BH

**The first principle**

To believe in the existence of the Creator, may He be blessed,

and that is that there is a Being complete in all the ways of existence. He is the cause of the existence of all other things in existence. Through Him does their existence survive and from Him is their survival.

And if one imagined the lack of His existence, ~~since in the lack of His existence~~, the existence of all things dissolves, and no thing's existence would survive.

And if we were to imagine the lack of all other things in existence besides Him, the existence of God, may He be blessed, would not dissolve and not be diminished. ~~Unity and Mastery only belong to God, may His name be blessed~~, since He suffices in His [own] existence. It is enough for Him to be by Himself and He doesn't need the existence of anything else.

And everything besides Him of the [abstract intellectuals, meaning the] angels and the ~~bodies of the planets~~ [causes of the orbits (spherical units of space)] and ~~what is in them and~~ what is below them - all need Him for their existence.

And this is the first principle, [and] it is indicated by the 'first commandment' - "I am the Lord, your God" (Exodus

20:2).

**The second principle**

The unity of God, may He be blessed,

which is to say that ~~we believe that~~ He who is the cause of everything **is one**.

And He is not like one of a pair and not like one of a group and not like one ~~person~~ that can be divided into many [smaller] units and not like a simple body which is numerically one [but] can be infinitely divided.

Rather He - God, may He be blessed - is one in a unity that has no unity like it.

And this is the second principle, [and] it is indicated by that which is stated, "Listen Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is one."

**The third principle**

Denial of His physicality

and that is ~~that we believe~~ that this Unity that we mentioned [in principle two] is not a body and not the power of a body and that actions of a body do not relate to Him, [like motion and rest] ~~not~~ [neither] in His essence ~~and not~~ [nor] in His [secondary affects] ~~doings~~.

And hence the sages, may their memory be blessed, denied [the possibility of ] His composition and dissolution and said (Chagigah 15a), "(Above) there is no sitting or standing, no backside (aoref) and no weariness (aipui)," which is to say say no dissolution, and that is aoref, and no composition, and that is aipui, as per the usage (Isaiah 11:14), "And they aifu on the shoulder of the Philistines," which is to say they pushed themselves onto [their] shoulder to connect to them.

And the prophet said (Isaiah 40:25), "'And to whom do you compare [G-d; and to whom shall you compare] Me and I be equated,' says the Holy."

[But] were He a body, He would be comparable to [other] bodies.

And everything that comes in the holy Scriptures that describes Him in physical ways, such as walking or standing or sitting or speaking, or similar to it, it is all by way of metaphor. And so did the rabbis say (Berakhot 31b), "The Torah speaks in the language of people."

And the sages already spoke much about this matter.

And this third principle is indicated by that which is stated (Deuteronomy 4:15), "for you did not see any image" - which is to say, you did not perceive Him as something with an image, because He is - as we mentioned - not a body and not the power of a body.

**The fourth principle**

Preexistence

and that is that we believe that this Unity that we mentioned is absolutely preexisting,

and that no other existing thing besides Him was preexisting in relation to Him.

And the proofs to this in the holy Scriptures are many.

And this fourth principle is indicated by that which is stated (Deuteronomy 33:27), "The abode of the preexisting God."

[Know that this is a great principle in Toras Moshe Rabbeinu, that the creation is new, and was created by by G-d, and it came into being after (it’s own) nothingness

The fact that you find me (RaMbaM) constantly addressing this question of the preexistence of the world is because, as the philosophers (actually) hold, is because the newness of the world is the absolute proof to His exalted existence.

As I explained and proved in the “Moreh”]

**The fifth principle**

That He is the One that is fitting to serve and to exalt and to make His greatness known and to do [know that we must do] His commandments;

and [that we must] not to do this to that which is below Him in existence - from the angels and the stars and the ~~spheres~~ [orbits] and the elements and what ~~which~~ is composed of them.

As they are all designed [and they are limited in their actions IOW] and there is no judgement and no free choice in their actions - only to Him [and His Will], may He be blessed.

And [therefore] ~~so [too]~~, it is not fitting to serve them in order that they be intermediaries to bring them closer to Him,

but rather to Him alone should they direct their thoughts and leave everything besides Him.

And this fifth principle is that idolatry (worship of others) is prohibited, and most of the Torah [comes to] prohibits this.

**The sixth principle**

Prophecy

and that is that a person should know that among the human species, there is found those that naturally have highly elevated character traits and great wholeness and their souls become fit until they receive the form of the intellect.

Afterwards that human intellect clings to the “Proactive Intellect” [=Hashem in His relationship with the world] and It emanates [from Him to the person] lofty emanation to him.

And these are the prophets

And this is prophecy and this is its understanding.

