

What makes us Jewish?  
What revokes this status?  
What you must know.



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**Fundamentals**

## the 13 Principles

MAIMONIDES

### Principle I. To know the existence of the Creator

To believe in the existence of the Creator, and this Creator is perfect in all manner of existence. He is the cause of all existence. He causes them to exist and they exist only because of Him. And if you could contemplate a case, such that He was not to exist...then all things would cease to exist and there would remain nothing. And if you were

*(continued on next page)*

Are you  
Sure  
you are a  
Jew?  
Do You Know the Fundamentals?

**RABBI MOSHE BEN-CHAIM**

Do you think you're Jewish? Why do you think so: because your parents were Jewish? Is it that simple to be Jewish, or do we require correct ideas about Torah and God as well?

Being "Jewish" means that one lives by a core set of Torah truths - the Fundamentals of Judaism - apprehending these truths with one's mind, and not deviating at all. I say a "core set" is required, since deviation in non-central matters does not cancel one's status as a Jew. Of the latter, we would not say one who forgot to bless before eating a fruit, has denied a Fundamental truth concerning God and His will. But if someone assumes God is physical, or has parts, or that He is not just or He doesn't give prophecy to man, then one errs in the most central of areas, and such a thought reveals one as

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(13 Principles cont. from pg. 1)

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to contemplate a case, such that all things would cease to exist aside from the Creator, His existence would not cease. And He would lose nothing; and oneness and kingship is His alone. Hashem of strength is His name because He is sufficient with His own existence, and sufficient [is] just Him alone, and needs no other. And the existences of the angels, and the celestial bodies, and all that is in them and that which is below them...all need Him for their existence. And this is the first pillar and is attested to by the verse, "I am Hashem your God."

**Principle II. The unity of God**

Meaning to say to accept that this is the quintessential idea of Oneness. It is not like the oneness of a pair (i.e. pair of shoes - one group) and not one like a species. And not like man that has many individual (members) nor like a body that divides into many different parts until no end (every part being divisible). Rather, God is one and there is no other oneness like His. This is the second principle and is taught in what it says, "Hear Israel, Hashem is Our God, Hashem is one."

**Principle III. The denial of physicality in connection with God**

This is to accept that this Oneness that we have mentioned above (Principle II) is not a body and has no strength in the body, and has no shape or image or relationship to a body or parts thereof. This is why the Sages of blessed memory said with regards to heaven there is no sitting, nor standing, no awakens, nor tiredness. This is all to say that He does not partake of any physical actions or qualities. And if He were to be a body then He would be like any other body and would not be God. And all that is written in the holy books regarding descriptions of God, they are all anthropomorphic. Thus said our great Rabbis of blessed memory, "The Torah speaketh in man's language" (i.e. using human terms to offer some understanding). And the Rabbis have already spoken at length on this issue. This is the third pillar and is attested to by the verse, "For you saw no image" meaning that you did not see an image or any form when you stood at Sinai because as we have just said, He has no body, nor power of the body.

**Principle IV. God's Antiquity**

This is that God existed prior to everything, and exists after everything. This is proved many times throughout scripture and is attested to by the verse, "Meuna Elokei kedem."

**Principle V. That God, blessed be He is worthy that we serve Him, to glorify Him, to make known His greatness, and to do His commands**

But not to do this to those that are below Him in the

creation. Not to the angels or to the stars or the planets or anything else, for they are all created things in nature and in their functioning, there is no choice or judgment except by God Himself. Also it is not fitting to serve them as intermediaries to God. Only to God should you incline your thoughts and your actions. This is the fifth principle and it warns against idolatry and most of the Torah speaks out against this.

**Principle VI. Prophecy**

And this is that it is known to man that this (prophet) is a type of man who are created beings of great stature and perfection of the character traits. Who have tremendous knowledge until a different intelligence attaches to them when the intelligence of the person clings to the intelligence of God and it rests upon him. And these are the prophets; and this is prophecy; and the idea of it. The explanation of it is very long and the intention is not to bring a sign for every fundamental and to explain it all, encompassing of all knowledge (i.e. God's knowledge) but it is mentioned to us in a story form and all of the Torah attests to this.

**Principle VII. The prophetic capacity of Moses our Teacher, peace be upon him**

And this is that we accept that he was the father of all prophets that were before him and that will be after him. He was on a qualitatively different level than any other, and he is chosen from all other people before and after him of any that have any knowledge of God; for his was the greatest. And he, peace be upon him, rose to the levels of the angels. He was granted all areas of knowledge and prophecy and his physical attributes did not diminish. His knowledge was different and it is through this difference that it is ascribed to him that he spoke to God without any intermediary or angel.

My intention was to explain this puzzling concept and to open up the sealed areas in the Torah regarding the verses of "face to face" and other similar references, but its length would be tremendous and it would require numerous proofs from the Torah and other sources and encompass many areas. Even to write it the briefest of briefest it would require 100 pages, so I will save it and write it in another book. I will now return to the intent of this seventh fundamental that the prophecy of Moses our teacher, peace be upon him, was different from all others in 4 ways:

1) Regarding all other prophets, God spoke to them through intermediaries. Regarding Moses, it was without one, as it says, "face to face I spoke to him".

2) Regarding all other prophets, prophecy came to them at night while they were asleep in a dream as it says, "in a dream of the night" and other such references; or in the day but only after a deep sleep-like state came over them, and all their senses were

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shut off except their thoughts. Not so by Moses. Moses would receive a prophecy any time when he would stand between the two figures [fixed] on the ark, as God attests to it, "and I will make it known to you there" and "not so my servant Moses. Face to face I speak to him."

3) When a prophet would receive prophecy he would not be able to stand the intense effect and he would shake and not be able to stand, as it relates regarding Daniel in his encounter with the angel Gabriel. Regarding Moses, he did not suffer from this. As it says, "Face to face do I speak to him as a person speaks to his friend". And even though this is the greatest connection to God, still, he did not suffer.

4) All other prophets could not receive prophecy at their will, [but] only when God desired to tell them. Some would go days or months without prophecy. Even if they wanted or needed something, sometimes it would be days or months or years or even never that they would be told [a prophecy]. Some would have people play music to put them in a good mood such as Elisha. But Moses, peace be upon him, received prophecy whenever he wanted, as it says, "Stand here and listen to what God will tell you what to do" and "God said to Moses tell Aaron your brother that he can't come to the holy of holies at any time [he wants]". Our rabbis said, "Aaron was prohibited to come whenever he wanted, but not Moses.

