

Judaism 101

A Text-Based Course

Student's Sourcebook

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Subjects included:

- Belief
- Prophecy
- Kindness
- Prayer
- Holiness
- The Commandments
- Shabbat

Comments, Questions and Suggestions
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Judaism 101: A Text-Based Course

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Judaism 101

Emunah (Belief):

(The First Commandment...or is it?)

Source Booklet

The Torah itself paints the scene for us. After many decades of torturing and persecuting the Jewish People, a startling and miraculous turn-around had occurred. The greatest and most powerful nation of the day, Egypt, stood in ruins. The evil and once-mighty Pharaoh was brought to his knees after ten devastating plagues. Pharaoh himself, say the Sages, went running through the streets of the Jewish ghetto searching for Moses so as to beg him to leave the country.

And leave they did. The next morning, the Jewish Nation walked away from the land that enslaved them for so many years. They passed through the crumbled walls of Egypt and left as a free and proud people, over two million strong. They were now on their way to accept a new destiny. They were traveling toward the mountain where Jewish and world history would be changed forever.

Fifty days after the miraculous exit of the Jewish Nation from Egypt, the Jews witnessed an incredible, unique event that has no human parallel. They stood at Mt. Sinai and witnessed the Revelation. The entire Nation, men women and children, was transformed into prophets and prophetesses as they gathered to hear the 10 commandments from G-d Himself.

The First Commandment

[source 1]

I am the LORD your G-d, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other G-ds before Me.

Exodus 20:2

אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ, אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִיךָ מֵאֶרֶץ
מִצְרַיִם מִבֵּית עֲבָדִים: לֹא יִהְיֶה לְךָ אֱלֹהִים
אֲחֵרִים, עַל-פְּנֵי

Section 1: The Approach of Maimonides

The First Commandment	המצווה הראשונה
<p>is that commandment in which we were commanded to believe in the Lord. That is, we must believe that there is an Origin and Cause, who is the Catalyst for all of existence. And so the Exalted One said, "I am the Lord your G-d" (Exodus 20:2 & Deut. 5:6).</p> <p>And at the end of Tractate Makos (23b) it is written: 613 Mitzvot were said to Moshe at Sinai. What is the verse [that hints] to this? "Torah was commanded to us through Moshe" (Deut. 33:4). That is to say [that the] numerical equivalent of TORA[h]¹ [was given to us through Moshe].</p> <p>The Gemora then asks the following (rhetorical) question: "How much does the word 'TORA[h]' equal in gematria?"</p> <p>[To which it answers] "611" [So where are the other two?]</p> <p>And the explanation is that [the other 2] "I am the Lord your G-d" and "You shall have no other G-d" were heard directly from the 'Mouth' of G-d.²</p> <p>Thus it is made clear that "I am the Lord..." is part of the count of 613 Mitzvot - And it is the commandment to believe, as I have explained.</p>	<p>היא הציווי שנצטוונו להאמין באלהות, והוא: שנאמין שיש (שם) עילה וסיבה, שהיא הפועל לכל הנמצאים. וזהו אמרו יתעלה: "אנכי ה' אלקיך" (שמות כ, ב ודברים ה, ו).</p> <p>ובסוף גמרא מכות אמרו: "תרי"ג מצוות אמרו לו למשה בסיני. מאי קרא? תורה ציונה לנו משה" (דברים לג, ד) כלומר: מנין תו'ר'ה'.</p> <p>והקשו על זה ואמרו: "תורה בגימטריא הכי הוי?"</p> <p>שש מאות וחד סרי הוי!".</p> <p>ובאה התשובה: "אנכי ה' אלקיך" ולא יהיה לך מפי הגבורה שמעום".</p> <p>הנה נתבאר לך, שאנכי ה' מכלל תרי"ג מצוות, והוא ציווי להאמין, כמו שביארנו</p>

¹ Hebrew letters have numerical values that are expounded under the rubric known as 'Gematria'. The letter ת = 400, the letter ו = 6, the letter ר = 200, and the letter ה = 5. [400+6+200+5=611]

² The Torah tells us that at the time of the Revelation Hashem began to tell us the 10 commandments, but after He said the first two the people were unable to bear the awesomeness of that Revelation. They then asked Moshe to intercede and be a go-between of sorts. He ascended the mountain and stayed there for 40 days and nights. During that time he was taught the very foundations of all of Torah, including the 613 mitzvot and their precise definitions. After those forty days he descended with the two tablets containing the 10 Commandments as well as a wealth of information that he was taught by G-d.

Section 2: The Approach of the BeHag

[source 3]

<p>It seems that the view of the Baal Halachos (BeHag) is that the count of 613 commandments are His decrees, may He be exalted, that He decreed upon us to do or to refrain from doing –</p> <p>but belief in His exalted existence that He informed us with signs and wonders and revelation of His presence to our very eyes, this is the central point, the root from which [all] the commandments are 'born' – this was not listed [in the 613].</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Nachmanides³</p>	<p>והנראה מדעתו שלבעל ההלכות שאין מנין תרי"ג מצות אלא גזירותיו יתעלה שגזר עלינו לעשות או מנענו שלא נעשה אבל האמונה במציאותו יתע' שהודיע אותה אלינו באותות ובמופתים ובגילוי השכינה לעינינו הוא העיקר והשורש שממנו נולדו המצות לא ימנה בחשבון.</p>
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[source 4]

<p>A parable: A king enters a country and his servants tell him, 'Make decrees for them!'</p> <p>He responds, 'If only they would accept my reign, I would make decrees upon them. Because if they don't accept my reign, how can they fulfill my decrees?'</p> <p>So said G-d to Israel: 'I am the Lord your G-d...you shall have no other G-ds'</p> <p>'Just like you accepted my reign, so too accept my commandments, "...you shall have no other G-ds"</p>	<p>משל למלך שנכנס למדינה אמרו לו עבדיו גזור עליהם גזירות</p> <p>אמר להם לאו כשיקבלו מלכותי אגזור עליהם גזירות שאם מלכותי אינן מקבלים גזרותי היאך מקיימין</p> <p>כך אמר המקום לישראל אנכי יי' אלהיך לא יהיה לך ... כשם שקבלתם מלכותי קבלו גזרותי לא יהיה לך.</p>
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[source 6]

<p>Accepting the kingship [of G-d] is one matter, and the commandments and decrees ...are another matter</p>	<p>קבלת המלכות עניין בפני עצמו והמצוות הנגזרות ... מענין אחר</p>
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³ in his commentary to Maimonides's Sefer HaMitzvot

Section 3: The Approach of Nachmanides

[source 7]

<p>“I am Hashem your G-d” This statement is a positive commandment.</p> <p>He says, ‘I am Hashem’ so as to instruct and command them [the Jews] that they should know and believe that there is a Lord, who is their G-d.</p> <p>That is to say, He exists, and always existed, and from Him all came to be through His Desire and Ability. He is their G-d Whom they are obligated to serve</p> <p>...</p> <p>G-d says to the Jews, “I am Hashem your G-d. You shall have no [other G-ds].” [In other words, G-d says,] “It is I whose Kingship you accepted on yourselves in Egypt”.</p> <p>They (the Jews) said back, “Yes it is true”.</p> <p>[G-d then says,] “If you accept my Kingship you should accept my laws”. That is, after you have accepted and agree that I am Hashem and I am your G-d (as you saw) from Egypt, now accept my Mitzvot!</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Exodus (20:2)</p>	<p>אנכי ה' אלהיך הדבור הזה מצות עשה, אמר אנכי ה', יורה ויצוה אותם שידעו ויאמינו כי יש ה', והוא אלהים להם, כלומר הווה, קדמון, מאתו היה הכל בחפץ ויכולת, והוא אלהים להם, שחייבים לעבוד אותואמר המקום לישראל אנכי ה' אלהיך לא יהיה לך, אני הוא שקבלתם מלכותי עליכם במצרים אמרו לו הן, כשקבלתם מלכותי קבלו גזרותי, כלומר אחר שאתם מקבלים עליכם ומודים שאני ה' ואני אלהיכם מארץ מצרים קבלו כל מצותי</p>
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Section 4: The Philosophical Focus

[source 8]

<p>1. The foundation of all foundations and the pillar of [all] wisdoms is to know that there is a First Cause. And He created all that exists. All that exists in the heavens and earth and all in</p>	<p>א יסוד היסודות ועמוד החכמות, לידע שיש שם מצוי ראשון. והוא ממציא כל הנמצא; וכל הנמצאים מן שמיים וארץ ומה ביניהם, לא נמצאו אלא מאמיתת הימצאו. [ב] ואם יעלה על הדעת שהוא אינו מצוי, אין</p>
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<p>between only exist due to the truth of His existence.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. If it were imaginable that He did not exist, then nothing else could exist. 3. If it were imaginable that nothing else but Him existed, He would continue to be and would not be negated [in any way] through their negation. This is because all of existence needs Him, and He – Blessed be Him – does not need them, and not [even] one of them! Therefore, His Truth (or 'reality') is not like any of their truths. 4. ... This is what the Torah means when it says, "There is none other than He" (Deuteronomy 4:35). That is, there is no true existence other than He and besides Him. 5. This Being is the G-d of the world, Master of all the land. He is the controller of the sphere [of existence] with a power that is endless and limitless. The sphere turns constantly and it is impossible that it do so without a 'Controller' (lit. Turner). He, the Blessed One, is the Controller who does so without a physical hand or form. 6. The knowledge of [all] this is a Positive Commandment, as it says, "I am the Lord, your G-d" (Exodus 20:2)... <p style="text-align: center;">Hilchos Yesodie Hatorah 1:1-6</p>	<p>[ג] ואם יעלה על הדעת שאין כל הנמצאים מלבדו מצויים, הוא לבדו יהיה מצוי ולא ייבטל הוא לביטולם: שכל הנמצאים צריכין לו; והוא ברוך הוא אינו צריך להם, ולא לאחד מהם. לפיכך אין אמיתתו כאמיתת אחד מהם.</p> <p>[ד]... והוא שהתורה אומרת "אין עוד, מלבדו" (<u>דברים ד, לה</u>), כלומר אין שם מצוי אמת מלבדו כמותו.</p> <p>[ה] המצוי הזה--הוא אלוה העולם, אדון כל הארץ. והוא המנהיג הגלגל בכוח שאין לו קץ ותכלית, בכוח שאין לו הפסק, שהגלגל סובב תמיד, ואי אפשר שיסוב בלא מסבב; והוא ברוך הוא המסבב אותו, בלא יד ולא גוף.</p> <p>[ו] וידיעת דבר זה מצות עשה, שנאמר "אנוכי ה' אלוהיך" (<u>שמות כב, דברים ה, ו</u>).</p> <p>הלכות יסודי התורה פרק א</p>
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Note that the Mitzva of Emunah is one of the 6 constant Mitzvot. The six Mitzvot are brought in the beginning of the Sefer HaChinuch and are discussed in the Biur Halacha in the beginning of Shulchan Orach (OC 1). In short they are:

1. Belief in Hashem (as above)
2. Not to believe in any other power
3. To recognize/integrate His Oneness
4. To love Him
5. To fear Him
6. To not follow the physical desires of our hearts and eyes

Judaism 101

Prophecy: When G-d Talks to Us

Source Booklet

Judaism 101: Prophecy



Jennifer was visiting New York City with a few friends. As the group walked down 42nd street in Midtown Manhattan a strange-looking man with wild eyes began talking loudly about the ‘End of Days’. He was standing on top of a milk crate with a sign that said “Messiah” around his neck and a homemade harp in his hands and claiming that G-d had spoken to him in a dream. He threatened listeners with ‘eternal damnation’ if they didn’t each fork over \$1 into his ‘holy coffer’.

At first Jennifer thought the whole scene was amusing, but then she started thinking: ‘Everyone knows this guy is crazy. But how is he different from Isaiah or Jeremiah or even Moses for that matter? They also claimed G-d spoke to them. How could a person ever really know?’

