a temporary endeavor. Finally, besides for our own involvement in *limud Torah*, we need to spread the light to the masses. We need to teach Torah to our uninitiated brothers and sisters. They are out there, and they are not just thirsty; rather, their *neshamos* are parched for the sweet and life-giving waters of Torah. These are the words of Rav Pam zt"l.

May we constantly grow in our closeness to Hashem. May we feel Hashem's love for us and reciprocate it. May we really expect and prepare ourselves for *moshiach*, whose footsteps can already be heard, and may we finally go out and greet him *b'mehaira be'yameinu amen*.

THE TWELFTH PRINCIPLE

YEARNING FOR ROYALTY (PART ONE)

The twelfth fundamental of *emunah* is to believe in the coming of *Moshiach*. The Rambam includes an additional point in this fundamental: “And we should also believe that *Moshiach* will be greater, and will be given more honor than all the kings who ever were... and to know that a Jewish king must come from Dovid Hamelech and his son Shlomo” (*Peirush Hamishnayos, Sanhedrin perek Chelek*).

We see that included in this *ikar* is the fact that *Moshiach* will be a king, and the greatest king of all time. Earlier in the *Peirush Hamishnayos*, before the thirteen principles, the Rambam spoke about the days of *Moshiach* and, there too, he pointed out that *Moshiach* will be a *melech Yisroel* – a Jewish king, and that with his coming we will once again have a glorious Jewish monarchy. Let us discuss the topic of a Jewish king, and *be’ezras Hashem*, we will also glean some important practical lessons in *avodas Hashem*.

There is a mitzvah in the Torah for the Jews to have a king, as is taught in *Parshas Shoftim* (17:14, see Rambam in *Sefer Hamitzvos, aseh* 173). There is an obligation to have tremendous awe and fear of the king (see Rambam *ibid.*). The king has tremendous power, and in many ways, is like an absolute monarch. The Rambam in the *Sefer Hamitzvos* writes that Jews must listen to the orders of the king; if not, he can decree death (so long as his orders do not contradict a mitzvah of the

Torah). Let us quote some of the *halachos* of a Jewish king from the Rambam's *Hilchos Melachim* in the *Yad Hachazakah*. This will give us a better picture of a Jewish king:

“We need to afford the king great honor (2:1). A king is not allowed to pass up on the honor due to him (2:3). The king takes a haircut every single day; he dresses very nicely and wears a crown. If the king orders someone to come to him, he must come (except for a *kohen gadol*). People have to remain standing while in the presence of the king and prostrate themselves before the king [except for a *kohen gadol* and *gedolei Yisroel*. In general, the king is to honor *lomdei Torah*, Torah scholars] (2:5).

If someone is rebellious toward the king, the king has permission to kill him. Even if the king tells a person to go somewhere or stay home, and he disobeys his orders, he can kill him for that.

If someone is even disrespectful to the king, he can kill him. The king can have someone whipped or imprisoned to protect his honor (3:8). The king has power to issue the death penalty to prevent crime and *aveiros* from being committed (3:10).

The king can impose taxes and enforce them (4:1). The king can force people to work for him (4:2). The king can forcefully take whomever he wants as a wife (4:4). When the king travels he can knock down anyone's fence and travel through their fields for his convenience (*Lechem Mishneh, Melachim* 5:3 – according to the Rambam he can only do it for the purpose of war).”

We see from these *halachos* the tremendous power granted to a Jewish king. It is important to understand the Torah concept of a king and of an ideal government. We must realize what it means to have a country run according to all the *halachos* of the Torah, enforced by

powerful courts, controlled by a king who was nearly an absolute monarch. With all the benefits of democracy we need to realize that it is far from ideal, as can be seen from the *halachos* of a *melech Yisroel*, who was at the helm of what had the potential of being the ideal government. The *Melech haMoshiach* will be a king with all the ramifications of a Jewish king. It would be very beneficial to learn to appreciate a real monarchy to prepare for *Moshiach's* arrival.

Let us quote some more details from the Rambam: Much of the king's power was absolute and independent; however, certain aspects of his power were dependent on the directives and agreement of the *nevi'im* and the *Sanhedrin*. Initially, the king is appointed by the *Sanhedrin* (the *Beis Din* of seventy one judges), and by a *navi* as well (Rambam, *ibid.* 1:3). The king's son inherits the kingship from his father (provided that he has *yiras Shamayim*, is G-d fearing) (1:7).

To wage a *milchemes mitzvah*, a war for the sake of a mitzvah, the king need not ask permission from *Beis Din*. However for a *milchemes reshut*¹ he does need to (5:2). The king does not have power to override the mitzvos of the Torah, and one who is involved with a mitzvah need not stop to carry out orders of the king (3:9). So clearly, the king's power is limited in some ways. However, for the most part, he is given a tremendous amount of absolute power and authority.

The Rambam writes further (2:6): The king is required to be very humble, merciful and caring. He is to take full responsibility for the wellbeing of all his citizens. The king is required to act with the utmost

1. A *milchemes mitzvah* was a war that was commanded by Hashem. The Rambam (5:1) writes that a *milchemes mitzvah* means fighting the Seven Nations of *Eretz Yisroel*, Amalek, and protecting the Jews if they are attacked. A *milchemes reshut* means a permissible war waged to gain land and prestige.

patience with his people. The king needs to limit his involvement in the mundane very much and must spend his time learning Torah and taking care of the kingdom (chap. 3:1-6).

It is the king's role to defeat the wicked (3:10). The king is expected to act for the sake of Heaven in everything he does. He is to rule with the goal of spreading the truth amongst the Nation, and to get everyone to adhere to all of the directives of the Torah. He is to fill the country with justice and rid the world of evil (4:10).

It is not easy for us to relate to kings and monarchies, however, learning about a Jewish king will prepare us for the imminent arrival of the Melech HaMoshiach. In the meantime we can improve our attitude towards accepting authority and discipline by working on listening to the directives of the Gedolim and the rabbanim.

THE TWELFTH PRINCIPLE

YEARNING FOR ROYALTY (PART TWO)

As previously stated, the twelfth *ikar* of *emunah* is to believe in the coming of *Moshiach*. The Rambam adds that we need to believe that *Moshiach* will be the greatest king that *Klal Yisroel* ever had. When *Moshiach* comes (hopefully very soon), we will once again have a Jewish monarch – a *Melech Yisroel*. Let us continue to broaden our understanding of the concept of a Jewish king. This will also prepare us for *yemos haMoshiach, be'ezras Hashem*.

There is a mitzvah in the Torah (*Parshas Shoftim*) to appoint a Jewish king. What is the function and purpose of a Jewish king? One important function of a king is to instill law and order in the country. We see this in the Mishnah in *Avos* (3:2) which states, “Were it not for the fear of the *malchus* – the monarchy, man would swallow his fellow man alive!” The Maharal explains this and also gives us a deeper definition of the function of a *melech*. Says the Maharal, “A *melech* unites the nation as one.” Without a kingship, every individual thinks that he is the center of the world and that everything and everyone have to fit in with his worldview and are for his personal benefit. The king, however, causes all individuals to merge and unite into one unified entity.

The *Sefer Hachinuch* in *Parshas Shoftim* (mitzvah 497- the mitzvah of making a king) points us in the direction of a concept he previously explained (in mitzvah 71 - the prohibition to curse a *nasi* – a Jewish

leader). Let us bring some of his words. The Torah prohibits one from cursing a king or a *nasi*. Explains the *Chinuch*, “It is impossible for a group of people to succeed without appointing a leader to be in charge. This is because different people think differently, and every individual will want to run things his way; thus, they will never agree on anything together. This will bring about chaos and futility. Therefore they need to join together and appoint one leader and follow his directives, no matter what. This way they will succeed. Even if their leader will sometimes give them bad advice, still it is far better for them to follow one leader together. Therefore, it is very important that they all honor their leader. Certainly they must never curse or belittle him.” From this we see the importance of a nation having a leader who single-handedly rules the people and guides everyone in a unified way. This is the only way a group can succeed. This is the function of the king – to lead and unify the nation.