#### **Principle VIII. That the Torah is from heaven [God]**

And this is that you believe that all of this Torah that was given by Moses our teacher, peace be upon him, that it is all from the mouth of God. Meaning that it was received by him entirely from God. And it is not known how Moses received it except by Moses himself, peace be upon him, that it came to him. That he was like a stenographer that you read to him and he writes all that is told to him: all the events and dates, the stories, and all the commandments. There is no difference between "And the sons of Cham were Kush, and Mitzraim, and his wife was Mehatbe'el" and "Timnah was his concubine" and "I am Hashem your God" and "Hear Israel [Hashem your God, Hashem is one]" for it was all given by God. And it is all Hashem's perfect Torah; pure, holy, and true. And he who says that these verses or stories, Moses made them up, he is a denier of our sages and prophets worse than all other types of deniers [form of heretic] for he thinks that what is in the Torah is from man's flawed heart and the questions and statements and the dates and stories are of no value for they are from Moses Rabbeinu, peace be upon him. And this area is that he believes the Torah is not from heaven. And on this our sages of blessed memory said, "he who believes that the Torah is from heaven except this verse that God did not say it but rather Moses himself did [he is a denier of all the Torah]." And this that God spoke this and that, each

and every statement in the Torah, is from God and it is full of wisdom (each statement) and benefit to those who understand them. And its depth of knowledge is greater than all of the land and wider than all the seas and a person can only go in the path of David, the anointed of the God of Jacob who prayed and said "Open my eyes so that I may glance upon the wonders of Your Torah" (Psalms 119). And similarly the explanation of the Torah was also received from God and this is what we use today to know the appearance and structure of the sukka and the lulav and the shofar, tzitzis, tefillin and their usage. And all this God said to Moses and Moses told to us. And he is trustworthy in his role as the messenger and the verse that teaches of this fundamental is what is written (Numbers 16) "And Moses said, with this shall you know that Hashem sent me to do all these actions (wonders) for they are not from my heart."

#### **Principle IX. The completeness of the Torah**

And this is that the Torah is from God and is not lacking. That to it you can't add or take away from. Not from the written Torah or from the oral Torah, as it says, "Do not add to it and do not take away from it." (Deut 3). And we already explained what needs to be explained about this fundamental at the beginning of this essay.

#### **Principle X. That God knows man's actions and does not remove His eye from them**

His knowledge is not like someone who says God abandoned the land but rather like it says (Jer. 32) "Great in council and mighty in deed, Your eyes are cognizant to all the ways of mankind." "And God saw for the evil of man on the land had grown greatly." (Gen. 6) And it says, "The disgust of Sodom and Amorrah is great" and this demonstrates the 10th principle.

#### **Principle XI. That God gives reward to he who does the commandments of the Torah and punishes those that transgress its admonishments and warnings**

And the great reward is the life of the world to come and the punishment is the cutting off of the soul [in the world to come]. And we already said regarding this topic what these are. And the verse that attests to this principle is (Exodus 32) "And now if You would but forgive their sins - and if not erase me from this book that You have written." And God answered him, "He who sinned against Me I will erase from My book." This is a proof that God knows the sinner and the fulfiller in order to mete out reward to one and punishment to the other.

#### **Principle XII. The era of the Messiah**

And this is to believe that in truth that he will come and that you should be waiting for him even though he delays in coming. And you should not calculate

times for him to come, or to look in the verses of Tanach to see when he should come. The sages say: The wisdom of those who calculate times [of his coming] is small and that you should believe that he will be greater and more honored than all of the kings of Israel since the beginning of time as it is prophesied by all the prophets from Moses our teacher, peace be upon him, until Malachi, peace be upon him. And he who doubts or diminishes the greatness of the Messiah is a denier in all the Torah for it testifies to the Messiah explicitly in the portion of Bilam and the portion of "You are gathered (towards the end of Deut)". And part of this principle that there is no king of Israel except from the house of David and from the seed of Solomon alone. And anyone who disputes this regarding this family is a denier of the name of God and in all the words of the prophets.

#### **Principle XIII. Resurrection of the dead**

And we have already explained it And when the person will believe all these fundamentals and his faith will be clear in them he enters into the nation of Israel and it is a mitzva to love him and to have mercy on him and to act to him according to all the ways in which God commanded us regarding loving your neighbor. And even if he did all of the sins in the Torah due to desire of the emotions, and from his physical aspect's conquering him, he will be punished for his sins, but he still has a share in the world to come and is among the sinners of Israel. However if he rejects one of these fundamentals he leaves the nation and is a denier of the fundamentals and is called a heretic, a denier, etc., and it is a mitzva to hate him and to destroy him (financially - not physically to kill him. And not to steal either). And regarding him it is said (Psalms 139) "Behold will not the enemy of God be my enemy?"

I have expounded at length many things and I have left the topic of my composition but I have done it for I saw a need in the dealings of the fundamentals of faith and I have gathered together many different and spread out areas Therefore know them and succeed in understanding them and review them many times and know them very well [i.e. not just memorization but to understand fully and to be able to support them and know their proofs]. Therefore if after one or ten times you think you have understood them, God knows that you are just involved in falsehood. Therefore do not read them quickly because I have not written them as it suddenly entered into my mind. But rather, after a deep and careful study of the whole area and after I have seen many clear and true ideas and I have seen what is proper to believe of them [as the fundamentals] and I have brought proofs and logical demonstrations for each and every one of them. May it be God's will that I have been correct that He helped me through this area on the good path and now I will return to my explanation of this chapter [in the Talmud]. ■

having no idea what God is, and can cancel one's share in the World to Come.

