

PRINCIPLE 2: THE UNITY AND UNICITY OF GOD

Rambam's Principles of Faith

Gavriel Z. Bellino

MAIMONIDES' COMMENTARY ON THE MISHNAH:

היסוד השני: יחוד הש"י,

The Second Principle: The Unity of God.

כלומר שנאמין שזה שהוא סברת הכל

This implies that this cause of all is one;

אחד ואינו כאחד הזוג ולא כאחד המין

not one of a genus nor of a species,

ולא כאיש האחד שנחלק לאחדים רבים,

and not as one human being who is a compound divisible into many unities;

ולא אחד כמו הגוף הפשוט האחד במנין שמקבל החלוק לאין סוף,

not a unity like the ordinary material body which is one in number but takes on endless divisions and parts.

אבל הוא הש"י אחד באחדות שאין כמותה אחדות,

But He, the exalted one, is a unity in the sense that there is no unity like His in any way.

וזה היסוד השני מורה עליו מה שנאמר שמע ישראל ה' אלהינו ה'

אחד:

This is the second cardinal doctrine of the faith which is indicated by the assertion, *Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God the Lord is One.*

LITURGICAL SUMMARIES

סדור תפלה - נוסח אשכנז - סדר שלש עשרה עיקרים

ב - אָנִי מֵאֲמִין בְּאֱמוּנָה שְׁלֵמָה. שֶׁהַבּוֹרֵא יִתְבָּרַךְ שְׁמוֹ הוּא יְחִיד וְאֵין יְחִידוֹת כְּמוֹהוּ בְּשׁוּם פְּנִים. וְהוּא לְבַדּוֹ אֵלֵּי הַיּוֹנֵה. הִיָּה ה' וְנֵה וְיִהְיֶה:

I believe with perfect faith that the Creator, blessed be His name, is a Unity, and that there is no unity in any manner like unto His, and that He alone is our God, who was, is, and will be.

סדור תפלה - נוסח אשכנז - תפלת שחרית

אֶחָד וְאֵין יְחִיד כְּיְחִידוֹ, נִעְלָם וְגַם אֵין סוּף לְאֶחָדוֹתָיו.

He is One, and there is no unity like unto His unity; inconceivable is He, and unending is His unity

TERMS FOR DISCUSSION

- Unity
- Unicity
- Monotheism
- Monolatry (religious monotheism)
- Ontological monotheism
- Deism
- Pantheism
- Panentheism
- Polytheism
- Dualism
- Trinitarianism

תלמוד בבלי מסכת ברכות דף לג/ב

בשלמא מודים מודים משתקין אותו משום דמיחזי כשתי רשויות

We understand why he is silenced if he says 'WE GIVE THANKS, WE GIVE THANKS', because he seems to be acknowledging two powers.

מדרש רבה שמות פרשה כט פסקה ה

(ה) ד"א אנכי ה' אלהיך א"ר אבהו משל למלך ב"ו מולך ויש לו אב או אח אמר הקב"ה אני איני כן
אני ראשון שאין לי אב ואני אחרון שאין לי אח ומבלעדי אין אלהים שאין לי בן

5. Another explanation of I AM THE LORD THY GOD. R. Abbahu illustrated thus: A human king may rule, but he has a father and brother; but God said: 'I am not thus; I am the first, for I have no father, and I am the last for I have no brother, and besides Me there is no God, for I have no son.'

