

Dear Friends,

The goal of Torah Learning Project is to give you a study experience that is both intriguing and uniquely satisfying. We invest much time and effort to ensure that your learning gives you a deep sense of personal fulfillment and leaves you wanting more.

In order to achieve this, we have created a dynamic, original curriculum that features:

- Thought-provoking issues
- Helpful, informative synopses
- Materials for 40 minutes of study
- Clear, easily understandable language and layout
- Challenging questions to consider at the end of each lesson

Our sincere aspiration is that your learning leaves you with a distinct sense of personal enrichment and a desire to continue growing in your studies.

We look forward to making many more rewarding learning experiences available to you in the future.

Sincerely,

Rabbi Yehoshua Werde
Director

Chavrusa Sushi is a coordinated network of creative learning programs geared toward the young working Chabad Professional. For comments questions or requests to join the Chavrusa Sushi Network, please email Director@Torahlp.com.

Visit us on the web at Torahonthego.com.

ב"ה

A decorative, ornate frame with intricate scrollwork and flourishes, surrounding the title and subtitle.

FAITH AND REASON

Logical and Biological Approaches



Lesson Outline

What is the Mitzvah

- » How can there be a mitzvah without there first being a G-d?
- » The Mitzvah is to know, not just to believe.
- » Knowing G-d is an outstanding performance of the mitzvah to believe in G-d.
- » 3 steps to the mitzvah of believing and knowing G-d

Can the existence of G-d be proven rationally?

- » What is considered absolute evidence?
- » What kind of evidence are we looking for?

Evidence for G-d's Existence

- » Intelligent Design
- » The Anthropic Principle
- » The Miracle of Jewish Continuity
- » Can there be a real code of right or wrong without G-d?
- » Why not follow what the majority of people believe?

What causes doubts in one's faith in Hashem, and how can they be resolved?

- » Analysis Paralysis
- » Learn lots of Chassidus
- » Stay Away from Cholov Akum
- » Eat Matzah (on Pesach)

Faith and Reason

Introduction:

What's the Mitzvah?

Before we can look at any rationale for believing in G-d, we need to understand the basics that define what Judaism requires of us in terms of believing in G-d. Depending on how you count the mitzvos, there can be up to four basic mitzvos that mandate a Jew's belief and knowledge of G-d:

Mitzvah #1

To believe in or know the existence of Hashem:

Shmos 20:2

אֲנֹכִי יְקֹנֵךְ אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִיךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם מִבֵּית עֲבָדִים:

I am Hashem your G-d who took you out of the land of Egypt from a house of bondage.

The Rambam explains what this mitzvah entails:

Rambam Sefer Hamitzvos, Positive Commandment 1

המצוה הראשונה היא הצווי אשר צונו להאמין האלוהות והוא שנאמין שיש שם עלה וסבה הוא פועל לכל הנמצאות והוא אמרו ית' אנכי יי' אלהיך.

The first mitzvah is the command that we are instructed to believe in G-d which means to believe that there is a cause and reason that is responsible for all that exists and this is what Hashem said "I

am Hashem your G-d.”

Mitzvah #2

To believe Hashem is the cause of all, master over all, and is one with no partner:

Devorim 6:4

שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל יְקֻקֵּ אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְקֻקֵּ אֶחָד:

Hear oh Israel, Hashem your G-d, Hashem is one.

The Sefer Hachinuch explains what this mitzvah requires of us:

Chinuch, Mitzvah 417

מצות אחדות השם: שנצטוונו להאמין כי השם יתברך הוא הפועל כל המציאות אדון הכל אחד בלי שום שיתוף, שנאמר [דברים ו', ד'], שמע ישראל ה' אלהינו ה' אחד, וזו מצות עשה היא,

The mitzvah of Hashem's unification: We are instructed to believe that Hashem is the cause for all that exists, master of all without any partner, as it says "Hear oh Israel, Hashem your G-d, Hashem is one," and this is a positive commandment.

Mitzvah #3

Not to have any other gods:

Shmos 20:2

לֹא יִהְיֶה לְךָ אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים עַל פְּנֵי:

You shall not have any other gods before me.

