

THE THIRTEEN PRINCIPLES OF FAITH

*My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.
— Psalms 42:3*

*What is most essential to emphasize at this point is that the fundamental principles of our faith are embraced in thirteen basic principles.
— Maimonides (1)*

The Thirteen Principles of Faith come at the end of our book, Rainbow Covenant: Torah and the Seven Universal Laws,” following the last chapter, on “Idolatry.” It begins:

After finishing with idolatry, we need to attend to idolatry’s opposite.

If you try to break Revelation down into its fewest common elements, its consistent core ideas, you come out with just Thirteen Principles.

These are the underlying doctrines of Judaism, “Noahism,” and of the “*Ivri*,” the people who share the same faith with the Jewish People but who aren’t necessarily Jewish. Basically, these Thirteen Principles are the heart of all true monotheism – the belief in One God - and what we call, in Rainbow Covenant, “the Hebrew Revolution.”

They can be divided into three groups. The first five set out Israel’s theology:

- 1) God exists.
- 2) He is one.

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(1) Commentary to the Mishnah (1168 CE), *Introduction to the Mishnah, Sanhedrin 10*.

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- 3) He is spirit, not matter.
- 4) He is eternal.
- 5) He alone may be worshipped.

The next four principles go to the inspiration, or Revelation, of the Written and the Oral Torah:

- 6) God communicates with mankind and womankind through His prophets.
- 7) Moses is and was unique among all God's other prophets.
- 8) The Lord God Revealed His Law — His Torah — through Moses.
- 9) His Law is eternal and immutable — the Law won't be replaced by another set of laws.

The last four principles go to the responsibilities of every person, and reward and punishment:

- 10) The All-Knowing One knows every action and every thought.
- 11) He rewards those who obey His will and punishes those who reject Him.
- 12) Before the Earth ends, the Messiah – the “annointed one” - will come.
- 13) Some of the dead will live again.

Israel has collectively accepted these Thirteen Principles, which are restated in every Hebrew prayer-book and repeated in daily prayers.

2) Naturally, every *Ben Noah* — every non-Jew — need not personally subscribe to each and every principle. Yet it's claimed that one needs no inspiration but only logic to distill them from Revelation for oneself. Abraham, for instance, the founder of the Jewish People and of the movement now called Judaism, derived the first six principles through personal observation of the Universe and logical deduction – ten generations before Moses.

Correct knowledge of God has never been one of the minimal requisites of personal decency and goodness. But study, and logic, always lead back to these same Thirteen Principles.

(2) In two frequently repeated prayers: *Yigdal* (“May He be Exalted”) and *Ani Ma'amin* (“I Believe”).

Most of the commentary below follows the classic commentaries of Maimonides. (3)

I believe with perfect faith. . . .
— The Jewish Prayer-Book, the *Siddur* (4)

ONE

Believe in the existence of the Creator, a perfect Being, the Supreme Cause of everything in existence. Nothing exists without Him. But He, Who is Self-contained, can exist without any other thing. All things and beings, in heaven, on earth, and everywhere (in this and every universe, if there are other universes), depend on Him for their existence.

*I believe in the sun, even when it is not
shining; I believe in love, even when notfeeling it; I believe in God, even when He is silent.*
— Anonymous (5)

TWO

Believe in the Unity of the Lord. Believe that He Who is the Cause of all things is One; that He alone is God; that there are no gods nor other beings with Him nor besides Him; that He cannot be divided. He is One by virtue of a Unity which is unlike any other unity, that surpasses every other unity.

All is NOT one. God unifies Creation, and He alone faithfully sustains its every particle, force and atom, but the Creator and His Creation are *not* the same.

3. Maimonides' Commentary on the Mishnah, *Sanhedrin 10* (Cairo, 1168 CE. See footnote #1, above; Maimonides' *Mishneh Torah*, the *Yad Hazaka* (another book, different from the Commentary on the Mishnah), on *Sanhedrin 10*, and *Moreh Nevuchim* ("Guide for the Perplexed," Cairo, c. 1190).

4. *Ani Ma'amin* ("I Believe," traditionally recited after the regular morning prayers), this two-word statement of belief immediately preceding the Thirteen Principles of Faith, the *Shloscha Asar Ikkarim*.

5. On the wall of a cellar in the city of Cologne, where Jews had hidden from the enemy, this inscription was discovered after the Nazi Holocaust. Alfred J. Kolach, Great Jewish Quotations (Jonathan David, New York NY, 1996) p. 18.