Hasdai Crescas' Refutation of the Fundamentals of the Christians

This principle is opposed to the Jewish religion for God is One in perfect simplicity and He alone is infinite in power. He embraces all perfections, to Him alone belong power, wisdom and will and all other eternal qualities. He has no partner and is in no way composite. He exists necessarily, that is to say, He is self-sufficient and owes not His existence to another. The refutation of the doctrine of the Trinity is as follows. If, as the Christians say, the Son born of the Father is like the Father then the Father, too, must have been born of another. But if so then He is an effect (i.e. not a cause) and has been created by another and has no necessary existence. The same applies to the Holy Ghost. If the Holy Ghost emanates from the Father and the Son and is like them then the Father, too, must have been emanated and He cannot therefore have necessary existence. It is also impossible to believe that the Father has all perfections for if this were so why should it have been necessary for Him to give birth to the Son who is God like Him? And why should it have been necessary for Him to cause the emanation of the Holy Ghost which is also God like Him? It can be asked further, at which time did the Father give birth to the Son? If the birth took place within Time it must follow that the Son did not exist at the beginning of Time, in which case the Son would not be eternal as the Father is eternal. If, on the other hand, the birth of the Son took place at Time's beginning one might just as well say that the Son gave birth to the Father. Some of them try to explain the matter by saying that the Father constantly gives birth to the Son and that the Son is constantly born of the Father. But this would mean that Time is composed of many times and periods and it would follow that from time to time the Son loses His existence and then regains it, so that at one time He is in existence at another time not. But if this is so then the Son is not eternal as the Father is eternal. The same kind of contradiction applies to

the Holy Ghost, which, they say, emanates from the Father or from the Father and the Son. We ask them whether It emanated within Time or at different times. Does it not follow either way that It is not eternal? A further proof that the Son is not as perfect as the Father and that the Father cannot have given all His power to the Son is the following. The Father had the power of begetting a Son while the Son does not give birth. If this is because the Son cannot give birth then He is not perfect. If, on the other hand, it is because He does not wish to give birth then the power He has is set at naught. The Holy Ghost, too, is unlike the Father, since the Father has the power of causing the emanation of the Holy Ghost while the Holy Ghost either cannot or will not produce such an emanation. The Christians try to prove the Trinity by the illustration of a burning coal which has a threefold appearance -fire, flame and coal. But this is no proof whatsoever. For there can be a coal without a flame, namely, a dull ember. There can also be a flame without a coal, the flame in a pan of oil, for instance. And there can be an ember without either flame or fire.