Let us review Maimonides' words (Laws of Idolatry, chap II)

*"Any Jewish heretic (apikores) is no longer Jewish in any measure, and is never received in his repentance, forever. And the heretics are those who go astray after their heart's thoughts in their foolish words that they state, until they violate the Torah's Fundamentals, despicably in spite, with an outstretched hand, and they claim that they are not sinning. It is forbidden to speak with them and to respond upon them with any response at all." (2:5)*

Maimonides makes it clear that one who violates the Torah Fundamentals assuming he is in line with Judaism is "no longer Jewish in any measure". It therefore behooves us all to make certain we understand the Fundamentals of Judaism. Maimonides also outlined our very Fundamentals, and added this at the closing of those 13 Principles:

*"Therefore know them [these 13 Principles] and succeed in understanding them and review them many times and know them very well. Therefore if after one or ten times you think you have understood them, God knows that you are just involved in falsehood. Therefore do not read them quickly because I have not written them as it suddenly entered into my mind. But rather, after a deep and careful study of the whole area and after I have seen many clear and true ideas and I have seen what is proper to believe of them [as the fundamentals] and I have brought proofs and logical demonstrations for each and every one of them."*

Maimonides states, "Therefore if after one or ten times you think you have understood them, God knows that you are just involved in falsehood." So we must not take this task lightly, since our Rabbis did not, and since these matters are of the greatest stature, and not easily comprehended. We must know our Fundamentals and not deny them, if we are to truly be considered Jewish.

We must all realize that our Judaism, our attachment to truth, to God, and our portion in the next world, are in the balance: if we know and understand our Fundamentals fully, then we are Jewish, and not heretics. It matters none if we are born to Jewish parents while deviating from Torah Fundamentals, for Korach, Dathan and Aviram, Doeg and many other Jews were great sinners.

And although born Jewish, this did not spare them great punishment. We have a treasured opportunity, while we are yet alive and can fulfill Torah Commandments, to seize and fulfill this command of Torah study par excellence: the Fundamentals top the list of Torah ideas which we must comprehend. They address our notion of God, and His relationship with mankind. If we live based on proven truths, then we earn a great Earthly existence permeated with the deep, unparalleled pleasure of learning; as well as eternal life. But if our ideas are false, regardless of how many other Jews duplicate those ideas, we tragically have but a simple Earthly existence met with friction and frustration since we deny reason, and we enjoy nothing further after we die. It is the greatest tragedy to forfeit our share in the World to Come, when with relatively brief time in study, we might retain this gift. The best thing any human can do for himself, is retain "himself"...I mean, retain one's soul. The worst thing we can do, is forfeit it.

Last week we reprinted the 13 Fundamentals, and we are doing so again this week, based on their essential study recommended by Maimonides, their compiler. But we must also understand them, and a good test of our adherence, is to learn if in everyday life, these Fundamentals are violated. In this manner, we may advise those in violation of their error, as well as teach others who are yet unaware.

Case and point: this week, we were asked at Mesora to promote an advertisement from an organization, which guarantees "salvation" if a person will pay \$400 to reproduce 12 volumes of a deceased Rabbi's writings. I responded, "Mesora will not run such ads, as your mission violates one of Judaism's Fundamentals, located in Maimonides' 13 Principles; not to seek an intermediary between oneself and God. (Principle V)" The organization responded as follows:

*"We are a known organization in Israel that prints the books of Rabbi XXXXX, who promised to be a Mailitz, Yosher [advocate before God in his death]. For whoever will help in the printing of his books, he will have a merit. It is a known 'segulah' [remedy] that for generations what was done for refuah (healing) etc. We are not trying to be an intermediary [between man and God]. Another person, Rabbi XXXXX wrote about this that it is a known remedy and many had a salvation. I mainly wrote to you because one is supposed to clean himself from a suspicion of wrong doing. I will be happy to reply to further questions. I suggest you read the article in the same site."*

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*"Any Jewish heretic (apikores) is no longer Jewish in any measure, and is never received in his repentance, forever. And the heretics are those who go astray after their heart's thoughts in their foolish words that they state, until they violate the Torah's Fundamentals, despicably in spite, with an outstretched hand, and they claim that they are not sinning. It is forbidden to speak with them and to respond upon them with any response at all."*

*(Maimonides' Laws of Idolatry, 2:5)*



This claim contradicts the Torah, as God endorsed Jacob's words by including them in our precious Torah, or book of truth.

**Reward and Punishment**

Now what does this Rabbi's theory say about God's justice? Reward and Punishment is one of the 13 Principles, another idea we must have perfectly clear, as it concerns our view of God's providence over mankind. God administers a reasonable system of justice. This too is based on Torah verses. But the concept of a dead advocate, who will generate salvation for a financier of his books, is against Reward and Punishment. I will explain.

In the Shema, God says only by observing the Torah Commandments, will we find success, and if we do not perform the commandments, we will receive punishments. Therefore, lucky charms, amulets, and these "segulas" are lies and denounced by God Himself. If one does not follow Torah, God says in His Shema that nothing can help him avoid God's punishments, nothing...including this deviant promise that book reprinting brings salvation. But if one does perform the Torah, then, as God said in the Shema, He alone will assist the person, and again, these amulets and false practices are obsolete. In God's system, the only system, man's merits or faults are the sole causes of his fate. Man's sins cause God to abandon him, regardless of how many books he finances; while merits cause God's love and providence, despite the fact that he never reprinted this Rabbi's books. God's system is perfectly righteous, while this Rabbi's system is flawed and denies God's words.

Well, I did read the article, and I will address one portion later in this article. But for now, the person who wrote this response contradicts himself: he says that reprinting books will entitle the financier to some intervention by the dead Rabbi; he will merit some "segula" or definite remedy. But then this person contradicts himself, saying the Rabbi is not an advocate. So which one is it: will or will not my financing of the book reproductions cause the dead Rabbi to talk to God for me? This person sits on both sides of the fence, and he does not even realize his contradiction. He also speaks of matters of which he has no knowledge, i.e., matters of the dead. This is problematic, as there exists no basis to suggest that the dead play this role before God. As the Talmud states, "no eye saw it [heaven]", that is, no one died and came back, in order that we might know what happens after death. Hence, this is entirely fabricated.

Furthermore, the Torah does not endorse such thinking: one who does not perfect himself, does not earn God's intervention, and no dead Rabbi can mitigate God's justice.

But the strongest question is this: why can't this

Rabbi be an advocate...for himself? Why does he need others to promote his books?! If he claims he will cause healing and salvation, what prohibits his own proliferation of his works... "himself"? The claim alone indicates the Rabbi is limited; as he requires others (the living) to promote his books. If he is so dependent, then he cannot be a guarantor for others! The very claim this organization makes is internally contradictory. Let us review the Torah on this Fundamental.