If all Creation were non-existent He alone would still exist.

The non-existence of His creatures would not involve His non-existence. All beings are dependent on Him but He is not dependent on them.

His real essence is separate from and unlike that of any of them. He Who is infinite is, by virtue of His essence, no more divisible than a geometric point.

It follows that, since there are no other gods than God, the One Creator, all human beings are equally His children — of Him, by Him, and (spiritually) even somewhat like Him.(6)

THREE

Believe that this One Being is incorporeal, without any physical shape or form whatsoever.(7)

Physical matter — even a single atom or electron — can always be divided. Everything corporeal is divisible; nothing corporeal can be a complete and perfect unity. Therefore, God in His total Oneness cannot be physically material. Neither is He reducible to a force or power within any physical body. Nor is He subject to any of the accidents that affect the material and physical, such as movement, destruction, or disintegration.

His essence is spiritual — spirit — rather than material.

Scripture repeatedly sets forth the truth that God cannot be a physical body. “The Lord is God in Heaven above and upon all the Earth beneath.”(8) Obviously, a physical body cannot be in two places at one time.

God has neither similitude nor peer.(9) “To whom then will you liken Me, or shall I equal?”(10) The answer is no one — none.

6. Genesis 1:26, 27; Psalms 8:6; Job 31:15. “Man eats and drinks, performs natural functions and dies like an animal; he stands erect, thinks and has visions like an angel.” — *Midrash* (ancient Biblical commentary), *Genesis Rabbah* 14:3.

7. See, e.g., Deuteronomy 4:15; Isaiah 40:25.

8. Deuteronomy 4:39.

9. Deuteronomy 4:15.

10. Isaiah 40:25.

If He were a corporeal, physical, material body, He would be like other bodies.

Every Scriptural expression that seems to impart animal or human attributes to God is rhetorical. Such attributes exist only in physical beings. God is infinitely blessed and exalted above the merely physical.

To all such expressions applies the saying, “Scripture speaks in the language of men.”(11) The human mind can no more comprehend God’s essential nature — His nature as He really is — than an ant can comprehend man’s essential nature, or a dog grasp our highest thoughts. “Can you, by searching, find out God? Can you find out the Almighty to Perfection?”(12)

FOUR

Believe in God’s eternity. The Universe and everything that has been, is, or ever will be exists only because of Him. He was first in time, He will be last in time. He is eternal and everlasting. He existed before the beginning and He will exist beyond the end of the Universe.(13)

FIVE

Believe that eternal God alone, the One Lord, the Creator, may rightly be worshipped and exalted. “The Eternal is the true God.”(14) That is, He alone is divine; there are no other gods and there is no other god but God.

“There is no one else besides Him.”(15) That is, there is nothing and no one like Him. So we are to worship nobody and nothing else than God Himself, and we are to act in such manner only toward Him.

Nothing below Him deserves prayer or worship.

11. Midrash, *Genesis Rabbah* 31b.

12. Job 11:7.

13. See, e.g., Deuteronomy 33:27.

14. Jeremiah 10:10.

15. Deuteronomy 4:35.

Regarding angels, we can't pretend to know the make-up of God's Heavenly court, but, to the extent that He has created angels, or "Heavenly messengers,"(16) neither they, nor the stars, nor galaxies, the elements or their compounds, nor forces, nor any of His other creations, including human beings, nor the creations of human beings, deserve worship.

SIX

Believe that God has communicated or "spoken" to human beings through His prophets.

We are to recognize that God chooses certain individuals who possess such excellent qualities and such pure and receptive souls that they can attain prophecy — the interaction of the prophet's powers of reason with the emanations from God's own divine Intellect.

Life has meaning. People are not just scuzz on the surface of a planet: we are each unique, and unique as a species; we exist in God's image! The Lord Himself, the Creator of the infinite cosmos and Master of all things can actually, as He wills it, communicate intelligibly with our species through our own kind — that is, through His prophets.