Chinuch, Mitzvah 26

שלא נאמין אלהים זולתי השם יתברך לבדו, שנאמר [שמות כ', ג'] לא יהיה לך אלהים אחרים על פני, ופירושו לא תאמין אלוה אחר זולתי.

That we shouldn't believe in a god other than Hashem alone, as it says: "you shall not have any other gods before me" which means not to believe in any other god besides Me.

Mitzvah #4

Not to forget Hashem:

Devorim 8:11

השֹׁמֵר לֵךְ פֶּן תִּשְׁכַּח אֶת ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ:

Guard yourself lest you forget Hashem your G-d.

Ramban's Hasagos to Sefer Hamitzvos, Negative #1

המצוה הראשונה שנמנענו שלא ישכח אחד ממנו אמונת האלהות... והוא אמרו (ואתחנן ו) השמר לך פן תשכח את ה' (אלקיד) אשר הוציאך מארץ מצרים מבית עבדים. ירצה בזה שלא נשכח עיקר האלהות ונכפור או נסתפק בו לומר שאין אלוה ושהעולם קדמון בעצמו או קדמון בסבה ועלה ולא ישתנה

The first commandment that we counted is that not one of us should forget believing in Hashem... this is what is stated: "guard yourself lest you forget Hashem your G-d who took you out of the land of

Egypt from a house of bondage”. This means not to forget the principle of G-d and to commit apostacy or to doubt Him saying that there is no G-d and the world always existed on its own or was preceded by a reason and cause and will never change.

Some Rishonim challenge the notion that there can be a mitzvah to believe in Hashem:

Question: How can there be a mitzvah without there first being a G-d?

Rabi Chasdai Crescas, Ohr Hashem, Hatzza'ah

טעה טעות מפרסם מי שמנה במצוות עשה להאמין מציאות האל יתברך. וזה, כי...לא יציר מצוה בזולת מצוה ידוע. ולזה, כאשר נניח אמונת מציאות האל יתברך מצוה, כבר נניח אמונת מציאות האל יתברך קודמת בידיעה לאמונת מציאות האל.

Those who count the mitzvah to believe in the existence of Hashem as a positive commandment made a famous mistake. The reason is since you cannot have a commandment without a known commander. Therefore, when we establish that belief in the existence of Hashem is a mitzvah, we must have already established a belief in the existence of Hashem as a prior knowledge to the belief in the existence of Hashem...

The following parable from the midrash serves To illustrate this point:

Mechilta of Rabbi Yishmael, Yisro, Masechte of Bachodesh, 6

משל למלך בשר ודם שנכנס למדינה, אמרו לו עבדיו, גזור עליהם גזרות. אמר להם לאו, כשיקבלו את מלכותי, אגזור עליהם גזרות, שאם מלכותי לא יקבלו, גזרותי לא יקבלו.

This is analogous to a king of flesh and blood who entered a country, his servants said to him: “Pass decrees upon them.” He said to them: “No, when they will accept my kingship, I will pass decrees upon them, for if they will not accept my kingship, they will not accept my decrees.”

How does the Rambam (who counts “Anochi Hashem Elokecha” as a mitzvah) answer this question?

The Mitzvah is to know, not just to believe.

Rambam, Yesodei Hatorah 1:1-3

יסוד היסודות ועמוד החכמות לידע שיש שם מצוי ראשון, והוא ממציא כל נמצא, וכל הנמצאים משמים וארץ ומה שביניהם לא נמצאו אלא מאמתת המצאו.

The foundation of foundations and the pillar of wisdom is to know that there is something [namely G-d] that existed before anything else did and that He created everything that there is. Everything in the heavens, on the ground, and in between exists only because He created them.

The Sefer Hachinuch offers an alternative answer explaining that while the mitzvah is to believe, the mitzvah is not limited

to belief but also extends to knowledge (and therefore has reason to exist as a mitzvah despite the required prior belief in the existence of G-d):

Answer 2: Knowing G-d is an outstanding performance of the mitzvah to believe in G-d.