**Man is Incapable**

After Rachel did not conceive, she asked Jacob, "Give me children, and if not, I am considered dead. And Jacob became very angry with Rachel, and he said, 'Am I in God's place, that I have withheld you from having children?'" (Gen. 30:2,3) Jacob is emphatic and greatly disturbed, replying that Rachel made a grave error for considering Jacob capable of doing anything to grant her children. Jacob denies this ability belongs to anyone, except God. Yet, this Rabbi and organization "guarantee" that which someone greater – a prophet – stated he could not perform!

The claim that anyone who reprints copies receives Divine aid, without repentance, contradicts the Shema. It contradicts reason. And as Jacob instructed his wife Rachel (according to Rashi), one must perfect themselves to gain God's favor and Divine assistance. Any action unrelated to one's perfection cannot remove one's sins. Rashi states that Jacob said this to Rachel, "I have children, but it is you and not I who God prevented from having children." This sounds harsh and callous, but what Jacob was saying, was this: "Rachel, you are the one who has no child, and therefore, the problem keeping you barren is within you, and not in me. Therefore, reflect on your values, and find your flaw, and correct it." This is the sense of Jacob's words. Repentance is the cure, not a donation to reprint books.

The prophet Micha also teaches this:

*"Does God desire thousands of rams [sacrifices] or tens of thousands of streams of oil? Shall I give my firstborn son to atone for my sins, or the fruit of my belly to atone for*

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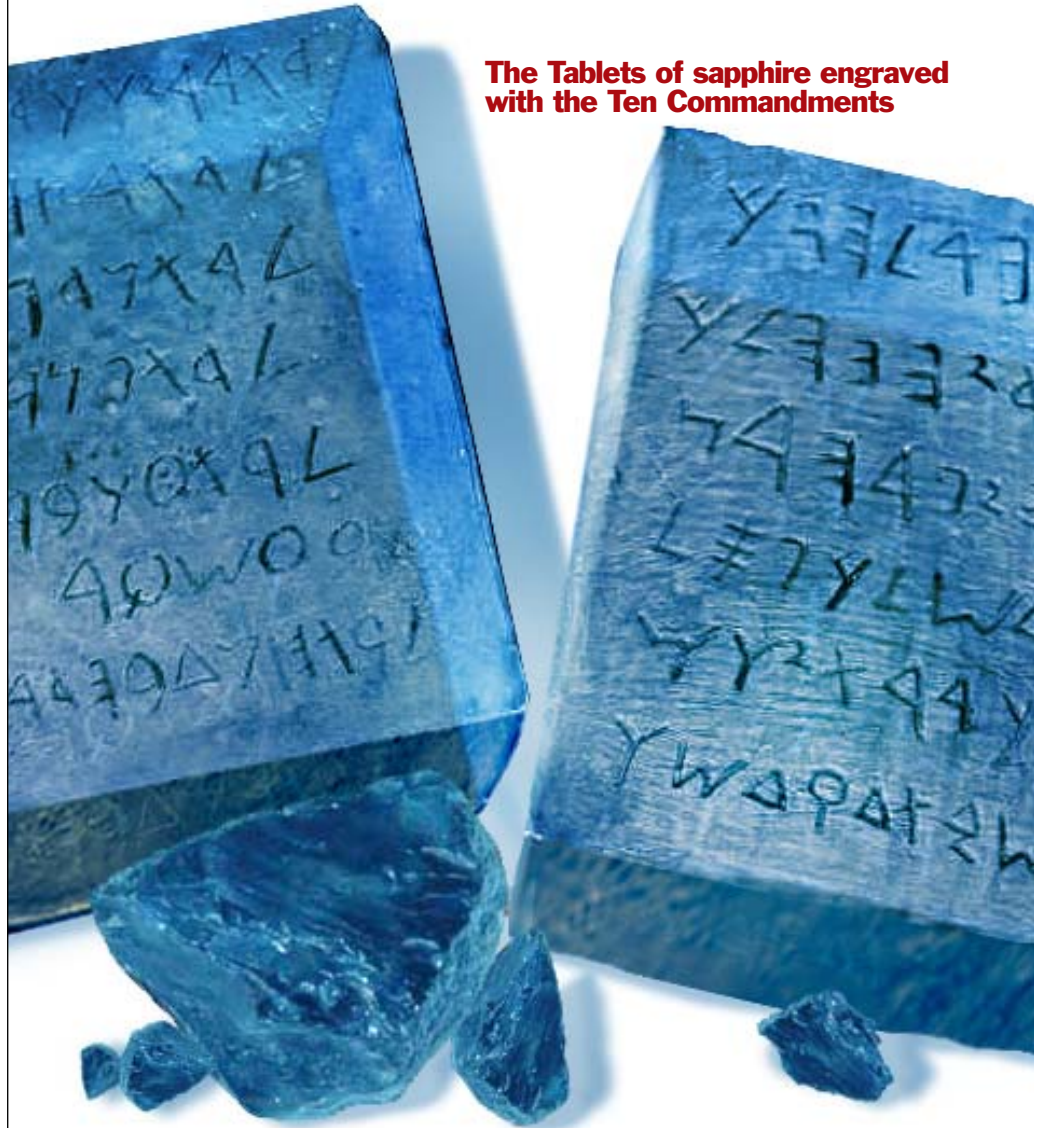
*the sins of my soul? It is told to you man, what is good, and what God requires from you: do justice and loving kindness and walk humbly before God.” (Micha, 6:7,8)*

Micha teaches this idea that thousands of actual commandments – sacrifices – can in no manner atone for one’s sins. One must be righteous and humble and repent. If commandments (sacrifices) cannot atone for one’s sins, certainly changing one’s mezuzah or financing book copies is no different, and cannot remove one’s sins.

This last idea is formulated so well by both Sforno and in Talmud Sotah, 21a. When Moses pleads before God to forgive the Jews’ sin of the Golden Calf, he says, “If You did not forgive them, erase me from Your book. And God said to Moses, ‘Whomever sinned to Me, I will blot out’.” (Exod. 32:32) Sforno comments: “Each man must bear punishment for his sins, and he will receive reward for his merits. For a Mitzvah cannot extinguish a sin, how much more will I not add your (Moses’) merits to the account of the Jews!” Sforno teaches that God will not look at man’s own good deeds, as a means of eliminating his sins; certainly God will not consider the good deeds of others. Although man might reproduce a Rabbi’s books, this in no manner may erase the sins of that man...each person is punished for his sins, and rewarded for his mitzvahs. But never has God wiped away a sin because man did some other good. The only method that man’s sins are erased, is repentance. This makes sense, for as long as man has not corrected a specific flaw, no change has occurred in his values entitling him to God’s providence. Sforno, the Talmud, Maimonides and all cases of God’s justice, thereby refute this false theory that reprinting books somehow entitles a person to God’s good graces.