I. What is Prophecy?

Moses and Other Prophets

[source 1]

<p>One of the principles of religion is to know that G-d prophesizes to mankind...</p> <p>Prophets come in levels, just like in wisdom there are sages wiser than others, so too in prophecy there are prophets wiser than others.</p> <p>And all of them only see the vision of prophecy in a dream – a vision of the night, or if sleep comes upon them in the day, as it says, 'I will be known to him in a vision, in a dream I will speak to him' (Numbers 12:6)</p> <p>Things that are made known to a prophet in a vision of prophecy – they are made known through parables, and immediately the explanation of the prophetic vision will be engraved on his heart, and he will know what it is...</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Maimonides⁴</p>	<p>מיסודי הדת, לידע שהאל מנבא את בני האדם...</p> <p>הנביאים, מעלות מעלות הן: כמו שיש בחכמה חכם גדול מחברו, כך בנבואה נביא גדול מנביא.</p> <p>וכולן אין רואין מראה הנבואה אלא בחלום בחזיון הלילה, או ביום אחר שתיפול עליהן תרדמה: כמו שנאמר "במראה אליו אתוודע, בחלום אדבר בו" (במדבר יב:ו)...</p> <p>הדברים שמודיעין לנביא במראה הנבואה--דרך משל מודיעין לו, ומיד ייחקק בליבו פתרון המשל במראה הנבואה, ויידע מה הוא...</p>
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[source 2]

<p>All the things we have said refer to the manner of prophecy for all the early and late prophets, except for Moses, our Master and Master of all the prophets.</p> <p>And what is the difference between the prophecy of Moses and that of the other prophets?</p> <p>All the other prophets: in a vision or dream; Moses was awake and standing ...</p> <p>All the other prophets: through an angel, therefore they saw what they</p>	<p>כל הדברים שאמרנו, הן דרך הנבואה לכל הנביאים הראשונים והאחרונים--חוץ ממשה, רבנו ורבן של כל הנביאים.</p> <p>ומה הפרש יש בין נבואת משה לשאר כל הנביאים—</p> <p>שכל הנביאים, בחלום או במראה; ומשה רבנו-הוא ער ועומד ...</p> <p>כל הנביאים, על ידי מלאך; לפיכך רואין מה שהן רואין במשל וחידה.</p>
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⁴ Hilchot Yisodei HaTorah 7:1-3

⁵ ibid #6

<p>saw through parables and riddles.</p> <p>Moses – not through an angel ... That is to say that there was no parable, rather he would see the matter clearly without riddle or parable</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Maimonides⁵</p>	<p>ומשה רבנו, לא על ידי מלאך... כלומר שאין שם משל, אלא רואה הדבר על בוריו בלא חידה בלא משל...</p>
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Seeing G-d

[source 3]

<p>He [Moses] then said, "Please grant me a vision of Your Glory."</p> <p>And He said, "You cannot see My Presence, for no man can see My Presence and live."</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Exodus 33:18,20</p>	<p>יח ויאמר: הראני נא, את-כבודך. כ ויאמר, לא תוכל לראת את-פני: כי לא- יראני האדם, וחי.</p>
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[source 4]

<p>Let them be ready for the third day, for on the third day, [G-d] will descend on Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Exodus 19:11</p>	<p>יא והיו נכונים, ליום השלישי: כי ביום השלישי, ירד יהוה לעיני כל-העם--על-הר סיני.</p>
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[source 5]

<p>That is, they will see the vision of the honor of G-d as a consuming fire on the top of the mountain (Sinai), but not that they would actually see G-d Himself. As it is written, "no man can see My Presence and live."</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Nachmanides⁶</p>	<p>כי יראו מראה כבוד ה' כאש אכלת בראש ההר לא שיראו את ה' דכתיב "לא יראני האדם וחי"</p>
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The Purpose of Prophecy

[source 6]

<p>It is possible that a prophecy is for the prophet alone, to expand their heart or deepen their understanding, so they</p>	<p>הנביא, אפשר שתהיה נבואתו לעצמו בלבד, להרחיב ליבו ולהוסיף דעתו, עד שיידע מה שלא היה יודע, מאותן הדברים הגדולים.</p>
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⁶Ad loc

<p>will know great things that they wouldn't have otherwise known.</p> <p>And it is possible that the prophecy is sent for one of the nations of the world, or the inhabitants of a city or Kingdom, to tell them what to do, or to stop them from the evil acts in their hands</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Maimonides⁷</p>	<p>ואפשר שישולח לעם מעמי הארץ, או לאנשי עיר או ממלכה, לבונן אותם ולהודיעם מה יעשו, או למנוע אותם ממעשים הרעים שבידיהם...</p>
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[source 7]

<p>And regarding prophets, in their being sent as G-d's messengers:</p> <p>That is not the core of prophecy, and it is not necessary at all that a prophet be sent to others</p> <p>The core of prophecy is as we have explained the close attachment to G-d, His revealing Himself, and the passing of knowledge and understanding to him [the prophet]</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Derech Hashem⁸</p>	<p>וממה שיגיע לנביאים, הוא היותם משתלחים בשליחות ממנו יתברך. והיינו, כי לא זה הוא עצם הנבואה, ואינו מוכרח כלל בנביא שישתלח לאחרים, אבל עצם הנבואה כבר ביארנוהו שהוא התדבק בו יתברך, והיגלותו יתברך אליו. ויתלוו לזה הידיעות וההשכלות שיתלוו</p>
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II. What it Takes to be a Prophet

How Many Prophets?

[source 8]

<p><i>There were many (prophets)⁹ as it was taught:</i></p> <p><i>"A great many prophets were established within the Jewish Nation – double the amount (of people) as left Egypt (i.e. 1.2 million).</i></p> <p><i>...Those prophecies that were relevant</i></p>	<p>טובא הוו כדתניא הרבה נביאים עמדו להם לישראל כפלים כיוצאי מצרים ... נבואה שהוצרכה לדורות נכתבה ושלא הוצרכה לא נכתבה</p>
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⁷ Hilchot Yisodei HaTorah 7:7

⁸ 3:4:6

⁹ in the first Temple Era

¹⁰ Talmud Bavli Megillah 14a

<p>for the future generations were recorded (in Scripture), otherwise they were not recorded for posterity. Talmud¹⁰</p>	
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Who can be a Prophet?

[source 9]

<p>Prophecy only occurs to one who is very wise, courageous in character traits, one whose [evil] inclination does not control them at all, rather they overcome it always; one who is extremely knowledgeable Maimonides¹¹</p>	<p>...ואין הנבואה חלה על חכם גדול בחכמה, גיבור במידותיו, ולא יהיה יצרו מתגבר עליו בדבר בעולם אלא הוא מתגבר בדעתו על יצרו תמיד, בעל דעה רחבה נכונה עד מאוד</p>
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III. Establishing Credibility

[source 10]

<p>[The Mishna noted that] One who ignores the words of a prophet [is punished¹²]. [The Gemora asks] How should one know [that the prophet is true, that he] should be punished? He gives a sign (and it comes true). But in the story of Micha¹³ he does not give a sign and yet [those who ignored him] were punished! In the case of [a prophet] who is already tested and known¹⁴, the rules are different. Talmud¹⁵</p>	<p>המוותר על דברי נביא מנא ידע דאיענש דיהב ליה אות והא מיכה דלא יהיב ליה אות ואיענש היכא דמוחזק שאני</p>
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¹¹ Hilchot Yisodei HaTorah 7:1

¹² through death from heaven

¹³ (Kings I Ch. 20)

¹⁴ In the words of Rashi, he is known to be "righteous and a true prophet".

[source 11]

When a person comes who is fitting for the work of G-d, and does not add or subtract [from the Torah], rather serves G-d in the Torah's commandments, we don't say to him 'split the sea' or 'revive the dead', etc, and then we'd believe him...

Rather we say to him, 'If you are a prophet, tell us things that will happen in the future.' And he says these things. And we wait to see if his predictions do occur.

If they do not happen – even if only one small detail is missing – it is known that he is a false prophet. And if all his words do happen, we see him as trustworthy.

And we check him many times. If all his words are reliable, he is considered a true prophet.

Do astrologers and magicians not also tell the future?

What is the difference between a prophet and them?

In truth, astrologers and magicians and those like them, some of their words come true and some do not...

But a prophet, ALL his words come true, as it is said "And nothing from the word of G-d shall fall to the ground" (2 Kings 10:10)

Maimonides¹⁶

... כשיבוא אדם הראוי לנבואה במלאכות ה', ולא יבוא להוסיף ולא לגרוע, אלא לעבוד את ה' במצוות התורה--אין אומרין לו קרע לנו את הים או החיה מת וכיוצא באלו, ואחר כך נאמין בכך.

אלא אומרין לו, אם נביא אתה, אמור לנו דברים העתידין להיות; והוא אומר, ואנו מחכים לו לראות היבואו דבריו:

אם לא יבואו, ואפילו נפל דבר אחד קטן-- בידוע שהוא נביא שקר. ואם באו דבריו כולם, יהיה בעינינו נאמן.

[ב] ובודקין אותו פעמים הרבה. אם נמצאו דבריו כולם נאמנין, הרי זה נביא אמת..

והלוא המעוננים והקוסמים אומרין מה עתיד להיות, ומה הפרש בין הנביא ובינם

--אלא שהמעוננים והקוסמים וכיוצא בהן, מקצת דבריהן מתקיימין ומקצתן אין מתקיימין.... אבל הנביא--כל דבריו קיימין, שנאמר "כי לא ייפול מדבר ה' ארצה" (מלכים ב י,).

¹⁵ Talmud Bavli Sanhedrin 89b

¹⁶ Yisodei HaTorah 10:1-3

[source 12]

<p>When he is sent [to prophecy to the people], he is given a sign and a wonder¹⁷ so that the people will know that G-d truly sent him.</p>	<p>וכשמשלחין אותו, נותנין לו אות ומופת כדי שיידעו העם שהאל שילחו באמת.</p>
<p>Not everyone who performs signs and wonders is believed to be a prophet. Rather, someone who was already deemed fitting to be a prophet due to their wisdom and deeds - raised above all his contemporaries, and went in the ways of prophecy and holiness and <i>perishus</i>¹⁸, and afterwards performs a wonder and says that G-d sent him, it is a <i>mitzvah</i> to listen to them, as it is said, 'And to him you shall listen.' (Deuteronomy 18:15)</p>	<p>ולא כל העושה אות ומופת, מאמינין אותו שהוא נביא: אלא אדם שהיינו יודעין בו מתחילתו שהוא ראוי לנבואה בחכמתו ובמעשיו, שנתעלה בהן על כל בני גילו, והיה מהלך בדרכי הנבואה ובקדושתה ופרישותה, ואחר כך בא ועשה אות ומופת ואמר שהאל שילחו--מצוה לשמוע ממנו, שנאמר "אליו, תשמעון" (דברים יח:טו)</p>
<p>Maimonides¹⁹</p>	

...

IV. Does G-d Still Talk To Us?

[source 13]

<p>Rabbi Yehoshua son of Levi said:</p>	<p>אמר רבי יהושע בן לוי, בכל יום ויום בת קול יוצאת מהר חורב ומכרזת ואומרת: אוי להם לבריות מעלבונה של תורה</p>
<p>Each and every day, a voice comes out from Mount Sinai and declares and says:</p>	
<p>"Woe to them, the people, because of the insult to the Torah.</p>	
<p>Mishna Pirkei Avos²⁰</p>	

[source 14]

<p>...Regarding the announcement from Above, it is difficult to understand:</p>	<p>בענין הכרוז היוצא מלמעלה דקשה ממה נפשך</p>
<p>If it is useful, why is it not heard?</p>	

¹⁷ ie a miracle

¹⁸ ie separation, mastery over the physical

¹⁹ Yisodei HaTorah 7:1

²⁰ 6:2

<p>...The 'announcement' is [in actuality] the matter of thought, and so even every wicked person has murmurings of repentance, because of hearing the announcement in his thoughts</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Ba'al Shem Tov Bechukosai 9</p>	<p>הכרוז הוא ענין המחשבה, ולכך אין לך רשע שאינו מהרהר בתשובה מצד שמעית הכרוז במחשבה</p>
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[source 15]

<p>Nachmanides was troubled by the fact that Abraham was told "lech lecha" [to go] " before his love was mentioned</p> <p>In the Zohar it seems that this itself is the praise – that Abraham heard "lech lecha" that G-d is constantly saying to all people ...and Abraham heard and accepted. This is why the phrase "lech lecha" is said [in the Torah] to him, because although he wasn't the only one to hear it, his praise was that he was the only one ready to accept it.</p>	<p>רמב"ן הקשה שנאמר לך לך בלי שנזכר מקודם חיבתו.</p> <p>ובזוה"ק נראה כי זה עצמו השבח ששמע זה המאמר לך לך שנאמר מהשי"ת לכל האנשים תמיד ... ואאע"ה שמע וקיבל. וממילא נקרא רק הדיבור אליו כי הלא לא נמצא מיוחד לשמוע. רק הוא אבל בודאי זה השבח בעצמו שהי' מוכן לקבל המאמר:</p>
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V. Dreams

[source 16]

<p>Dreams are 1/60 of prophecy Talmud²¹</p>	<p>חלום אחד מששים לנבואה</p>
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[source 17]

<p>Rabbi Yochanan said in the name of Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai: just as it's impossible to have wheat without chaff, it's impossible for dreams to be without inaccuracies.</p>	<p>אמר ר' יוחנן משום ר' שמעון בן יוחי כשם שאי אפשר לבר בלא תבן כך אי אפשר לחלום בלא דברים בטלים</p> <p>אמר ר' ברכיה חלום אף על פי שמקצתו</p>
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²¹ Talmud Bavli Brochos 57b

²² Ibid 55a

<p>R' Berachiya said, even though part of dream can come true, all of it cannot come true</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Talmud²²</p>	
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VI: The Sage or the Prophet?

[source 18]

<p>Rabbi Avidimi from Haifa said:</p> <p>From the day that the Temple was destroyed, prophecy was taken from the prophets and given to the Sages.</p> <p>But aren't the sages themselves prophets?!</p> <p>This is what he meant:</p> <p>Even though it [prophecy] was taken from the prophets, it was not taken from the sages.</p> <p>Amimar said:</p> <p>A sage is greater than a prophet</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Talmud²³</p>	<p>אמר רבי אבדימי דמן חיפה מיום שחרב בית המקדש ניטלה נבואה מן הנביאים וניתנה לחכמים</p> <p>אטו חכם לאו נביא הוא הכי קאמר אע"פ שניטלה מן הנביאים מן החכמים לא ניטלה אמר אממר וחכם עדיף מנביא</p>
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[source 19]

<p>This is what [the Talmud] meant:</p> <p>Even though the prophets' prophecy – ie in visions – was taken, the prophecy of sages – the path of wisdom – was not taken away, rather they know the truth through the Divine Spirit inside them</p>	<p>הכי קאמר אע"פ שנטלה נבואת הנביאים שהוא המראה והחזון, נבואת החכמים שהיא בדרך החכמה לא נטלה, אלא יודעים האמת ברוח הקדש שבקרבתם:</p>
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[source 20]

<p>There is no sign and no prophet, and true understanding – the Divine Spirit –</p>	<p>אמנם אין אות ואין נביא, וחסרה ההשכלה האמיתית שהיא רוח הקודש. כי אמנם מה</p>
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²³ Talmud Bavli Bava Basra 12a

<p>is also lacking. For what a person understands in his mind through his human endeavors compared to what one understands through the overflowing Spirit, can only be compared in value to the body vs. the soul</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Derech Hashem²⁴</p>	
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VII. Revelation

A great Rebbe died, survived by his two sons. However, he left no instructions as to which son was to inherit the mantle of leadership in the community. The congregation itself was equally divided between the two. Some insisted that one son was more qualified while others were sure that the other son would be the better Rebbe. After weeks, the conflict finally came to a standstill, since the elders of the community could not decide who should be their new Rebbe.