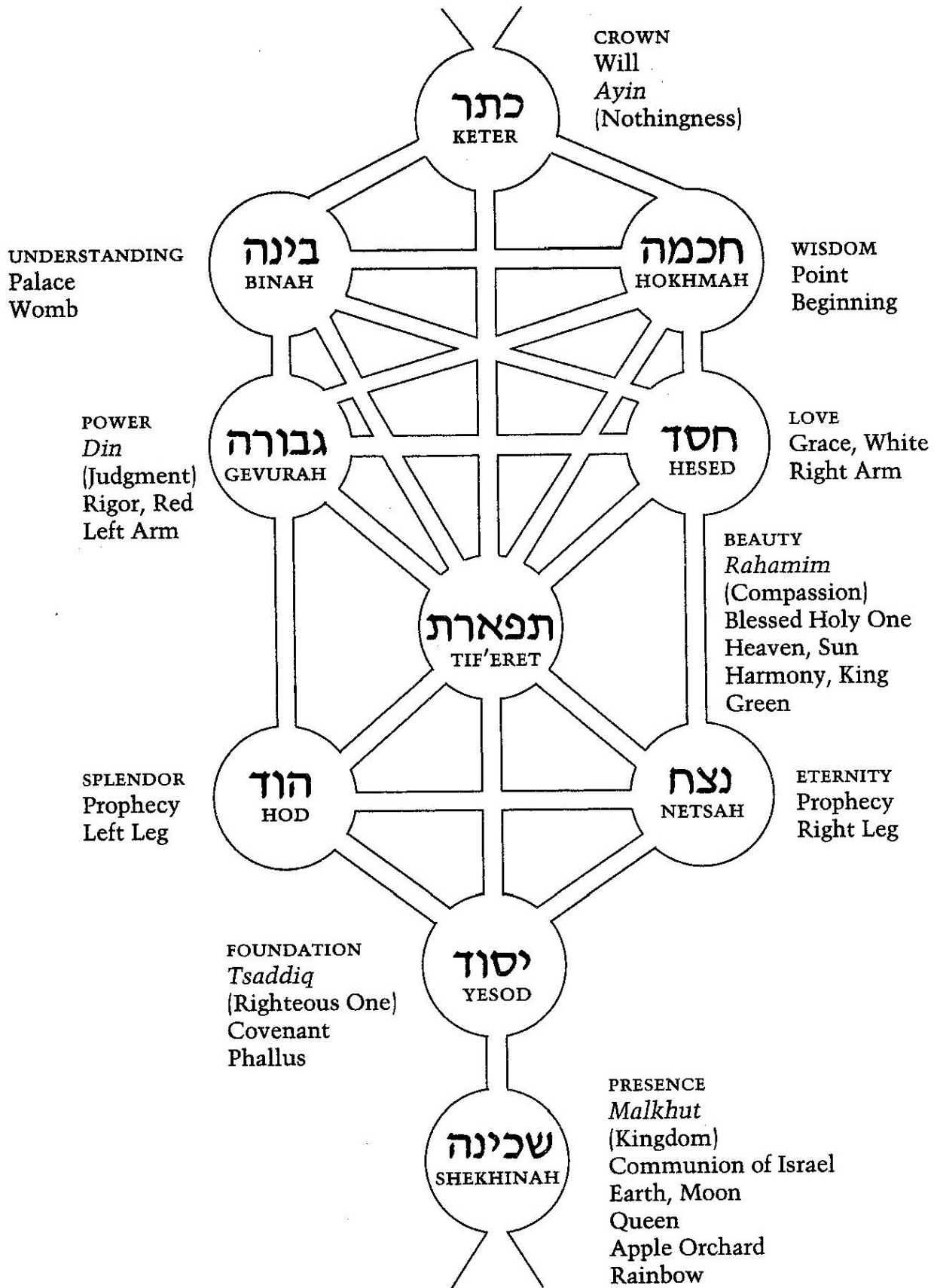
Kavod Theory

- **Sadiah:** There is something called כבוד נברא. God created a כבוד and that's what he shows the world. A pyrotechnic presentation. Created by god, but not God. God can't be seen, but this was created to be seen.
- **Ibn Ezra:** God doesn't create a כבוד. The כבוד is the way a manifestation of God appears to us. All that we see is in human terms. (See Ibn Ezra on Shemot 20).
- **Rambam:** Downplays the whole concept of a visual כבוד. If it's a visual כבוד then it just means celestial realms. We see God in the aura of the cosmos. Then he throws you for a loop in the Guide that he accepts a creative voice. God did create a voice. Not visionary, rather an auditory presence. (It's from one of the נבואה chapters).
- **Ramban:** (Inherited Ashkenaz traditions). A real part of God. כבודו ובעצמו. Lower than the Infinite.
- **Ashkenaz Versions:** Tend to form a three-part structure of
 - בורא – The Creator – Ineffable God
 - כבוד עליון – Upper Glory – God Enthroned
 - כבוד תחתון – Lower Glory – Interactive God

Terms:

מצידינו (from His perspective) vs. מצידינו (from our perspective),
 עצמות (essence) vs. לבוש (vestige).

The Ten Sefirot



שו"ת הריב"ש סימן קנז ד"ה אה מאד (Responsum of R. Isaac b. Sheshet (1326-1407))

גם בתפלת שמנה עשרה יש להם בכל אחת ואחת כונה לספירה ידועה. וכל זה הוא דבר זר מאד בעיני מי שאינו מקובל כמו הם; וחושבים, שזה אמונת שניות. וכבר שמעתי אחד מן המתפלספים מספר בגנות המקובלים, והיה אומר: הע"ג מאמיני השלוש, והמקובלים מאמיני העשיריות.