It can be suggested that another important function of a king is that his kingship conditions people to be humble, disciplined and to accept and respect authority. These are very important character traits and qualities.

A central function of a Jewish king is that he compels everyone to keep the Torah (*Rambam, Hilchos Melachim 4:10*).

Another important function of a Jewish king is that he represents *Malchus Shamayim*, the Heavenly Kingdom. He conditions people to acting with the yoke of Majesty upon their necks, and thus they will learn how to act as true servants and slaves to the King of All Kings – *Avinu Malkeinu*. The *Melech Yisroel* himself is a form of representation of *Malchus Shamayim* (see *Mei Zahav, Parshas Shoftim* from Rav Yitzchok

Pinchas Goldwasser *shlita*, the *mashgiach* of *Yeshivas Ohr Yisroel* in *Eretz Yisroel* and *Re'eh Emunah* from Rav Moshe Shapiro *zt"l* [twelfth *ikar*]).

Rav Goldwasser *shlita* (*ibid.*) brings the following true anecdotes, which occurred recently. Hopefully they will enable us relate to the concept of royalty a little better. He writes, “In a certain Arab country ruled by a king, a certain Jew had a high-ranking position in the kingdom. In fact, he was in charge of at least a thousand people. Once a year, he would meet with the king and would be given directives for the entire year. The last time he went to the king he was nearing retirement age. The king asked him if he would want to retire, since he was getting old. He answered, “I would like to retire, but I will do whatever the king thinks should be done.” A few hours later, the man got a frantic phone call from someone who was close to the king. The man told him, “You are in serious trouble. The king is so angry at you; it is even life threatening for you. How could you say, ‘I want?’ In front of the king there is no such thing. You were supposed to answer immediately, ‘Whatever the king wants is my pleasure and command!’” The man, realizing the danger, quickly called his son-in-law and had him go to the *Gedolei Yisroel* to request their *brachos*, and tried doing whatever he could. In the end, the man’s life was spared, but he was sent to some far-away district and given an insignificant job without pay! Rav Goldwasser heard this story from the man’s son-in-law. He concluded, “In front of a king we need to negate our personal interests entirely!”

Rav Goldwasser writes a second anecdote. “There is a famous *ger tzedek* living in *Tzfas*. His name is R’ Nossan. He was a son of an African king, from a cultured region¹. He related some of the royal practices

1. His full name is Rabbi Nossan Gamedze and he was born into the royal family of Swaziland.

from his father's palace. If a person would come to meet with the king, he would first need to stand in an outer chamber and praise the king saying, "The powerful lion, the great sea..." Then, if the king would usher him in, he would enter. If the king refused to meet with him, then he was required to stay in the palace the entire day until the king retired for the night. A person coming to the king was not allowed to be taller than the king, often necessitating a visitor to come in on all fours!"

Part of yearning for the *Melech haMoshiach* is to develop an appreciation for *malchus*. Let us work to become more disciplined and obedient and try to recognize the great benefits of *malchus*. Most of all, let us increase our conviction and commitment to Hashem's Majesty each day. Especially when we accept upon ourselves *ol Malchus Shamayim*, the Heavenly yoke of Hashem's kingdom, in *Kriyas Shema*, we should feel like loyal subjects of Hashem, the King of the entire world.

THE THIRTEENTH PRINCIPLE

TECHiyAS HAMEISIM, THE REVIVAL OF THE DEAD- (PART ONE)

Let us bring the Rambam's thirteenth principle of *emunah*, found in his *peirush hamishnayos* on the eleventh *perek* of *Sanhedrin*, *perek Chelek*. In the words of the *Ani Maamin's* in the *siddur*, which are based on the Rambam: "I believe with complete faith that there will be a resurrection of the dead, whenever the Creator, may He be blessed, decides to revive the dead. May Hashem's Name be acknowledged always and for eternity."

The Rambam mentions and discusses *techiyas hameisim* in various places in his *seforim* (see *Yad Hachazaka*, *Hilchos Teshuva*, *perek 8*, *Peirush Hamishnayos*, introduction to *perek Chelek*). However, in *Igros Ve'teshuvos HaRambam (ma'amar techiyas hameisim)*, the Rambam writes that many people misunderstood his opinion about this topic. Therefore, he wrote a whole essay to reiterate the basics of *techiyas hameisim*, and he added some new points too.

There the Rambam writes that there really is not much to discuss regarding *techiyas hameisim*. That is, other than the fact that one day Hashem will make a phenomenal miracle and bring the dead back to life. In other words, He will return the *neshama*, soul, to the *guf*, body, and bring the person back to normal life.

Many commentators on the principles of faith ask why *techiyas hameisim* is an important, central and fundamental point of Judaism. Why does it not suffice to simply know that everyone gets *schar*, reward, for the good deeds they performed, even if just in the form of the *neshama* receiving *schar*? Why is it so important to know that the soul and body will be rejoined and receive reward in tandem?

It is the Ramban's opinion in *Sha'ar Ha'gmul* (*Mechon Ma'arava* edition 5:10) that *techiyas hameisim* lasts for eternity. In other words, Hashem returns the *neshama* to the *guf* and both exist together in *Olam Haba*. *Olam Haba* will follow *Gan Eden*, *Yemos HaMoshiach* (the period of *Moshiach*) and the *yom hadin hagadol*, the Great Day of Reckoning in the future. According to this, it is easier to understand that *techiyas hameisim* is an essential point of Judaism. However, according to the Rambam (*Yad Hachazaka, Hilchos Teshuva* 8:2), *Olam Haba* is just for the *neshama*, and the *guf* won't exist there. This means that *techiyas hameisim* – when the body and soul are reunited – is just a temporary phase¹ according to the Rambam, to be followed by *Olam Haba*, which is for the soul exclusively. Therefore, why does it deserve being one of the thirteen principles of Judaism?

1. According to the Rambam, the place where man's *neshamah* (not the body) goes after leaving this world is referred to as *Olam Haba*. The next phase is *techiyas hameisim*, when the *neshama* is returned to the body, and man resumes normal physical life. Then man dies again, and his *neshama* alone returns to *Olam Haba* for eternity. *Gan Eden* refers to a life of pleasure in this physical world, which will take place during *Yemos HaMoshiach*, the era of *Moshiach*, or during the period of *Techiyas Hameisim* (as quoted by the Ramban - *ibid.* 5:12).

The Rambam himself answers this question in *mam'ar techiyas hameisim*: He writes that *emunah* in *techiyas hameisim* is the key to belief in miracles in general. A Jew must know and understand that Hashem can perform, did perform and still does perform miracles. He runs our world with many supernatural phenomena. One who, Heaven forbid, has trouble relating to *techiyas hameisim*, will not be able to believe in miracles in general, and will come to deny that Hashem created the world out of nothingness, *chas ve'shalom!* Therefore, belief in *techiyas hameisim* is an essential fundamental of Judaism.

However, the question is why the miracle of *techiyas hameisim* are chosen as an *ikar* of our faith over all the other famous miracles which Hashem performed for the Jews, like the wonders of the *makkos* in *Mitzrayim* for example?

Perhaps we can suggest the following: First of all, *techiyas hameisim* expresses the belief that in the future Hashem will also make miracles, and that Hashem's miracles are not just something of the past. Furthermore, this highlights a very important aspect of reality, i.e. – the spiritual existence of the *neshama*. Plus, it shows that Hashem is not only able to take life – as was demonstrated by *makkas bechoros*, but He can also give life to the dead and revive them. This demonstrates Hashem's complete control over life and over the *neshama* – the ability to return the *neshama* to the *guf* even after it was taken out of the *guf*.

