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- G-d is the transcendent Creator and Guide of the universe.
- A robust case can be made for the existence of G-d, the truths of His Torah, and the centrality of the Torah Nation.
- Hashem (G-d) gave man the free will to choose good or bad, blessing or curse.
- By choosing good, man merits to receive the greatest good.

I. A Robust Case for Torah Judaism

ספר דברים פרק ד (לט) וַיֵּדַעַתְּ הַיּוֹם וְהַשַּׁבָּת אֶל לְבָבְךָ כִּי ה' הוּא הָאֱלֹקִים בְּשָׁמַיִם
מִמַּעַל וְעַל הָאָרֶץ מִתַּחַת אֵין עוֹד:

You shall **know** this day by engaging your mind that Hashem is G-d in the heavens above and on the earth below; there is no other.

Below we provide four categories of evidence for the truths of the Torah. Each would require book length treatment. Each follows from a study of the phenomena of nature and history. Below we merely present a very brief summary of the principles.

A. Plan-and-Purpose

When we look at nature we see a world buzzing with Plan and Purpose. Intelligent Design is implicated, and if there is Design, there is a Designer. Thus, a Being of enormous wisdom and power—transcending space and

time—is beyond a reasonable doubt the explanation for the existence of the cosmos and life within it. That Being is G-d.

The most influential intellectuals around the world are mostly atheistic materialists. They assume that G-d exists only in the minds of religious believers. They believe that we are a mere concatenation of chemicals and cosmic dust, living out our lives in a blind and purposeless universe that came into being for no reason. Judaism is a protest against such despair in the name of G-d and in the name of humanity.

See <https://toriah.org/docs> for answers to those who mistakenly believe that there are irreconcilable conflicts between Science and the Torah. The truth is that the more we investigate the phenomena of nature — the more we discover signs of unfathomable wisdom. For example, modern scientists are clueless about the origin of even the simplest life (e.g. bacteria). The more we discover the organized complexity in cellular machinery the more we see signs of unfathomable wisdom. At the same time, the hypothesis of chemical origins via unguided processes become vastly more untenable. Intelligent agency is deduced from what **now know**, not from what we do not know.

The more scientists investigate the laws of nature the more they see fine-tuning. Fine tuning refers to the ever-growing list of properties of the universe where slight changes to their values would prevent life as we know it. Adjust one, and life giving chemicals such as DNA would be unable to form and subsist. Adjust another, then stars and planets would not be able to exist. We have now discovered there should be no stars like the Sun, no light, no water, no world no matter, no space or time, and no life, would the constants of nature be different. What we do see is that constants of the laws of nature and fine tuned for life.

For years, leading scientists and science popularizers have mistakenly

insisted that humans are nothing special in the cosmic scheme of things. But, rather:

The cosmos is stunningly fit not just for cellular life, not just for carbon-based animal life, and not even just for air-breathing animals, but especially for bipedal, land-roving, technology-pursuing creatures of our general physiological design. In short, the cosmos is specifically fit for creatures like us. Contemporary science has revived humanity's special place in nature. The human person as revealed by modern science is no contingent assemblage of elements, an irrelevant afterthought of cosmic evolution. Rather, our destiny was inscribed in the light of stars and the properties of atoms since the beginning. Now we know that all nature sings the song of man. Our seeming exile from nature is over. We now know what the medieval scholars only believed, that the underlying rationality of nature is indeed 'manifest in human flesh.' And with this revelation the delusion of humankind's irrelevance on the cosmic stage has been revoked." [Michael Denton, *The Miracle of Man: The Fine Tuning of Nature for Human Existence*, 2022]

Once we know that there is a transcendental Creator and Guide to the universe, Divine revelation, moral freedom, prophecy and miracles — such as the Ten Plagues, the splitting of the red sea and the 40 years of Manna (from heaven) for food in a lifeless desert — become plausible. This prepares us for the next step.

B. Authentic National Revelation

- God spoke — face to face — with the whole Jewish nation at the mountain of Sinai (national revelation, Exodus 20:1-17).
- As He stated: I am the Lord your G-d who brought you out of Egypt [where we were enslaved and persecuted by the greatest power of

antiquity].