SEVEN

Believe that Moses is and was unique among all God's other prophets, and that his prophecy is not merely true, but of a quality unapproached by any other prophet before or since.(17)

Moses' prophecy differs from the prophecy of all others in four ways:

1) In the case of all other [genuine] prophets, the Creator communicates with them only indirectly, through intermediaries or angels. But with Moses He communicated directly, with no intermediary.(18)

16. "When God created the Universe, on the second Day He produced the angels, with their natural inclination to do good, and an absolute inability to commit sin." — *Midrash, Tanchuma* 76b. Some of Israel's great teachers consider the idea of angels to be largely or merely allegorical, while others maintain a literal belief in supernaturally potent angels. Yet they are, at most, Divine instrumentalities — in Hebrew, *malachim*, or "messengers" — who are the totally faithful servants of their Creator. See, e.g., *Moreh Nevuchim* ("Guide for the Perplexed"), 2:6: "Everyone entrusted with a mission is an angel . . . all forces that reside within the body are angels."

17. See Rav Nosson Scherman, *The Complete Artscroll Siddur* (Mesorah, New York NY, 1984) p. 179 ("Commentary on the *Shloscha Asar Ikkarim*/ Thirteen Principles of Faith," No. 7).

18. Numbers 12:8.

2) In the case of all other prophets, prophecy comes to them only in the course of natural sleep,(19) or when overtaken by a deep and sudden sleep.(20) But prophecy came to Moses while he was conscious and awake.(21)

3) Even though coming by means of intermediaries, in visions cushioned by sleep, all other prophets are weakened, fatigued, pained or frightened by the experience of prophecy.(22) But “the Lord spoke unto Moses face to face, as a man speaks unto his friend.”(23) Moses’ reason was in such intense union with the Divine Intellect that Moses felt no fear — just as one feels no fear while conversing with a friend.

4) Other prophets prepare themselves, clear their minds, and wait for prophecy — sometimes for days, sometimes for years. Prophecy doesn’t come to them by their own will but only by the Will of the Lord. But Moses, following a certain point in his career,(24) could confidently say: “Stay, that I may hear what the Lord will Command concerning you.”(25)

Israel puts Moses as far above all other prophets as the great composer Beethoven, say, stands above whoever wrote “*Chopsticks*.” Still, putting Moses below another prophet can’t be said to contravene the universal moral law (the Noahide Law, the Seven Commandments/the Law of the Rainbow Covenant).

People have every right to value wisdom from whatever source it may derive exactly as they want or think fitting. Idolatry, however - to impute divinity to any human being, whether Moses, Jesus (Yeshua or Yeshua ben Yosef of Galilee), the Buddha (Siddhartha Gautama), or anyone or anything else – is extremely problematic. And it’s probably about equally bad – just as sacrilegious, misleading, and harmful to one’s mind and spirit - to try to channel prayer through any human (or other) idol.

19. See, e.g., Genesis 20:3, 31:24; 1 Kings 3:5; Job 33:14-15.

20. See, e.g., Ezekiel 8:3.

21. Numbers 12:6-8. See Exodus 25:18-22.

22. See, e.g., Daniel 10:16.

23. Exodus 33:11.

24. That is, following the events described in Exodus 34:29-35, and Moses’ transforming experience at Sinai.

25. Numbers 9:8.

Prophets are God's servants, not His peers. The Lord can inspire or communicate with certain people – some people really are holier than others, or, anyway, more receptive to holy messaging - much as people, through their prayer and service, can communicate with God. Naturally, many nations other than Israel have had their prophets.(26) But prophecy in the Biblical sense came to an end with Israel's latter prophets, Zechariah, Haggai and Malachi,(27) and won't return again until the Messianic Age.(28)

Once a great rabbi was arguing a point of law. A Talmudic legend recounts that he tried to strengthen his position by asking God to perform some supporting miracles. God obliged him! But his fellow rabbis still voted against him. They didn't accept his reasoning.

They based their decision upon their own (better reasoned) analysis — and also on the grounds that neither miracle nor prophecy *ever* supplants Torah. The primary rabbinic lesson being: God wants humanity to take responsibility for itself. He gave us His Torah complete, with all its pre-installed problem-solving processes and methods. So, obviously, just as He never contradicts Himself, nothing coming from Him — no miracle nor prophet nor mystic phenomenon whatever — will ever contradict, replace, or set aside this Torah.(29)

Until then, and everywhere, if God wants us to be more responsible, He must restrict Himself from intervening in the legal process with Heavenly signs or miracles. The rabbis (in the case of Israel) must rule according to the Torah.

God's prophets have shown men the way. Now it's up to all of us to finish the work. When our race — the human race — has come closer to completing it, or at the beginning of the Messianic age, prophecy will come again.