In fact, every day we make a special, detailed mention of this, which we can use as an opportunity to think about Hashem's miracles in general. Upon arising in the morning we recite, "*Elokai, neshama shenasatah bi, my G-d, the soul which You placed inside of me ... Atah berasah, You created it ... v'Atah mishamra b'kirbi, and You guard it within me, v'Atah asid litlah mimeni u'lihachzirah bi l'asid l'avo, and in*

the future You will take it back from me and then return it to me in The World to Come ... *Adon kol haneshamas*, Master of all the souls, *Baruch Atah Hashem hamachazir neshamos lifgarim meisim*, Blessed are You Hashem, who returns the souls to lifeless bodies.”

The miracles of *Mitzrayim* mostly demonstrated Hashem’s complete control over nature, whereas *techiyas hameisim* shows Hashem’s control over a person’s *neshama*. To be able to bring the dead back to life emphasizes that the real life power is *ruchnius* – the *neshama*, and it is completely in Hashem’s Hands. The more we think about this, the more we can gain awareness of our *neshama*.

Included in this principle is to realize that the *neshama*, the real “me,” the real personality, the thinking, feeling “me,” the part of me that experiences pain and pleasure – always lives on. As Rav Yisroel Salanter writes that the *guf* is like a coat for the *neshamah*². The “real self,” the “me,” that thinks and feels, will always exist, and I personally will deal with all the consequences of my actions in this world, in the afterlife.

Let us contemplate this well. Spirituality is very, very real. The Rambam stresses how *ruchniyus* is truly much more real than *gashmiyus*, physicality, but many people have trouble understanding this (see *Ma’mar Techiyas Hameisim*). Hashem made many miracles in the past, up until our present day. By reading true stories about miracles we can strengthen this foundation of *emunah*, the concept of belief in *techiyas hameisim* and miracles in general. Hence we will also be better able to understand the important concept of creation that we mention in *tefillah* – “*hamechadesh b’tuvo b’chol yom tamid maasei bereishis*, [Hashem did not just create the world purely out of His desire to

2. See *Sefer Ohr Yisroel*, letter 6, (page 118 in the Rav Weissblum edition); *Kochvei Ohr*, (Rav Blazer) os 53.

so; in fact,] He recreates, out of His goodness, every single day, and constantly, the acts of creation.”

THE THIRTEENTH PRINCIPLE

TECHiyAS HAMEISIM, THE REVIVAL OF THE DEAD - (PART TWO)

Harav Shmuel Berenbaum zt”l was once walking with a student in between the tall buildings and skyscrapers in Manhattan. His *talmid* saw him chuckle to himself and wondered aloud what was amusing him suddenly. Rav Shmuel told him, “*Zei meinen es af an emes* – they mean it for real. They take this world seriously, is it not funny?”

As the final principle of Judaism, the Rambam lists that one is obligated to believe in *techiyas hameisim* – the resurrection of the dead. A Jew must know and believe that besides for the reward for all mitzvos performed, and besides for the glorious time of the days of *Moshiach* and *Olam Haba*, there is also a phase of *techiyas hameisim*.

Now the truth is that according to the Rambam, the fundamental of *techiyas hameisim* does not necessarily include the belief in *Olam Haba*. In fact, the Rambam only mentions *Olam Haba* in the principle of *schar v’onesh*, not in the principle of *techiyas hameisim*.

Furthermore, according to the Rambam, *techiyas hameisim* is only a temporary stage and not a part of *Olam Haba* (*Ma’amar Techiyas Hameisim*). According to the Ramban (*Sha’ar Hag’mul Mechon Ma’arava*, edition 5:10) however, *techiyas hameisim* is the entry into *Olam Haba*, and it is a state that remains for eternity. According to his opinion, after

the *techiya*, both the *guf* and the *neshama* enjoy *Olam Haba* together. Therefore, it is part of the general discussion of *techiyas hameisim* to also explain and understand the topic of *Olam Haba*.

But it can also be understood according to the Rambam's perspective that there is a common theme in the two concepts of *techiyas hameisim* and *Olam Haba*. This is as the Rambam¹ stresses that *techiyas hameisim* is only for a righteous person, who is considered "alive" even after death, as opposed to a *rasha* who is, in a sense, "dead" even while alive. We can explain that this hints at the essence of *techiyas hameisim* – to be truly alive, meaning connected to the source of life – Hashem; such a life continues for eternity. So too, *Olam Haba*, the eternal world, is also a state of being truly "alive," meaning, connected to the source of life by means of the mitzvos. This especially applies to the mitzvah of Torah study, as the Gemara (*Kesubos* 111b) writes that to merit *techiyas hameisim*, one must possess the merit of *limud Torah*, or at least some connection to it. This is probably also true for *Olam Haba*, even according to the Rambam, who says that *Olam Haba* is just for the *neshama* and not for the *guf*.

The *Mesillas Yesharim* writes (first *perek*) that *Olam Haba* is the great goal of man's life. He writes that a person was created solely to have pleasure in the company of Hashem, and to bask in the light of His Divine Presence (*Shechinah*). This is the true and greatest delight and pleasure which is possible to experience (*ta'anug ha'amiti – idun hagadol*). The place where this ultimate pleasure exists is only in *Olam Haba* – the World to Come. As the *mishna* (*Avos* 4:21) teaches, "This world is a lobby for the World to Come." The Gemara in *Eruvin* (22a) teaches,

1. In the introduction to his commentary on *Mishnayos Sanhedrin perek Chelek*.

“Today is for actions (*olam hazeh*) and tomorrow is for reward (*Olam Haba*).” In other words, *olam hazeh* is not the “real world”; rather it is a world of preparation and a time for investment. The “real world” is *Olam Haba*.

Before we discuss *Olam Haba*, it’s important to clarify something. There is a difference between *Gan Eden* – the *olam ha’neshamos*, and *Olam Haba* (see Ramban’s *Shaar Hag’mul* 5:5, which stresses this point). We sometimes refer to *Gan Eden* as *Olam Haba* (perhaps this is based on the opinion of the Rambam, who posits this way to some extent). However the Ramban writes (*ibid.* 5:5 and 4:2) that the standard usage of the term *Olam Haba* is not in reference to *Gan Eden*. *Gan Eden* is the place where the *neshama* goes after man passes away. *Olam Haba*, however, is the special period after *yemos haMoshiach*, *techiyas hameisim* and the *yom hadin hagadol*. (Most people also need some cleansing in *gehinom* before they can enter *Gan Eden*.)

The *Ritva* at the end of *Tannis* and in *Rosh Hashana* (16b) points out that there will be more than one *techiyas hameisim*. Those who waited and hoped for *Moshiach*’s arrival will have a special *techiya*, which will enable them to enjoy the days of *Moshiach*. Everyone else will be part of the general *techiyas hameisim* after *yemos haMoshiach*. They will experience the *yom hadin hagadol* and *Olam Haba*. Some great *tzaddikim* will even have a *techiya* in *Gan Eden*.

One of the important lessons of *Olam Haba* is to develop the mindset that this world is a time for investments. The more we can understand this and live this way, the more we will utilize our opportunities correctly. Also, with this attitude, we won’t be frustrated and disappointed whenever things seem not to go our way. Just like a businessman will invest a lot of money and then live frugally until it pays off, so too, many

kollel members are proud to invest their time, talents and energy to make the most of their opportunities. There is no greater investment, as the *mishna* writes *ashrecha b'olam hazeh v'tov lach leOlam Haba*. They are an inspiration and example for everyone to make the most out of life. It is also a great inspiration to see the many Jews who choose to make the truly profitable investment, investing much of their time into *chinuch*, *kiruv*, *chessed* and other work on behalf of the Jewish community, sometimes even making it their life's mission.

