

## THE THIRTEEN PRINCIPLES OF FAITH

1. **אני מאמין** *I believe with complete faith that the Creator, Blessed is His Name, creates and guides all creatures, and that He alone made, makes, and will make everything.*
2. **אני מאמין** *I believe with complete faith that the Creator, Blessed is His Name, is unique, and there is no uniqueness like His in any way, and that He alone is our God, Who was, Who is, and Who always will be.*
3. **אני מאמין** *I believe with complete faith that the Creator, Blessed is His Name, is not physical and is not affected by physical phenomena, and that there is no comparison whatsoever to Him.*
4. **אני מאמין** *I believe with complete faith that the Creator, Blessed is His Name, is the very first and the very last.*
5. **אני מאמין** *I believe with complete faith that the Creator, Blessed is His Name — to Him alone is it proper to pray and it is not proper to pray to any other.*
6. **אני מאמין** *I believe with complete faith that all the words of the prophets are true.*
7. **אני מאמין** *I believe with complete faith that the prophecy of Moses our teacher, peace upon him, was true, and that he was the father of the prophets — both those who preceded him and those who followed him.*
8. **אני מאמין** *I believe with complete faith that the entire Torah now in our hands is the same one that was given to Moses, our teacher, peace be upon him.*
9. **אני מאמין** *I believe with complete faith that this Torah will not be exchanged nor will there be another Torah from the Creator, Blessed is His Name.*
10. **אני מאמין** *I believe with complete faith that the Creator, Blessed is His Name, knows all the deeds of human beings and their*

are physical, we cannot conceive of a Being totally unaffected by material conditions or the laws of nature and physics. The Torah speaks of God's 'eyes,' 'hands,' and so forth only to help man grasp the concepts being conveyed.

4. *God is eternal and the First Source.* Everything in the created universe has a moment when it came into existence; by definition no creature can be infinite. God transcends time, however, because time itself is His creation.

5. *Prayers should be directed to God.* It is tempting to beseech the angels or such mighty forces as the sun and the constellations, because God has entrusted them with carrying out His will. However, this is illusory. None of them have any power independent of what God assigns them. Therefore, prayers should be directed only toward God Himself.

**B) Authenticity of the Torah**

6. *God communicates with man.* In order for man to carry out his Divinely ordained mission, he must know what it is. Prophecy is the means by which God communicates His wishes to man.

It is a gift that man can attain upon reaching heights of self-perfection.

7. *Moses' prophecy is unique.* Moses' prophecy is not only true, but of a quality unapproached by that of any other prophet before or since. It is essential that his prophecy be unrivaled so that no later 'prophet' could ever claim that he had received a 'Torah' that was superior to that of Moses.

8. *The entire Torah is God-given.* Every word in the Torah was dictated to Moses by God. In Rambam's classic formulation, all the verses of the Torah have equal sanctity, and 'there is no difference between [the apparently trivial verses:] and the children of Ham were Cush and Mizrayim, and his wife's name was Mehitabel... and [the awesomely important verses:] I am HASHEM, Your God, and Hear O Israel. Moreover, the same applies to the Oral Law that explains the Torah. All was given by God to Moses.

9. *The Torah is unchangeable.* Since both the Written and Oral Law were God-given, they cannot be improved upon in any manner.

## שלשה עשר עקרין

- א **אני מאמין** באמונה שלמה, שהבורא יתברך שמו הוא בורא ומנהיג לכל הברואים, והוא לבדו עשה ועושה ויעשה לכל המעשים.
- ב **אני מאמין** באמונה שלמה, שהבורא יתברך שמו הוא יחיד ואין יחידות במוהו בשום פנים, והוא לבדו אלהינו, הנה הנה ויהיה.
- ג **אני מאמין** באמונה שלמה, שהבורא יתברך שמו אינו גוף, ולא ישיגוהו משיגי הגוף, ואין לו שום דמיון כלל.
- ד **אני מאמין** באמונה שלמה, שהבורא יתברך שמו הוא ראשון והוא אחרון.
- ה **אני מאמין** באמונה שלמה, שהבורא יתברך שמו לו לבדו ראוי להתפלל, ואין לוולתו ראוי להתפלל.
- ו **אני מאמין** באמונה שלמה, שכל דברי נביאים אמת.
- ז **אני מאמין** באמונה שלמה, שנבואת משה רבנו עליו השלום היתה אמתית, ושהוא היה אב לנביאים, לקודמים לפניו ולבאים אחריו.
- ח **אני מאמין** באמונה שלמה, שכל התורה המצויה עתה בידינו היא הנתונה למשה רבנו עליו השלום.
- ט **אני מאמין** באמונה שלמה, שזאת התורה לא תהא מחלפת ולא תהא תורה אחרת מאת הבורא יתברך שמו.
- י **אני מאמין** באמונה שלמה, שהבורא יתברך שמו יודע כל מעשה