This is a Fundamental of Judaism, and if we veer from the truth of God’s justice, then our idea of God is false, and we risk our status as Jews, and our share in the World to Come. These are the words of Maimonides.

Is it worth losing our lives here and in the next world, simply because we find it difficult to disagree with the masses? Are we that insecure, that we deny Torah fundamentals and reason because a recent movement of Rabbis follows nonsense? A person must ask himself if he is following such practices because so many others do; because Rabbis endorse it; or because it is written in books and therefore assumes an air of “authenticity”. But all these excuses cannot justify beliefs that might render us an apikores, a heretic. We must at the very least, have a deep concern for Maimonides’ powerful accusation of who are heretics, and no longer Jews with no share in the



**The Tablets of sapphire engraved with the Ten Commandments**

World to Come. Such a loss disturbs me more deeply than anything I can imagine.

#### **Deviation from Torah Law**

This organization attempts to win over donors, by promoting many stories of Rabbis performing miraculous feats. One such case is this:

*“A man once appeared at the Rav’s house late one night. His wife was having a baby, but her life was in extreme danger. The husband desperately pleaded with the Rav for help. The Rav dealt with this life-and-death situation a unique way. He took a Gemara and began studying a section with great concentration. When he came across a difficulty posed by Tosfos, he summoned his formidable capabilities and came up with an*

*ingenious resolution to the question. Then he offered a prayer to Hashem, to rescue the woman from the dangers of the childbirth she was going through, in the merit of the answer which he had labored to come up with.”*

This is practice of endangering a woman whose life is at risk, is most foolish, and prohibited. The Shulchan Aruch – the Jewish Law – teaches that one may even violate the Sabbath to save a life. Since life is so precious, we dare not engage in anything other than rushing someone to the hospital, and we must violate even the Sabbath to save another person. This story, that a Rabbi would start studying and rely on a miracle, goes against reason of how we treat physical ailments, and it violates “Ain Somchin al haNase”, “Do not rely

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## Fundamentals

## The Dead Sea Scrolls



*So, who do you follow to be considered a Jew: the 150-year-old European movement of men who err with magical amulets and deny Torah claiming inexplicable views, or the 3318-year-old Torah of Moses and Jacob, "prophets" with reasonable messages who spoke God's words and whom God endorsed?*

on a miracle" which is a Torah principle. Would this Rabbi study a Gemara if his arm were just amputated in combat? Even the prophet Samuel, when in actual discussion with God, concerning God's command that he locate a new king, said to God, "King Saul will hear [that I seek his replacement] and will kill me". Samuel teaches that even when on a direct mission from God, and even while talking with God, we do not rely on miracles or feel confident God will step in...for no man knows God's thoughts suggesting whether we truly deserve His providence at any given time. Samuel was far greater than this Rabbi, and he did not feel protected by God's miracles, or insulated from any assassination attempt by King Saul. This story is recorded for us to learn from, not that we might deny it, and fabricate notions in the name of Torah. Stories such as this Rabbi's claims destroy the Torah, as they mislead many Jews to abandon reason, and deny God's teachings.

We must not be impressed by the long list of cases posted on this organization's website claiming "miracle after miracle", when these miracles violate reason and Torah principles. Samuel was correct, but the Rabbis this website promotes were at fault. Perhaps as you read this, you wonder how so many Rabbis can be making a mistake. Perhaps their antiquity forces a sense of "truth" on your emotions, as you feel this has been accepted by people from Warsaw and other European towns as far back as the 1800s, which you blindly equate to the accuracy of Warsaw and the ghetto. But be sharp, and distinguish, as you are being duped by a trick of the emotions. Stories authored by "Rabbis from Warsaw" make them no truer. The age of a story or its place of origin lends no credibility...the facts alone must be what you consider to discern truth. Just as today, many Rabbis accept false notions that contradict Torah, why was yesteryear any different? People were fooled by fantastic stories then, just as is true today.

The reason so many Rabbis on their website are recorded as accepting fantastic stories, is quite simple: just as this Rabbi today promoting this website is led astray by these fantastic stories, the same applies for the past few hundred years, where generation after generation, they all sustained the same sentiment: "How can I deny what previous Rabbis accepted?" This absent-minded approach where an individual is afraid to question and argue on his predecessors, is a cycle wherein the Torah's principle are not considered, but Rabbis' legends obscure what our minds know to be true, and where Torah Fundamentals have not be studied for hundreds of years. Had these Rabbis studied the Torah properly, they would abandon such practices as they violate God's words. And since this lineage of people transmit-

ting hearsay with no critical thinking goes unopposed, it reaches today's generation, fooling even more people who ignore their minds, in favor of fairy tales.

It is also the fault of the masses, that you too do not study the Fundamentals, and therefore, you find such stories inspiring, instead of the truth, that they are heretical. Today's Rabbis must vocally denounce such Judaism, where legends of Rabbis performing miracles replace God's Torah accounts like Jacob and Rachel, Samuel, Micha, and all other prophets who God clearly favored as possessing the true philosophy.

**Who is a Jew?**

If you wish to be a Jew, you must study our Torah Fundamentals many times until they become clear in your mind. If you currently deny them, Maimonides states that this removes you from being Jewish. How do you know if you deny the Fundamentals? You can only determine this, by studying them. We have included the Fundamentals once again in this week's issue.

Today's Rabbis must stop proliferating fallacies of Rabbis' miraculous cures, stories unheard of in our Torah, and in direct violation of God's words. You must return your congregants and students to the Torah, teaching what is a Fundamental, and denouncing such stories, as God does not include these in His Torah. Otherwise, your silence, or worse, your support, will be a great sin, as to you alone do your flocks and students seek as their sole source for Torah truths. You have a great responsibility, and a great ability to influence people away from fallacy, and return them to truth. So many religious and non-religious Jews are tragically no longer Jewish, according to Maimonides.