Imagine a fundraiser going to raise money for his *yeshiva*. He is buckling under a million dollar debt and needs to finish an already half-built building. He is desperate for very significant help. He comes into a wealthy *baal tzedaka's* home and is waiting in the waiting room, which is packed to capacity. Suddenly out comes the rich man, and as soon as he sees this fundraiser, he starts yelling at him, "You *ganef*, you liar, get out of my house right now!" The man is extremely embarrassed and he wishes he could bury himself on the spot. Then the wealthy man pulls him into his study and suddenly – his whole demeanor changes! "Oh, I am so sorry, I mixed you up with someone else. I feel so bad; here is a check for one million dollars. Furthermore, I pledge to give you \$36,000 every year from now on." Imagine the feelings of the fundraiser. The embarrassment is long forgotten; it's nothing compared to his great fortune. The more we contemplate the *schar* of *Olam Haba*, the pleasure for eternity, the more we will realize how all the pains we may suffer in this world are really nothing in comparison.

The *Orchos Tzaddikim* (*shaar ha'simcha*) writes that one of the reasons that we should enjoy ourselves on Shabbos with good food and happiness is to give ourselves a *mashal*, an allegory, for what *Olam Haba* will be like. As we enjoy ourselves, we should think about *Olam*

Haba, which is a place of eternal pleasure. This will help us focus, dream, plan and invest in our *Olam Haba*.

THE THIRTEENTH PRINCIPLE

OLAM HABA AND TECHIYAS HAMEISIM, THE REVIVAL OF THE DEAD - (PART THREE)

It is important to have clarity about the order of events after *olam hazeh*. Let us attempt, *be'ezras Hashem*, to shed some light on this matter and describe the sequence of events based on the opinion of the Ramban in his *sefer Shaar Ha'gmul*, which discusses these matters at length. Let us start with a more general picture of it and then we will mention some sources for these ideas.

The first phase is *olam hazeh*, the world in which we live now. This world was created by Hashem 5,777 years ago. We experience this world as a *guf*, a physical body, together with a *neshama*, a soul, as is well known. This world will not exist for longer than 6,000 years (Gemara, *Sanhedrin* 97a).

In this world there are various periods of time. The first period began with Adam Harishon. Then came Noach's time, and then Avraham Avinu's. Avraham was the first Jew and the father of *Klal Yisrael*.

Then came the slavery in *Mitzrayim*, which lasted about 200 years, followed by *yetzias Mitzrayim*, the exodus from Egypt. After this was *matan Torah*, which took place approximately 3,300 years ago. This was the period of Moshe Rabbeinu and the *Dor Hamidbar*, the generation that sojourned the wilderness.

Following that were the *nevi'im*, prophets, Jewish kings and the *Beis Hamikdash* in *Eretz Yisroel*. This all took place in a time-span of about 1,500 years. After that the Gemara was written. This took place around 1,600 years ago.

The past 2,000 years have been a period of *churban Beis Hamikdash* and *galus*, due to our sins. On the other hand, it is an opportunity to perfect ourselves and come closer to Hashem. This is just a basic and short description of *olam hazeh*. *Olam hazeh* carries on and includes the *yemos haMoshiach*, may they start speedily in our time (hopefully by the time you are reading this, *moshiach* will have already come).

The second phase in our journey to eternal perfection is called the *olam ha'neshamos*, where the *nesahama* resides after an individual passes away. There is a *Gan Eden* for reward and pleasure and *Gehinom* for punishment and cleansing. In most cases, *Gehinom* must be experienced before a soul merits entering *Gan Eden*. Imagine the millions of Jews that are enjoying the bliss of *Gan Eden* over the past few thousand years, some of them over 5,550 years already!

The next phase is *yemos haMoshiach*. *Moshiach* will reveal himself, and we will enter a glorious era when Hashem's glory, and that of His beloved nation *Klal Yisroel*, will be apparent to all. This period is included in the 6,000 years of our world. Since it is now around year 5,800 from the creation of the world, if *Moshiach* will come now (as we assume and hope), we will have around 200 years of *yemos haMoshiach* (*Sanhedrin 97b*).

The *Ritva* (*end of Ta'anis*) writes that during this time period of *Moshiach*, *techiyas hameisim* will be experienced by all those who looked forward to *Moshiach's* arrival. After *yemos haMoshiach* there will be a general *techiyas hameisim* for everybody else. All the people who died

throughout history will come back to life and rise from their graves. Then there will be a *yom hadin hagadol* – a great day of judgment, when Hashem will judge everyone. Some will unfortunately be convicted for eternal punishment, whereas others will be allotted eternal joy and pleasure. They will be afforded the opportunity to bask in the Presence of Hashem, which is the greatest pleasure and the highest form of fulfillment and achievement (see *Daniel 12:2*).

The next and final phase is *Olam Haba*, otherwise known as *nitzchiyus* – eternity, which is the place where man receives the main *schar* (reward) for all of his Torah and mitzvah performance. This phase is the main purpose of the world and our lives; everything else is a preparation for this glorious time. *Gan Eden* is just a temporary *schar*, but the real, lasting and eternal *schar* is *Olam Haba*, following the days of *Moshiach*. *Olam Haba* itself is described by the Ramchal as having four phases: the seventh millennium, the eighth millennium, the ninth millennium, and the tenth millennium. The tenth millennium then leads into *netzach netzachim* – eternity.

It can be said that there are seven stages in our journey through “life”: 1) *olam hazeh*; 2) *olam haneshamos* – *Gan Eden* and *Gehinom*; 3) *yemos haMoshiach*; 4) either the first or second *techiyas hameisim*; 5) *yom hadin*; and 6) *Olam Haba*.

Now, *be’ezras Hashem*, let us bring some sources for our discussion. The Gemara in *Sanhedrin 97a* (at the bottom of the page) teaches: “Rav Katina says: the world will last for just 6,000 years.” This means that the amount of time spanning from creation until the end of *Moshiach’s* days will be 6000 years. Afterwards, there will be a thousand years of “*charuv*,” which means “a state of destruction” (our *chachamim* explain this to mean that physicality won’t play an important role in

the world – *Sefer Sifsei Chaim* (*Emunah U'Bechira* volume two, page 226). The Gemara continues, “The world is to last for 6,000 years. The first 2,000 years are termed *tohu* – empty and lacking. This time period lasted from creation until Avraham Avinu was 52 years old. The second 2,000 years are called a time of Torah (Of course, there is an ongoing obligation to study Torah and observe the mitzvos. But in *galus* the Torah is not fully accessible, since many layers of it are concealed due to the impurities that abound. Therefore, the title of the “time of Torah” is limited to those 2000 years alone – *Maharsha*). The final two thousand years are called “*yemos haMoshiach* – the days of *Moshiach*.” Unfortunately, due to our sins, a portion of these years have passed already without us meriting the arrival of *Moshiach*. We see from here that the days of *Moshiach* are within the 6,000 years of this world.