Then, one day, one of the sons approached the Council of Elders and told them an amazing story. He insisted that his father, the Rebbe, had come to him in a dream the night before, and had told him to convey to the elders his command that this son become their new Rebbe.

Upon hearing this story, a hush fell over the Council. Would this new development settle at last the dispute that had occupied the minds and mouths of the whole community for so long? Was this what they had been waiting for?

As the suspense grew, a little old man who was sitting in the corner, amused at what he'd heard, softly decided the matter: "Young man, if your father, the Rebbe, had wanted you to be the new leader of our community, he should have come to us in our dreams, not to you in yours!"²⁵

[source 21]

<p>32: Inquire now about the early years that preceded you, from the day that G-d created Adam on earth and from one end of the heavens to the other end of the heavens: Did anything ever happen comparable to this great event, or did anyone ever hear of such a thing?</p>	<p>לב כי שאל-נא לימים ראשונים אשר-היו לפניה, למן-היום אשר ברא אל הים אדם על-הארץ, ולמקצה השמים, ועד-קצה השמים: הנהיה, כדבר הגדול הזה, או, הנשמע כמ'הו. לג השמע עם קול אל הים מדבר מתוך-האש, כאשר-שמעת אתה--ויהי.</p>
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²⁴ 2:8:4

²⁵ FROM Aish.com: The Prophecy of Moses – by Rabbi Mordechai Blumenfeld

<p>33: Did any nation [ever] hear G-d's voice speaking from within the fire as you heard, and survive?</p> <p>34: Or did any god ever miraculously come and take for himself a nation from within a nation through tests, with signs and with wonders, and through warfare, and with a strong hand and with an extended arm, and with great displays; entirely as Ad-noy, your G-d, did for you in Egypt as you watched?</p> <p>35: You have been shown that you might know that Ad-noy, He is the G-d; there is no [power] other than He.</p> <p>36: From the sky He made audible to you His voice to teach you, and on the earth He showed you His great fire, and you heard His words form within the fire.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Deuteronomy Chapter 4:32-36</p>	<p>לד או הנסה אל הים, לבוא לקחת לו גוי מקרב גוי, במסות באותות ובמופתים ובמלקמה וביד חזקה ובזרוע נטויה, ובמוראים גדלים: ככל אשר-עשה לכם יהוה אל הים, במצרים-- לעיניך.</p> <p>לה אתה הראת לדעת, כי יהוה הוא האל הים: אין עוד, מלבדו.</p> <p>לו מן השמים השמיעך את-קולו, ליסרך; ועל-הארץ, הראך את-אשו הגדולה, ודבריו שמעת, מתוך האש</p>
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[source 22]

As Lawrence Keleman puts it²⁶:

Imagine that the pope decided to announce today that G-d once spoke simultaneously to all Italians. Where in history could the pope place such an event and get away with it? ... All ancient and modern religions borrowed themes and narratives from neighboring theologies...Why doesn't a report of mass-prophecy appear in the annals of any other religion or cult?

Moreover, early Christianity and Islam would have benefited from incorporating such a myth into their respective theologies. Because Jews believed that millions of people – all of their ancestors – received the Torah directly from G-d, they were hesitant to accept just Jesus' or Muhammad's word that the Torah had been annulled. If G-d changed His mind, Jewry reasoned, why didn't He let them know?

[source 23]

²⁶ "Permission to Receive" (Targum Press, pages 61 – 70)

<p>1: Everything that I am commanding you--- be careful to fulfill it; do not add to it and do not subtract from it.</p> <p>2: If a prophet arises among you or a dreamer of a dream, and he gives you an omen or a miracle,</p> <p>3: And the omen or the miracle happens--- the one he told you about--- saying, "Let us go after other gods, that you do not know, and let us serve them."</p> <p>4: Do not listen to the words of that prophet or to that dreamer of a dream, because Ad-noy, your G-d, is testing you to know whether you love Ad-noy, your G-d, wholeheartedly and with your entire beings.</p> <p>5: After Ad-noy, your G-d, are you to go, fear Him, keep His commandments, heed His voice, serve Him, and cleave to Him.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Deuteronomy²⁷</p>	<p>א את כל-הַדְּבָר, אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי מְצַוֶּה אֶתְכֶם-- אֶתוֹ תִשְׁמְרוּ, לַעֲשׂוֹת: לֹא-תֹסֵף עָלָיו, וְלֹא תִגְרַע מִמֶּנּוּ. {פ}</p> <p>ב כִּי-יָקוּם בְּקִרְבְּךָ נְבִיא, אוֹ חֵלֶם חֲלוֹם; וַיִּתֵּן אֵלֶיךָ אוֹת, אוֹ מוֹפֵת.</p> <p>ג וַבָּא הָאוֹת וְהַמּוֹפֵת, אֲשֶׁר-דִּבֶּר אֵלֶיךָ לֵאמֹר: נִלְכָה אַחֲרֵי אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים, אֲשֶׁר לֹא- יִדְעֶתֶם--וַיִּנְעֲבֶדֶם.</p> <p>ד לֹא תִשְׁמַע, אֶל-דִּבְרֵי הַנְּבִיא הַהוּא, אוֹ אֶל- חוֹלֵם הַחֲלוֹם, הַהוּא: כִּי מִנְסָה יְהוָה אֶל הַיְכֶם, אֶתְכֶם, לְדַעַת הִישָׁקֶם אֱלֹהִים אֲתֵ-יְהוָה אֶל הַיְכֶם, בְּכָל-לְבַבְכֶם וּבְכָל-נַפְשְׁכֶם.</p> <p>ה אַחֲרֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם תֵּלְכוּ, וְאֶתוֹ תִירְאוּ; וְאֶת-מִצְוֹתָיו תִּשְׁמְרוּ וּבִקֵּלוֹ תִשְׁמָעוּ, וְאֶתוֹ תַעֲבֹדוּ וּבוֹ תִדְבְּקוּן.</p>
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[source 24]

<p>This matter is clear and explicit in the Torah, that it is a commandment to last forever, there will be no change, no subtraction, no addition²⁸ ...</p> <p>We learn that all the words of the Torah, we are commanded to do them forever....a prophet is not allowed to change anything</p> <p>Therefore if someone stands up,</p>	<p>א דבר ברור ומפורש בתורה, שהיא מצוה עומדת לעולם ולעולמי עולמים: אין לה לא שינוי, ולא גירעון ולא תוספת...הא למדת שכל דברי תורה, מצווין אנו לעשותן עד עולם;...אין נביא רשאי לחדש דבר....</p> <p>ב לפיכך אם יעמוד איש, בין מישראל בין מן האומות, ויעשה אות ומופת ויאמר שה' שלחו להוסיף מצוה, או לגרוע מצוה, או לפרש במצוה מן המצוות פירוש שלא שמענו ממש,</p>
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²⁷ 13:1-5
²⁸

שנאמר "את כל הדבר, אשר אנכי מצווה אתכם--אותו תשמרו, לעשות: לא תוסף עליו, ולא תגרע ממנו" (דברים יג:א) ונאמר "והנגלות לנו ולבנינו, עד עולם--לעשות, את כל דברי התורה הזאת" (דברים כט:כח)

²⁹ Hilchot Yisodei HaTorah Chapter 9 1-2

<p>Jewish or not, and performs a wonder, and says G-d sent him to add or subtract a mitzvah, or to explain a commandment in a way that we did not hear from Moses, or he says that the commandments that the Jewish people were commanded are not forever and for every generation, rather that they were for a limited period of time....</p> <p>[that person] is a false prophet Maimonides²⁹</p>	
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Appendix

Looking for Prophecy?

<p>All prophets do not prophesize when they want. Rather they focus and sit, happy and of good heart, and meditate.</p> <p>Because prophecy cannot reside in sadness or laziness, only in happiness....</p> <p>They search after prophecy....that is to say they go in the paths of prophecy ...</p> <p>Maimonides Yisodei Hatorah 7:4</p>	<p>ח [ד] כל הנביאים--אין מתנבאין בכל עת שירצו, אלא מכוונין דעתן ויושבין שמחים וטובי לב ומתבודדין: שאין הנבואה שורה לא מתוך עצבות ולא מתוך עצלות, אלא מתוך שמחה. והם מבקשים הנבואה...כלומר מהלכין בדרך הנבואה...</p>
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May one look for 'signs'?

<p>We do not 'practice signs' like ...those who say,</p> <p>'since my bread fell from my mouth, or my staff from my hand, I won't go to such-and-such place today, because if I go I won't realize my goals;</p> <p>Since a fox crossed my right, I won't leave the house today, because if I leave it, a scoundrel will attack me..'</p>	<p>ד אין מנחשין ... כגון אלו שאומרין הואיל ונפלה פיתי מפי, או נפל מקלי מידי, איני הולך למקום פלוני היום, שאם אלך אין חפציי נעשין; הואיל ועבר שועל מימיני, איני יוצא מפתח ביתי היום, שאם יצאתי, יפגעני אדם רמאי... וכל כיוצא בדברים האלו, הכול אסור</p>
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...All things like these are forbidden...

Maimonides

Hilchot Avodas Kochavim 11:4

Judaism 101

Mitzvot (Commandments)

Source Booklet

Mitzvot (Commandments): Actions That Build

*Some old song
Just a drop of water
In the endless sea
All we do
Crumbles to the ground
Though we refuse to see
Dust in the wind*

*Now, don't hang on
Nothing last forever
But the earth and sky
It slips away
And all my money
Won't another minute buy*

*Dust in the wind
All we are dust in the wind
Dust in the wind
Dust in the wind*

- 'Dust in the Wind', by Kansas

The Jewish View of Life

[source 1]

<p>Every person should know:</p> <p>I, with my abilities and attributes, my face and the treasures of my soul, am unique in the world. Among all those that are alive today, there is no one like me. In generations past, there was no one like me. And until the end of time, there will never be anyone like me!</p> <p>If so, certainly G-d sent me to the world on a special mission that no one else can fill!</p>	<p>וידע כל אדם</p> <p>אני עם כחותי ותכונותי, פרצוף פני וסגולות נפשי, יחידי בעולם. בין כל החיים עכשיו אין אף אחד כמוני. בדורות שעברו לא היה כמוני. ועד סוף כל הדורות לא יהיה כמוני!</p> <p>ואם כך, בודאי הקב"ה שלחני לעולם בשליחות מיוחדת ששום אחר אינו יכול למלאותה!</p> <p>--הרב שלמה וולבה</p>
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Rabbi Shlomo Wolbe ³⁰	
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[source 2]

These are the things that a person does and enjoys their 'fruit' in this world, and the principal remains intact for them in the World to Come.... Talmud ³¹	...אלו דברים שאדם עושה אותם ואוכל פירותיהן בעולם הזה והקרן קיימת לו לעולם הבא ...
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Introduction to the Commandments (Mitzvot)

[source 3]

You must not kindle a fire in all your dwelling places on the day of Shabbos. Exodus 35:3	ג לא-תבערו אש, בכל משבתיכם, ביום, השבת
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[source 4]

And you shall write them [the scrolls] on the doorposts of your house and upon your gates Deuteronomy 6:9	ט וכתבתם על-מזוזות ביתך, ובשעריך.
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[source 5]

<p>(1) How do we write the mezuzah? Write two sections (Shema and veHiya Im Shamoah) on one page on one parchment and leave a space below and above about half a nail's worth, and at the beginning leave enough in order to roll it after it is folded...</p> <p>(2) One should write it on own page but if it was [already] written on two or three pages, it is Kosher</p> <p>(3) If it was written out of order – even if [the scribe] forgot to write one letter – it is invalid and cannot be fixed. All the more so if the sections were written out of order</p> <p>(4) If it was written on two skins, even</p>	<p>(א) כיצד כותבין את המזוזה כותבין שתי פרשיות שמע והיה אם שמוע על דף אחד ביריעה אחת ועושה לה ריוח מלמטה וריוח מלמעלה כמו חצי צפורן ובתחלתה ישייר כדי לגול אותה אחר שתכרך ...</p> <p>(ב) צריך לכתבה בדף אחד ואם כתבה בב' או בג' דפין כשרה:</p> <p>(ג) כתבה שלא על הסדר אפילו שכח מלכתוב אות אחת פסולה ואין לה תקנה ואין צריך לומר אם הקדים פרשה לפרשה:</p> <p>(ד) כתבה בשתי עורות אף על פי שתפרן פסולה:</p>
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³⁰ Alei Shor Volume 2, p. 71

³¹ Shabbos 127a

though they were sewn together, it is invalid Code of Jewish Law ³²	
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Who are the Mitzvot for?