- Thou shall have no other gods before me [wether the abomination of paganism or any other foreign ideology].
- We were freed from Egypt miraculously (e.g. the Ten Plagues and the splitting of the Red sea].

The Exodus from Egypt and the Revelation at Sinai are central to Jewish belief as recorded in universally available documents such as the Tanach and Talmud. They confirm that G-d exists, the truths of the Torah and the centrality of the Torah Nation—the only nation of antiquity that has survived with its core beliefs and value system intact.

That Jews have had these beliefs for many centuries is a historical fact. In the modern era—Jews from communities that were once isolated from each other—have once again come into close contact with each other, whether from Eastern or Western Europe, North Africa, Yemen, Iraq or Iran. These communities all have the same fundamentals beliefs. It is true that each community has its own customs, but each of those communities is based on the same sacrosanct core Torah. So it is not as if there is a single line of “broken telephone” that contradicts these claims.

So, these centuries of belief of Jews is a historical fact. The following criteria provided a strong basis for accepting the core claim that what we have is an authentic tradition:

- (a) the tradition is accepted by a nation about its own history;
- (b) the tradition describes a **national experience** of a prior generation where the participants (the whole nation) were personally eye witnesses to the events;
- (c) members of the current generation are the descendants of the earlier generation;

- (d) the events described are important enough for the national ethos so that it would be expected to create a national memory.
- (e) there is a detailed mechanism to transmit the tradition from one generation to the next (such as the Tanach, the Talmud, the Pesach Haggada etc.).

Each of these criteria strengthen the authenticity of the claim making it very difficult for such a claim to be fabricated. In fact, very few true historical claims meet all these stringent conditions. **Empirically**, no such national tradition that meets these conditions across human history has been shown to be suspect.

Other religions such as Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism etc. rely on the belief in a single charismatic leader or have evolved over thousands of years through a blend of various mythic beliefs, pagan practices, and cultural influences. They do not satisfy the conditions needed for an authentic tradition.

רמב"ם איגרת תימן: לפיכך, אחינו כל ישראל הנפוצים בקצוות הארץ, חייבים אתם לחזק קצתכם לקצתכם, ולאמץ ולזרז הגדולים לקטנים, והיחידים להמון, ותחברו אומתכם על דבר אמת שלא ישתנה ולא יופר, ולהרים קולכם באמונה שלא תפול לעולם ולא תשחת, והוא להודיע לרבים שהקדוש ברוך הוא הוא אחד ולא כשאר האחדים, ולהודיע שמשה הוא נביאו ומדבר עמו, והוא אדון כל הנביאים, והוא שלם מכולם, והוא המשיג מהקדוש ברוך הוא מה שלא השיג אחד מכל הנביאים לא לפניו ולא לאחריו, ושספר תורה זה כולו "מבראשית" עד "לעיני כל ישראל" הוא דבור מאת הבורא יתברך למשה רבינו, שנאמר (במדבר י"ב ח'): "פה אל פה אדבר בו". ושאין להפר ולא לשנות ולא להוסיף ולא לגרוע לעולם, ושלא תבא מאת ה' תורה זולתה ולא ציווי ולא אזהרה. וכמו כן זכרו מעמד הר סיני שצונו הקדוש ברוך הוא לזכרו תמיד, וגם הזהירנו מלשכחו, וצונו ללמד אותו לבנינו כדי שיגדלו על תלמודו, הוא מה שנאמר (דברים ד' ט' - י'): "רק השמר לך ושמר נפשך מאד פן תשכח את הדברים אשר ראו עיניך ופן יסורו מלבבך כל ימי חיך והודעתם לבניך ולבני בניך יום אשר עמדת לפני ה' אלקיך בחרב". וראוי לכם, אחינו, שתגדלו בניכם על