The Ramban in *Shaar Ha'gmul*¹ proves that if a person's soul needs cleansing, it descends to *Gehinom* right after he dies. Amongst his sources are the *mishna* in *Edius* (2:10) which states that *Gehinom* lasts for twelve months. He also cites the Gemara in *Kiddushin* (31b), which says that for twelve months after a person's father passes away, when quoting him he adds, “May I suffer on his behalf, instead of him.” However, after twelve months, this practice is discontinued, and instead he says, “*Zichrono l'chayei haOlam Haba*, He should be remembered for life in the World to Come.” This is because wicked Jews only suffer twelve months in *Gehinom*. The Ramban also brings sources to show that a person, if deserving, goes to *Gan Eden* right after he passes away (*Machon Ma'arava* 4:2; *Chazon Yoel* page 316). He brings many sources that say that *Gan Eden* takes place the same time that *Gehinom* does

1. Chapter 3, 2 in the *Machon Ma'arava* edition; pg. 258 in the *Chazon Yoel* edition.

– following the person’s *petirah*. He also brings a Gemara in *Temurah* (16a) that clearly alludes to this fact, stating, “When Moshe Rabbeinu was *niftar* (passed away) to go to *Gan Eden*...” We see, therefore, that immediately after he left the world, he entered *Gan Eden*.

Regarding *yemos haMoshiach*, we brought the Gemara in *Sanhedrin* 97a which teaches that it is part of the 6,000 years of *olam hazeh*.

Regarding *techiyas hameisim*, the Ritva (*ibid.*) writes as follows: The Gemara states there that if one transgresses by feasting on *Tisha B’av*, about him it is written, “His sin will be on his bones.” The Ritva explains this to mean that he will not merit the special *techiya* that will be for those who wanted *Moshiach* to come and awaited his arrival; therefore, he will not have *techiyas hameisim* during the time of the rebuilding of the *Beis Hamikdash*. However, this person can still merit being brought back to life in the general *techiyas hameisim* (which takes place before the *yom hadin hagadol*, after *yemos haMoshiach*, prior to *Olam Haba*).

In *Rosh Hashana* (16b), the Ritva cites the *pasuk* in *Daniel* (12:2), which describes *techiyas hameisim*: “Many of those sleeping in the ground will awaken, some for *chayai olam* – eternal life, and others for eternal humiliation (*l’charafos l’diron olam*) (see *Metzudos* and the other *meforshim*).” The Ritva asks why it says, “Many of those sleeping... will awaken” – won’t everyone awaken for the final judgment? The answer, he explains, is that there are three different *techiyos*: The first is for the *Avos*, the *nevi’im* and the *gedolei chasidei Yisroel*, who have already merited being brought back to life, together with their bodies in *Gan Eden*. The second *techiya* will be during the days of *Moshiach* (or right before – see Rambam, *Ma’amar Techiyas Hameisim*) for *tzaddikei Yisroel* who passed away during the *galus*. The third *techiyah* will be before the *yom hadin hagadol*. This *techiya* will be

for everybody; some will be rewarded and others will be revived and punished².

Regarding the *yom hadin hagadol*, the Ramban in *Shaar Ha'gmul* (*Machon Ma'arava* 3:5; *Chazon Yoel* page 286) writes as follows: There are three times of judgment for every person. One is on Rosh Hashana every year, when there is judgment for matters of *olam hazeh*. The second category of judgment that everybody undergoes is when they are *niftar* – on the day they die. This is for the *schar v'onesh* of the *neshama* in *Gehinom* and *Gan Eden*. The third day of judgment will be in the beginning of *techiyas hameisim*. This judgment concerns the reward in *Olam Haba* – *netzach nitzachim* (eternity). The Ramban brings various sources regarding the *yom hadin hagadol*, which precedes *Olam Haba*.

Regarding the phase of *Olam Haba*, the Gemara in *Sanhedrin* (97a) writes that after the 6,000 years of *olam hazeh* there will be 1,000 years called *charuv*, meaning a certain sense of destruction. The Ramchal in *Da'as Tevunos* introduces the different phases of *Olam Haba* and discusses the phases of the world in general. Rav Chaim Friedlander elaborates on his words (see *Da'as Tevunos*, Rav Friedlander edition, pg. 82, paragraph 92). He writes, “Generally speaking, there are three phases in the world. They are: 1) the 6,000 years of our present world, 2) *elef hashvi'i* – the seventh millennium, and 3) *chiddush ha'olam*, the renewal of the world. Rav Friedlander points out, based on a different teaching of the Ramchal, that *Olam Haba* can be broken up into different parts, each one termed *elef* – a thousand years. These are the seventh

2. See additional sources about multiple *techiyos* in *Tanna D'bei Eliyahu* 31:36 and *Teshuvos Ridvaz*, *chelek* 3, *elef* 69.

elef, the eighth and ninth *elef*, and the tenth and final *elef*, which is already the start of *nitzchiyus* – eternity.

We call the seventh *elef* “*charuv*” to hint that the body is somewhat “destroyed,” since a person starts to gradually become more spiritual and less physically inclined. From *elef hashmini* onwards the state is called *chiddush ha’alom*. Hashem will renew the world to a new type of existence. May we all merit striving for *chayai olam*, to rise above this mundane world and be close with Hashem for eternity.

THE THIRTEENTH PRINCIPLE

TECHIYAS HAMEISIM, THE REVIVAL OF THE DEAD - (PART FOUR)

It cannot be stressed enough how important it is to rethink the things we already know from our childhood and younger years (*Chovos Halevovos, Alter M'Kelm*). We will be surprised and shocked at how our picture of certain fundamental ideas and our knowledge of various important items is exactly the way we understood them as children five or six years of age!

Let me share an observation regarding this. I asked someone the following question: At *techiyas hameisim* will people be able to get back their houses and bank accounts? Imagine that a person bought a new apartment or house for half a million dollars. Shortly afterwards he passed away, and his nephew inherited his house. When he comes back to life, is he entitled, according to *halacha*, to get his house back? I was greeted by a blank and somewhat bewildered look for asking this. As if to say *what do you mean – who will need a house by techiyas hameisim anyway?* We need to internalize that fact that *techiyas hameisim* means to come back to life – simply put.

Rav Shlomo Levenstein (*U'masok Ha'or, Chanuka*, volume 2, page 28) in a speech given to women, describes what *techiyas hameisim* will look like. He depicts a scene of how his grandparents, whom he had not seen since they were *niftar* twenty years beforehand, called him

up. Of course he was shocked. They asked to come over to visit, and a short time later they arrived, and they had a beautiful reunion. Later on, the phone rang again and it was his good friend Yaakov; he was calling to invite him to come with him to a *shiur* given by none other than Rashi. He asked his friend to repeat what he had said because he didn't think that he had heard correctly! His friend said that it really is Rashi who will be giving the *shiur*, and the *shiur* is being held down the block from where the Rambam is staying! When he went outside he saw that there were signs for buses travelling to Chevron to visit Avraham Avinu and Sara Imeinu. He started thinking about how he would present himself to them. Would he say, "Hello Bubby, here I am. I waited all these years; the *galus* was so long and hard ...". On second thought, he wondered if they would really be proud of him – is this the grandchild that they envisioned and wished to reap *nachas* from? Do we presently act and dress in a way that will make our ancestors happy to see us? Such thoughts are very important to develop a real picture of *Olam Haba* and *techiyas hameisim* in our minds. Rav Avigdor Miller *zt"l* lived with a constant vision of *Olam Haba*. In fact, the realness of *Olam Haba* was even more true to him than *olam hazeh* (cited from his biography, written by R' Hamburger, 2016, pg. 278)¹.

Another observation: While sitting together at the Shabbos table, my seven year old daughter asked me how old a person will be when he is

1. Incidentally, we cannot really have any true vision of what *techiyas hameisim* will be like. Keep in mind that the Arizal teaches that each person will be comprised of all the various *gilgulim* he ever was. Combined of the best part of each *gilgul*! Everything will be the most wonderful gift bestowed upon us by Hashem, but it will not be as simple as many believe it to be. However visualizing different possible pictures of what it will be like will at least serve as a *mashal*, an illustration, which will make it much more real to us.

revived in *techiyas hameisim* – will he be a baby or an adult? I had never thought about this question before, because I never thought about *techiyas hameisim* vividly enough.