26. See, e.g., Numbers 22:9-12. 326

27. Talmud, *Sotah* 48b. See Aryeh Kaplan, Handbook of Jewish Thought (Maznaim Publishing, NY 1979), Chapters 6 and 8.

28. See Joel 3:1-2 and commentaries.

29. Talmud, *Bava Metzia* 59b. Many Christians subscribe to the idea that God does contradict Himself — that one or more of the 48 latter prophets of the Bible after Aaron and Moses (See Talmud, *Megillah* 14a) have somehow nullified, invalidated or set aside all or most of the Law of Sinai, the Torah. 29. Talmud, *Bava Metzia* 59b.

EIGHT

Believe that the Five Books of Moses — known as the *Chumash*, with a guttural “ch” sound), the Pentateuch (the “Five”), the Law, or Torah; at any rate, the first Five Books of the Bible, being Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy⁽³⁰⁾ — were all given to us, through Moses, from the Almighty.

Although the precise manner in which this was accomplished is unknown to us, having been known only to Moses, he was like a scribe who writes down what is dictated to him.⁽³¹⁾

Moses was absolutely trustworthy in this respect. “And Moses said: Hereby you shall know that the Lord sent me to do all these works, and that I have not done them of my own mind.”⁽³²⁾

Following Moses, other prophets, psalmists, and the authors of the Scripture’s Writings also received varying degrees of Divine inspiration. As for the Written Torah’s “other half,” the so-called Oral Torah, the *Mishnah* and the *Talmud*, its wisdom is completely integral to the whole prophetic system.

The Oral Torah comes from consecutive revelations and a historically seamless process beginning from before Abraham, through Moses, and Sinai, carried on into the present through their heirs, the leaders and chief thinkers of the Jewish People and the Hebrew Revolution.⁽³³⁾

No generation of Israel ever completely dropped the baton. The Eternal Lord, by the hand of Moses, has entrusted Israel’s Torah leaders, the Jews’ judges, elders, priests and scholar-rabbis, with the continuing responsibility for interpreting and judiciously applying this Torah — and for

30. *Chumash* — the Five. The books are called, in Hebrew, *Bereisheit* (Genesis), *Shemot* (Exodus), *Vayikra* (Leviticus), *Bemidbar* (Numbers), and *Devarim* (Deuteronomy), based on the first words that begin each book.

31. See, e.g., Deuteronomy 33:21. Some believe that Joshua, not Moses, wrote the last eight verses of Deuteronomy. See the discussion in the Talmud, *Bava Batra* 14b-15a; Deuteronomy 34:5 with Rashi; Joshua 24:26 and commentaries.

32. Numbers 16:28. See Numbers 9:23; Deuteronomy 4:44.

33. See Exodus 3:15; Deuteronomy 17:8-9; Ezra 10; Nechemiah 9-10. Also see Talmud, Nedarim 32b: Abraham learned and emerged from the School (or *yeshiva*) of Shem (one of Noah's three sons; see Genesis 9:26), as did Jacob, who later received the name “Israel.” Sinai validated Israel's Abrahamic heritage — his inspired true teachings, including many teachings from the School of Shem.

precisely conveying it, according to revealed methods of exacting transmission, through successive generations.(34)

So this Oral Torah, including Israel's traditional interpretations of the Five Books, flows very reliably — Moses having done everything he could to ensure precisely that — from Sinai. The Written Torah itself guarantees it.(35)

“You shall come unto the priests, the Levites, and unto the judges that shall be in those days, and inquire, and they shall tell you the sentence of judgment. And you shall do according to the sentence . . . according to the judgment which they shall teach you, you shall do.”(36)

NINE

Believe that this Torah has been formulated by the Creator and by no one else. Its principles are eternal and immutable. Righteous conduct, as the Torah defines it, will always be righteousness. Evil, as the Torah defines it, will always be evil. Other, later Revelations may further elucidate God's commandments but will never reverse or contradict them.

We [that is, the Jewish People] are to obey this eternal Torah now, immediately, as devotedly and precisely as possible. “Whatever I command you, observe to do it; you shall not add thereto, nor diminish from it.”(37)

34. See, e.g., Deuteronomy 4:31, 12:21; 30:11-12-14; Isaiah 59:21. The great early Sages of the *Mishnah* and the *Talmud* learned directly from the schools – the *yeshivas* - of Israel's 48 latter Prophets. See, e.g., Talmud, *Megillah* 14b with Rashi. One can't overstate Israel's Sages' and Prophets' dedication to precision — that is, to correctly and carefully transmitting the exact heritage of Sinai, letter-by-letter, and even in matters of pronunciation.