[source 6]

<p>If you sin what does it effect within Him? If your sins multiply what does it do to Him?</p> <p>If you act righteously what do you give to Him? Or what from your hands would he [need] to take?</p> <p>Job 35:6-7</p>	<p>ו אם-חטאת, מה-תפעל-בו; ורבו פשעך, מה-תעשה-לו. ז אם-צדקת, מה-תתן-לו; או מה-מידך יקח</p>
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[source 7]

<p>.The Lord commanded us to perform all these statutes to [show that we] fear the Lord, our G-d; to benefit us for all time, to keep us alive like this day.</p> <p>Deuteronomy 6:24</p>	<p>כד ויצונו יהוה, לעשות את-כל-החקים האלה, ליראה, את-יהוה אלהינו--לטוב לנו כל-הימים, לחיתנו כהיום הזה</p>
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[source 8]

<p>What does it matter to G-d if an animal is slaughtered by cutting its neck through the spine or the throat?</p> <p>[The answer is] "The commandments were given only in order to refine humanity</p> <p>Midrash Rabbah³³</p>	<p>וכי מה איכפת ליה להקב"ה למי ששוחט מן הצואר או מי ששוחט מן העורף הי לא נתנו המצות אלא לצרף בהם את הבריות</p>
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[source 9]

<p>And all these matters [the mitzvot] are to overcome the evil inclination and to correct our traits and most laws of the Torah are instruction from the Great Adviser to correct our character traits and straighten our ways</p>	<p>וכל אלו הדברים כדי לכופ את יצרו ולתקן דעותיו ורוב דיני התורה אינן אלא עצות מרחוק מגדול העצה לתקן הדעות וליישר כל המעשים</p>
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³² Shulchan Orach, YD 288:1-4

³³ Genesis 44:1

Tamei HaMitzvot

[source 10]

A complete explanation of the mitzvot has not yet been revealed to any person in the world, even Moses...

Because the Holy Torah is emanated from Above, above all understanding. How could [this understanding] be given over to the grasp of man?

Nefesh HaChaim³⁵

כי טעמי מצות עד תכליתם לא נתגלו עדיין לשום אדם בעולם אף למשרע"ה...! כי התורה"ק אצולה מלמעלה ראש מעל כל ההשגות. ואיך אפשר שיהא הדבר מסור להשגת האדם ...

[source 11]

Even though all the laws of the Torah are [Divine] decrees ... it is still fitting that a person contemplate them, and give reasons as much as we can, and the early sages said that King Solomon understood most of the reasons of all the laws of the Torah

Maimonides³⁶

אע"פ שכל חוקי התורה גזירות הם כמו שביארנו בסוף מעילה ראוי להתבונן בהן וכל מה שאתה יכול ליתן לו טעם תן לו טעם הרי אמרו חכמים הראשונים שהמלך שלמה הבין רוב הטעמים של כל חוקי התורה...

Explaining Mitzvot: The Example of Mezuzah

[source 12]

A person should be diligent with regard to the Mitzvah of Mezuzah (for) every time one enters or leaves he is reminded of G-d's unity and love, and will awaken from his sleep and his wasting of time, and will know that the only thing that lasts forever is knowledge of Him, and immediately [the person] will return to his senses and walk in just paths

Maimonides³⁷

חייב אדם להזהר במזוזה ... כל זמן שיכנס ויצא יפגע ביחוד השם שמו של הקדוש ב"ה ויזכור אהבתו ויעור משנתו ושגיותיו בהבלי הזמן וידע שאין דבר העומד לעולם ולעולמי עולמים אלא ידיעת צור העולם ומיד הוא חוזר לדעתו והולך בדרכי מישרים

[source 13]

³⁴ Yad end of Hilchos Temurah³⁵ 1:22³⁶ Yad end of Hilchos Temurah³⁷ Hilchot Mezuzah 6:13

<p>Onkelos son of Klonimus [and brilliant nephew of the Roman Emperor Titus], converted to Judaism.</p> <p>[Hearing this] Titus sent a brigade of soldiers from Rome after him [to bring him back]. But when Onkelos engaged the soldiers in discussion of the Torah, they converted to Judaism.</p> <p>Titus then sent another brigade, instructing them not to speak to Onkelos. [eventually] they too converted to Judaism.</p> <p>Finally Titus sent a third brigade and instructed them not even to listen to Onkelos. When they were leading him away, Onkelos placed his hand on the mezuzah and inquisitively inquired, "What is that?"</p> <p>"You tell us," the soldiers said.</p> <p>He replied, "Normally, a human king sits inside and his servants stand outside and guard him. But, with the Holy One Blessed be He, His servants are inside and He guards them from outside."</p> <p>They too converted.</p> <p>Titus sent no more soldiers.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Talmud ³⁸</p>	<p>אונקלוס בר קלונימוס איגייר שדר קיסר גונדא דרומאי אבתריה משכינהו בקראי איגיור</p> <p>הדר שדר גונדא דרומאי [אחרינא] אבתריה אמר להו לא תימרו ליה ולא מידי... איגיור [כולהו]</p> <p>הדר שדר גונדא אחרינא אבתריה אמר להו לא תשתעו מידי בהדיה כי נקטי ליה ואזלי חזא מזוזתא [דמנחא אפתחא] אותיב ידיה עלה ואמר להו מאי האי</p> <p>אמרו ליה אימא לן את אמר להו מנהגו של עולם מלך בשר ודם יושב מבפנים ועבדיו משמרים אותו מבחוץ ואילו הקב"ה עבדיו מבפנים והוא משמרן מבחוץ ...</p> <p style="text-align: right;">איגיור תו לא שדר בתריה</p>
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[source 14]

<p>It is known that every person has 248 spiritual limbs and 365 spiritual sinews, and on them are 'clothed' the physical 248 limbs and 365 physical sinews, as</p>	<p>ידוע הוא דכל אדם יש לו רמ"ח איברים ושס"ה גידיים רוחניים, ועליהם מלבשים הרמ"ח איברים ושס"ה גידיים גשמיים, כמו שנאמר (איוב י' י"א), "עור ובשר תלבישני ובעצמות</p>
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³⁸ Avodah Zara 11

<p>it is said (Job 10:11) 'Skin and flesh you have clothed me and bones and sinews you have covered me' – the verse mentions skin, flesh, bones and sinews and refers only to 'covering' and 'clothing'.</p> <p>Who is being clothed, if not for the soul inside, that is the core of the person, and on each and every limb of the soul is clothed from above a corresponding 'bodily' limb, like clothing on a body.</p> <p>And corresponding to this G-d gave us 248 positive commandments and 365 negative commandments, and they are also divided up according to limbs, for there are commandments relating to the hand and to the feet and to other limbs....</p> <p>And when a person in this world fulfills a commandment with a certain limb, in the future light will rest on that limb...</p> <p>It turns out that when a person fulfills the 248 positive commandments, they are a complete person holy to G-d in all their limbs...And if a person is careful from transgressing the negative commandments in the Torah, they extend the holy light onto the 'sinews' of their soul Chofetz Chaim³⁹</p>	<p>ואת מי הלביש, אם ל'א לנפש אשר בקרבו, שהיא היא עצם האדם, ועל כל איבר ואיבר של הנפש מלבש מלמעלה איבר הגוף המכנה כנגד איבר ההוא, כמו הבגד על הגוף.</p> <p>וכנגד זה נתן לנו הקדוש ברוך הוא רמ"ח מצות עשה ושמ"ה ל'א תעשה, והם מחלקים גם כן על האיברים, דיש מצוה שתלויה ביד ויש מצוה שתלויה ברגל וכן שאר כל איברים ...</p> <p>וכשהאדם מקיים בעולם הזה איזה מצוה באיזה איבר, שורה לעתיד לבוא אור ה' על אותו איבר,</p> <p>... נמצא דכשהאדם מקיים הרמ"ח עשין, אז הוא האדם השלם המקדש לה' בכל איבריו...</p> <p>וכשהאדם זהיר מלעבר על הלאוין שבתורה, הוא ממשיך אור הקדשה על גידי נפשו</p>
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[source 15]

<p>'Reward' in the world to come is [a result] of the actions of people themselves. After the soul separates from the body, it rises to delight and be satiated in the flashes of light and powers and holy worlds that were added and expanded by its good deeds</p>	<p>זהו ענין שכר העה"ב שהוא מעשי ידי האדם עצמו. שאחר פרידת נפשו מהגוף. הוא העולה להתעדן ולהשביע נפשו בצחצחות האורות והכחות והעולמות הקדושים שנתוספו ונתרבו ממעשיו הטובים. אבל האמת שהעה"ב הוא הוא מעשה ידי האדם עצמו שהרחיב והוסיף והתקין חלק לעצמו במעשיו....</p>
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³⁹ In the introduction to his Shmiras HaLoshon

⁴⁰ Sha'ar 1 Chapter 12

...

The truth is that the World to Come is the creation of a person himself, that he expands and prepares his own portion in the World to Come
Nefesh HaChaim⁴⁰

Judaism 101

Shabbat: The Day of Rest

Source Booklet

Judaism 101: Shabbat

Leaving the gloomy theatre, the littered coffee cups, the jumbled scarred-up scripts, the haggard actors, the shouting stagehands, the bedeviled director, the knuckle-gnawing producer, the clattering typewriter, and the dense tobacco smoke and backstage dust, I have come home. We have sat down to a splendid dinner, at a table graced with flowers and the old Sabbath symbols: the burning candles, the twisted loaves, the stuffed fish, and my grandfather's silver goblet brimming with wine. I have blessed my children with the ancient blessing; we have sung the pleasantly syncopated Sabbath table hymns. The talk has little to do with tottering ruins. My wife and I have caught up with our week's conversation. The children, knowing that the Sabbath is the occasion for asking questions, have asked them; the Bible, the encyclopedia, the atlas have piled up on the table. We talk of Judaism, and there are the usual impossible children's queries about God, which my wife and I field clumsily but as well as we can.

Saturday has passed in much the same manner. The children are at home in the synagogue, and like it. They like even more the assured presence of their parents. On the Sabbath we are always there, and they know it. It is their day. It is my day, too. The telephone is silent. I can think, read, study, walk, or do nothing. It is an oasis...

- From Herman Wouk's [This Is My God](#)

A Special Day

[source 1]

<i>The [Roman] Caesar once asked Rabbi Yehoshua ben Chananya why it is that the food [the Jews eat] on Shabbat has such an enticing aroma?</i>	א"ל קיסר לרבי יהושע בן חנניא מפני מה תבשיל של שבת ריחו נודף
<i>Rabbi Yehoshua said [back] to him,</i>	אמר לו תבלין אחד יש לנו ושבת שמו שאנו מטילין לתוכו וריחו נודף

⁴¹ Trac Shabbos 119a

<p>“There is one spice that we have, and its name is ‘Shabbat’, that we place in [the food] and it causes an enticing aroma”.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Talmud</i>⁴¹</p>	
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[source 2]

<p>Shabbat is one sixtieth of the World to Come</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Talmud</i>⁴²</p>	<p>שבת אחד מששים לעולם הבא</p>
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The Day of Rest

[source 3]

<p>7 Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.</p> <p>8 Six days shall you labor, and do all your work</p> <p>9 But the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God, in it you shall not do any manner of work, neither you nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your man-servant, nor your maid-servant, nor your cattle, nor the convert that is within your gates;</p> <p>10 for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested on the seventh day; wherefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day, and sanctified it.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Exodus Chapter 20: 8-11</p>	<p>ז זְכוֹר אֶת-יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת, לְקַדְּשׁוֹ</p> <p>ח שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים תַּעֲבֹד, וְעָשִׂיתָ כָּל-מְלֹאכֶתְךָ.</p> <p>ט וַיּוֹם, הַשְּׁבִיעִי--שַׁבָּת, לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ: לֹא-תַעֲשֶׂה כָל-מְלֹאכָה אֹתָהּ וּבִנְךָ וּבִתְךָ, עַבְדְּךָ וְאִמְתְּךָ וּבְהֵמָתְךָ, וְגֵרְךָ, אֲשֶׁר בְּשַׁעְרֶיךָ.</p> <p>י כִּי שֵׁשֶׁת-יָמִים עָשָׂה יְהוָה אֶת-הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת-הָאָרֶץ, אֶת-הַיָּם וְאֶת-כָּל-אֲשֶׁר-בָּם, וַיִּנַּח, בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי; עַל-כֵּן, בֵּרַךְ יְהוָה אֶת-יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת--וַיְקַדְּשֶׁהוּ.</p>
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[source 4]

<p>If the Creator had a body and form, He</p>	<p>ואילו היה היוצר גוף וגווייה--היה לו קץ ותכלית,</p>
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⁴² Brochos (57b)

<p>would have a limit and boundary, for it is impossible to have a body without a limit. And all that has a limit and boundary, its power is limited...</p> <p>G-d has no body or form...</p> <p>If so, what is this that is mentioned in the Torah: 'under His feet' (Ex. 24:10), 'written with the finger of G-d' (Ex. 31:18), 'the hand of G-d' (Ex. 9:3), 'the eyes of G-d' (Deut. 11:12), 'the ears of G-d' (Num. 11:11), etc?</p> <p>Everything is according to the understanding of human beings, who only know bodies, and the Torah spoke the language of people....everything is a metaphor...</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Maimonides⁴³</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">אין הקדוש ברוך הוא גוף וגווייה...</p> <p>אם כן מה הוא זה שנאמר בתורה "ותחת רגליו" (שמות כד,י), "כתובים באצבע אלוהים" (שמות לא,יח), "יד ה'" (שמות טג) "עיני ה'" (דברים יא,יב), "אוזני ה'" (במדבר יא,א), וכיוצא בדברים הללו--הכול לפי דעתן של בני אדם הוא, שאינן מכירין אלא הגופות; ודיברה תורה כלשון בני אדם. . . והכול משל.</p>
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[source 5]