What is the purpose of *techiyas hameisim*? Why can't the *schar* that the *neshama* receives be enough? What makes *techiyas hameisim* so important that it's one of the thirteen principles of *emunah*, especially considering the fact that according to the Rambam it's only a temporary phase and not the actual *Olam Haba*? I asked a few people why *techiyas hameisim* is such an important part of Judaism. (It took some time until they realized that I was asking about *techiyas hameisim* and not *Olam Haba* – *nitzchiyus*, eternity). Some people suggested that if only our *neshamos* received reward it would be hard to relate to it and be motivated by it. Therefore Hashem decided that a portion of our future *schar* would be received together with our bodies in a natural world. This way we will be able to imagine it and relate to it.

Harav Moshe Shapiro zt"l, based on the teaching of the *Leshem* (see *Re'eh Emunah, techiyas hameisim*), writes how if we look back from the beginning of history until today, the Jews never really made it. Any time we got close to a successful situation, we very soon lost it again. It can seem, *chas ve'shalom*, that Hashem's plan to reveal *kvod Shamayim* and knowledge of His existence, never came to fruition. But it is impossible that Hashem created the world to be a place full of challenges, without completion. The answer to this is *techiyas hameisim*. The ultimate purpose of this world will be reached in the era of *techiyas hameisim*. The whole world will be renewed; every aspect of the vast creation of Hashem will once again be full of vitality and will announce to all the glory of Hashem, the Creator and Controller of the world. There will come a time when even the ignorant Jew and gentile will recognize the greatness of Hashem, Klal Yisroel, and the world. So too, every *tzaddik*,

according to his level, will achieve tremendous understanding of the glory and purpose of Hashem's world.

The Rambam himself in *Ma'amar Techiyas Hameisim* writes that the importance of belief in *techiyas hameisim* is that it is the key to believing in miracles in general. Belief in miracles is the key to belief in *chiddush ha'alom* – Hashem's creating the world out of nothing, as well as *emunah* in Hashem's existence.

Rav Yoel Sperka, in his commentary on the Ramban's *Shaar Ha'gmul*, *Chazon Yoel*, brings various approaches which explain this matter (pg. 490). Based on the *Sefer Ha'ikrim* (4:30), he writes that one of the purposes of *techiyas hameisim* is to publicize *emunah* and the miracles of Hashem. We can explain this to mean that the amazing miracle of *techiyas hameisim* itself certainly demonstrates the amazing power and ability of Hashem. Hashem will miraculously recreate the bodies of people which have already decomposed and scattered out into tiny particles. Then we will also be able to believe in all types of miracles and revelations of *emunah* that will be within man's grasp during the days following *techiyas hameisim*. Even the Rambam, who holds that people will die again after *techiyas hameisim*, agrees that people will first live an unusually long amount of time. During this time there will be a tremendous opportunity to grow in *emunah*.

Another major benefit of these days is that they will offer man the opportunity to complete the whole spectrum of Torah and mitzvos, which was difficult or impossible to accomplish during *galus*. After these years of achieving *shleimus*, perfecting ourselves, a person's entire *Olam Haba* will be vastly enhanced (based on the *Sefer Ha'ikrim*, *ibid.*).

Another benefit of these days is that since a person suffered during his life due to the pangs of *galus*, now, after *techiyas hameisim*, he can enjoy this world without worry, pain and limits. We can apply the *pasuk* (*Tehillim* 90:15) “*Samcheinu k’yomos inyanu*” – we ask of Hashem to please give us happiness, at least equal to the amount of suffering we endured in *galus*. We can add that the more a person enjoys Hashem’s bounty in this world, the more it will obviously help him develop *ahavas Hashem* (*ibid.*).

Rav Sperka suggests an additional reason based on the Gemara in *Sanhedrin* (91a), why *techiyas hameisim* is a prerequisite for the *yom hadin hagadol* – the final day of judgment preceding *Olam Haba*. For a person to properly be judged, the *guf* and *neshama* need to be rejoined; this way neither one can shift the blame to the other one. The Gemara compares this to a lame man riding on the shoulders of a blind man, the two of them conspiring as one to steal some luscious fruit from a tall tree. When, subsequently, the two were individually accused of the theft, each of them denied the possibility of their having stolen, due to their handicaps. The angry owner placed the lame man on the blind man’s shoulders and punished them together, as one unit.

Included in the aforementioned reason, that the period of *techiyas hameisim* will be a time to complete the whole gamut of mitzvos, is to experience the spiritually uplifting aura of the *Beis Hamikdash*. Once again, we will stream to the *Beis Hamikdash* and see the *kohanim* and *levi'im*, the *korbonos* and the *simchas beis hashoeva*. This will greatly enhance our level and understanding of the great glory of Hashem for all eternity.

Appendix

RAV AVIGDOR MILLER'S DEFINITION OF EMUNAH - PART ONE

What is the definition of the mitzvah of *emunah*, and what does the word *emunah* mean?

The popular definition for the word and mitzvah of *emunah* is “belief.” This means to become convinced of the truths of the existence of Hashem, the Divine origin of the Torah, and of the fundamentals of *emunah*.

However, this definition presents us with many difficulties. Rav Miller *zt”l* asked:

1. *How can there be such a mitzvah if many people are not capable of researching the facts that substantiate our faith?*
2. *Furthermore, for those who can prove *emunah* intellectually, it is so obvious and simple. It doesn't make sense that it would be a mitzvah to verify the proofs of our faith.*
3. *Furthermore, how can there be reward and punishment for belief? It is not something that one can choose by using his free-will. If someone is not convinced of the truth of our faith, how can he be commanded to believe? He is simply not convinced of its truth, so how can he be taken to task for such a thing?*

4. *How can we praise a ma'amin as being virtuous for believing? Believing cannot be a barometer of virtue, because if you are a scholar, it's so easy to believe, and if you believe in your parents and nation's traditions, it's so easy and expected. But if you are not a scholar, and you don't have a tradition, you can't be blamed for not believing. It seems that for most people, not believing is outright wickedness, so how can belief be a virtue?*

Rav Miller goes on to enlighten us with a novel approach to explain the mitzvah and word of *emunah*, and goes on to prove it from numerous sources, in addition to all of the aforementioned questions, which all point to a new approach.

Emunah does not mean “belief” – that is only a secondary translation of the word. The primary meaning of the word *emunah* is “loyalty” – remaining steadfast and staying where you are.

This is as we find by the war with *Amalek* after *yetzias Mitzrayim*. Moshe Rabbeinu lifted up his hands, and stones were placed beneath them to be able to keep them upraised until nightfall. The *pasuk* says (*Beshalach* 17:12), “*Vyehi yadav emunah ad bo hashamesh.*” We see from here that *emunah* cannot mean “belief” – hands don't believe, it must mean “steadfastness.” So we see *emunah* means to remain steadfast, which would also mean “loyalty,” because loyalty means to stay steadfast to your nation's traditions and to your principles – loyalty to your people is the true definition of the word and mitzvah of *emunah*.

In *Iyov* (39:24) the *pasuk* describes a war horse – a horse that has been trained to charge at the sound of the trumpets. The *pasuk* says, “*V'lo ya'amin (יאמין) ki kol shofar* – when the trumpet blows he cannot stand still.” *Ya'amin* must be translated as to stay where you are.

Amein sometimes means true, but many times it means “may it be so,” “it should stand so,” and the word *amein* has the same root as the word *emunah*¹ (אמן-אמונה).

When Mordechai was raising his niece Esther (also called Hadassah), the *pasuk* says, “*V’yehi o’mein* (אמן) *es Hadassah*”, meaning that he was “training” her. Why do we use the word *o’mein* for this (which also has the same root as *emunah*)? The answer is that when you train someone, you are instilling in them a set of characteristics or practices that will remain with them forever. The person becomes set in a certain way.