35. Genesis 49:10 with Rashi; Deuteronomy 4:29, 26:18. See, e.g., Psalm 94:14.

36. Deuteronomy 17:9-11. See *Sefer HaMitzvot* (Book of the [Torah's black-letter] Commandments] 1:174, 2:312-314.

37. Deuteronomy 13:1. Also see *Sefer HaMitzvot* 2:313-314.

Knowing that the judgments and customary applications of the Law may require an extension in some cases and curtailment in others, according to differing places, events and circumstances, the Lord established a special system of great dependability and flexible adaptability.

Israel may legislate certain temporary by-laws or fences around the Law, or agree to dispense with some religious act prescribed in the Law, if necessary, for the Law's own protection.(38) But none of God's laws can be changed or abrogated permanently. "By this method, the Law remains perpetually the same, and will yet admit at all times and under all circumstances such temporary modifications as are indispensable."(39)

TEN

Believe that God is conscious and aware of all the deeds and thoughts of humanity, and that His watchfulness over us is unceasing.(40)

This Principle is in total opposition to the opinion of those who maintain that the Lord has abandoned the Earth. Time and space impose no restrictions upon the Infinite Creator of time and space.

God is absolutely omniscient. He sees everything, from before the Beginning to beyond the end of this and every universe, and into the tiniest details of Creation. He even knows what people think. "The Lord sees not as men and women see . . . the Lord looks into the heart."(41)

38. See Leviticus 18:30; Numbers 15:16; Mishnah, *Pirke Avot* 1:1. Any modification can only be temporary and situation-specific; this is an emergency power. In Scripture, Elijah [or *Eliyahu*] invoked it (1 Kings 18:32), performing a sacrificial service on Mt. Carmel, even though such services should normally not be offered there. See Deuteronomy 12:13 and commentaries; Talmud, *Zevachim* 119b.

39. Moreh Nevuchim 3:41. Actually, the Law is, if anything, much more stable than this quote may imply.

40. See, e.g., Jeremiah 32:19.

41. 1 Samuel 16:7.

ELEVEN

Believe that the Lord rewards those who fulfill His Law's commandments, and punishes those who transgress them.

Of all rewards, the greatest is that of inheriting a portion in the World to Come — i.e., after one's death. The greatest punishment is the soul's extinction.

God knows the transgressor and the sinner, and whom to reward and whom to punish. "Whoever has sinned against Me, him will I blot out of My book."⁽⁴²⁾ Everything mortal must die;⁽⁴³⁾ their bodies will decompose. Our chemical particles are merely "dust."⁽⁴⁴⁾ But life is more than just gathered stardust. The soul, the animating spirit in all life, is not mortal. "Behold, all souls are Mine," God tells us.⁽⁴⁵⁾ "The dust returns to the earth as it was, and the soul returns to God who gave it."⁽⁴⁶⁾

Every soul comes from God in an inherently pure condition: the way one leads his life affects the soul, for good or bad. "With the pure, God shows Himself pure."⁽⁴⁷⁾ The Eternal's love and mercy will envelope the beautiful soul with tender passion, forgiveness and redemption.⁽⁴⁸⁾ But for the coarsened souls of those who, rejecting His ways, have turned against Him, God's

42. See Exodus 32:32-33. Note the allegorical expression, connoting "erase you from My memory" — *Moreh Nevuchim* 2:47 — or "blot you out of the book of life (that is, kill you)." Talmud, *Rosh HaShana* 16b. Probably the clearest references in Torah, with its tremendous emphasis on life in this world, to an afterlife, or life after death, are to *kares* — the "cutting off" or extinction of one's immortal soul as a punishment for bad behavior. See, e.g., Leviticus 18:29 with Ramban (Nachmanides).

43. 2 Samuel 14:14; Ecclesiastes 2:14. Even though God has been known to spare some souls the physical experience of death. See Genesis 6:24 (Enoch); 2 Kings 2:11 (Elijah).