המעמד ההוא הגדול, ותספרו בתוך קהל ועדה גדולתו והדורו שהוא עמוד שהאמונה סובבת עליו, והטענה המביאה לידי אמת, וגדלו המעמד ההוא על כל גדולה כמו שגדלו הקדוש ברוך הוא, שנאמר (דברים ד' ל"ב): "כי שאל נא לימים ראשונים אשר היו לפניך". ודעו אחינו בברית הזאת ובסברה הזאת, שהדבר הגדול הזה שנראה במציאות שהעיד עליו מבחר כל העדים שלא היה מקודם כמוהו וכן לא יהיה אחריו כמוהו, והוא שתשמע אומה אחת בכללה דבור הקדוש ברוך הוא ושתראה כבודו עין בעין, ודבר זה היה שתתחזק האמונה חזק שלא ישנהו משנה, ויגיע לנו על ידי האמת כדי להעמיד רגלינו לבל ימעדו אשורינו בעתות כאלו, כשיתחדש שום רוגז או שמד על יהודים חס וחלילה וכשתתגבר יד האנס, שכן כתוב (שמות כ' כ'): "כי לבעבור נסות אתכם בא האלקים ובעבור תהיה יראתו על פניכם לבלתי תחטאו", כלומר שזה הנגלה עליהם בענין זה, כדי שתעמדו בכל נסיון שיפגע בכם באחרית הימים, שלא יזוז לבבכם ולא תחטאו. ואתם, אחינו, היו על בריתכם קיימים ובדתכם מחזיקים ועל אמונתכם נוהגים ועומדים.

Rambam, Epistle to Yemen: It is imperative, my brothers, that you engage your children in this great Revelation at Mount Sinai. Proclaim at public gatherings its momentousness. For this event is the pivot of our religion, and the proof which demonstrates its veracity. Evaluate this phenomenon at its true importance for Scripture has pointed out its significance in the verse, "For ask now of the days past, which were before thee, since the day that God created man upon the earth, and from the one end of heaven unto the other, whether there hath been any such thing as this great thing is, or hath been heard like it?" (Deut. 4:32). Remember, my co-religionists, that this great, incomparable and unique historical event, is attested by the best of evidence. For never before or since, has a whole nation witnessed a revelation from G-d or beheld His splendour. The purpose of all this was to confirm us in the faith so that nothing can change it, and to reach a degree of certainty which will sustain us in these trying times.

C. Verified Predictions

There are many predictions in the Torah that have come true, but a famous one that is easy to check is the following (end of Deuteronomy): that we would be exiled, persecuted, small in number, the land would lie fallow. And yet—the Torah Nation would survive, and one day would return to the Land of Israel. An objective observer might well ask: what is the secret of this immortality?³ For, we are the only nation of antiquity still around to tell the tale.

In *The Meaning of History*, the Russian political philosopher Nikolai Berdyaev (1874 – 1948) wrote:

I remember how the materialist interpretation of history, when I attempted in my youth to verify it by applying it to the destinies of peoples, broke down in the case of the Jews, where destiny seemed absolutely inexplicable from the materialistic standpoint... Its survival is a mysterious and wonderful phenomenon demonstrating that the life of this people is governed by a special predetermination, transcending the processes of adaptation expounded by the materialistic interpretation of history. The survival of the Jews, their resistance to destruction, their endurance under absolutely peculiar conditions and the fateful role played by them in history: all these point to the particular and mysterious foundations of their destiny." [quoted in: *The Meaning of History*, Joe Kanofsky, Tradition Online, June 3, 2021.]

The survival of Israel is already miraculous given how it has been in exile and persecuted for thousands of years. It is told that King Louis XIV of France once asked Blaise Pascal, the renowned 17th century scientist and philosopher, to give him proof that there are miracles. Pascal answered: "Why, the Jews, your Majesty—the Jews.