<p><i>"And He rested on the 7th Day"</i></p> <p>– <u>so to speak</u>.</p> <p>[G-d] writes about Himself the notion of 'rest' so as to learn from it 'all the more so' to man whose work is done through toil and effort - That [we] should surely rest on Shabbat!</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Rashi ad loc</p>	<p>(יא) וינח ביום השביעי - <u>כביכול</u> הכתיב בעצמו מנוחה ללמד הימנו ק"ו לאדם שמלאכתו בעמל וביגיעה שיהא נוח בשבת</p>
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Thou Shalt Not⁴⁴

[source 6]

⁴³ Hilchos Yesodei HaTorah Chapter 1

⁴⁴ For more on the subject though, please see the study session entitled "Mitzvot, Actions that Build", which is part of the Judaism 101 series

<p>And He rested on the Seventh Day:</p> <p>There are 39 forbidden melachos, including some that have no exertion at all in doing them: like carrying a vessel from private to public area or vice-versa, or many other examples...</p> <p>A person will say, 'what exertion is there in this?...'</p> <p>Therefore the verse said, 'Six Days...and He rested'</p> <p>... go and understand the reason – ...</p> <p>It says [in Isaish 40] '[G-d] does not get tired or exerted....' [meaning that]</p> <p>... exertion is not the only factor [at all] rather anything that has the name 'melacha' on it...</p> <p>The Ohr HaChaim to Exodus 20:11</p>	<p>וינח ביום השביעי.</p> <p>...מ' מלאכות [ח"א] שיש בהם מלאכה שאין בה שום טורח כלל בעשייתה כמו שתאמר המוציא כלי מרשות היחיד לרשות הרבים או להפך וכדומה לזה רבים ...</p> <p>ויאמר אדם מה טורח יש בדבר זה...</p> <p>לזה אמר הכתוב כי ששת ימים וגו' וינח וגו' פירוש ודוק והשכיל בטעם ותדע כי אין הדבר לצד הטורח לבד... והרי מי שנאמר בו (ישעי' מ') לא ייעף ולא ייגע ...</p> <p>ולזה כל ששם מלאכה עליה..._</p>
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[source 7]

<p>The idea of Melacha in no way necessarily entails the idea of strenuous physical labor. It occurs nearly 200 times in the scriptures and in no single instance does the word itself indicate strenuous work, just as the slave work in Egypt is never called 'Melacha'.</p> <p>But everywhere the essential idea of the word Melacha seems to be ... not the greater or lesser amount of bodily fatigue but the intelligent carrying out of an intention.</p> <p>So that if we knew nothing of the oral traditional explanation, simply from the actual meaning of the word, and from the hundred-fold evidence of the way it is used in the Bible we should say that ל' א-תַעֲשֶׂה כָּל-מְלָאכָה means, "Thou shalt not perform any constructive work". Thou shalt not carry out thy intention on any thing, make no thing the bearer of thy purpose, thy ideas; in general, thou shalt not produce, not construct!</p> <p>The Pentateuch – Samson Raphael Hirsch⁴⁵</p>

⁴⁵ Judaica Press Gateshead 1982, translated from the original German by Isaac Levy. Pages 270-271

[source 8]

<p>The reason [behind the command to sanctify Shabbat] is that we remember it so that it is holy in our eyes, as it says, "if you proclaim the Shabbat 'a delight' ..."46.</p> <p>...we should see our rest to be based on the holiness of the day.</p> <p>[We are] to turn away from the [physical] pursuits that take up our minds and the silliness with [which we waste] our time.</p> <p>[Rather] we are to afford our spirits delight in the Ways of God, and to go to the sages and prophets to hear the Word of G-d.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Nachmanides⁴⁷</p>	<p>וטעם לקדשו - שיהא זכרוננו בו להיות קדוש בעינינו, כמו שאמר וקראת לשבת עונג לקדוש ה' מכובד (ישעיה נח יג) והטעם, שתהא השביתה בעינינו בעבור שהוא יום קדוש, להפנות בו מעסקי המחשבות והבלי הזמנים, ולתת בו עונג לנפשינו בדרכי ה', וללכת אל החכמים ואל הנביאים לשמוע דברי ה', כמו שנאמר (מ"ב ד כג) מדוע את הולכת אליו היום לא חדש ולא שבת, שהיה דרכם כן, וכך אמרו רז"ל (ר"ה טז) מכלל דבחדש ושבת בעי למיזל</p>
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[source 9]

<p>Are we not commanded to take delight on Shabbat with tasty foods, nice clothes, a bed that is made, and lit candles, as it is written, 'And you shall call Shabbat a delight'?</p> <p>What is [this] delight?</p> <p>It is delighting in G-d – that is to say regarding G-d – that this delight should come from spirituality alone and not from physical pleasures.</p> <p>Such is the power of the holiness of Shabbat that these too [the physical pleasures] are through it considered to be in the realm of spirituality!</p> <p>Rav Dessler⁴⁸</p>	<p>אך הלא נצטוונו לענג את השבת במאכלים ערבים, בבגדים נאים, במטה מוצעת ובנרות דולקים, וכן כתוב "וקראת לשבת עונג..." מאי עונג...?דהאי עונג על ה' – פ' אודות ה' – שהעונג יבוא מן הרוחניות לבד ולא מן התענוגים הגשמיים כה גדולה היא קדושת השבת עד שגם אלה מוכנסים על ידה לתחום הרוחניות</p>
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⁴⁶ Isaiah 58:13

⁴⁷ Nachmanides to Exodus 20:8

⁴⁸ Michtav Eliyahu vol. 2, page 14

The Philosophical Approach

[source 10]

<p>1. The goal of Creation was for G-d to give of His goodness to others.... Seeing as He alone is true Good...</p> <p>Therefore His wisdom decreed that the way of giving of [His] goodness would be the giving of opportunity for his Creations to get close to Him, as much as they can, so that the perfect completion that they could not achieve on their own...they will achieve as much as possible through their closeness to Him</p> <p>2...In order for this good to be complete, the one who enjoys it should 'own' it.</p> <p>To explain: Whoever acquires this good for themselves ... this is somewhat similar – as much as possible – to G-d's completeness, for His completeness is intrinsic to Him, not accidental, and although it is impossible for our completeness to be [like G-d's], it can be somewhat similar to His, at a minimum we need to <i>acquire</i> it for ourselves ... and so be fitting to get close to G-d and to enjoy His goodness</p> <p>Rabbi Moshe Chaim Lutzato⁴⁹</p>	<p>א. הנה התכלית בבריאה היה להטיב מטובו יתברך לזולתו... ובהיותו הוא לבדו יתברך הטוב האמיתי... על כן גזרה חכמתו שמציאות ההטבה האמיתית הזאת יהיה במה שיינתן מקום לברואים לשיתדבקו בו יתברך, באותו השיעור שאפשר להם שיתדבקו.</p> <p>ואז נמצא שמה שמצד עצמם אי אפשר שיתוארו בשלמות כשלמותו יתברך, הנה מצד התדבקם בו, יגיע להם באותו השיעור שאפשר לתאר בשלמות ההוא.....</p> <p>ב...להיות הטוב שלם, ראוי שיהיה הנהנה בו בעל הטוב ההוא. פירוש: מי שיקנה הטוב בעצמו... ותראה שזה נקרא קצת התדמות, בשיעור שאפשר, אל שלמותו יתברך. כי הנה הוא יתברך שמו שלם בעצמו, ולא במקרה, ואולם זה אי אפשר שימצא בזולתו.. אך להתדמות לזה במקצת, צריך שלפחות יהיה הוא הקונה השלמות ... ותהיה ראוי לידבק בו וליהנות בטובו</p>
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[source 11]

<p>What is the definition of 'Work' that G-d does? ... the creation of [His] hidden-ness in order to allow free choice</p> <p>Rav Eliyahu Dessler⁵⁰</p>	<p>מהו גדר מלאכה עצל הקב"ה? ...בריאת ההסתר כדי לאפשר הבחירה</p>
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⁴⁹ Derech G-d Part I, Chapter 2 #1-2

Appendix

More on Shabbat and creation:

<p>That which we have learned, namely that the forbidden categories of creative work are forty minus one (i.e. 39), what does that correspond to? Said Rabbi Chanina to them (i.e. the questioners) they correspond to the activities in the construction of the Tabernacle</p> <p>- Shabbos 49b</p>	<p>הא דתנן אבות מלאכות ארבעים חסר אחת כנגד מי אמר להו ר' חנינא בר חמא כנגד עבודות המשכן</p>
<p>(9) 'The structure of the Tabernacle and the structure of its vessels' – It is known that the tabernacle and its vessels are physical forms through which to contemplate the more lofty concepts which they represent. Among the awesome concepts contained within them (i.e. the Tabernacle and its vessels) is that they are split into three general categories; namely Inside the curtain (i.e. the 'holy of holies'), outside the curtain – which is the 'Ohel Mo'ed' (the 'holy'), and finally the courtyard. These represent the 3 basic levels of existence (i.e. the physical/spiritual universe); namely the world of the angels, the world of the planets, and the lower world (i.e. our world)...</p> <p>- Rabbeinu Bachya Exodus 25:9</p>	<p>(ט) את תבנית המשכן ואת תבנית כל כליו - ידוע כי המשכן וכליו הכל ציורים גופניים להתבונן מהם ציורים עליונים שהם דוגמא להם, ומכלל העינים הנפלאים הנכללים בו הוא מה שתמצא המשכן על ג' חלקים, לפנים מהפרוכת חוץ לפרוכת שהוא אהל מועד חצר המשכן כנגד המציאות שנחלק לג' חלקים עולם המלאכים עולם הגלגלים עולם השפלים.</p>
<p>Rav Hamnuna said; Anyone who prays on the eve of Shabbat and pronounces [Kiddush that contains the words,] "And the [creation] was complete...", the Torah considers this individual as being a partner in Creation!</p>	<p>דאמר רב המנונא כל המתפלל בע"ש ואומר ויכולו מעלה עליו הכתוב כאילו נעשה שותף להקב"ה במעשה בראשית</p>

More on Shabbat and rest

For on [Shabbat] everything necessary to bring the goal to realization was already complete, and in completion there is rest

Seforno Exodus 20:11

שבו כבר נשלם כל הצריך להביא המכון אל תכלית, ובשלמות תהיה המנוחה

The Ten Commandments

The Ten Commandments:

- 1) I am the Lord Your G-d who took you out from Egypt.
- 2) You shall not recognize the gods of others in My presence.
- 3) You shall not take the name of the Lord your G-d in vain.
- 4) Remember the Sabbath day to make it holy.
- 5) Honor your father and your mother.
- 6) You shall not murder.
- 7) You shall not commit adultery
- 8) You shall not steal.
- 9) You shall not commit perjury.
- 10) You shall not covet.

Judaism 101

Chesed (Kindness)

Source Booklet

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Judaism 101: Chesed (Loving-Kindness)

There was a poor man who lived in the community of the sage, Mar Ukva. Mar Ukva would slip 4 zuz (a currency of the time) under this man's door every week. The man decided that he was going to discover who his anonymous benefactor was and waited in hiding to see who would come to his door. That day, Mar Ukva happened to be walking with his wife, and when they slipped the money under the door, they noticed the poor man trying to come toward them and meet them in person. In order to avoid embarrassing him, they ran away!

The poor man gave chase and so they turned down an alley looking for a place to hide. All they saw was a large oven, which was currently not in use. They both jumped in. The oven was still warm, though, and the heat was burning the bottom of Mar Ukva's feet. His wife was not in any pain, and told him to place his feet on hers. She saw that he was disturbed, for it seemed that G-d felt her merit was very great, for she did not suffer from the heat: 'Why,' he asked himself, 'am I not also worthy of not having to be pained by the heat of the oven floor? Have I sinned in some way?'

His wife, seeing his downtrodden face, said that he should not be disheartened. She explained that she had the special merit of not only giving charity to the poor, but actually feeding them food when they came to her door. Her giving immediately filled their needs and so she merited extra protection! - The Talmud⁵¹

⁵¹ Tractate Ksubos (67b)

Abraham and His Guests

[source 1]

(1) G-d appeared to him [Abraham] in the groves of Mamrei and he was sitting at the door of the tent in the heat of the day.

(2) He lifted his eyes and saw, and behold three men were standing near him. He saw [them], and ran from the door of the tent to greet them, and he bowed down to the earth.

(3) He said, "My Master, if I have found favor in Your eyes, please do not bypass your servant."

(4) "Let a bit of water be brought and wash your feet. Rest yourselves under the tree.

(5) I will get bread and you will sustain your hearts. Afterwards you will continue on your way, because it is for this reason that you have passed by your servant." They said, "Fine, do as you have said."

(6) Abraham hurried to Sarah's tent and said, "Hurry! [take] three measures of the finest flour; knead it and make cake-rolls."

(7) Abraham ran to the cattle, and took a tender, choice calf. He gave it to the lad, and hurried to prepare it.

(8) He took butter, milk, and the calf he had prepared, and set it before them. He stood over them under the tree, and they ate.