And the full elucidation of this principle is very lengthy, and it is not our [purpose] ~~intention~~ to demonstrate all of its paradigms and to elucidate the nature of its attainment; as this is the [ultimate] understanding of [all knowledge] ~~wisdom~~, ~~more generally~~.

Rather, I am mentioning it only in passing.

And the verses of the Torah testify to the prophecy ~~of~~ [are in] many [books of the] prophets.

**The seventh principle**

The prophecy of Moshe, our teacher ~~- peace be upon him –~~

and that is that we believe that he was the father of all the prophets that were before him and that arose after him,

[meaning] that all are below him in [loftiness] and that he is the chosen one from the entire human species. [This is so] since he grasped more of [Him] ~~His knowledge~~ than any man who lived and more than any man who will live,

[Moreover] ~~and~~ he arrived at ~~an~~ [the maximum] elevation above man - until he reached the level of angels and [he reached the level] ~~was included in the domain~~ of the angels. [And as such] no barrier remained that he did not pierce ~~and go through~~ and no physical impediment impeded him and [he remained with] no defect – [whatsoever] whether large or small ~~- was a part of him~~.

And there was a settling (calming) of all his faculties, [both those connected to the imagination as well as those connected to the senses] ~~the illusory and physical powers and their perceptions disappeared from him~~ and the power of arousal [for] ~~and~~ desire were separated from him and he remained only intellect.

And about this matter, it is stated about him that he would speak with God, ~~may He be blessed~~, without an angelic intermediary.

[And I wish] ~~My desire was~~ to elucidate [here] this amazing matter and to [expose the mystery of] ~~open the lock from~~ the verses of the Torah [about Moshe]

and to explain the meaning of "Mouth to mouth" (Numbers 12:8) and the [rest of this] ~~entire~~ verse [and other versus] besides [this phrase] about this matter.

However, I saw that these matters [are very fine and] would require [a broad expounding] ~~very many proofs~~ and that we would have needed ~~many propositions and~~ introductions and parables, and that we first [have to] elucidate the [nature of the form] ~~existence~~ of angels and the difference in their level [in relation to] ~~from~~ the Creator, God ~~- may He be blessed –~~

and that we [need to] elucidate [further] the [nature of the] soul and all of its [faculties] ~~powers~~.

And the [scope of the discussion] ~~circle~~ would be[come] so wide to the point that we would speak about the forms that the prophets spoke about, [vis-a-vis] ~~that are fitting for~~ the Creator and [His] ~~for the~~ angels.

~~And we would enter into this with a full posture and in its context~~. And [even] a hundred pages would not suffice just for this matter - and even if it was greatly shortened.

And therefore, I will leave it for its place, whether in the book of homilies that I have projected to write or in the books of prophecy that I am involved with or in the book that I will write to elucidate these principles. And I will return to the understanding of this seventh principle

and [here] I will [return to the subject of the seventh Principle and] say that the prophecy of Moshe, our teacher ~~- peace be upon him -~~ is distinct from the prophecy of all [other] prophets in four ways:

**The first one is** that any prophet that existed was only spoken to by God, ~~may He be blessed~~, through an intermediary [=an Angel]. And Moshe was without an intermediary, as it states, "Mouth to mouth will I speak to him."

**And the second matter is** that any [other] prophet would not get prophecy except when he was sleeping - as it is stated in many places, "in a dream at night," "in an apparition at night" and many like this –

or during the day after falling into a trance in such a way that all of his [senses] ~~feelings~~ disappear from him and his [faculty of ] thought becomes [fully] [cleared] ~~available~~, like in the matter of [sleep] ~~a dream~~. And this matter is called an apparition or a vision

and about it, it is stated, "the vision of God."

~~And~~ [As apposed] ~~the [divine] speech would come~~ to Moshe [who gets “the word”] during the day and he would be standing between the two cherubs (of the tabernacle), as God, [assured him] ~~may He be blessed, testified about it~~, "And I will meet you there [and I will speak to you]"

(Exodus 25:22). And God, ~~may He be blessed,~~ said (Numbers 12:6-8), "if you will have prophecies, [it will be in a vision I will allow myself to be known or in a dream I will speak] ~~etc~~. Not so is my servant, Moshe [...] ~~Mouth to mouth I will speak to him, etc."~~

**And the third matter is** that when a prophecy comes to [another] prophet - even though it is in a vision and through an angel – his [faculties] ~~powers~~ weaken and his frame shrinks and a very great fear comes upon him; [so much so] [as if he’s to die] ~~that his spirit almost leaves him~~, as it is stated in Daniel 10:8-16, when [the angel,] Gavriel spoke with him, he said, "and there remained no strength in me and my expression changed upon me to destruction and I retained no strength," and he said, "and I was asleep on my face and my face was to the ground," and he said, "my pains have turned upon me."