This people [the Jews] are not eminent solely by their antiquity, but are

also singular by their duration, which has always continued from their origin till now. For, whereas the nations of Greece and of Italy, of Lacedaemon, of Athens and of Rome, and others who came long after, have long since perished, these ever remain, and in spite of the endeavours of many powerful kings who have a hundred times tried to destroy them, as their historians testify, and as it is easy to conjecture from the natural order of things during so long a space of years, they have nevertheless been preserved (and this preservation has been foretold); and extending from the earliest times to the latest, their history comprehends in its duration all our histories which it preceded by a long time." [Blaise Pascal, Pensées]

Blaise Pascal was a famous scientist and philosopher. He makes two points:

- The Jews are the only nation of antiquity to survive and flourish ("a formidable race") into the modern era despite hatred persecution and pogroms.
- This survival was predicted in the Torah.

Some people like Jews and some do not, but no thoughtful man can doubt the fact that they are beyond all question the most formidable and the most remarkable race which has ever appeared in the world."
[Winston Churchill, Illustrated Sunday Herald, 8 February, 1920.]

Only the Almighty can make such a prophetic prediction so many years ago; for, He alone has the power to guide and control history to ensure such a prediction comes true.

D. Morality

The prophetic books of the Tanach have been a great inspiration to mankind.¹ Even today, no human writer has been able to free himself from

the various forms of pagan idolatry or ideology of one kind or another.

The late historian Paul Johnson (who is not Jewish) described the nature of the Jewish contribution to mankind as follows:

No people has ever insisted more firmly than the Jews that history has a purpose and humanity a destiny. At a very early stage of their collective existence they believed they had detected a divine scheme for the human race, of which their own society was to be a pilot. They worked out their role in immense detail. They clung to it with heroic persistence in the face of savage suffering... The Jewish vision became the prototype for many similar grand designs for humanity; both divine and man-made. The Jews, therefore, stand right at the centre of the perennial attempt to give human life the dignity of a purpose. [A History of the Jews, 2013]

בראשית י"ח:י"ט וְה' אָמַר הַמַּכְסָּה אֲנִי מֵאַבְרָהָם אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי עֹשֶׂה: וְאַבְרָהָם הָיוּ יְהִיָּה
לְגֹי גָדוֹל וְעַצוֹם וְנִבְרָכֻבּוֹ כֹּל גּוֹי הָאָרֶץ: כִּי יִדְעֻתִּיו לְמַעַן אֲשֶׁר יֵצְאֶה אֶת-בָּנָיו וְאֶת-בֵּיתוֹ
אַחֲרָיו וְשִׁמְרוּ דְרָכָה ה' לַעֲשׂוֹת צְדָקָה וּמִשְׁפָּט לְמַעַן הָבִיא ה' עַל-אַבְרָהָם אֶת אֲשֶׁר-דִּבֶּר
עָלָיו:

Genesis 18:17-19: Now the Lord said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do [to the evil city of Sodom], since Abraham is to become a great and populous nation and all the nations of the earth will be blessed thorough him? For I have cherished him, because he will instruct his children and his posterity to keep the way of Lord by doing what is just and right, in order that the Lord may bring about for Abraham what has been promised him".

Resh Lakish said: Read not "and he [i.e. Abraham] called" but "and he made to call" [vayakri], thereby teaching that our father Abraham caused the name of the Holy One, blessed be He, to be uttered by the mouth of every passer-by. How was this? After travelers had eaten and drunk, they stood up to bless him; but, said he to them, "Did you eat of mine? You ate

of that which belongs to the G-d of the Universe. Thank, praise and bless Him who spoke and the world came into being." [Talmud, Sotah]

Abraham is associated, above all, with the attribute of chesed – acts of kindness to his fellow men. But Abraham also proclaimed the truth about God to a world in which the knowledge of that truth had been lost. Abraham considered this truth to be the most important thing that he could teach to anyone who enjoyed the warmth and hospitality of his home.