(א) וַיֵּרָא אֵלָיו יְדֹד בְּאֵלֵי נִי מִמְרָא וְהוּא יֹשֵׁב פֶּתַח הָאֹהֶל כְּחֹם הַיּוֹם:

(ב) וַיֵּשָׂא עֵינָיו וַיֵּרָא וְהִנֵּה שְׁלֹשָׁה אַנְשִׁים נֹצְבִים עָלָיו וַיֵּרָא וַיִּרְץ לִקְרֹאתָם מִפֶּתַח הָאֹהֶל וַיִּשְׁתַּחוּ אֲרָצָה:

(ג) וַיֹּאמֶר אֲדֹנָי אִם נָא מְצֹאתִי חֵן בְּעֵינֶיךָ אֵל נָא תַעֲבֹר מֵעַל עַבְדְּךָ:

(ד) יִקַּח נָא מֵעֵט מַיִם וְרַחֲצוּ רַגְלֵיכֶם וְהִשְׁעֲנוּ תַּחַת הָעֵץ:

(ה) וְאָקַחְהָ פֶתַח לֶחֶם וְסִעְדוּ לְבָבְכֶם אַחֵר תַּעֲבֹרוּ כִּי עַל כֵּן עֲבַרְתֶּם עַל עַבְדְּכֶם וַיֹּאמְרוּ כֵן תַּעֲשֶׂה כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבַּרְתָּ:

(ו) וַיִּמְהַר אַבְרָהָם הָאֵלֶּהָ אֶל שָׂרָה וַיֹּאמֶר מְהֵרָה שְׁלֹשׁ סָאִים קֶמַח סֵלֶת לּוֹשִׁי וְעֲשֵׂי עֲגוֹת:

(ז) וְאֵל הַבָּקָר כֵּץ אַבְרָהָם וַיִּקַּח בֶּן בָּקָר בֶּן יָטוֹב וַיִּתֵּן אֶל הַנֶּעֱר וַיִּמְהַר לַעֲשׂוֹת אֹתוֹ:

(ח) וַיִּקַּח חֲמָאָה וְחֵלֶב וּבֶן הַבָּקָר אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה וַיִּתֵּן לַפְּנֵיהֶם וְהוּא עֹמֵד עֲלֵיהֶם תַּחַת הָעֵץ וַיֹּאמְרוּ:

Genesis 18:1-8

[source 2]

<p>“And G-d appeared to him” –</p> <p>To visit the sick.</p> <p>Rabbi Hamma son of Chaninah said:</p> <p>It was the third day after his circumcision, and G-d was ‘checking’ on his welfare</p> <p>Rashi ⁵²</p>	<p>וירא אליו - לבקר את החולה (ב"מ פו)</p> <p>אמר רבי חמא בר חנינא</p> <p>יום שלישי למילתו היה ובא הקב"ה ושאל בשלמו:</p>
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[source 3]

<p>“In the heat of the day” –</p> <p>G-d made it extremely hot in order to prevent [Abraham] being disturbed by visitors</p> <p>When [G-d] saw that Abraham was troubled that he didn't have guests, He sent angels [to Abraham] in the guise of people</p> <p>ibid</p>	<p>כחום היום - (ב"מ פו) הוציא הקב"ה חמה מנרתיקה שלא להטריחו באורחים ולפי שראהו מצטער שלא היו אורחים באים הביא המלאכים עליו בדמות אנשים:</p>
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Abraham and Us

[source 4]

<p>For I have given him special attention⁵³ because he commands his children, and his household after him, and they will preserve the way of G-d, doing charity and justice, so that G-d will bring upon Abraham all that which He has spoken of him.</p> <p>Genesis (18:19)</p>	<p>יט כי ידעתיו, למען אשר יצוה את-בניו ואת-ביתו אחריו, ושמרו דרך יהוה, לעשות צדקה ומשפט—למען, הביא יהוה על-אברהם, את אשר-דבר, עליו.</p>
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[source 5]

<p>There are three distinctive signs of this [the Jewish] Nation.</p>	<p>שלשה סימנים יש באומה זו</p>
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⁵² ad loc / Talmud Baba Metziah 86

⁵³ literally, I have ‘known’ him. In the Hebrew, though, the sense is more intimate: ie I have become intertwined with him because...

They are merciful, bashful, and doers of Chesed! Yevamos 79a	הרחמנים והביישנים וגומלי חסדים
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The Depth of Chesed:

[source 6]

The world from its inception was only created through Chesed, as it says, "For I said, 'a world of Chesed shall be built...'" (Psalms 89). Avos D'Reb Nosson 4:5	העולם מתחלה לא נברא אלא בחסד שנאמר (תהלים פט) כי אמרתי עולם חסד יבנה
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[source 7]

The point of creation was for Him to give of His Goodness to another... Derech G-d Part I Chapter 2 #1	א. הנה התכלית בבריאה היה להטיב מטובו יתברך לזולתו...
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Torah or Chesed?

[source 8]

Simon the Just was one of the last remaining members of the Men of the Great Assembly. He used to say, "On three pillars the world stands; Torah, Divine Service, and acts of Chesed!" Avos 1:2	אב שמעון הצדיק היה משיירי אנשי כנסת הגדולה. הוא היה אומר, על שלושה דברים העולם עומד--על התורה, ועל העבודה, ועל גמילות החסדים
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[source 9]

You have been told what is good and what the Lord requires of you: to act justly, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God. Michah 6:8	גיד לך אדם מה טוב ומה יהי' ונה דורש ממך כי אם עשות משפט ואהבת חסד והצנע לקת עם-אל ה'ך:
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[source 10]

We must be careful about the commandment of charity, above all other positive commandments, that charity is the symbol of the righteous descendants of Abraham our Father, as it is said, 'For I have given him	א חייבין אנו להיזהר במצות צדקה, יתר מכל מצוות עשה--שהצדקה סימן לצדיקי זרע אברהם אבינו, שנאמר "כי ידעתיו, למען אשר יצווה...". (בראשית יח,י)
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special attention' ... Maimonides ⁵⁴	
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[source 11]

<p>These are things that have no established measure: Peah, Bikkurim, Reayon, the giving of Chesed, and the study of Torah.</p> <p>And these are the things that a person enjoys the interest in this world, and the principal remains in the World to Come:</p> <p>Honoring one's parents; the bestowing of Kindness; Creating peace between a person and his fellow; and <i>the study of Torah is equal to them all</i> The Mishna in Pe'ah 1:1</p>	<p>א, אלו דברים שאין להם שיעור--הפיאה, והביכורים, והריאיון, וגמילות חסדים, ותלמוד תורה. ואלו דברים שאדם אוכל מפירותיהן בעולם הזה, והקרן קיימת לו לעולם הבא-- כיבוד אב ואם, וגמילות חסדים, והבאת שלום בין אדם לחברו; ותלמוד תורה כנגד כולם</p>
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[source 12]

<p><i>Rav Avahu ... sent [someone] to check on his son, Rabbi Chanina, [who was supposed to be learning Torah] in Tiberius.</i></p> <p><i>He was told that [his son] was [extremely busy] performing acts of Chesed. [He was spending all his time digging graves.]</i></p> <p><i>Rav Avahu responded: "Is there a lack of graves [needed to be dug] in Caesaria⁵⁵ that I sent you to Tiberius?! The Sages in the upper level of the house of Arim decided that learning must be one's focus!"</i></p> <p><i>The other Sages around him comforted</i></p>	<p>ר' אבהו ... שלח לר' חנינה בריה מזכי בטיבריה שלחון ואמרון ליה גמל הוא חסד</p> <p>שלח כתב לליה המבלי אין קברין בקיסרין שלחתיך לטיבריא וכבר נמנו בעליית בית ארים סלוד התלמוד קודם למעשה</p> <p>רבנן דקיסרין אמרין הדא דאת אמר בשיש שם מי שיעשה אבל אם אין שם מי שיעשה המעשה קודם לתלמוד</p>
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⁵⁴ Matnos Anyim 10:1

⁵⁵ where they were from

⁵⁶ Chagiga 1:7

<p><i>him by noting that the idea that learning comes first assumes that someone else will take care of the needed Mitzvah.</i></p> <p><i>But if there is no one else [as was the case in Tiberius] then the deed comes before study [As such, Rabbi Chanina was in the right].</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Yerushalmi⁵⁶</p>	
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[source 13]

<p><i>If one has before him the choice of doing a Mitzva or learning Torah, if the Mitzva can be performed by others then the person should continue learning, otherwise they should do the Mitzva and then return to learning.</i></p>	<p>[ד] היה לפניו עשיית מצוה ותלמוד תורה--אם אפשר למצוה להיעשות על ידי אחרים, לא יפסיק תלמודו; ואם לאו, יעשה המצוה ויחזור לתורתו.</p>
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The Commandment(s) of Kindness

[source 14]

<p>You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall <i>love your neighbor as yourself</i>. I am the LORD. Leviticus 19:18</p>	<p>יח ל'א-תק'ם וְלֹא-תט'ר אֶת-בְּנֵי עַמְךָ, וְאֶהְבֶּתָּ לרַעֲךָ כְּמוֹךָ: אֲנִי, יְהוָה</p>
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[source 15]

<p>We were commanded to love each other as we love ourselves,</p> <p>and that my mercy and love for my brethren should be like my mercy and love of myself ...and anything he wants and anything I want for myself, I should want for him ...</p> <p>.... And this is what is said, 'And you</p>	<p>היא שצונו לאהוב קצתנו את קצתנו כמו שנהב עצמנו</p> <p>ושתהיה חמלתי ואהבתי לאחי כחמלתי ואהבתי לעצמי ... וכל מה שיהיה ברשותו או ירצה אותו וכל מה שארצה לעצמי ארצה לו כמוהו</p> <p>...והוא אמרו ית' ואהבת לרעך כמוך</p>
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shall love your neighbor as yourself Maimonides ⁵⁷	
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[source 16]

The LORD will establish you as a holy people unto Himself, as He has sworn unto you; if you will keep the commandments of the LORD your God, <u>and walk in His ways</u> . Deuteronomy 28:9	ט יְקִימְךָ יְהוָה לְעַם קְדוֹשׁ, כְּאִשֶּׁר נִשְׁבַּע- לְךָ: כִּי תִשְׁמֹר, אֶת-מִצְוֹת יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ, וְהִלַּכְתָּ בְּדַרְכָיו
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[source 17]

We were commanded to imitate G-d as much as we can, as it is said ' <u>and walk in His ways</u> .' Included in this is: Just as G-d is Gracious, so you should be gracious Just as G-d is Righteous, so you should be righteous Just as G-d is Giving, so you should be giving Also included is that we should be similar to Him in the good acts and character traits that He is described with... Maimonides ⁵⁸	מצוה ח - היא שצונו להדמות בו ית' לפי יכולתנו והוא אמרו והלכת בדרכיו וכבר כפל צווי זה ואמר ללכת בכל דרכיו ובא בפירוש זה מה הקדוש ברוך הוא נקרא רחום אף אתה היה רחום מה הקב"ה נקרא חנון אף אתה היה חנון מה הקב"ה נקרא צדיק אף אתה היה צדיק מה הקב"ה נקרא חסיד אף אתה היה חסיד ... ובא בפירוש גם כן שעלינו להדמות בפעולות הטובות והמדות החשובות שיתואר בהם האל ית'
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⁵⁷ Positive Commandment # 206

⁵⁸ Positive Commandment # 8

Judaism 101

Tefillah (Prayer)

Source Booklet

Judaism 101: Tefillah (Prayer)

Dateline: 1997. Psalms were being recited in synagogues around the world. Women had accepted the call to light Shabbat candles for the first time. Just before Shabbat, the hostage's mother, Esther Wachsman, made a dramatic and emotional appearance on Israeli television, pleading with the public to pray for her son Nachshon who had been kidnapped by Hamas. Earlier that day, the terrorists had released a video of Nachshon begging the government to relent to their demands.

The entire country spent Shabbat in tense apprehension, not knowing the fate of the hostage. When Shabbat was over we received the horrible news that Nachshon had been murdered during a rescue attempt by the IDF. The Wachsman family sat shiva, and thousands of Jews from all backgrounds flocked to their home in the Ramot section of Jerusalem.

The broken father barely answered the reporter's questions, until one correspondent had the audacity to ask, "Well, what happened to all our prayers?"