Chinuch, Mitzvah 25

ואם יזכה לעלות במעלות החכמה, ולבבו יבין ובעיניו יראה במופת נחתך שהאמונה הזאת שהאמין אמת וברור אי אפשר להיות דבר בלתי זה, אז יקיים מצות עשה זו מצוה מן המובחר.

If a person will merit to ascend the rungs of wisdom, and with his heart understand, and with his eyes see, with a clear model that this belief that he believed is true and that clearly there can be nothing else, then he has fulfilled this positive commandment [of believing in Hashem's existence] in an outstanding manner.

Although he maintains that belief in Hashem is a mitzvah, the mitzvah extends to knowing Hashem as well.

The Rebbe summarizes three aspects in ones belief in and knowledge of Hashem's existence (primarily following the Rambam's opinion that the mitzvah is to know G-d, but also complementing the Chinuch's position that "knowing" is about filling in the details of one's belief):

3 steps to the mitzvah of believing and knowing

G-d

Toras Menachem 5746 vol. 2 p. 647

באמונת וידיעת השם -- ג' ענינים:

(א) האמונה (שלפני הציווי), ידיעה כללית שיש אלוקה (מבלי להיכנס לשום פרטים).

(ב) הידיעה (מצד הציווי) שיש שם מצוי ראשון והוא ממציא כל נמצא וכו', הידיעה בשלימותו ית' (שע"פ שכל)

(ג) ידיעה נעלית יותר (שגם היא בכלל המצוה) שהוא ית' אינו מוגדר בגדר ידיעה שכלית ("לידע") -- שהשכל גופא ידע ויבין שהוא נברא מהקב"ה, ושהקב"ה אינו מוגדר בו ח"ו, ובלשון החקירה: תכלית הידיעה שלא נדעך.

In believing and knowing Hashem -- there are three aspects:

1) *Belief (that precedes the mitzvah), a general knowledge that there is a G-d (without getting into any details).*

2) *Knowledge (as a result of the mitzvah) that there is a first being and He brings into being all that is found etc., the knowledge in the completeness of Hashem (which is based on reason).*

3) *Higher knowledge (which is also part of the mitzvah) that Hashem is not limited by rational knowledge ("to know") -- so that the mind itself knows and understands that it is a creation of Hashem, and that Hashem is not limited by it Chas*

Veshalom. In the language of philosophy: The ultimate knowledge is that we do not know you.

Now that we've established that there is a mitzvah to at least know Hashem (which must be preceded by a belief in His existence) we need to address the question: How can Hashem be known?

Can the existence of G-d be proven rationally?

What is considered absolute evidence?

In this world there can be no such thing as absolute proof. The reason for this is that we don't have accurate measuring tools with which to test on an absolute level whether something is true or not. Our logic can be flawed, our senses can fool us, absolutely nothing we have is absolutely full proof.

Absolute truth must be infinitely true, and so long as we are limited to our finite tools, we will never be able to prove or disprove a truth in absolute terms.

Consistency: The closest thing to evidence

What then is the closest thing we have to absolute proof?

Consistency.

The closest we can get to an absolute truth is consistency. Emes, the Hebrew word for truth is spelled Aleph, Mem, Taf, the first, middle, and last letters of the Hebrew alphabet - this is because truth is consistent throughout, from beginning, to middle, to end, it stays the same.

Reason only helps half of our brain (the other half needs faith)

If we limit ourselves to using an analytical approach to seek the truth, the truth will be partial to the limitations of the analytical method.

In reality, we have a left brain and a right brain. While the left brain is mainly used for analysing things, the right brain is used to experience feelings, love, art, music, beauty etc. activities that are not logical or analytical; this is the side of us that all the analytical arguments in the world will not speak to.

Logic is limited too

We need to recognize the limits of the analytical method. Why should we expect logical analysis (something limited) to be able to govern something infinite? (It's like holding up a classroom ruler to measure the height of the Empire State Building and when the building doesn't fit into any one measurement on the ruler you arrive at the conclusion that the Empire State Building must not exist.)

Obviously, any logic, reason, or proof that can be provided in attempt to prove or disprove Hashem's existence cannot be absolute. It is therefore impossible to prove or disprove G-d's existence in any absolute terms using logical arguments.