An *u’man* is a master craftsman. He is called *u’man* (which is the same as the word *emunah*), because his hands are already set in certain muscular behavior patterns.

Emes (אמת) is from the word *a’mein* (which is the same as *emunah*). It means something that stands. *Emes* means *v’yatzev* – what stands. Like the *gemara* states, “*Kushta kai* – the truth will stand.” What is “true”? Something that will always be – that is truth. To translate *emes* as true, as opposed to “false,” is really only a secondary meaning.

That is also the proper translation of the word *emunah* in the *pasuk* in *Tehillim* (119:90), “*L’dor v’dor emunasecha* – from generation to

1. On a different occasion, Rav Miller said that *amein* primarily means “that’s it” – i.e., it will remain that way forever after. Like when we say *Hamelech Hakadosh*, it cannot mean “so it should be so.” It must mean “that’s so,” “that’s true,” “it is so,” “it will be so forever,” “it always was so,” and “it will always be so.” It would seem that Rav Miller explained this point in two different ways on different occasions, but it seems that whatever translation you give, it could still imply a similar meaning to our definition of *emunah*.

Sometimes *amein* means “that’s it,” “it will remain that way,” and sometimes it means “that’s true,” because whatever is true endures, unlike fads which are not truth and therefore do not endure.

generation is Your steadfastness,” meaning, you gave Your word when You created the world.

The word *emunah* also comes from the word *ne’eman*, which means “loyalty.”

When *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* promised Avraham Avinu that the land of Eretz *Cana’an* will be given to him, it says, “*V’heemin baShem* – Avram believed in Hashem.” The word ‘believe’ is not the correct meaning over here; rather, it means, he persisted in believing in Hashem. He always persisted in his loyalty, even though he never saw this promise fulfilled².

Furthermore, it cannot mean “believe,” because the *pasuk* there says, “*V’yamin baShem* – he believed in Hashem, *vayachshaveha lo tzedaka* – and Hashem considered it a righteousness for him.” Now what’s the greatness here? If Hashem tells you something, of course you believe it! Furthermore, of course Avraham was a believer. Rather, it really means that he always remained loyal to that principal.

So we see from all this that the mitzvah and the definition of the word *emunah* is not belief – it is loyalty. To be loyal to your nation – loyal to its customs and to your family’s customs; loyal to the Torah; loyal to the principles that you know. Now of course it’s good to become convinced of the truths about Hashem and the Torah if you can, and it is very important to do that – but that is not *emunah* – *emunah* is to remain steadfast, to love your people and be loyal to them! This is certainly a freewill decision. It is constant work and something that everyone can do. This is the great mitzvah of *emunah*.

2. tape 22, minute 45.

RAV AVIGDOR MILLER'S DEFINITION OF EMUNAH PART TWO

Rav Miller *zt"l* gives a novel explanation for the mitzvah of *emunah* [tape E-96, minute 38]. The first of the *Aseres Hadibros* is *Anochi Hashem Elokecha* – what does *Anochi* mean? The Rambam writes that this commandment is *leida v'leha'amin* – two things: *Leida* – to know, and *leha'amin* – to believe. *Leida* does not merely mean to know, everyone knows that Hashem exists and took us out of *Mitzrayim*. *Leida* means to acquire *da'as*. How do you get *da'as*? There are a number of ways. One is what you call *emunah peshuta*. You listen to your father and mother; you listen to your *rebbe*; you learn from the *Chumash*, and you get the *yedios* – the information. Then you put it into your head, and you think about it, as the *pasuk* says, “*Zichru niflaosav asher asah* – remember the wonders that Hashem did.” You try to remember it; you think about it often; and then little by little your mind becomes full of *emunah* – *emunah peshuta*, a very strong loyalty to Hashem.

There is another *emunah* which you get by means of *seichel* – intellect. You look and you see the wonderful things in the world. If you contemplate the wonderful orange for example, you cannot help but realize the *chochmas haBorei* – the wondrous wisdom of the Creator. The only way to explain such phenomena is to say that there is a Creator, and He is still around. That is *leida*. You can know that there

is a *borei*, and not just a *borei* – a Creator. You can also know that He is *gadol* – great, *gibbor* – strong, *norah* – awesome, *chachom* – wise and *oseh chessed* – kindly and benevolent. “*Chofetz chessed hu* – He desires to do kindness, *yoducha Hashem kol ma’ashecha* – all of Your works praise You, *kvod malchuscha yomeiru* – to speak of the glory of Your kingdom.” For what purpose? “*L’hodiah livnei adam gevurosov* – to make known, to give *da’as* to people of the mightiness of Hashem.”

That’s one of the two ways of *leida*. One *leida* is to accept what you are told by your parents and what you learned in the *Chumash*, which is *emunah peshuta*. It is very important – you need to put it into your blood. Make sure to talk to your children about it – train them to understand it. The other way is to gain from your own ideas – what you see in the world. That’s *leida*. Now what does *l’ha’amin* mean? *L’ha’amin* means something entirely different. It means to remain loyal – to stick by it always. *Emunah* does not mean to believe, it means to be loyal – to stick by it.

Once you understand the great truth of *Hashem hu haElokim*, which you were taught by your parents and your *rebbe*, and you learned it from nature all around you, next comes *emunah*. Never give up, no matter how many *goyim* there are in the world. Even though there are many scientists who are *reshaim* – wicked heretics, who tell lies and foolishness, and pretend that they have absolute and clear evidence, stick to your truth. Never abandon your truth. That is *l’ha’amin*, that is *emunah* – remain loyal! Hold on to it forever and ever. Like the *Chovos Halevovos* says, “Do not sacrifice your *vadaus* – your certainty, your knowledge, because of the multitude of fools in the world.”

Rav Miller, in different *shiurim*, explained that once a person is loyal to his people, belief will come easily. What causes people not to

believe is not because they are convinced otherwise. It is because they are just following the crowd. They don't want to believe; they do not have ample motivation to believe. It is from a lowness of character, a wickedness to deny, simply because it is your own heritage.

Proof to this, is that if you will take an atheist, and make him a *gabbai* in the *Satmarer shul* for \$100,000 a year, he will become a believer – and a real one!

Evolution is so silly; it is so easy to disprove it. So why do people believe in it? Just because they follow the crowd, or they just do not want to believe.

These two essays of Rav Miller's definition of *emunah*, are based on Rav Miller's recorded *shiurim*¹. Interestingly, if you look in Rav Miller's *sefer* entitled, "Awake My Glory," he brings both approaches – the popular approach of belief, and his own approach of loyalty, in two different places in the same *sefer*.

On page 327, number 1050, Rav Miller writes as follows: "*Emunah*, to be convinced of the verities (truths) of Torah, and then to learn, to become more and more deeply aware of them, is one of the greatest mitzvos." There is a mitzvah of *Anochi Hashem* (*Shemos* 20:2), which means to know that there is a First Being who brought everything into existence (*Rambam, Yesodei HaTorah* 1:1,6). We are commanded to acquire this knowledge, and to continue, mindful of it always.

1. These essays are culled from the following tapes (we will also bring transcripts too, *be'ezras Hashem* later on): Tape 10C (creation), minute 17; Tape 22 (A Stubborn Nation), minute 122; Tape E-96 (Learning Loyalty), minute 25 and minute 38; Tape E-243, minutes 9, 22, 43, 100, 108, 112; Tape R-1 (*Emunah*), minute 40, and also the exact same *shiur* – Tape R-63 (The Stiff-Necked).