שלשה עשר עקרין /  
The Thirteen Principles of Faith

Historically, Judaism never separated belief from performance. In the Torah, the commandment to believe in God is not stated differently than the commandment to lend money to a fellow Jew in need, or to refrain from eating non-kosher food. As the centuries rolled by, however, philosophical speculation and dogmas of faith became prevalent among other religions and, in time, began to influence a number of Jews. To counteract this trend, medieval Rabbinical authorities felt the need to respond by defining the principles of Judaism. The 'Thirteen Principles of Faith' are based upon the formulation of Rambam [Maimonides] in his *Commentary to Mishnah (Sanhedrin, ch. 10)* and have achieved virtually universal acceptance.

It is a commendable practice to recite the Thirteen Principles every day after *Shacharis*. As Rambam himself writes, one does not become imbued with them from a perfunctory reading

once or even several times. One must constantly review and study them.

The Thirteen Principles fall into three general categories: (a) the nature of belief in God; (b) the authenticity of the Torah, its validity and immutability; and (c) man's responsibility and ultimate reward.

**A) The Nature of Belief in God**

1. *God's Existence.* There is no partnership in creation. God is the sole Creator and the universe continues to exist only because He wills it so. He could exist if everything else were to come to an end, but it is inconceivable that there could be any form of existence independent of Him.

2. *God is a complete and total Unity.* He is not a collection of limbs and organs, as are man and animals. He cannot be split as can a rock or divided into component elements as can everything in Creation. This is the concept expressed in the first verse of *Shema*.

3. *God is not physical* nor can His essence be grasped by the human imagination; because we

thoughts, as it is said, 'He fashions their hearts all together, He comprehends all their deeds.'<sup>1</sup>

11. **אני מאמין** *I believe with complete faith that the Creator, Blessed is His Name, rewards with good those who observe His commandments, and punishes those who violate His commandments.*

12. **אני מאמין** *I believe with complete faith in the coming of the Messiah, and even though he may delay, nevertheless I anticipate every day that he will come.*

13. **אני מאמין** *I believe with complete faith that there will be a resurrection of the dead whenever the wish emanates from the Creator, Blessed is His Name and exalted is His mention, forever and for all eternity.*

*For Your salvation I do long, HASHEM.<sup>2</sup>*

*I do long, HASHEM, for Your salvation.*

*HASHEM, for Your salvation I do long.*

### THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

Exodus 20:1-14

**וַיְדַבֵּר** *God spoke all these statements, saying: [1] I am HASHEM, your God, Who delivered you from the land of Egypt, from the house of slavery.*

[2] *You shall not recognize the gods of others before My presence. You shall not make yourself a carved image nor any likeness of that which is in the heavens above, or of that which is on the earth below, or of that which is in the water beneath the earth. You shall not prostrate yourself to them nor shall you worship them; for I am HASHEM, your God — a jealous God, remembering the sins of fathers upon children, to the third and fourth generations of My enemies, but showing kindness for thousands of generations to those who love Me and who keep My commandments. [3] You shall not take the Name of HASHEM, your God, in a vain oath; for HASHEM will not absolve anyone who takes His Name in a vain oath. [4] Remember the Sabbath day to sanctify it. Six days you are to work and accomplish all your tasks. But the seventh day is Sabbath to HASHEM, your God; you may not do any work — you, your son, your daughter, your manservant, your maidservant, your animal, and the convert within your gates — for in six days HASHEM made the heavens, the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and He rested on the seventh day. Therefore, HASHEM blessed the Sabbath day and sanctified it. [5] Honor your father and mother so that your days may be lengthened upon the land which HASHEM, your God, gives you. [6] You shall not kill. [7] You shall not commit adultery. [8] You shall not steal. [9] You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. [10] You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his bull, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor's.*

(1) Psalms 33:15. (2) Genesis 49:18.