Why then do we seek reason at all?

1) Whether you like it or not, we do have an analytical side to us that we must live in and have a human need to satisfy. So, even if Hashem's existence would not be rational, we would still have a need to rationalize His existence in order for us to be able to make sense of it and to live with it in our logical

reality.

2) We learned earlier that there is a mitzvah not only to believe in the existence of Hashem, but to endeavor to know Hashem by way of rational and logical analysis. This means that rationalizing Hashem's existence is not only to make us more comfortable with the idea, but it itself is a mitzvah that we are obligated to do.

3) By gaining a logical appreciation of Hashem's existence, we become familiar with His presence in ways that can improve our observance of His mitzvos and our general state of devotion to G-d's will, wisdom, and mission for humanity.

What kind of evidence are we looking for?

Before looking to present a rational argument for G-d's existence, we need to first define what is considered evidence? Should we expect to see, hear, and touch G-d to be able to verify His existence? What types of things do you accept in your reality without being able to see, hear, or touch them?

In the following letter, the Rebbe provides unique perspective into the types of things we consider to be evidence nowadays:

Igros Kodesh vol. 18 letter #6876

ילד קטן, יש אומרים אשר בעולמו "מציאות" והוכחה על מציאות הוא רק דבר שיכול למשמש בידיו. ולסומא, למשל, הרי, מצד עצמו מושללת כל המציאות של צבעים, המוכרח הוא לסמוך על שני שאומר לו שרואה צבעים וגונים?

ובדרגה מפותחת יותר, "הכל" מודים בהחלט ובוודאות שכל פעולה מחייבת מציאות של סיבה ומקור לפעולה זו, ולכן כשרואים פעולות הרי אלו הוכחה מוחלטת למציאות "כוח" הפועל, אף על פי שאין

בזה הוכחה באופן "ישר", ולכאורה נשאר מקום לספק. דוגמא בולטת בזה הוא - מציאות כוח העלעקטרי. האדם הוא בעל חושים, וחוש הראי" שלו מאמת מציאות הצבעים, כמו שחוש השמיעה מאמת מציאות הקול וכו' - והם נחשבים להוכחות גמורות וישירות. אבל אין לאדם חוש ל"ראות" את כוח העלעקטרי, אלא - כשרואה פעולות, היינו שמתלהט חוט, או שמודד העלעקטרי מתנענע וכיו"ב, אז בא לידי החלטה שיש מציאות של כח זה המכונה עלעקטרי - שלעולם לא יראה אותו - והוא הסיבה והגורם לפעולות הנ"ל. וגם זה נחשב להוכחה מוחלטת. ועל דרך זה בנוגע לכח המגנטי וכו'. ותפסתי את הדוגמא הנ"ל - כי כל מציאות העלעקטרי כ"כ מקובלת ורווחת בלי כל פיקפוק וצל של פיקפוק.

A small child, some say in his world a "reality" and proof of reality is only something he can touch with his hands. To a blind person, for example, since for him the entire reality of colors is irrelevant, must he rely on a second person who tells him that he sees colors and shades?

On a more developed level, "all" agree in definite terms and in certainty that every activity requires the existence of a cause and source for that activity. Therefore, when one sees activity, it is absolute proof of the existence of an "active force," even though there is no "straight forward" proof and there seems to remain room for doubt.

An outstanding example for this is from the existence of the electric force. Man has senses; his sense of sight verifies the existence of colors, just as

his sense of smell verifies the existence of sound etc. -- and they are considered absolute and straight forward evidence.

However, a person cannot use his senses to “see” the electric force, only when he sees its effects, such as when a wire heats up, or an electricity meter moves and so forth, then he arrives at the conclusion that there exists a force that is called electricity -- which he will never see -- and this is the reason and cause for the aforementioned activity. And even this is considered decisive evidence. Similarly with regards to the magnetic force etc.

However, I chose the above example -- since the entire existence of electricity is so accepted and widespread without any doubt or glimmer of a doubt.