On page 5, Rav Miller explains that the methods of acquiring this knowledge are as follows: For those capable of thought, and can access the right information and facts, they should do so. If not, they should rely on the integrity of their great people, and continue loyal in their ways. To believe, efforts must be expended, either his own, or his parents and teachers. The results will not come by themselves.

Ideally, one should use his logic and observe the facts in order to believe properly (*emunah*), as mentioned. However, if that is not possible for whatever reason, then a person must diligently employ the intrinsic means of acquiring the Torah attitudes. This will at least give him *emunah peshutah* – simple faith. Among those means are: fear of G-d, *bitachon*, love of G-d, *dveikus* (thinking of Him), and *avodah* (doing His service). We need to be wary of the fact that usually the appeal to simple faith (*emunah peshuta*) is just an excuse to do nothing.

However on page 101, number 336, Rav Miller explains *emunah* differently. First he brings the classic meaning – belief. Then he writes that actually *emunah* means steadfastness and loyalty. He goes on to explain that really belief comes easily, but it is only easy if a Jew is loyal to his people. Disbelief is not because it is hard to believe, but it is a result of yielding to gentile influence.

(Endnotes)

א. וז"ל הרמב"ם (מלכים יא, א): המלך המשיח עתיד לעמוד ולהחזיר מלכות בית דוד לישנה הממשלה הראשונה ובונה מקדש ומקבץ נדחי ישראל ... וכל מי שאינו מאמין בו או מי שאינו מחכה לביאתו לא בשאר נביאים בלבד הוא כופר אלא בתורה ובמשה רבינו שהרי התורה העידה עליו שנאמר... "עכ"ל עיי"ש.

ב. וז"ל הח"ח במאמר צפית לישועה פרק ב "והנה כל מי שאינו מאמין כלל בביאת המשיח ידוע לכל שעונו גדול מנשוא שחסר לו עיקר אחד מן השלשה עשר עיקרים, וכן מי שאינו מחכה לביאתו דהיינו שמתיימש ממנו מאיזה סיבה שהיא - הוא חבירו של האיש הזה וככופר בתורה יחשב דז"ל הר"ם בהלכות מלאכים פי"א... וכל מי שאינו מאמין בו או שאינו מחכה לביאתו (ע"כ, ר"ל שמתיימש ממנו מאיזה סיבה שהיא) לא בשער נביאים בלבד הוא כופר אלא בתורה ובמשה רבינו...

ג. וז"ל מכתבו של הגאון המקובל רבי ישראל אליהו וויינטרויב זצ"ל (מובא בסוף ספר עדיך תאתה)... שנית, ענין אם יתמהמה חכה לו מבואר בגמ' (סנהדרין צ"ז ע"ב): "אמר רבי שמואל בר נחמני אמר ר' יונתן, תיפח עצמן של מחשבי קיצין, שהיו אומרים, כיון שהגיע את הקץ ולא בא, שוב אינו בא, אלא חכה לו, שנאמר 'אם יתמהמה חכה לו'", ע"כ. היינו דבעלי קיצים קבעו (וחשבון הקיצים שלהם לא היה כזב ח"ו כמבואר שם), שאז הוא מוכרח לבוא, וממילא אם לא בא, אז יהיה פקפוק בביאתו, אלא דפסוק זה דחבוקק נתחדש שיש מהלך דיתמהמה, וממילא חכה לו שבודאי יבוא. וגדר מי שאינו מחכה לביאתו הוא בשביל חישוב קיצים, שאם לא בא, אז לא יבוא. וגם לא אמרו שם דתיפח עצמן של מחשבי קיצין מצד דסברי דרק בזמן ההוא לעתיד יבוא ולא קודם, דבזה לא נתהפכו לאפיקורסים, ומכלל מחכי ביאתו הם בודאי.

עוד זאת, הרי התם גופא אמרו ז"ל: "אמר ליה, עד הכא לא תיסתכי ליה, מכאן ואילך איסתכי ליה", ופירש רש"י: "עד היובל האחרון לא תצפה לו, דודאי לא יבוא קודם הזמן הזה", עכ"ל. והרי אלו דברים שמסרו לנו חז"ל לא לסתום דבריהם אלא לגלות דבריהם, והרי הם דברי אליהו ז"ל לרב יהודא, והאם חלילה נולד מזה ריח של אפיקורסות ח"ו, אלא ודאי דמעולם לא היה כוונת הגר"ז על כגון דא ולא הובנו דבריו הקדושים כראוי.

עוד שאלו חז"ל שם: וכי מאחר שמדת הדין מעכבת, אנו למה מחכין, לקבל שכר, שנאמר "אשרי כל חוכי לו", והרי אין בקושיא זו דאנו למה מחכים שום הפקעת אמונתנו כלל, דאל"כ אין שייך לשאול שאלה כזו, אלא דאין זה הנידון כלל, דרק מי שנתייאש מביאתו שאמר שכבר בא או שלא יוכל לבוא מצד מה להתקבץ בידיעתו הרי זה כופר ביסוד זה דביאת המשיח, אבל מי שמחכה לו שיבוא באיזה זמן מהזמנים אינו נידון בזה...

ד. הרמב"ם ביד החזקה [הלכות מלאכים פרק י"א א'] כותב "וכל מי א' שאינו מאמין בו ב' או מי שאינו מחכה לביאתו לא בשאר נביאים בלבד הוא כופר אלא בתורה ובמשה רבינו".

ה. וז"ל רבינו יונה בשערי תשובה. ובעבור המעלות האלה נברא האדם, שנאמר (ישעיה מג, ז) כל הנקרא בשמי ולכבודי בראתיו ומה תקות הנברא אם לא ישים עמל נפשו ועיקר עסקו בדברים אשר נברא בעבורם [שער ג אות יז] ולהלן כותב רבינו יונה היצורים כלם נבראו לכבוד השם יתברך שנאמר [שם] כל הנקרא בשמי ולכבודי בראתיו יצרתיו אף עשיתיו. אכן נודע מן השכל כי המחלל את השם ובוזה דברו, אבדה תקותו. כי לו רב לו אשר לא יקים מה שנדרש ממנו מעיקר יצירתו לכבד את השם ולקדשו, אבל שלח ידיו לעשות התמורה וההפך ולחלל את שם קדשו [שער ג אות קמג] ולהלן כותב הרבינו יונה כי הדבר ידוע, כי מדרכי קידוש השם יתברך להודיע בכל מבטא שפתים ובכל אשר ירמזון עינים ובכל הנהגה ופועל ידים, כי יסוד לנפש האדם, וצבי עדיו, והטוב והעיקר, והתועלת, והיקר אשר בו, - עבודת השם יתברך, ויראתו, ותורתו. כמו שכתוב (קהלת יב, יג) כי זה כל האדם, ודבר זה כבוד השם יתברך... ואחרי אשר התברר שהכל ברא השם יתברך לכבודו, חייב האדם לשום לבו בכל עת לכבד את השם ולקדשו בכל דבריו... וכאשר יתיצב בתוך העם וידבר עם חבריו, יתבונן בינה וידקדק וישגיח בכל מוצא שפתיו לקדש את השם בדבריו... כי זה מעיקרי יצירת האדם [שער ג, אות קמח].

L'illui nishmas

my dear grandmother
Mrs. Shulamis Goldberger AH

שולמית בת הרב **חיים צבי**

הלכה לעולמה ה' אדר ב' תשע"ט

and for my dear grandmother
Mrs. Rivkah Freedman AH

רבקה בת ר' **שמואל**

הלכה לעולמה כ"ח אדר ב' תשע"ט

and for my dear nephew Kalman
the son of my brother Rabbi Simcha
zissel Shlita who completed his
tafkid at the tender age of three
and we will always miss him
dearly.

קלמן בן הרב **שמחה זיסל**

הלך לעולמו ז' אדר א' תשע"ט