**Make a Decision**

The bottom line is that there exists two opposing opinions: those of fairly recent "miracle-working" Rabbis (not prophets) who deny Fundamentals and forfeit your Jewish status, claiming inexplicable and unproven things; that book reprinting, red bendels and checking mezuzas can avert God's just punishments, even though people don't repent. And then we have Maimonides who is firmly based in the Torah's reasonable words; like Jacob the prophet who taught Rachel that God does not bring salvation without her repentance; and the Shema that teaches man receives Reward and Punishment solely based on his merits and sins, regardless of extraneous activities.

So, who do you follow to be considered a Jew: the 150-year-old European movement of men who err with magical amulets and deny Torah, or the 3318-year-old Torah of Moses and Jacob, "prophets" who spoke God's words and whom God endorsed? Choose one, you can't follow both. ■

# the Book of Job

RABBI ISRAEL CHAIT  
Transcribed by students

## PART VII GOOD & EVIL

Tzofar says as follows:

*“Know therefore that God has exacted from you less than what your sins deserved.” (11:6)*

This can be taken two ways: 1) that by God exacting less, God is acting mercifully and not exacting strict justice. He is acting for man's sake as opposed to what the plan of creation calls for. 2) (More in line with the tenor of his words) “Job, you really deserve nothing. You have no claim against God. Whatever God exacts is less than what you deserve because you have no claim against God.” However, if Tzofar were trying to demonstrate God's justice, why would he opine that “exacting less” is justice? It would show just the contrary: God did not display justice! Therefore we explain this verse to refer to Tzofar's commentary on Job's status, and not referring to how God works. Meaning Tzofar is condemning Job by saying he should have received more punishment - not that God did not fulfill His plan. Tzofar is telling Job, “you are judging this situation from your own view of justice. Therefore, any theory you suggest will minimize what you truly deserve.

In 15:1-7, Eliphaz says that if Job had not done away with fear of God, he would see matters clearly. (We see this is his argument from verse 4). He maintains that since Job did away with fear of God that is why he cannot see that he sinned. (This was Eliphaz's previous argument.) But if Job would fear God, he would understand where he sinned. Eliphaz's argument can be equated to someone who is told first by a child, and then by a great genius that he sinned. His response to the child would be one of amusement, whereas if a genius would tell him he sinned, he would search

diligently to detect his flaw. Here too, Eliphaz maintains that Job would see his error by doing a thorough investigation, had he maintained his fear of God.

“What do you know, that we know not? What do you understand, which is not in us?” (15: 9) Eliphaz means to say that Job cannot assume his experiences afford him any more knowledge than it affords him. For experiences of pain per say are not the source of knowledge. It is the fact that Job is having a certain amount of pain that affords knowledge, and not the experience. Therefore, Eliphaz is saying that Job could convey what he was experiencing so Eliphaz could be put on the same plane of knowledge as Job, and then work out the situation. Having seen Job and hearing his complaints, Eliphaz maintains that he is stubborn and does not have a disproof of God. “You have a sin and do not want to surrender to God”, said Eliphaz. From 14:26 and on, Eliphaz states his view that Job's sin is one that was not overt. So Job must search it out. And since this is what is required, and Job failed to do so, his suffering is understood.

*“With his wealth he goes against God” (14:27)*

But he won't be successful against God. Further in this chapter Eliphaz is describing the life of the “Rasha” – the evil person; viz.,

*“21; a dreadful sound is in his ears. 22; he is waited for by the sword. 23; the day of darkness is ready at hand;*

In verses 28-35 his whole thrust is that there must be a point where the Rasha breaks, and has a sudden downfall. Sure, the Rasha has a rise, but from his glorious heights, comes his great surge downwards. Why is this so?

The reason the Rasha is successful to begin with, is because at first, he abandons all peripheral distractions from his quest, and this is something at which he succeeds. But the motivation of the Rasha is something that cannot last. An example can be taken from Hitler, may his name and remembrance be wiped out: his flaw was his “superman” emotion. He would push aside fear in order to maintain this image. However, when he came to a situation where rationally he should retreat, he could not, because emotionally, this opposed his superman emotion. This is where lies the break and fall of the Rasha.

This is what Eliphaz is telling Job at the end of chapter 15: “Since you put all your energies into the wickedness, hence, you will suffer a great downfall because it is impossible for the wicked to prosper.” This second argument of Eliphaz is

directed squarely at the person at Job, whereas the first argument conveyed abstract ideas. In 15:25 Eliphaz is referring to the “Rasha” as one whose emotions do not allow him to see reality.

16:1-6: Job states that they cannot understand his pain. His friends' view that Job could possibly tell them everything so they may debate on equal footing with Job, is false. He then criticizes them for not strengthening him. He says that he is terrified of the physical problems, saying that they “filled him wrinkles.” Then he continues to talk about the psychological problems. In 16:10, “they have gaped...they have smitten...they have gathered against me.” Job means to say that a just person must have enemies. The reason being that people who are unjust are not going to be happy to hear his just words; they will rejoice when he falls. So the psychological pain is being the subject of mockery. Job was a counselor and advisor in a big city, and a person in his position will naturally have enemies. From 16:11 until the end of this chapter, Job seems to openly state that the only possibility in his situation is that God should admit that there are some imperfections. In 16:17 he says, “There is no injustice in my hands.” He means that he does not deserve his situation.

In chapter 17, Job states two thoughts: his three friends do not have wisdom and they are afraid to join hands with him. Job desires someone who will argue with him. In 17:8 he states what a wise man is, and he degrades the three of them. From 17:11 and on, he speaks about there being no possible hope for him in life. What Job means by calling the grave his father and the worm his mother and sister is that the grave is his new home.



(continued on next page)



*(Job continued from previous page)***Job****Chapter 18**

“Consider and afterwards we will speak.” Here, Bildad accuses Job of acting emotionally. “Shall the earth be forsaken?”... “The rock moved out of its place?” He means that Job is being self-centered, viz. “Will the world (earth & the rock) change for you?” Bildad is of a different view than Eliphaz. Eliphaz says that God metes out justice directly. Bildad maintains it is compensation. The question is how to understand the “wicked” described by Bildad?

The common denominator of the three is that God is just. But the purpose of Bildad’s monologue about the wicked was to tell Job to return before it is too late. If we look at Job’s answer, we can see how this view is supported. One more point in 18: it says he is cast in a net by his own feet (meaning that due to the acts of the Rasha, he falls and it says the “trap shall take him by the heel”. But this latter statement does not propose that it is the doing of the Rasha.) This theory of compensation (maintained by Bildad) works in two ways, while the Rasha creates his own downfall. This is under normal circumstances. However, sometimes the Rasha will be successful. In this case, God will knock him down and give him what he deserves. Bildad emphasizes the downfall of the Rasha so as to effectuate Job’s repentance.