Now that we’ve clarified what’s so difficult about proving G-d’s existence, let’s now look at the most common evidence:

Reason to Believe

Intelligent Design

The most common evidence brought for the existence of G-d is from the idea of intelligent design, as Rabbeinu Bachya (mid thirteen hundreds - 1340) explains in Chovas Halevavos:

Rabbeinu Bachya, Chovos HaLevavos (Duties of the Heart)
1:6

ויש בני אדם, שאמרו, שהעולם נהיה במקרה מבלי בורא שהתחילו ויוצר שיצרו. ומן התימה בעיני, איך תעלה בדעת מדבר, בעודנו בבריאותו, כמחשבה הזאת. ואלו היה בעל המאמר הזה שומע אדם, שיאמר כמאמרו בגלגל אחד של מים, שהוא מתגלגל להשקות חלקה אחת של שדה או גנה, וחושב, כי זה נתקן מבלי כוונת אומן, שטרח בחבורו והרכבתו ושם כל כלי מכליו לעומת התועלת, היה לו להפליא ולהגדיל הרבה עליו, ולחשוב אותו בתכלית הסכלות וימהר להכזיבו ולדחות מאמרו. וכיון שידחה המאמר הזה בגלגל קטן ופחות ונבזה, שנעשה בתחבולה קטנה לתקנת חלקה קטנה מהארץ, איך יתיר לעצמו לחשב כמחשבה הזאת בגלגל הגדול הסובב את כל הארץ וכל אשר עליה מן הברואים, והוא בחכמה, תקצרנה דעות כל בשר ושכלי המדברים להשיג הויתה, והוא מוכן לתועלת כל הארץ וכל אשר עליה. ואיך יוכל לומר עליו שנהיה מבלי כוונת מכוון ומחשבת חכם בעל יכולת.

There are those who say that the world came into existence by chance, without a Creator Who caused and formed it. I wonder how any rational person in a normal state of mind can entertain such a notion.

If one holding such an opinion would hear a person expressing a similar view in regard to a water-wheel that revolves in order to irrigate a portion of a field or garden, and were to say that he thinks it had been set up without any intention on the part of an engineer who labored to assemble and install it, using all his tools so as to obtain this useful result, the one listening would be astonished, and consider the man who made such a statement extremely foolish! He would promptly charge him with lying

and would reject his assertion.

Now, if such a statement is rejected in regard to a small and insignificant wheel ... how can anyone permit himself to harbor such a thought concerning the immense sphere that encompasses the whole Earth?

Rabbeinu Bachya continues with the following analogy:

Once a rabbi entered a king's palace and was granted an audience with the king.

The king asked him the question, "how do you know of the existence of the Creator?"

The rabbi respectfully asked the king to leave the room for a short while.

On the table was a quill, an inkwell and some paper. While the king was out of the room, the rabbi wrote a beautiful poem on the paper.

When the king returned he noticed the poem and was amazed at its poetic style.

The ink was still wet and the king praised the rabbi for writing such a beautiful poem. The rabbi replied that he had not written the poem, rather, he had taken the inkwell, poured it onto the paper and the letters had formed themselves.

The king ridiculed such a suggestion saying that it was impossible for the ink to arrange itself into a single letter, let alone a word, let alone a sentence, and certainly not into a beautiful poem!

The rabbi replied, “there is your answer. If the ink in an inkwell cannot form a poem without the hand of a poet, then certainly the world, which is infinitely more complex than the poem, could not possibly form itself without the hand of a Master Creator!”

Another version of this point:

Otzar Midrashim, Temurah 7

ומעשה שבא מין ואמר לר' עקיבא העוה"ז מי בראו א"ל הקב"ה, א"ל הראיני דבר ברור, א"ל למחר תבא אלי, למחר בא אצלו א"ל מה אתה לובש, א"ל בגד, א"ל מי עשאו, א"ל האורג, א"ל איני מאמינך הראיני דבר ברור, א"ל ומה אראה לך ואין אתה יודע שהאורג עשאו, א"ל ואתה אינך יודע שהקב"ה ברא את עולמו,

נפטר אותו המין, אמרו לו תלמידיו מה הדבר ברור, א"ל בני כשם שהבית מודיע על הבנאי והבגד מודיע על האורג והדלת על הנגר, כך העולם מודיע על הקב"ה שהוא בראו

A heretic once asked Rabbi Akiva, “Who created the world?” Rabbi Akiva answered, “The Holy One, Blessed be He.” The heretic said, “Show me clear proof” ... Rabbi Akiva asked, “Who wove your shirt?” The heretic replied, “A weaver, of course!” Rabbi Akiva said, “I don’t believe you. Prove it to

me.” The heretic answered, “What’s there to prove? Don’t you know that it was a weaver?” “And don’t you know that God made His world?”