Also in their *Amidah*, they [the Kabbalists] have for each [blessing] an intention to a specific Sefirah. And all this is very foreign in the eyes of someone who is not a Kabbalist, and would think that this is the belief in a multiplicity. And I have already heard from one of the philosophers, from a book denigrating the Kabbalists, that he would say: The idolaters [Christians] believe in three and the Kabbalists believe in ten.

Maimonides' Guide of the Perplexed, i. 50.

If, however, you have a desire to rise to a higher state, viz., that of reflection, and truly to hold the conviction that God is One and possesses true unity, without admitting plurality or divisibility in any sense whatever, you must understand that God has no essential attribute in any form or in any sense whatever, and that the rejection of corporeality implies the rejection of essential attributes. Those who believe that God is One, and that He has many attributes, declare the unity with their lips, and assume plurality in their thoughts. This is like the doctrine of the Christians, who say that He is one and He is three, and that the three are one. Of the same character is the doctrine of those who say that God is One, but that He has many attributes; and that He with His attributes is One, although they deny corporeality and affirm His most absolute freedom from matter; as if our object were to seek forms of expression, not subjects of belief.

ספר פרדס רמונים - שער ד פרק ד Pardes Rimonim (R. Moshe Cordovero (1522-70))

אמנם מה שראוי שנדע הוא כי בתחלת האצילות האציל האין סוף ממ"ה הקב"ה עשר ספירות אשר הם מעצמותו מתיחדות בו והוא והם הכל אחדות שלימה.

Indeed, what is worthy of our knowing is that at the start of the emanation, the Ein Sof, King of Kings, the holy One blessed be He, emanated Ten Sefirot, which from his essence, are one with Him, and he and they are one complete unity.

זוהר חלק ב דף טז/ב

אמר רבי אבא, מאי דכתיב היש יהו"ה בקרבנו אם אין, וכי טפשין הוו ישראל דלא ידעי מלה דא, והא חמו שכינתא קמייהו, וענני כבוד עלייהו דסחרן לון, ואינן אמרו היש יהו"ה בקרבנו אם אין, גוברין דחמו זיו יקרא דמלכיהון על ימא, ותנינן ראתה שפחה על הים מה שלא ראה יחזקאל, אינן אשתכחו טפשין ואמרו היש יהו"ה בקרבנו אם אין. אלא הכי קאמר רבי שמעון, בעו למנדע בין עתיקא סתימאה דכל סתימין דאקרי אין, ובין זעיר אנפין דאקרי יהו"ה, ועל דא לא כתיב היש יהו"ה בקרבנו אם לא, כמה דכתיב הילך בתורתך אם לא, אלא היש יהו"ה בקרבנו אם אין, אי הכי אמאי אתענשו, אלא על דעבידו פרודא, ועבידו בנסיונא, דכתיב ועל נסותם את יהו"ה, אמרו ישראל אי האי נשאל בגוונא חד, ואי האי נשאל בגוונא אחרא, ועל דא מיד ויבא עמלק:

Said R. Abba: 'What did the Israelites mean when they said: IS THE LORD AMONG US OR NOT (ayin, lit. nothing)? Were they so blind as not to know that He was in their midst? Did not the Shekinah encompass them and the clouds of glory surround them? Had they not seen the radiance of their King's glorious majesty at the sea? It is, however, as R. Simeon explained, that they desired to know whether the Divine manifestation which they had experienced was that of the Ancient One, the All-hidden One, the Transcendent, whose designation is Ayin (Nought), because He is above comprehension, or of the "Small Countenance", the Immanent designated TETRAGRAMMATON. Hence the word "ayin" (nothing) is used here instead of "lo" (not). If so, it may be asked, why were they punished? Because they differentiated between these two aspects in God and "tempted the Lord"; for they said to themselves: "If it is the One, we shall pray in one way, and if it is the Other, we shall pray in another way".' THEN CAME AMALEK AND FOUGHT WITH ISRAEL IN REPHIDIM.