**Chapter 19**

In verses 3 and 4, Job ridiculed his friends for not functioning objectively. They were supposed to accept Job’s facts as true, and help him if they could, with advice on how to address his predicament. But they did not accept Job’s words as truth, and distorted his claim of innocence, saying that he really sinned. They were changing the facts. That is why Job says, “and even if I did sin, it remains with me.” Meaning, he really did not sin, however, the friends should have accepted that as fact. They are not functioning as Job had expected. They could not listen to the possibility of Job’s question; they had to change the facts.

Job’s view is that nothing takes place in this world without it being the will of God.

(19:19) Job expresses the pain he suffers from his friends, who were part of his own clique, as they mocked him. He lost his friends. In 19:23 Job states that his words should be written down. Why? He is stating how sure he is of his objectivity.

**Chapter 20**

Tzofar presents an argument that the wicked suffer. Then in chapter 21 Job states that they do not. Is this an argument in facts? I truth, both are correct. Tzofar is right that the Rasha falls. But Job states that it is not due to God intervening, that the

Rasha falls. Job breaks down that part of the argument, which Tzofar wishes to use to show that there is a Divine system. Job maintains the fall of the Rasha to be his own undoing. But when the wicked make good in this life, where is the justice? Job refutes Tzofar’s argument. In 21:22 “Shall any teach God knowledge?” Job means to mock Tzofar because Tzofar is saying that the Rasha does not succeed, and there is a system of justice. Job retorts and says how can it be that God knows all (21:22) and yet, the righteous suffer? Hence, there must not be a system of providence.

Job accepted Hashgacha Klaliyot (general Providence) but not Hashgacha Pratiyot (Providence for individuals). Otherwise, there is a system and it is corrupt; since Job felt a providential system over individuals should have shielded him, he being wholly righteous. Either way, Tzofar is wrong according to Job’s view. Verse 22 is a rhetorical question: “Will one teach God knowledge?” Then Job states “And He, on high matters [alone] does He judge.” Meaning God is involved in the higher spheres, but not in everyday particulars. This is also what King David said, “What is man that You [God] shall be mindful of him?” God is too lofty to be involved in man’s affairs.

Job’s opinion of God not recognizing man is not at all incorrect. We see that King David maintained this view. If one does not question this, his ego is corrupt. This is not to say that there is no answer to this question, for we know that God takes notice of man, but a person should initially agree with King David’s sentiment.

Verses 23-26: The reason why Job carries the parallel here to post mortem is because he is searching for some justice...even after death. But he finds none, viz. “and they both lay down in the dust.” Job does not find a better situation for the wealthy after death. (The wealthy here is the Rasha and the poor is the righteous.) They are equal in life, and there is no difference after death. There are those who will tell you that certain righteous people are not eaten by the worms. This story is evidence to the emotion that Job is trying to counter. (The escape of being eaten by worms makes no sense in terms of a reward.)

Job maintains that if there are one or two incidents where a righteous person escapes, you cannot build your faith on this, because this also happens to the Rasha. This is the last part of his argument in verse 21. The reason why Job tells Tzofar to ask the wayfarers is because they can give an opinion concerning world events, and not merely in an isolated case. Certainly, one can find a case to support a purported faith system, but objectivity demands we examine the general rule. Job also exclaims, “who can tell the Rasha to his face his loss in life?” Meaning, how can you tell the Rasha he is not succeeding, when in fact he is?

Since he is successful, he is convinced that nothing wrong will happen. Even in religious circles, people see successful peers and say that God must be favoring his actions. But the simple breakdown to this argument is the successful, wicked individuals. One cannot suggest that God is looking down upon them with a smile. People feel that when they are successful at something, it is an omen that they are acting properly. Conversely, if one receives punishment, one thinks he ought to check his actions. Truthfully, one should examine his path in life rationally. One should not change a trait if it is proper, for the sake of changing one’s ways.

Another break down to this argument is to show not only how the wicked are saved, but how the righteous are punished: can one say that since Rabbi Yochanan lost ten sons, that he questioned his path in life? Job was saying to his friends that they are bent on an emotion that the righteous will always prosper. But this is not how it works in reality and the only reason why someone thinks this way, is due to an emotional wish for things to work this way. It is a superstition.

In verse 21:32 Job says that when a Rasha is dead, he will be in a nice grave and the “clods of the valley shall be sweet to him.” Job means, this so-called truth by which all swear (in the end the Rasha will get his punishment and he’ll be remembered for bad) is not true. But in Proverbs, King Solomon states, “The memory of the righteous will be a blessing, and the name of the wicked will rot.” This opposes Job’s opinion.

In truth, there are two types of Rasha: 1) Proverbs refers to a person who acts unjustly towards others and with others. So during this Rasha’s lifetime, his friends will praise what he is doing because they are gaining from him. But after he dies, those who review his actions will see he is a Rasha: the reason being they can no longer gain from him. And the opposite is the case with the righteous: during his life, some will hate him because they know he is doing right and they see the wrong in themselves. But when the righteous person dies and he no longer oppresses the emotions of others, they can look at his acts objectively and see he was just. In Job we discuss the second Rasha: 2) a person who does not outwardly espouse evil, but underneath he is evil and escapes unscathed. During his life he is not looked upon outwardly as a Rasha. So Job says, “if you tell me there is a system of justice, this Rasha should not get away with evil, and if he does, there is no system.” So this second Rasha never acquired a defamed reputation like the first, hence, no bad memories. But Job felt that there should be some evidence of downfall for this second type...but there is not. Every argument is present here!