The heretic left and Rabbi Akiva then said to his students, “Just as a building testifies to the existence of the builder, and a garment testifies to the existence of the weaver ... so too the world testifies to the existence of the Creator.”

The Anthropic Principle

A variation of the intelligent design argument is the anthropic principle which points to an unusually high unlikelyhood of a random process arriving at such a significant outcome as the human being and how it appears that all of nature was created to support human life:

Nathan Aviezer, Bar Ilan University, Jewish Action, Spring 1999

In recent years, it has become clear to many scientists that the universe appears as if it were specifically designed for the existence and well-being of man. This phenomenon, which has attracted considerable scientific attention, has become known as the Anthropic Principle, from the Greek word anthropis, meaning “man.”

The Anthropic Principle expresses itself in two ways: (1) very slight changes in the laws of nature would have made it impossible for life to exist, and (2) human life would not have been possible were it

not for the occurrence in the past of a large number of highly improbable events.

One example that Aviezer points to is from the distance between the sun and the earth, If the earth were just a slight bit closer to the sun it would be too hot to support human life and if it were slightly more distant from the sun, it would be too cold. The chances of that happen by random occurrence are close to zero.

Professor Raphael Falk, Hebrew University Geneticist

Falk basically makes the point that while the chances of conditions to support human life is a close to zero, so is almost everything that happens unlikely to happen, but the fact is that these things happen and are insignificant. In Falks words:

Aviezer places particular emphasis on the “remarkable coincidences” which characterize the universe. The point of this claim is that such remarkable events could not have occurred through chance, but rather are the result of a guiding hand. Superficially, this claim appears convincing, but a little thought shows that that it is without foundation. According to Aviezer’s logic, the probability that I am writing these lines with a dull yellow pencil, using my left hand, sitting at my kitchen table, on the third floor of a specific Jerusalem address — this probability is completely negligible. Nevertheless, all these events happened

and they clearly mean nothing.

Segments of Aviezer's response:

In his response, Aviezer basically says that the slim chances are irrelevant if human life is irrelevant, but if you value human life, it is extremely significant.

...What was the probability that Falk wrote his article on his kitchen table, using a dull yellow pencil held in his left hand, on the third floor of a specific Jerusalem address? The answer is: 100%! Why? Because Falk chose these unusual conditions on the basis on what he already knew to have happened. In other words, he simply asked, "What is the probability that what I know to have happened, really did happen?" The answer is clearly 100% — by definition.

...What conclusions may one draw from the anthropic principle? The answer depends on one's views regarding the significance of human beings. ...The extremely rare straight flush is a wondrous event in a poker game, but a meaningless event in a bridge game.

In other words, the same rare event can be either wondrous or meaningless: it all depends on the importance that one attributes to the event itself.

...If humans are assumed to be just another species in the Animal Kingdom (as the secularists believe), not more

important than any other of the approximately two million species discovered so far, then the anthropic principle has no meaning. We have seen that rarity by itself is not significant. It is a “straight flush” in bridge, rare and interesting, but without any meaning. If, however, one believes that human beings are the most important species in the world and that mankind is the entire reason for the creation of the universe — as the Torah and the Sages of the Talmud repeatedly emphasize — then the anthropic principle is of the utmost significance. It is a straight flush in poker, the most meaningful of occurrences.

The Miracle of Jewish Continuity

Another more Jewish variation of the anthropic principle can be found in the writings of a non-Jew, Mark Twain, who marvels at the miracle of the unlikely survival of the Jews through all the storms of history:

Mark Twain, Harper's Magazine, June 1899

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 always way 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 splendour, 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 all 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?