But Moshe, ~~peace be upon him~~ - was not like this; [rather] ~~since~~ the [divine] word would come upon him and [shrinkage] ~~fear and trembling~~ would not come upon him in any way; as it is stated (Exodus 33:11), "And the Lord would speak to Moshe, face to face, as a man would speak to his fellow";

which is to say, just like the speech of his friend does not cause trembling to a person, so [too] was [he] ~~Moshe -~~ peace be upon him - that he would not tremble from the [divine] word, and even though he was face to face. And this is because of the strength of his [union with his] intellect~~'s cleaving [to God],~~ as we have mentioned.

**And the fourth matter is** that the spirit of prophecy did not rest upon all of the [other] prophets according to their will, but only according to the will of God, ~~may He be blessed~~.

~~As behold,~~ [it would happen that] a prophet would remain for ~~days or~~ years and not receive prophecy. And [some] ~~he~~ would remain and request from the [prophet] ~~Creator, God - may He be blessed -~~ that he inform him about something in prophecy and he would wait until he prophesied, for days or months, or He [G-d] would not inform him in any regard.

And there were among them groups that would prepare themselves [with a joyous heart] and [by] purify[ing] their thoughts - as Elisha did, as it is written (II Kings 3:15), "And now get me a musician" - and prophecy would come to him.

But [even this] ~~it~~ was not necessarily [the case] that he would prophesy at the time that he prepared for it.

But Moshe, our teacher - peace be upon him - [could receive prophecy] at any time that he wanted:

He said (Numbers 9:8), "Wait and I will hear what the Lord commands for you"; and it is stated (Leviticus 16:2), "speak to your brother Aharon, that he should not come at any time to the Holy" – [and] the sages, ~~may their memory be blessed~~, said (Sifra on Leviticus 16:2), "Aharon is [in the category of ] 'he should not come [at any time],' but Moshe is not [in the category of ] 'he should not come.'

**The eighth principle**

That the Torah is from Heaven

and that is that we believe that this Torah that is given to us through Moshe, our teacher ~~- peace be upon him –~~ [that we possess in our hands] is [the Torah that was given to Moses and it is] completely from the mouth of the Almighty;

which is to say that it all came to him from God, ~~may He be blessed~~, in a manner that is metaphorically called speech.

And no one [really] knows how it came to him except ~~Moshe~~ [he] himself, peace be upon him - since it came to him.

And [we believe] that he was like a scribe who is dictated to and writes down all of the [dates,] events, ~~and~~ stories and the commandments.

And therefore [Moshe] is called the engraver.

And there is no difference [in the divinity] between [the words] "And the sons of Cham were Kush and Mitsrayim" (Genesis 10:6), "and his wife's name was" Meheitabel [the daughter of Matreid]" (Genesis 36:39), ~~"And Timnah was his concubine" (Genesis 36:12)~~ [on the one hand] and [the words] "I am the Lord, your God" (Exodus 20:2) and "Hear Israel [G-d is our G-d, G-d is One]" (Deuteronomy 6:4) [on the other]; since they are all from the mouth of the Almighty and it is all the Torah of God - complete, pure and holy truth.

And [Menashe was not deemed the greatest atheist and rebel worse than any other atheist only because he argued that the Torah has a depth and a peel; and that ~~anyone who says~~, "These ~~types of [dates] verses or stories [are of little value and that they] were written by Moshe on his own,"~~

~~[Such a person] is for our sages and prophets a heretic, and one who reveals [incorrect] faces [of the Torah] more than all of the heretics; since he thinks that there is a heart and a peel to the Torah and that these~~ chronicles and stories don't have a point to them and that they are from Moshe [on his own] ~~our teacher~~ ~~- peace be upon him.~~

And this [is the] matter of one who holds that “the Torah is not from Heaven”, the sages said about it (Sanhedrin 99a), that it is one who believes the whole Torah is from the mouth of the Almighty except for this one verse, which the Holy One, ~~blessed be He~~, did not say, but rather it was from Moshe himself. ~~And this~~ [This] is "Since he disgraced the word of the Lord" (Numbers 13:31) - God, may He be blessed, [and it] is [of] ~~above~~ the statements of the heretics.

Rather every single word of the Torah contains wisdom and wonders for the one who understands them. And their ultimate wisdom is not [fully] grasped [by anyone], as 'its measure is longer than the earth and broader than the sea.'

And a man should only [hope to] walk in the footsteps of of David, the anointed of the God of Yaakov, who prayed (Psalms 119:18), "Uncover my eyes and I shall look upon the wonders of Your Torah."

And so too, the accepted [interpretation (=Torah SheBaalPeh)] ~~understanding~~ of the Torah is also from the Almighty;

and [so] that which we today make a [certain] form for the sukkah, the lulav, the shofar, the tsitsit, the tefilllin and other [such matters], it is the exact form that God, ~~may He be blessed~~, said to Moshe, and which [Moshe] told to us – and he is reliable [emissary] in his charge.