The room fell silent as all eyes fell on Yehudah Wachsman, who quietly replied: "All of my life I have been asking God for things, from health to spouse to job, and He always answered me positively. But it is a father's prerogative to say 'no' every so often. This time He said 'no' to our prayers."⁵⁹

I. Why Pray?

[source 1]

<p>[G-d] knows all and nothing is hidden from him</p> <p>Maimonides⁶⁰</p>	<p>הוא יודע הכול ואין דבר נעלם ממנו</p>
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[source 2]

⁵⁹Reprinted with permission from Aish.com article entitled "Lively Introduction to Prayer", By Rabbi Avi Geller

⁶⁰ Hilchot Yesodei HaTorah 2:12

<p>The goal of Creation was to bestow good ... to others....</p> <p>Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luttzato⁶¹</p>	<p>א. הנה התכלית בבריאה היה להטיב מטובו ... לזולתו...</p>
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[source 3]

<p>Every day will I bless Thee; and I will praise Thy name for ever and ever.</p> <p>Great is the LORD, and highly to be praised; and His greatness is unsearchable⁶²</p> <p>Psalms 145: 2-3</p>	<p>ב בְּכָל-יוֹם אֲבָרְכֶךָ ; וְאֶהְלֵלָה שְׁמֶךָ, לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד. ג גְּדוֹל יְהוָה וּמְהֻלָּל מְאֹד ; וְלִגְדֻלְתּוֹ, אֵין חֶקֶר</p>
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II. Islands of Spirituality

[source 4]

<p>... the time of prayer is <i>the most ideal time</i>, and other times are simply paths leading toward it</p> <p>To its arrival, one looks forward, because with it [the pray-er] becomes like spiritual beings and distances himself from lower beings...</p> <p>Behold the value of this to the soul is like the value of food for the body, for a person's prayer is good for his soul like food is good for a person's body</p> <p>And also the blessing of every prayer rests on a person until the next time of prayer, just like the power of a meal that one ate satiates one until the next meal, however the further away the time of prayer</p> <p>But at the time of prayer, a person purifies his soul from everything that</p>	<p>... שעת התפלה ... כגרעין הזמן ופריו ושאר השעות תהיינה לו כדרכים המוליכות אל שעה ז שלבואה הוא מצפה כי על ידה הוא מדמה אל העצמים הרוחניים ומתרחק מן הבהמיים ...</p> <p>והנה ערך כל אלה לנפש הוא כערך המזון לגוף שכן תפלת האדם טובה לנפשו כשם שהמזון תועלת לגופו</p> <p>וכן ברכת כל תפלה שורה על האדם עד שעת תפלה שאחריה כשם שכח הסעדה שסעד מתקים בו עד שיסעד סעדת לילה אולם ככל אשר תתרחק שעת התפלה תלך הנפש הלך וקדור מטרדות העולם הבאות עליה ...</p> <p>אך בשעת התפלה מטהר האדם את נפשו מכל מה שעבר עליה בינתיים ומכין אותה לקראת העתיד</p>
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⁶¹ in Derech HaShem I 2:1

⁶² The verses above were taken from the 145th Psalm, repeated three times a day in regular daily prayer:

happened in between, and prepares himself for the future Kuzari ⁶³	
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[source 5]

<p>The more who gets involved in worldly matters, the more one is distanced from the Divine Light...</p> <p>Behold [G-d] prepared a solution for this, that a person presents himself and draws close and stands before Him, and from Him requests all his needs, and upon Him throws his burdens, and this should be the central and principal point of all his efforts, so that when he continues later in ...other means of human effort, he will not become confused and sunk in physicality and materialism, because he has already placed everything on Him</p> <p>It is a great kindness from Him to give man a place to get close to Him, even those his natural place is quite far from the light, and sunken in darkness. Rabbi Moshe Chaim Lutzatto⁶⁴</p>	<p>... כי הנה כפי מה שירבה להסתבך בעניני העולם, כך מתרחק מן האור העליון ומתחשך יותר. והנה הכין הבורא ית' תיקון לזה, והוא מה שיקדים האדם ויתקרב ויעמוד לפניו ית', וממנו ישאל כל צרכיו ועליו ישליך יהבו, ויהיה זה ראשית כללי ועיקרי לכל השתדלותו, עד שכאשר ימשך אחר כך בשאר דרכי ההשתדלות שהם דרכי ההשתדלות האנושי, לא יקרא שיסתבך וישתקע בגופניות וחומריות, כיון שכבר הקדים ותלה הכל בו ית'</p> <p>ג. והנה היה מחסדו ית' לתת לאדם מקום שיתקרב לו ית', אע"פ שכפי מצבו הטבעי נמצא רחוק מן האור ...</p>
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III Opening the Channels

[source 6]

<p>No shrub of the field was yet in the earth, and no herb of the field had yet sprung up; for the LORD God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was not a man to till the ground Genesis 2:5</p>	<p>וְכֹל שִׁיחַ הַשָּׂדֶה טָרָם יְהִי בְּאֶרֶץ וְכֹל עֵשֶׂב הַשָּׂדֶה טָרָם יִצְמַח כִּי לֹא הִמְטִיר יְדֹוֹ אֶל הָאֲדָמָה: עַל הָאֶרֶץ וְאָדָם אֵין לְעַבֵּד אֶת הָאֲדָמָה:</p>
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[source 7]

<p>Why did it not rain? Because there was no man to work the land, and no one to</p>	<p>...ומה טעם לא המטיר לפי שאדם אין לעבוד את האדמה ואין מכיר בטובתן של גשמים</p>
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⁶³ 3:5

⁶⁴ Derech Hashem IV:5:2-3

recognize the goodness of rains	
When man came and recognized that they were necessary for the world, he prayed for them, and the rains came, and the trees and grasses sprouted	וכשבא אדם וידע שהם צורך לעולם התפלל עליהם וירדו וצמחו האילנות והדשאים:
Rashi Gen 2:5	

[source 8]

<p>The matter of prayer is, that the Highest wisdom arranged that in order for created beings to receive from G-d, they need to awaken to Him and approach Him, and beseech Him. And according to their awakening to Him, so too will [His goodness] flow to them.</p> <p>And G-d wants that his creatures enjoy His goodness at all times, and so prepared for them this worship every day, that through it will flow His abundance, success and blessing, according to what they need in their situation in this world</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Derech Hashem⁶⁵</p>	<p>א. ענין התפילה הוא, כי הנה מן הסדרים שסידרה החכמה העליונה הוא, שלהיות הנבראים מקבלים שפע ממנו ית', צריך שיתעוררו הם אליו ויתקרבו לו ויבקשו פניו, וכפי התעוררותם לו כן ימשך אליהם שפע, ואם לא יתעוררו לא ימשך להם. והנה האדון ב"ה חפץ ורוצה שתרבה טובת בראיו בכל זמניהם, והכין להם עבודה זו דבר יום ביומו, שעל ידה ימשך להם שפע ההצלחה והברכה כפי מה שהם צריכים לפי מצבם זה בזה העולם:</p>
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[source 9]

<p>The Master of all, Who created them, wants what is best for them, and guided them in His precious commandments that they should gain merit, and He also informed them and opened for them an opening whereby they could attain everything they wanted for the good - that they ask from Him, Who can fill every need.</p> <p>Aside from informing them of this opening, He commanded them that they should use it, and should always request of Him their needs and wants, and aside from getting our hearts'</p>	<p>ואדון הכל שבראם חפץ בטובתם והדריכם והצליחם במצוותיו היקרות שיזכו בהן, והודיעם גם כן ופתח להם פתח באשר ישיגו כל משאלותיהם לטוב, והוא שיבקשו ממנו ברוך הוא אשר בידו ההסתפקות והיכולת כל חסרונו, כי הוא יענה את השמים לכל אשר יקראוהו באמת:</p> <p>ומלבד ההודעה להם בזאת המדה ציום שישתמשו בה ויבקשו ממנו תמיד כל צרכיהם וכל חפצת לבם, ומלבד השגת חפצי לבנו יש לנו זכות בדבר בהתעורר רוחנו וקבענו כל מחשבתנו כי הוא האדון הטוב והמטיב לנו, וכי עיניו פקוחות על כל דרכינו</p> <p>ובכל עת ובכל רגע ישמע זעקתנו אליו לא ינום</p>
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⁶⁵ IV Ch. 5 #1

⁶⁶ Commandment #433

<p>desires, we also benefit [from prayer] in that we awaken our spirits and focus our thoughts that He is the Master of good, Who bestows good upon us, for His eyes are open on all our ways, and at all times He hears our calls....for there is no obstacle to Him in anything He wants...</p> <p>And in every time and moment He hears our calls to Him, for he Guardian of Israel neither slumbers not sleeps, and we believe in His Kingship and powers without any reservation, for there is no obstacle to anything He wants...</p> <p>Sefer HaChinuch⁶⁶</p>	
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The Lesson of the Snake

[source 10]

<p>And the LORD God said unto the serpent: 'Because you have done this, cursed are you from among all cattle, and from among all beasts of the field; upon your belly shall you go, and dust⁶⁷ shall you eat all the days of your life.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Genesis 3:14</p>	<p>יְדִי וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי הַיָּם אֶל-הַנָּחָשׁ, כִּי עָשִׂיתָ זֹאת, אָרוּר אַתָּה מִכָּל-הַבְּהֵמָה, וּמִכָּל חַיֵּי הַשָּׂדֶה; עַל-גֶּחַךְ נָךְ תֵּלֵךְ, וְעָפָר תֹּאכַל כָּל-יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ</p>
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[source 11]

Once there were two fathers. The first was angry with his son, gave him a \$1,000,000 check and told him: "Here, this is all you need. Now leave me alone and don't bother me!" The other father loves his son very much and wants to be close to him. He put the child on a regular allowance in order that the child constantly return to him, and thus enable a lasting bond to form.

⁶⁷ I.e. from the dust – any little animals or insects that are commonly and easily found there

Judaism 101

Holiness: A Jewish Perspective

Source Booklet

Judaism 101: Holiness

Webster's dictionary definition of Holy:

ho·ly

Pronunciation: 'hO-IE / Function: adjective

1 : exalted or worthy of complete devotion as one perfect in goodness and righteousness

2 : DIVINE <for the Lord our God is holy -- Psalms 99:9 (Authorized Version)>

3 : devoted entirely to the deity or the work of the deity <a holy temple>
<holy prophets>

4 a : having a divine quality <holy love> **b** : venerated as or as if sacred
<holy scripture> <a holy relic>

I. You Shall Be Holy!

[source 1]

Speak to the entire assembly of the children of Israel and say to them, "You shall be holy, for I, the Lord your G-d, am holy!"

Leviticus 19:2

דבר אל-כל-עדת בני-ישראל, ואמרת אלהם--
קדשים תהיו: כי קדוש, אני יהוה אלהיכם:

The broad approach

[source 2]

Behold there are positive and negative commandments in the Torah which do not refer to specific actions but rather to the entire body of Mitzvot (commandments).

It is as if it said, "Do all that I have commanded you to do, and refrain from doing all that I have forbidden"...

הנה יבואו בתורה צווין ואזהרות אינן בדבר רמוז אבל יכללו המצות כלם כאילו יאמר עשה כל מה שצויתך לעשות והזהר מכל מה שהזהרתך ממנו... קדושים תהיו... צווין לקיים כל התורה כאילו יאמר היה קדוש בעשותך כל מה שצויתך בו והזהר מכל מה שהזהרתך ממנו...

⁶⁸ Sefer HaMitzvot Sherashim, Shoresh 4. see below, note §5.

<p>[Such commandments as] <i>Be holy</i> is as a positive commandment... be holy in your doing all I have commanded you...</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Maimonides⁶⁸</p>	
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The specific approach

[source 3]

<p>"And sanctify yourselves and you shall become holy" – just as I am holy so too you shall be holy, just as I am separate so too you shall be separate.</p> <p>...Separation is mentioned throughout the Talmud. Those who possess [this trait] are called <i>Perushim</i> [Pharisees — i.e., Distant ones].</p> <p>The meaning thereof is as follows: The Torah has admonished us against licentious relations and forbidden foods, but has permitted sexual relations between man and wife, and the eating of meat and wine.</p> <p>If so, a man of desire could find room to be addicted to his... many wives and to be among drunkards (of wine) and the gluttons (of meat), and to speak freely in all manners of profanity, since this prohibition has is not mentioned in the Torah, and thus he will be a sordid person with the the Torah's license!</p> <p>Therefore, after having listed the matters that it prohibits altogether, Scripture follows with a general directive that we should be distant from excesses.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Nachmanides⁶⁹</p>	<p>והתקדשתם והייתם קדושים כי קדוש אני, כשם שאני קדוש כך אתם תהיו קדושים, כשם שאני פרוש כך אתם תהיו פרושים: ...הפרישות היא המוזכרת בכל מקום בתלמוד, שבעליה נקראים פרושים: והענין כי התורה הזהירה בעריות ובמאכלים האסורים והתירה הביאה איש באשתו ואכילת הבשר והיין, א"כ ימצא בעל התאוה מקום להיות שטוף בזמת... נשיו הרבות, ולהיות בסובאי יין בזוללי בשר למו, וידבר כרצונו בכל הנבלות, שלא הוזכר איסור זה בתורה, והנה יהיה נבל ברשות התורה: לפיכך בא הכתוב, אחרי שפרט האיסורים שאסר אותם לגמרי, וצוה בדבר כללי שנהיה פרושים מן המותרות...</p>
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⁶⁹ Ibid.

II. Abstinence From Worldly Pleasures?

[source 4]

<p>... a person who takes a vow to G-d in a manner of holiness is proper and praiseworthy, and on this person it is stated: "... he is holy unto G-d."⁷⁰</p> <p>And Scripture equates him with a prophet, as it states: "And I will raise prophets from among your sons and <i>Nazirim</i> from among your lads."⁷¹</p> <p>Maimonides (based on the Talmud)⁷²</p>	<p>...הנודר לה' דרך קדושה הרי זה נאה ומשובח ועל זה נאמר... קדש הוא לה' ושקלו הכתוב כנביא (שנאמר) ואקים מבניכם לנביאים ומבחורכם לנזירים:</p>
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[source 5]

<p>Rabbi Elazar HaKappar the Great says: Why does it say: "And he [the <i>Nazir</i>] will atone for his sin on his soul?"⁷³</p> <p>Upon what soul did he sin?</p> <p>But [his sin was] that he afflicted himself by [denying himself] wine. And if this [<i>Nazir</i>] who only afflicted himself by wine is called a sinner, all the more so one who afflicts himself by [denying himself] everything!</p> <p>Talmud⁷⁴</p>	<p>ר' אלעזר הקפר ברבי אומר מה ת"ל וכפר עליו מאשר חטא על הנפש</p> <p>וכי באיזו נפש חטא זה</p> <p>אלא שציער עצמו מן היין וק"ו ומה זה שלא ציער עצמו אלא מן היין נקרא חוטא המצער עצמו מכל דבר על אחת כמה וכמה:</p>
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[source 6]

<p>This is why the <i>Nazir</i> is called a sinner: Because if he was a pure, upright person, who maintained his affairs judiciously, he would not need to vow and become a <i>Nazir</i>, for who prevents him from acting with <i>perishus</i> and from</p>	<p>לכך נקרא הנזיר חוטא כי אילו היה איש תם וישר מכלכל דבריו במשפט לא היה צריך לנדור ולהזיר, כי מי יעכב על ידו להתנהג בפרישות ובהרחקת המותרות בלא נדר, ומדאצטריך להתקשר בנזירות זה יורה כי הוא יודע בעצמו שאין מעצור לרוחו ע"כ הוא קופץ ונשבע כנגד</p>
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⁷⁰ Numbers 6:7-8.