There is another, moral argument for the existence of a G-d:

Can there be a real code of right or wrong without G-d?

In the following segment of a letter, the Rebbe points to the holocaust as an example of why there is a fundamental need for G-d given principles of right and wrong:

Igros Kodesh Vol. 19, p. 186, letter 7195

הרי דוקא בדורנו ראינו, שאותו העם שהתרבות שלו היתה במדה הכי

גבוה, חקירות מדעיות שיטות פילוסופיות, ולא עוד אלא - שיטות בתורת המוסר וכו' - הרי באפשרית שניתנה לו, נעשה רוצח הכי מבהיל, אפילו מנקודת מבט פשוטה ואפילו בהשוות לחיתו טרף, והיודע את כל המעשים שנעשו ע"י האשכנזים - לא יאומן כי יסופר, באם לא היינו עדים לזה בפועל, והכל בשם הצדק ובהתאם לתורת המוסר וכו' וכו', ולא עוד אלא שמביניהם גם כאלה - שהיו להם אמונת תפלות באותו האיש וכו', וביחד עם זה לא נמנעו מלקחת חלק פעיל בכל מעשים האמורים, ובטוחני אשר לדכוותי אין צורך בהאריכות בהאמור, והתוצאה מהתבוננות בהאמור, אשר, כאמור לעיל, מוכרחת אמונה באלקים חיים

Specifically in this generation we have seen, that a nation whose culture was of the highest order in scientific research, philosophical ideologies, and even ideologies in the field of ethics, nevertheless, when given the opportunity, became the most frightful murderers. Even from a simple standpoint, even in comparison to wild animals, and those who know all that the Germans perpetrated, you would not believe if you were told, if we didn't see it happen in actuality. And all of it was in the name of justice and in the name of ethical ideology. Not only that, but among them there were some who had a baseless faith in "that man" [Christianity] and they nevertheless did not hesitate to play an active role in all the above atrocities, and I trust that there is no need to go on about the aforementioned. The result of contemplating what was said above, necessitates the belief in a Living G-d.

Why not follow what the majority of people believe?

In the following letter, the Rebbe responds to this question:

Igros Kodesh vol. 15, p. 377, letter 5704

מפני מה מעטים הם המאמינים בה' בתורתו ובמצותיו. והנה כבר נאמר בתורתנו הקדושה, כי אתם המעט מכל העמים... והנקודה התיכונה בזה היא, אשר האיכות חשובה יותר בערך מאשר הכמות, ז.א. שאיכות יתירה שמשכנה בכמות קטנה, מכריעה כמות הכי גדולה, באם רק איכותה פחותה

Why are there so few believers in Hashem and His Torah and Mitzvos?

It was already foretold in our holy torah: “for you are the minority among all the nations,” ... The underlying point here is, that quality is worth more in comparison to quantity, which means that quality that resides in lesser quantity, overrules the greatest amount of quantity, if it is of lesser quality.

The idea the Rebbe is saying here is that “how many” is not as important as “what type of people.” I.e., thinking people normally do see the truth of Yiddishkeit, but nowadays many people don't think for themselves.

What causes doubts in one's faith in Hashem, and how can they be resolved?

Analysis Paralysis

What is often the reason why people begin questioning the

existence of G-d? In the following letter the Rebbe explains that because the concept of G-d is so broad and complex (Hashem is infinite), without the proper guidance, the more you think about it, often, the more confused you end up getting. This doesn't mean we should just follow blindly without thinking (there is a mitzvah to KNOW G-d), the idea is that we should focus on thoughts that clarify G-d's existence, not thoughts that are too complicated for us to figure out that will just confuse us.

The Rebbe (from a letter printed in Emunah Umadah p. 61)

לעתים תכופות מבלבל האדם עצמו ע"י העמקת חקר ללא כל צורך בשאלות וחשבונות לגבי דברים שיש לקבלם כפשוטם ואינם מהווים כל בעיה ומסתבר שככל שאדם משכיל יותר כך נוטה הוא יותר ויותר לחפש "חשבונות" וכתוצאה מכך מביך את עצמו יותר ויותר.