And the statement that indicates this principle is that which is stated (Numbers 16:28), "with this shall you know that it is the Lord that sent me to do all of these acts, and it is not from my heart."

**The** **ninth principle**

[is the idea that it is impossible for the Torah to be Bottul; that this Torah of Moshe will not be Bottul and there will not come to us any other Torah from Him besides for this one] ~~Faithful transmission and that is that this Torah has faithfully been transmitted from the Creator, God - may He be blessed - and not from anyone else.~~ And [so] it cannot be added to and it cannot be taken away from, [neither in the written (Torah) nor in the oral (Torah)] as it is stated (Deuteronomy 13:1), "you shall not add to it and you shall not take away from it."

And we have already elucidated this principle in the introduction to this composition.

**The tenth principle**

is that God, may He be blessed, knows the actions of people and does not ignore them.

Not like the opinion of the one that said that 'the Lord abandoned the earth,'

but rather as it is stated (Jeremiah 32:19), "Great of counsel and mighty of [schemes] ~~works~~, as Your eyes are open upon all the ways of people, etc."; "And the Lord saw that the evil of man was mighty upon the earth, etc." (Genesis 6:5); and it is stated (Genesis 18:2), "the yelling of Sodom and Ammorah, as it was mighty."

And [all these (and more)] ~~this~~ is what indicates this tenth principle.

**The eleventh principle**

is that God, may He be blessed gives reward to the one who does the commandments of the Torah and punishes the one who transgresses its prohibitions

and that the great reward is the world to come

and that the strong punishment is being cut off.

And we have already said about this matter that which will suffice.

And the verse that indicates this principle is that which is stated (Exodus 32:32), "And now, if You will lift up their sin [then it is good]; but if not, erase me please [from Your Book]," and God, may He be blessed, answered him (Exodus 32:33), "The one who sins against Me, I will erase from My book" –

this is a proof that that He knows the servant and the sinner to give reward to this [one] and punishment to that [one].

**The twelfth principle**

The Messianic era

and that is to believe and to [affirm] ~~confirm~~ that he will come and not to think that he is late [and won’t come anymore (??) but rather]. 'If the tarries, wait for him'

and do not give him a [set] time

and do not create analyses from the verses to extrapolate the time of his coming. And the sages said (Sanhedrin 97b), "The spirit of those that calculate the end should blow up."

And [from this principle is] that he believes that [the Messiah] will have ~~great advantage and stature and honor above all of the kings that ever were~~ [Greatness and Love and we must pray for his coming]; according to that which all of the prophets prophesied about him; from Moshe, our teacher, - ~~peace be upon him~~ - to Malachi, ~~peace be upon him~~.

And one who doubts him or for whom his stature is diminished denies the Torah, as the Torah [guarantees] ~~testifies~~ about him in Parshat Bilaam and in Parshat Atem Netsavim.

And included in this principle is that there should not be a king in Israel except from the House of David [and the seed of Shlomo] alone.

And anyone who disputes [the status] of this family, denies the name of God, ~~may He be blessed~~, and the words of His prophets.

**The thirteenth principle**

The Revival of the dead and we have already elucidated it.

And when a person believes in all of these principles and his faith in them is clarified, he enters into the category of Israel; and it is [then] a commandment to love him and to have mercy upon him and to act with him according to everything which God, may He be blessed, commanded about the a man towards his fellow, regarding love and brotherhood. And even if he does what is in his ability from the sins, because of desire and the overpowering of his base nature, he is punished according to his sins, but he [still] has a share in the world to come, and is [only considered to be] from the sinners of Israel. But if one of these principles becomes compromised for a person, behold, he exits the category of Israel and denies a fundamental [dogma] and is called an apostate, a heretic and 'someone who cuts the plantings.' And it is a commandment to hate him and to destroy him, and about him it is stated (Psalms 139:21), "Do I not hate those that You hate, O Lord."

And behold, I have written at great length about these things and I have gone on a tangent from the subject of my composition, but I have done this because I saw an [important] point to it about faith - as I have collected many useful things scattered in [various] great books. And you should know them and have success with them and review (these) [over them] many times and reflect on them with a proper reflection. And if your heart carries you away to think that you understand its content from one [reading] - or from ten - you will know that it has carried you away falsely. And therefore, do not haste in your reading of it; since I did not write it according to that which [just] came to me, but rather after great analysis and reflection. And after I saw clear and true opinions and [also] those not true, then I knew what was fitting to believe from them and brought proof in the claims and proofs on each and every matter. And it is from God, may He be blessed, to fulfill my wish and to guide me in the good path. And I will [now] return to the subject of the chapter [in the Mishnah].