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(Job continued from previous page)

## Job

## Chapter 22

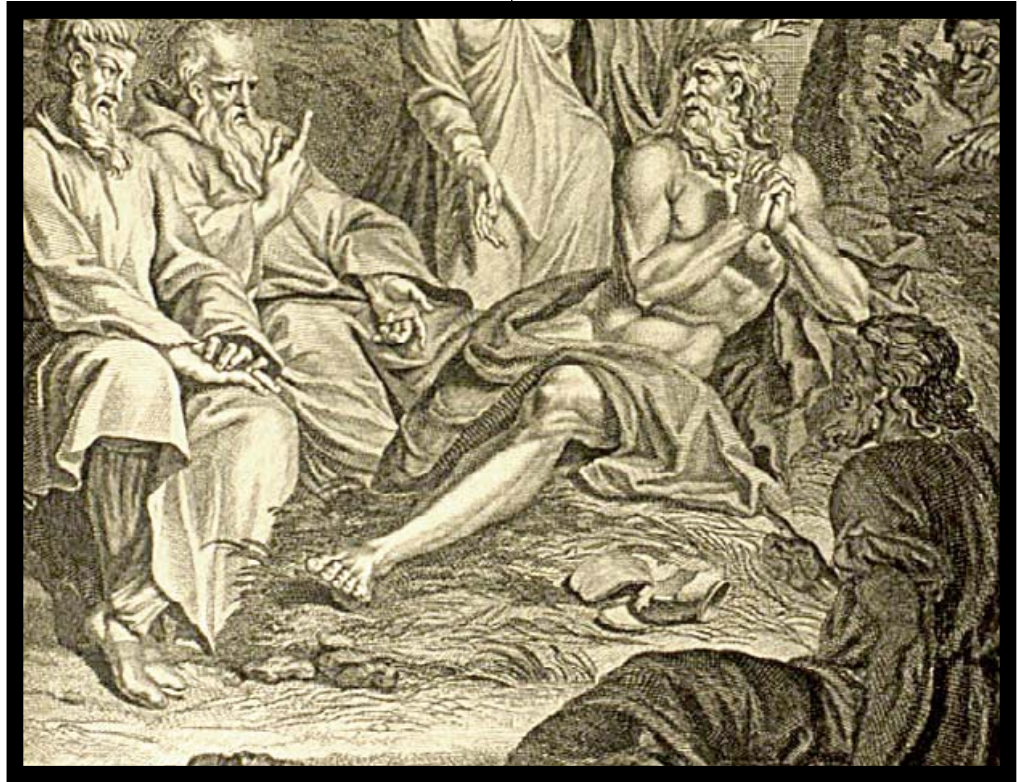
Eliphaz states all the sins of Job, while Job says he is innocent. We stated earlier that Job told Eliphaz that he did help the poor, and Eliphaz denied it. Eliphaz continues to deny Job's words. Furthermore, what does "will you benefit God with your righteousness" have to do with Eliphaz's argument? The reason for the first part of Eliphaz's argument is to accuse Job of operating under the emotion of trying to satisfy God with his actions. Eliphaz maintains, "Because you did not give a poor widow her needs, for this you are punished." Eliphaz maintains Job's sin to be that he did not do more, and he should have. He also feels that Job possessed this corrupt feeling that all the good he performed would build up a debt for God to reward him.

## Chapter 23

There is one thought Job is expressing until verse 7: that he is right. Verse 5: "I would know His words," meaning, I know God would agree with me. Verse 6: "He would listen to me." Job is stating that there is no way that he is wrong. Verse 7: "There the upright reason with Him, so I should be delivered from my Judge." Meaning, Job is akin to the upright. Verse 10: "When He has tried me, I shall come forth like gold." Job is convinced that he is perfectly guiltless. The question is in verse 5, how can Job say that he is going to understand everything that God says? Even a fool does not utter this. What Job means is that everyone must be judged according to his or her own level. Job states that he has thoroughly examined himself and has found no flaw. Since he found nothing lacking, he knows God cannot either. The reason why God cannot show Job wrong in this area is because the area we address is the 'extent of Job's knowledge'. Job is stating that in this area, he has as much knowledge as God, because this is an area, which Job experienced totally.

If Job were to say that he knows how God would answer him in biology or astronomy, then he would be making a mistake because there could be something, which Job wasn't witness to in its creation, and hence, he would be ignorant. However, regarding his life's experiences, Job states that he remembers everything and found no flaw.

Job's reasoning is sound: he feels that he has perceived the level required of himself during his life, and that he had reached that level. For if one says God demanded Job to reach an unattainable level of perfection, this would not be just. Job felt certain that he has done all that is possible – according to his make up – to search for any error. He has done all he can to live as best he could.



Now, since Job has this knowledge, he feels God cannot add anything in this area.

One might perhaps suggest, that only God knows when any person has reached his true potential, so Job's claim that he reached this potential is inaccurate. This may be answered from another example, when one learns Torah: one may feel tired after learning for an hour or two, but thinks, "Maybe I can go on a little longer?" So he does, and is even more exhausted. He feels that since God alone knows man's true limits, perhaps he should learn for yet another hour. Following this course, he will soon perish. For there is only so much that an organism may tolerate. We conclude: man must be aware of his limitations. This must be God's design. Job was in the right to assess himself, claiming with certainty that he did all he could. (This view of "always being to go a bit further" is the view belonging to Eliphaz.) From verse 8 until the end of this chapter, Job changes his argument from one of security in being right, to one of fear of God. Why did he change?

Job follows his argument to its logical conclusion: since he feels correct in his assessment, also convinced that God desires justice. Hence, God must be avoiding him, since justice would demand that Job's innocence release him from his travails. Since he is still tortured, it must be due to God avoiding him altogether. Otherwise, God should step in to rescue him. Job states this in verse 23:13, "But He is in one mind, and who can turn Him? And what His soul desires, even that He does".

Job was faced with two possible explanations; 1) that he was not just; 2) or he was in fact completely just, but God was not concerned with his specific justice. Meaning, "God has His own will - He does what He wills."

In 24:1, the word "ittim" (times) refers to "chance occurrences." Here, Job asks why chance occurrences are hidden from God. Job premises the following: God created the world and all existing causes. It follows that God created all chance occurrences, the very results of His creation. If this is so, how does He hide from me, "The righteous never witness His acts." With this, Job moves from the argument of "God's lack of concern with him", to, "All creation – including chance occurrences – should partake of God's justice."

In this entire chapter (24), Job describes the success of the wicked. But verse 20 presents a problem:

*"The womb shall forget him; the worm shall feed sweetly on him; he shall be no more remembered; and wickedness shall be broken as a tree."*

This verse implies that the wicked do in fact suffer, against Job's current tone. But in fact, this verse is no problem. For Job is stating that even in death, the wicked die suddenly, and with no pain. Again, the wicked escape mishap. This is a direct refutation of Bildad's argument of "retribution of the wicked." ■

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