

Awareness of G-d¹

1. The basic foundation and the first principle of faith is to know that there is a Primary Being who brought all existence into being. All of the entities in the spiritual and physical realms come into existence only from the truth of His Being.
2. This Being is the G-d of the universe and the Master of the entire earth. He controls the spheres and the entire universe with infinite and unbounded power that continues without interruption.
3. This G-d is one, and only can be one, and not two or more. He is one with a complete unification that surpasses any of the types of unity that are part of the created realms. He is not one in the manner of a category that includes multiple individual entities, nor one in the manner of a body that is divided into portions or dimensions. Rather, He is completely unified, and there exists no unity similar to His within the created realms.

there is a Primary Being who brought all existence into being - In a note that Rambam wrote on his Commentary on the Mishnah, published in Rav Kapach's edition, he explained, "Know that one of the great fundamental principles of the Torah of Moses is that our universe is a new entity, created and formed by G-d out of absolute nothingness. ... the non-existence of the universe before the beginning of time ... proves G-d's existence absolutely".

He controls the spheres and the entire universe ... without interruption - His complete knowledge and control of all creation extends to His continuous power of individual Divine Providence.

a complete unification that surpasses any of the types of unity that are part of the created realms - The created realms include the physical and the spiritual, to the peak of levels, and G-d's Unity transcends them all entirely.

nor ... divided into portions or dimensions - He has neither physical nor spiritual dimensions, as it is said (I Chr. 29:10-13), "L-rd, Yours is [i.e., to You belong] the greatness, the power, the glory, the victory, and the majesty, even everything in Heaven and earth" – and none of these are of His Essence.

there exists no unity similar to His within the created realms - Thus it is impossible for a human or angel to conceive of the true nature of His Unity.

¹ Based on Rambam, *Laws of Foundations of the Torah* 1:1-7.

If there were multiple gods, they would be limited to some type of spiritual body and form, because similar but distinct entities existing on the same level are separated from each other through limitations that are associated with body and form.

If G-d were to have body and form, He would be limited and defined, because it is impossible for there to be a body which has no limitation. Everything that has limitation and definition, by virtue of its body, also has a limited and bounded power. Since G-d's ability and power have no limitation or boundary, His power is not the power of a body. And since He does not have a body or any form, He cannot be affected by any circumstances that can affect a body, as for example the effects of being separate from another entity. Thus it is impossible for Him to be anything other than one.

4. Just as His Existence is of an entirely different nature than that of the created beings, so too, His Truth is incomparable to the truth of the created beings. For all the created beings require Him, and He, blessed be He, does not require them. Therefore, the truth of His Being does not resemble the truth of any of their beings.

This is implied by the words of the prophet:² "G-d your L-rd is true" – i.e., He alone is true, and no other entity possesses truth that

If there were multiple gods, they would be limited to some type of spiritual body and form - This limitation applies to the spiritual creations referred to as angels; see Rambam, *Laws of Foundations of the Torah* 3:3-8.

G-d's ability and power have no limitation or boundary - Why then are we not overwhelmed by the presence of unlimited G-dliness? His infinite power includes His ability to limit the revelation of His G-dliness to His creations. Note the explanation by Rashi on Gen. 1:1: "Originally it arose in G-d's thought to create the world with the attribute of stern judgment [i.e., with total concealment of G-dliness]; He saw, however, that the world could not endure, so He combined with it the attribute of mercy."

the truth of His Being does not resemble the truth of any of their beings - The truth of the existence of created beings is relative and subsidiary to, and a result of, the truth of His Being. For they exist only because, and as long as, it is His will that they exist. The creation and sustained existence of the spiritual and physical realms is only a result of G-d's speech (Gen. ch. 1).

² Jeremiah 10:10.

compares to His Truth. This is what is meant by the Torah's statement:³ "There is nothing else aside from Him" – i.e., aside from Him, there is no true existence like His.

5. Knowing this fundamental principle, the existence of G-d, blessed be He, was included in the commandment and the warning that prohibited idolatry to Adam the first man and all his descendants.⁴

The obligation of this knowledge is not only to hear and understand this precept once and to agree and set it in one's heart. Rather it is a continuous obligation for every person to think about and contemplate the existence of the Master of the universe and His greatness, in order to set the knowledge of G-d strongly in his heart and mind. One should constantly reflect upon this, as the righteous King David wrote,⁵ "I place G-d before me always; because He is at my right hand I shall not falter."

This command of knowing and recognizing the existence of G-d includes the acceptance of His Kingship and His constant authority. This means that each Gentile is obligated to accept upon himself all things which he is commanded by G-d – i.e., this recognition, and the Seven Noahide Commandments and their details as transmitted in the Torah – because G-d, the Master of the universe, commanded them and informed us of them in the Torah through the prophecy of Moses.⁶

³ Deuteronomy 4:35; compare Deuteronomy 4:39.

⁴ Obviously the commandment to believe in one G-d and no other is included in the prohibition against serving idols, based on the logical rule, "from the negative, one can infer the positive."

In Tractate *Sanhedrin* 56b, it is shown that Adam was prohibited from serving idols by the words, "And the L-rd G-d commanded the man ..." (Genesis 2:16), from which we infer that Adam was prohibited from rebelling against the One who commanded. Rashi explains there that Adam was prohibited from serving idols from these words, with which the Almighty commanded Adam that His G-dliness should not be associated with any other entity. This is also clearly cited by Rambam (*Laws of Kings* 8:10): "Moses was commanded by the Al-mighty to compel all the inhabitants of the world to accept the (seven universal) commandments given to Noah's descendents." It is therefore obvious that all the nations of the world are commanded to believe in and recognize G-d [and this brings great spiritual merit].

⁵ Psalms 16:8.

⁶ Rambam, *Laws of Kings* 8:11.