⁷¹ Amos 2:11.

⁷² *Yad HaChazakah, Hil. Nezirus* 10:15, based on the Talmud.

⁷³ Numbers 6:11.

⁷⁴ Bavli, *Taanis* 11a.

<p>distancing himself from excesses without a vow.</p> <p>But in binding himself with [a vow of] <i>Nazirus</i>, it is demonstrated that he knows himself, that he cannot restrain his spirit, and therefore he jumps and swears against the evil inclination, and thus causes himself anguish.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Kli Yakar⁷⁵</p>	<p>היצה"ר ובזה גרם לעצמו צער:</p>
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[source 7]

<p>Shmuel said: Anyone who is involved in fasting is called a sinner — [as we saw about a Nazir]</p> <p>And if this [<i>Nazir</i>] who only afflicted himself by wine is called a sinner, all the more so one who afflicts himself by [denying himself] everything!</p> <p>Rabbi Elazar says: [Anyone who is involved in fasting is called holy], as it is stated: "He shall be holy, growing wild the hair of his head."⁷⁶ And if this [<i>Nazir</i>] who only afflicted himself in one matter is called holy, all the more so one who afflicts himself by [denying himself] everything!...</p> <p>Reish Lakish said: He [who is involves in fasting is called pious...</p> <p>... Rabbi Yirmiyah son of Abba in the name of Reish Lakish said: A scholar is not permitted to be involved in fasting because he limits [his] Divine toil.</p> <p>Talmud⁷⁷</p>	<p>אמר שמואל כל היושב בתענית נקרא חוטא ...</p> <p>ומה זה שלא ציער עצמו אלא מן היין נקרא חוטא המצער עצמו מכל דבר ודבר על אחת כמה וכמה:</p> <p>רבי אלעזר אומר נקרא קדוש שנאמר קדוש יהיה גדל פרע שער ראשו ומה זה שלא ציער עצמו אלא מדבר אחד נקרא קדוש המצער עצמו מכל דבר על אחת כמה וכמה...</p> <p>ריש לקיש אמר נקרא חסיד...</p> <p>... רבי ירמיה בר אבא אמר ריש לקיש אין תלמיד חכם רשאי לישב בתענית מפני שממעט במלאכת שמים:</p>
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[source 8]

⁷⁵ To Numbers loc. cit.

⁷⁶ Numbers 6:5.

⁷⁷ *Taanis* 11a-b.

<p>[Said] Rabbi Chizkya (son of) Rabbi Kohen in the name of Rav:</p> <p>Eventually, a person will have to give an accounting [to G-d] for all that his eye beheld from which he did not eat.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Talmud Yerushalmi⁷⁸</p>	<p>רבי חזקיה ר' כהן בשם רב: עתיד אדם ליתן דין וחשבון על כל שראת עינו ולא אכל:</p>
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<p>[source 9]</p> <p>...In truth, all matters of this World have holiness, for they have been readied to increase holiness and are tools for holiness...</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Michtav Me'Eliyahu⁷⁹</p>	<p>...באמת כל עניני עוה"ז יש בהם קדושה שהרי מוכנים המה למען הרבות קדושה והם כלים לקדושה...</p>
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III. Isolation?

<p>[source 10]</p> <p><i>Rabbi Yossi ben (son of) Kisma said:</i></p> <p><i>One time I was walking along the way and a certain man met me. He greeted me and I returned the greeting.</i></p> <p><i>He said to me: 'Rabbi, where are you from?'</i></p> <p><i>I responded: 'I am from a large city of scholars and scribes.'</i></p> <p><i>He said to me: 'Rabbi, would you be willing to dwell among us in our place, and I will give you hundreds of thousands of gold coins, precious stones and pearls?' I said to him: 'Even if you would give me all the silver, gold, precious stones, and pearls in the world, I would not dwell anywhere other than a place of Torah.'</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Avos 6:9</p>	<p>(י) אָמַר רַבִּי יוֹסִי בֶן קִסְמָא:</p> <p>פַּעַם אַחַת הָיִיתִי מְהַלֵּךְ בַּדֶּרֶךְ וַפְגַּע בִּי אָדָם אֶחָד, וְנָתַן לִי שְׁלוֹם, וְהִחֲזַרְתִּי לוֹ שְׁלוֹם,</p> <p>אָמַר לִי, רַבִּי מֵאַיִזָּה מְקוֹם אַתָּה,</p> <p>אָמַרְתִּי לוֹ, מֵעִיר גְּדוֹלָה שֶׁל חֲכָמִים וְשָׁל סוֹפְרִים אֲנִי</p> <p>אָמַר לִי, רַבִּי רְצוֹנְךָ שֶׁתְּדוֹר עִמָּנוּ בְּמִקְוָמֵנוּ וְאֲנִי אֶתֵּן לְךָ אֶלֶף אֶלְפִים דִּנְרֵי זָהָב וְאַבְנִים טוֹבוֹת וּמְרַגְלִיּוֹת, אָמַרְתִּי לוֹ אִם אַתָּה נוֹתֵן לִי כָּל כֶּסֶף וְזָהָב וְאַבְנִים טוֹבוֹת וּמְרַגְלִיּוֹת שֶׁבְּעוֹלָם, אֵינִי דֹר אֶלָּא בְּמִקְוֹם תּוֹרָה</p>
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⁷⁸ End of Kiddushin; see *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch* 59:19. Talking about permitted things, of course!

⁷⁹ Vol. 1, p. 5.

[source 11]

<p>Part of the nature of man is to be pulled after the opinions and actions of his loved ones and friends, and to act in the customs of the people of his country.</p> <p>Therefore a person should befriend righteous people and always sit with the wise, in order to learn from their actions; and distance oneself from evil people going in the ways of darkness, in order not to learn from their actions.</p> <p>This is what [King] Solomon said, 'one who goes with the wise will get wise; one who befriends fools will become foolish' (Proverbs 13:20)...</p> <p>And so if he is in a place where the customs are evil and people are not living righteously, he should go to a place where people are righteous and act well.</p> <p>And if all the countries that he knows and has heard of act badly, like in our times, or he cannot go to a place where the customs are good...because of sickness – he should dwell alone...</p> <p>and if the people are evil and sinners and don't let him dwell in their place unless he mixes with them and acts in their evil ways, he should go out to caves and deserts rather than act like the sinners.... Maimonides⁸⁰</p>	<p>דרך ברייתו של אדם--להיות נמשך בדעותיו ובמעשיו אחר ריעיו וחבריו, ונוהג במנהג אנשי מדינתו. לפיכך צריך אדם להתחבר לצדיקים ולישב אצל החכמים תמיד, כדי שילמוד ממעשיהם; ויתרחק מן הרשעים ההולכים בחושך, כדי שלא ילמוד ממעשיהם. הוא ששלמה אומר, "הולך את חכמים, יחכם; ורועה כסילים, ירוע" (משלי יג,כ)... ב וכן אם היה במדינה שמנהגותיה רעים, ואין אנשיה הולכים בדרך ישרה--ילך למקום שאנשיו צדיקים, ונוהגים בדרך טובים. ואם היו כל המדינות שהוא יודען ושומע שמועתן נוהגים בדרך לא טובה, כמו זמננו זה, או שאינו יכול לילך למדינה שמנהגותיה טובים, מפני ... החולי--ישב לבדו יחידי... ואם היו רעים וחטאים, שאין מניחין אותו לישיב במדינה אלא אם כן נתערב עימם ונוהג במנהג הרע--יציא למערות ולחווים ולמדברות ואל ינהיג עצמו בדרך חטאים...</p>
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[source 12]

<p><i>...And I have placed you as a light onto the Nations, so that my Salvation reaches the ends of the Earth.</i> Isaiah 49:6</p>	<p>ונתתיך לאור גוים, להיות ישועתי עד-קצה הארץ.</p>
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⁸⁰Mishnah Torah, Hilchot Da'os 6:1

[source 13]

<p>Just as every nation has its own unique type of negativity, so does it have its own spark of holiness by means of which it is sustained. As the verse says, " And You give them all life" (Nechemia 9:6) For without this, they could not exist. This life force from G-d is certainly positive. The purpose of exile is for the Jew to absorb this positive aspect...and when they do, the good becomes a part of their essence.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Tzidkas HaTzadik⁸¹</p>	<p>כל אומה כמו שיש לה רע מיוחד כך יש לה ג"כ איזה ניצוץ קדוש מיוחד שממנה חיותה כטעם ואתה מחי' את כולם דלולי כן כלא הי'. וחיות דהש"י ודאי הוא דבר טוב וע"ז הוא הגלות לקלוט אותו דבר טוב לישראל. וכמ"ש בזוהר תרומה קנ"ב ב' דבגלות השפע הולך לאו"ה וישראל קולטין תמצית. ובודאי השפע מאת הש"י הולך למינו ולדבר טוב שנמצא בהם ומצד זה הוא השפע להם. וכאשר ישראל קולטים התמצית נתמצה לתוכם אותו דבר טוב.</p>
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III. Balanced Living

[source 14]

<p>A person should not [give away] all his property and one who does so goes against reason... this is not piety but silliness, for he loses all his money and requires charity.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Maimonides⁸²</p>	<p>לעולם לא יקדיש אדם... כל נכסיו... והעושה כן עובר על דעת... ואין זו חסידות אלא שטות שהרי הוא מאבד כל ממונו ויצטרך לבריות:</p>
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[source 15]

<p>[The laws of] Shabbos are pushed aside when life is threatened, as are all the other commandments in the Torah. Therefore a sick person whose life is in danger... it is a mitzvah to violate the Shabbos [to save him].</p> <p>And if the patient does not want [Shabbos to be violated], we force him in this. And it is a terrible sin for him to be a <i>Chassid Shoteh</i> who will not be healed on account of some prohibition...</p>	<p>דחוויה היא שבת אצל סכנת נפשות כמו שאר כל המצות שבתורה. לכן חולה שיש בו סכנה... מצוה לחלל עליו את השבת.</p> <p>ואם החולה אינו רוצה, כופין אותו על כך. ועון גדול הוא בידו להיות חסיד שוטה שלא להתרפאות בשביל איזה איסור...</p>
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⁸¹ (Rabbi Tzadok HaKohen of Lublin) #256

⁸² *Hilchos Arachin* 8:13.

[source 16]

Who is a *Chassid Shoteh*? One who sees a child drowning in a river and says: When I take off my *tefillin* I will save him; by the time he takes off his *tefillin*, his [the child's] soul expires.

Talmud Yerushalmi⁸⁴

אי זהו חסיד שוטה ראה תינוק מבעבע בנהר אמר לכשאחלוץ תפילי אצילנו עם כשהוא חולץ תפיליו הוציא זה את נפשו.

IV. Holiness as Devotion

Each of us ... should therefore constantly strive to devote all our physical and spiritual strengths to the greater good of society. In my opinion, this is the definition of the mitzvah to be holy... This mitzvah encompasses the entire foundation and purpose of our lives, i.e., that we constantly direct all our toil and effort toward the benefit of the greater society (לטובת הכלל) ... We then resemble *Hekdesh*, something uniquely designated for some lofty purpose.

When a person's pathways lead in the direction of constant efforts to devote his life to the good of our people, then all that he does, even for his own physical and mental health, falls under the heading of holiness. One's personal health one also benefits society, for that which benefits him then benefits those to whom he devotes himself as well ...

When Holiness is understood in this way, there is some comparison between G-d's holiness and ours. Just as G-d is constantly occupied with sustaining and benefiting others, we also occupy ourselves with the good of our people, not our own pleasure.

Rabbi Shimon Shkop⁸⁵⁸³ 92:1.⁸⁴ *Sotah* 3:4.⁸⁵ Introduction to *Shaarei Yoshel*; this explanation is somewhat based on word LeKadesh itself – it means to 'designate'.

Judaism 101
Recommended Reading

Complete Idiot's Guide to Understanding Judaism (Alpha) by: Benjamin Blech
An excellent intro to Jewish philosophy. It deals with all the major issues such as belief, free will, mitzvot, intellect and faith, etc.

Gateway to Judaism (Artscroll) by: Mordechai Becher
The What, How, and Why of Jewish Life

Jewish Matters (Targum/Feldheim) by: Doron Kornbluth
In this lightweight, pocket-size book, twenty-three Jewish leaders, thinkers, and educators offer their insights and knowledge on topics as varied as relationships, prayer, mysticism and happiness.

Permission to Believe (Targum/Feldheim) by: Lawrence Kelemen
Four rational approaches to G-d's existence.

The Everything Torah Book: (Adams) by Yaakov Menken
An introduction to the Torah and Jewish thought and practice.

Recommended Surfing

www.aish.com

www.chabad.org

www.ohr.edu

www.simpletoremember.com

www.torah.org