44. Genesis 3:19.

45. Ezekiel 18:4.

46. Ecclesiastes 12:7, answering the question posed in Ecclesiastes 3:21. Note that the Hebrew here for "soul" is *ruach* or "living spirit," or "animated spirit." Man is also a "soul" or *nefesh* — a "speaking spirit," a personality capable of thinking and making his or her thoughts known. See Genesis 2:7; Ezekiel 18:4. Further, every human being has a higher "soul" or *neshama* — the Heavenly spark or spirit of God in man that makes him a responsible moral being. See, e.g., Talmud, *Berachot* 10a; *Moreh Nevuchim* 3:12.

47. 2 Samuel 22:27. See Deuteronomy 4:4, 10:12, 28:9 and commentaries; Job 21:14.

48. See Psalms 130.

justice awaits. “The Lord is known for His justice.”(49)

“[K]eep My statutes and My ordinances, which if a man do, he shall live in them” speaks not just of human free will and not just of life. Rather, it speaks of life beyond life — of the World to Come.(50) It includes not just the Jews in its scope but every human being of every race and language.

“The righteous of all nations have a share in the World to Come.”(51) As for the utterly evil person, “that soul shall be cut off.”(52) Much more than that we cannot know. God has not revealed it. “No living eye has seen the World to Come, O Lord, only you.”(53)

Generally, Israel believes that a purgation or purging process may lie before most souls.(54) Based upon the *Kabbalah*, a mystic tradition containing many Jewish elements, many Jews also believe that an incomplete soul may be reborn, or reincarnated.(55)

Remember that all Israel – and therefore all humankind - is called to believe that God is not merely just and not merely all-powerful but also loving, forgiving and kind. And that all the

49. Psalm 9:17. Generally, see Talmud, *Nedarim* 32b, *Sanhedrin* 91a; Nachmanides on Leviticus 4:2.

50. Leviticus 18:5 and commentaries. See, e.g., Deuteronomy 6:24, 11:21; Proverbs 15:24.

51. *Mishnah Tosefta*, *Sanhedrin* 13:2. See, e.g., *Mishnah*, *Sanhedrin* 10:1 with commentaries. Also see Talmud, *Avoda Zorah* 18a, about a crude Roman centurion who, through a single act of great humanity, acquired a seat alongside one of Israel's foremost scholar-saints, at the same Heavenly table.

52. Numbers 15:31 (speaking of the punishment of *kares*). Also see, e.g., Leviticus 7:22, 27. It goes without saying that God does not forget – that there is no forgetting with God; everyone and everything lives, forever, in His mind. “Cutting off,” being erased from His memory, being blotted out of His book [see references in footnote #42 above], may involve a process of being deliberately erased from His memory.

53. Talmud, *Berachot* 34b, *Shabbat* 63a, *Sanhedrin* 99a.

54. For up to one full planetary year. Talmud, *Shabbat* 33b, *Rosh HaShana* 17a; *Sanhedrin* 104a.

55. See Talmud, *Niddah* 13b, *Hagigah* 12b; *Encyclopedia Judaica*, supra, “Gilgul,” and “Transmigration of Souls.”

souls that receive even a tiny portion in the World to Come will receive incomparable goodness.(56) They will “delight in the radiance of the Divine Presence.”(57)

TWELVE

Believe that the Era of the Messiah — in Hebrew, *HaMashiach*, “The Anointed,” or, in other words, God’s appointed — will come. The human race, the people of Israel, and life on earth won’t come to an end before all of them become drastically and obviously better.

If you should happen to be holding a sapling in your hand when they tell you that the Messiah has arrived, first plant the sapling, then go and greet the Messiah.— Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai (58)

Do not think that the new dispensation — the coming era’s Redemption — will revoke the laws of nature. Don’t expect any man or men, even including the Lord’s Anointed, to perform miraculous signs or wonders, revive the dead, or do similar things. But do expect the Messiah to be a leader for Israel like Moses or King David. He will be a Jew, a man, of the tribe of Judah (rather than a Levite, *cohen* or “priest”), a descendant of David and his righteous ancestress Ruth (the Ruth of the Bible’s Book of Ruth, who was once a Noahide - a pious, Torah-respectful non-Jew – before converting to Judaism).

Do expect the King Messiah to succeed.(59)

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56. See *Mishnah, Pirke Avot* 4:22, in the name of Rabbi Jacob: “Better is one hour of bliss in the World to Come than the whole life of this world.” Still, “Better is one hour of repentance and good deeds in this world than the whole life of the World to Come.” In the next world one can only **receive** good.