הדבר מזכיר אפיזודה אותה סיפר לי פרופסור לרפואה היה זה בתקופה בה עסק בלימוד האנטומיה ובמיוחד באנטומית הרגל דהיינו בתאור השרירים השונים וכו' אשר מספרם מגיע למאות וכולם מתואמים להפליא בעת בצוע תנועת ההליכה כשהתעמק מאוד בכל הפרטים בהיותו איש משכיל ביותר נוכח לפתע שההליכה קשה עליו ביותר משום שתוך כדי הליכה ניסה לנתח את פעולת כל שריר פרק וכדומה מוסר ההשכל ברור בהחלט.

From time to time a person confuses himself by analysing too deeply questions and calculations that should be taken simply and don't present any problem. And it follows that to the degree that a person thinks more, he is also more and more likely to seek "calculations" and as a result confuse himself more and more.

This brings to mind an episode that was told to me by a medical professor. It happened at a time when he was busy studying anatomy, particularly the anatomy of the foot, i.e., identifying the different muscles etc. which number in the hundreds and they are all wondrously coordinated when used to go through the motions of walking.

After deeply immersing himself in all the details, since he was a very smart person, he realized for a moment that he had a lot of trouble walking, since in the course of walking, he tried to dissect the activity of every muscle, joint, and the like. The lesson from this is clear.

Learn lots of Chassidus

To retain a strong belief in Hashem, it is vital to study lots of Chasidus regularly to keep Hashem in mind at all times.

Lekutei Sichos Vol. 18 p. 251

חזוק בעניני אמונה ובטחון וכו' ילמד חסידות בשופי ויתוסף בכל הנ"ל

For strength in matters of faith and trust in Hashem etc., you should learn lots of chassidus and all the above [i.e., your faith in Hashem] will be increased.

Stay Away from Cholov Akum

Igros Kodesh v. 16 p. 243

חלב עכו"ם מעורר ספיקות באמונה

Cholov Akum causes one to raise doubts in his faith.

Eat Matzah (on Pesach)

Igros Kodesh vol. 11 p. 6

בהנוגע לחלוקת מצה שמורה...נקראת מיכלא דמהימנותא ומיכלא
דאסוותא שמחזקת האמונה בתוככי כאו"א מבני ישראל

*With regards to distributing Shmurah Matzah...it
is called the bread of faith and the bread of healing
since it strengthens the belief of every single Jew.*

Concluding Question

Is there any absolute proof for G-d's existence? If there is,
what is it? If not, why not?

Take-Aways

- » There is a mitzvah from the Torah to believe in G-d, to know Him, and not to forget Him.
- » Before there can be a mitzvah to believe in G-d, there needs to already be a belief in him, so the mitzvah primarily refers to knowing G-d.
- » There cannot be any absolute proof since our tools are limited (consistency is our best indicator of truth).
- » Belief (like art) is a right brain function, not an analytical process and should therefore not be subject to critical analysis.
- » We accept that everything complex must have a source of origin and did not come about by means of random occurrence.
- » There multiple indications in nature that it was designed to support human life.
- » Without G-d there is no true sense of right and wrong.
- » Thinking too much about complex matters that are beyond our logical comprehension will only lead us further into confusion.

Take-Aways

- » Torah, davening, and good deeds should keep our mind, heart, and body occupied in the service of Hashem.
- » The mitzvah of tefillah is to turn to Hashem when we have something to ask for, or to be thankful and praise Him for what He has given us.
- » The three daily tefillos were instituted by members of the

Anshei Knesses Hagedolah to correspond to the prayers instituted by the Avos, or to the korbonos in the Beis Hamikdash.

- » The timing of the tefillos corresponds to the time when the korbonos were brought in the Beis Hamikdash.
- » When you are davening, if you don't have in mind that you are davening to Hashem, you are required to daven again.
- » During davening, your animal soul gets to listen in to your neshomah praising Hashem.
- » You can uplift the animal soul by 1) Thinking about Hashem in terms that even the animal soul will understand and 2) Pushing your animal soul to move out of its comfort zone.
- » A minyan in a shul is the most suitable place for davening since that is where Hashem's presence is found most and your prayers are more readily heard and answered.