#### עשרת הדברות / The Ten Commandments

During the Temple era, the Ten Commandments were recited as a part of the Shema service each morning. Later, certain heretics denied the validity of the rest of the Torah, but accepted only the Ten Commandments as the word of God. To prove their point, they cited the fact that the Ten Commandments were recited each day, while the rest of the Torah was not. To counteract their claims, the Talmudic Sages

(Berachos 12a) removed the Ten Commandments from the formal public prayer service and forbade their reinsertion into the service or their recitation in any public forum (except when they appear in the course of the regular Torah readings). Moreover, even an individual may not recite them as a part of the formal service. Nevertheless, an individual may (and, according to some authorities, should) recite them either before or after his regular prayers.

בני אדם וכל מחשבותם, שנאמר: היצר יחד לבם, המבין אל כל מעשיהם.<sup>1</sup>

יא **אני מאמין** באמונה שלמה, שהבורא יתברך שמו גומל טוב לשומרי מצותיו ומעניש לעוברי מצותיו.

יב **אני מאמין** באמונה שלמה, בביאת המשיח ואף על פי שיתמהמה, עם כל זה אהבה לו בכל יום שיבוא.

יג **אני מאמין** באמונה שלמה, שתהיה תחיית המתים בעת שיעלה רצון מאת הבורא יתברך שמו ויתעלה זכרו לעד ולנצח נצחים.

לישועתך קייתי יהוה.<sup>2</sup> קייתי יהוה לישועתך. יהוה לישועתך קייתי לפורקנך סבֵרית יהוה. סבֵרית יהוה לפורקנך סבֵרית.

### עשרת הדברות

שמות כ"א"ד

**וַיְדַבֵּר** *אלהים את כל הדברים האלה לאמר. [א] אנכי יהוה אלהיך, אשר הוצאתיך מארץ מצרים מבית עבדים. [ב] לא יהיה לך אלהים אחרים על פני. לא תעשה לה פסל וכל תמונה אשר בשמים ממעל, ואשר בארץ מתחת, ואשר במים מתחת לארץ. לא תשתחוה להם ולא תעבדם, כי אנכי יהוה אלהיך, אל קנא, פקר עון אבת על בנים, על שלשים, ועל רבעים לשנאי. ועשה חסד לאלפים, לאהבי, ולשומרי מצותי. [ג] לא תשא את שם יהוה אלהיך לשווא, כי לא ינקה יהוה, את אשר ישא את שמו לשווא. [ד] זכור את יום השבת לקדשו. ששת ימים מעבד ועשית כל מלאכתך. ויום השביעי שבת ליהוה אלהיך, לא תעשה כל מלאכה, אתה ובנך ובתך, עבדך ואמתך ובהמתך, וגרך אשר בשעריך. כי ששת ימים עשה יהוה את השמים ואת הארץ, את הים ואת כל אשר בם, וינח ביום השביעי, על כן ברך יהוה את יום השבת ויקדשהו. [ה] כבד את אביך ואת אמך, למען יארכון ימיה על האדמה אשר יהוה אלהיך נתן לך. [ו] לא תרצח [ז] לא תנאף [ח] לא תגנב [ט] לא תענה ברעך עד שקר. [י] לא תחמד בית רעה, לא תחמד אשת רעה, ועבדו ונאמתו ושורו וחמרו, וכל אשר לרעה.*

#### C) Man's Responsibility and Ultimate Reward

10. *God knows man's thoughts and deeds.* Man's individual deeds are important to God and so are the hopes and thoughts that drive him. God is aware of everything man thinks and does.

11. *Reward and punishment.* No one acts in a vacuum and no deed goes unrewarded or unpunished. This includes the dictum that one cannot cancel out a bad deed with a good one. Each is treated independently.

12. *The Messiah will come.* We are to conduct our lives according to the Torah and remain faithful that the Messiah will come at the time deemed by God to be proper. This faith includes the principle that only the Davidic dynasty will provide the Messianic king.

13. *The dead will live again* in the Messianic era, when the world will attain a new spiritual and physical level of perfection. Those who have not been found too unworthy to enter this exalted state will live again to enjoy it.