I will insist that the Hebrews have done more to civilize men than any other nation. If I were an atheist and believed in blind eternal fate, I should still believe that fate had ordained the Jews to be the most essential instrument for civilizing nations... I should believe that chance had ordered the Jews to preserve and propagate to all mankind the doctrine of a supreme, intelligent, wise, almighty Sovereign of the universe, which I believe to be the great essential principle of all morality, and consequently of all civilization. [US President John Adams, in a letter dated February 18, 1809, Letter to Dutch jurist Francis Adrian Van der Kemp (1783-1825) dated December 31, 1808]

The Hebrew Scriptures are unique in the ideal of pure monotheism. Only an absolute G-d can provide an absolute basis for morality (as in the categories of obligations in the Ten Commandments). No book of antiquity took so vehement a stand against immorality. No book of antiquity was as vehement on behalf of the widow, the orphan, the stranger or the slave. No book of antiquity imposed so many personal duties without benefit to the king or priesthood, including the duty of studying, teaching and living according to all the obligations of the Torah. No book of antiquity found fault so vehemently with its own protagonists. No other book of antiquity forbids its people to conquer neighbouring nations. No book of antiquity claims that its authenticity was demonstrated in the presence of millions of spectators. The

phenomenon of moral prophecy in Israel has no counterpart among the nations. It is evident that the prophets did not speak that which they themselves wished to say, but that which G-d commanded them to say.²

II. The Obligation to Substantiate our Emunah

The Existence of G-d: Every Jew must believe and know that there is an Eternal Prime Being (מצוי ראשון) Who brings into being all that exists. And that is G-d, may He be blessed.

רמב"ם: יסוד היסודות ועמוד החכמות לידע שיש שם מצוי ראשון. והוא ממציא כל נמצא. וכל הנמצאים משמים וארץ ומה שביניהם לא נמצאו אלא מאמתת המצא:

רמח"ל דרך ה': כל איש מישראל צריך שיאמין וידע שיש שם מצוי ראשון קדמון ונצחי והוא שהמציא וממציא כל מה שנמצא במציאות והוא האלוה ב"ה

Rambam, The Book of Knowledge: The foundation of all foundations and the pillar of wisdom is to **know** that there is a Primary Being who brings all existence into being (here and now).

All the entities in the heavens, the earth, and what is between them come into existence only from the Truth [the necessity] of His Being.

The command is "to know" G-d. Thus, one is obligated to develop one's knowledge and awareness of G-d, and to internalize that knowledge and make it part of his conscious awareness. The intellectual activity necessary for this process of internalization is an act which can be required of a person, each according to his intellectual potential.⁴

The knowledge of God's existence serves as the foundation for the entire Torah, because a man will not have faith in the Torah if he does not accept G-d's existence (Perush).

That is also the topic of Rav Moshe Chaim Luzzato's foundational first chapter in his work 'דרך ה', "The Way of G-d". At the end of that first chapter, he summarizes the six things we must know:

כל איש מישראל צריך שיאמין וידע שיש שם מצוי ראשון קדמון ונצחי והוא: מציאות ה' שהמציא וממציא כל מה שנמצא במציאות והוא האלוה ב"ה: נמצא כלל הידיעות שלימותו הכרח המצאו היותו בלתי נתלה והם: אמתת מציאותו ית' השרשיות האלה ו' בזולתו פשיטותו ויחודו:

The existence of G-d: Every person of Israel must believe and know that there is a preexisting, eternal First Being. And He brought into being, and brings into being, everything that exists. And that is G-d, may He be blessed. ...

It comes out that the sum of these root principles are six, and they are: The reality of His existence, may He be blessed; His perfection (**שלימותו**); the necessity of His existence; His being independent of anything besides Him; His simplicity; and His Unity.

Likewise, Rabbenu Bechaya, Duties of the Mind:

קפח ספר חובות הלבבות - השער הראשון - שער היחוד - פרק ג: אבל האם חייבים אנו לחקור על היהוד בדרך העיון או לאו. אמר: שכל מי שאפשר לו לחקור על ענין זה וכל הדומה לו מן המושכלות בדרך השיקול השכלי--- הרי זה חייב להקור על כך כפי השגתו וכח הבחנתו. וכבר אמרתי בהקדמת ספר זה דברים בחיוב דבר זה והכרחיותו מה שיש בו די. ומי שהתעלם מלחקור על בירורו ואמרתו הרי הוא נענש על התעלמו ממנו וכו' וכו' וכבר חייב אותנו הכתוב בכך באמרו "וידעת היום והשבות אל לבבך" (דברים ד.לט) והראיה, כי השבה אל-לב הכוונה בה הפעלת השכל, הוא מאמר הכתוב: "ולא ישיב אל לבו ולא דעת ולא תבונה" (ישעיה מד.יט) ואמר ההסיד ע"ה: "ואתה שלמה בני דע את אלקי אביך ועבדהו בלב שלם" (ד"ה א' כח.ט).