57. *Mishnah, Sanhedrin* 10:1; Talmud, *Berachot* 17a.

58. Midrash, *Avot d’Rabbi Nathan* 31 — meaning, among other things, that trees and work will still be necessary to the world, even in the messianic era.

59. See Isaiah 42:4. Besides the (Davidic) King Messiah, God may actually or figuratively “anoint” - as kings of Israel were anointed, as in 1 Samuel 10:1 - other people to serve as redeemers, to help him. Who can say? See, e.g., Talmud, *Sanhedrin* 99a; Midrash, *Lamentations Rabbah* 2:2. So there is not much point in putting a lot of effort into trying to identify any of these anointees early. How could such a futile study make one a better person, or affect one’s love for God or fear of Him?

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He will reign — he will rule Israel, not just as a moral leader but politically — for a long time. His influence will spread across the world while he lives; when he dies his own pious descendants will reign in his stead.(60)

We are to set no time for this Messiah’s arrival,(61) nor try to use Scripture to calculate his coming. “Woe to them who make calculations of the End [i.e., the end of the current era].”(62)

Not only its time but the exact form the Redemption will take, and the processes that God might choose to use to effect it, must remain unknown until the time comes.(63) But the Messianic Age will take us to the last, highest stage of human evolution.

Knowledge, peace, world prosperity, unity, liberty and justice will be its hallmarks, right here on Earth: “it is not of Heaven.”(64) Eagerly, of their own accord, multitudes will pursue God and Torah.(65) Finally, the whole human race will come to recognize God’s sovereignty, and accept His Universal laws.(66) Then “The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.”(67)

THIRTEEN

Believe in the resurrection of the dead. Some who are now dead, and some who live — or who will live — and die will live again.

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60. That is, if he dies. At some point following the beginning of his reign, even death—in the sense that we today speak of death - will come to an end. See Isaiah 25:8.

61. Habakuk 2:3.

62. Talmud, *Sanhedrin* 97b. See, e.g., Daniel 11:35; *Mishnah Tosefta, Derech Eretz* 6:13.

63. Talmud, *Sanhedrin* 97a.

64. Deuteronomy 30:12.

65. Talmud, *Avodah Zorah* 3b, in the name of Rabbi Yose ben Halafta.

66. Midrash, *Mechilta* to Exodus 20:2. See, e.g., Isaiah 66:23; Zephaniah 3:9.

67. Isaiah 11:9.

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God will deal with the souls of His creatures, after our bodies die, according to His Will, out of His infinite justice, love and compassion. But He is also all-powerful, and completely unrestricted in what He may do. So the details and mechanisms of resurrection are basically unknowable. Never revealed,(68) they are secret things; they are known and belong only to God.(69)

“This world [the world we live in] is like a vestibule before the World to Come. Prepare yourself in the vestibule so you can enter the banquet hall.”(70)

Life on earth, in this world, deserves the concentrated attention of the living. “The way of life goes upward for the wise [person], that he may depart from the grave beneath.”(71) Trust that the Lord, the God of judgment,(72) will do good unto the good.(73)

68. “For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor seen, what God has prepared for him who serves You, O God.” — Isaiah 65:3. At the same time, also see Isaiah 25:8 on the future of death.

69. See Deuteronomy 29:29.

70. Mishnah, *Pirke Avot* 4:21.

71. Proverbs 15:24. “[W]ise” — having insight, judgment. “[G]oes upward” — that is, up to [eternal] life, not down to [eternal] death. “[M]ay depart” — turn away from. “[T]he grave beneath” — *Sheol*, the pit, the underground. See Genesis 42:38. On life after death generally, see, e.g., Deuteronomy 30:4, 30:15-19, and Leviticus 18:5 with commentaries; Isaiah 26:19; 1 Samuel 28; Daniel 12:2; Mishnah, *Sanhedrin* 10:1. “The grave, like the womb, [both] receives and gives forth.” — Talmud, *Berachot* 15b, in the name of Rabbi Yosiah. “If a grain of wheat, buried naked, sprouts forth in many robes, how much more so the righteous!” — Talmud, *Sanhedrin* 90b, in the name of Rabbi Meir. “The resurrection of the dead is only for the righteous.” Midrash, *Genesis Rabbah* 13; Talmud, *Berachot* 18b.

72. Deuteronomy 32:4.

73. Psalms 125:4.

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