Duties of the Mind: Is it one's duty to investigate the subject of God's

unity intellectually?

I say anyone who is capable of investigating this and similar matters with his intellect—it is his duty to do so according to his intelligence and perception. I have already written in the introduction to this book sufficient arguments which demonstrate our obligation in this matter. Whoever neglects to investigate this subject is punished ...

The Torah has already obligated us as it is written: “know therefore today, and reflect in your heart, that the Lord is G-d in heaven above and on the earth beneath; there is no other” (Deut. 4:39). The proof that “reflect in your heart” refers to engaging your intellect [in intellectual investigation], is from the following verse says: “When no one reflects in his heart, then neither is there knowledge or understanding” (Isaiah 44:19). So too David urged his son: “And you, Solomon my son, know you the G-d of your father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing soul” (Chronicles 28:9).

1. The Yale University coat of arms has an open book and the words *Urim* and *Turim* inscribed upon it in Hebrew letters. Princeton's shield depicts an open Bible and a ribbon below the shield bears the University motto, DEI SUB NUMINE VIGET, or “Under God's power she flourishes.” It is often noted that the Bible has been purchased more often than any other book in history. ↩
2. See Rabbi Avigdor Miller, *Awake My Glory*, p97. Thus, Rav Samson Raphael Hirsch asks “is it is conceivable that the nations of the world appear to have learnt nothing from all this? Could they fail to recognize that the higher power preserving Israel throughout its experiences is the One Alone, and the loyalty to Him demonstrated by Israel is the task of all humanity?” This is a timeless message expressing the wonder of the

national Revelation at Sinai, the predictions Jewish Survival as the Torah Nation, and its Morality and Influence on the world. ↩

3. Mark Twain: Concerning The Jews, Harper's Magazine, March, 1898: To conclude. – If the statistics are right, the Jews constitute but one per cent. of the human race. It suggests a nebulous dim puff of star-dust lost in the blaze of the Milky Way. Properly the Jew ought hardly to be heard of; but he is heard of, has always been heard of. He is as prominent on the planet as any other people, and his commercial importance is extravagantly out of proportion to the smallness of his bulk. His contributions to the world's list of great names in literature, science, art, music, finance, medicine, and abstruse learning are also away out of proportion to the weakness of his numbers. He has made a marvellous fight in this world, in all the ages; and has done it with his hands tied behind him. He could be vain of himself, and be excused for it. The Egyptian, the Babylonian, and the Persian rose, filled the planet with sound and splendor, then faded to dream-stuff and passed away; the Greek and the Roman followed, and made a vast noise, and they are gone; other peoples have sprung up and held their torch high for a time, but it burned out, and they sit in twilight now, or have vanished. The Jew saw them all, beat them all, and is now what he always was, exhibiting no decadence, no infirmities of age, no weakening of his parts, no slowing of his energies, no dulling of his alert and aggressive mind. All things are mortal but the Jew; all other forces pass, but he remains. What is the secret of his immortality? ↩
4. This answers the questions of Rav Yitzchak Abarbanel in Rosh Amanah.
 - a) How can the first commandment be to believe in God? He is the one who issued the commandments. Without belief in Him, there can be no concept of serving Him by carrying out His will.
 - b) How can one command belief? Belief is a state of mind and not an action that is

dependent on a person's will. See *Derech Mitzvosecha, mitzvas HaAmanat Elokut*. By stating that the command is "to know" — i.e., to develop one's knowledge and awareness of G-d. Furthermore, the Rambam (in MN II) provides solid proofs for the existence of G-d. Thus, even an honest atheist is obligated to know that G-d exists. ↩