

Emunah in the Shadow of Faith – The Succah

By Rabbi Dr. Hillel ben David (Greg Killian)



Let’s examine one of the ideas of Succoth[[1]](#footnote-1) where the Zohar[[2]](#footnote-2) says that the succah is the *shadow of faith*, based on a reference from Shir HaShirim.

***Shir HaShirim (Song of Songs) 2:3*** *… In His shadow, I delighted there and there I sat, and the fruit of His Torah was sweet to my palate.*

***Soncino Zohar, Vayikra, Section 3, Page 103a*** *When Miriam died the well was taken from them, as it is written, “And Miriam died, and there was no water for the congregation”.[[3]](#footnote-3) Another well which was with Israel also desired to depart, but when it saw six clouds that hovered over them it remained attached to them. When Aaron died the clouds departed and the cloud of the well with them, until Moses came and brought them back.’ R. Isaac said: ‘Why was this honour conferred upon Aaron? Because he was linked with clouds and he linked them all together, so that they were all blessed through him. For in addition to all the lovingkindness that God did with Israel, He linked with them seven precious clouds which He also linked with the Community of Israel, whose cloud was linked with seven others, and Israel traversed the wilderness protected by all of them. They all form a bond of faith, and therefore Israel were bidden to dwell in booths seven days, so that the Israelite may show that he is dwelling in the shadow of faith. As long as Aaron was alive, Israel were in the shadow of faith under those clouds. When Aaron died, a cloud on the right departed and the rest departed with it, and the weakness of Israel was exposed, and straightway the king of Arad heard that the clouds had departed [Tr. note: Cf. T.B. Taanith, ibid.] and the great explorer to whom they were all linked was dead.’ R. Isaac observed that the King of Arad dwelt in the south, and the spies also brought back word that Amalek dwelt in the south,[[4]](#footnote-4) to awe the people, because Amalek had struck the first blow at them. R. Abba said: Why is the Canaanite mentioned here? Because Canaan was a slave of slaves,[[5]](#footnote-5) and this shows that he who withdraws himself from the shadow of faith deserves to be a slave to the slave of slaves. Hence “all that are homeborn in Israel shall dwell in booths”; everyone who is of the holy root and stock of Israel shall dwell in a booth under the shadow of faith. Shall he that is not of the holy stock withdraw himself from the shadow of faith? We are told that Eleazar the servant of Abraham was a Canaanite, but because he served Abraham, who sat under the shadow of faith, he was delivered from the curse of Canaan and was even called “blessed”, as it is written, “Come in, thou blessed of the Lord”.[[6]](#footnote-6) Thus whoever abides under the shadow of faith acquires freedom for himself and his descendants in perpetuity, and is blessed with a noble blessing, but he who withdraws from the shadow of faith brings captivity upon himself and for his children, as it is written, “And he took some of them captive”.*

There are several questions which arise: What is the ‘shadow of faith’,[[7]](#footnote-7) what does that mean?[[8]](#footnote-8) Why is the Succah connected with emunah?

To understand this enigmatic phrase, we must first examine the words ‘faith’[[9]](#footnote-9) or ‘belief’. The two words both carry the connotation of something that is blind. Faith and belief suggests that you believe something that you can’t ever know. This is silly when you are speaking about something as important as the Creator of the universe and one’s eternal destiny. Consider also that if you have faith in something that you can’t ever ‘know’, then how is your faith in HaShem any different from another man’s faith in little green men?

Emunah[[10]](#footnote-10) derives from the same root[[11]](#footnote-11) as ne’eman, meaning faithful or loyal. Even the most superficial examination of the word in Torah will show that it cannot be translated as faith in the sense of belief: in the verse:

***Shemot (Exodus) 17:12*** *But Moses’ hands were heavy; and they took a stone, and put it under him, and he sat thereon; and Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, the one on the one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were faithful until the going down of the sun.*

 “Va’yehi yadav emunah ad ba hashamesh, And his hands were loyal until the sun went down”; Moses’ hands stayed where they were, they remained *loyal* to their task. The verse cannot be translated in any other way. Hands cannot have faith or believe anything. In Judaism there is no such concept as contained in the English word ‘faith’. Even the Nazarean Codicil teaches that emunah requires ‘substance’ and ‘evidence’:

***Bereans (Hebrews) 11:1*** *Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the* ***evidence*** *of things not seen.*

A unique feature of the human condition is that we can know something with clarity and yet act in discordance with that knowledge. In disloyalty to that knowledge. You may acknowledge that a certain action is wrong and then do it anyway. who can claim that this is an unfamiliar problem? Free will means that you can act in disharmony with your intellect. Understanding a thing and all its consequences clearly does not guarantee that you will live in accord with your understanding, that you will be loyal to it. Not at all. It takes work to live up to the truth. That work is emunah.

Emunah relates very little to the idea of blind belief; it relates far more to the work of disciplining the heart and harnessing the hands in loyalty to the head. With this understanding, lets begin to look at the Succah.

What is a Succah? The mitzva of Succah has some unique characteristics which are not found in any other mitzva.

A Succah has to be flimsy, a trait not found in any other mitzva. The roof must be so thin that you can see the stars, and the rain can come through freely. Yet, the whole concept of a Succah is that it provides protection. We leave a solid structure, with the illusion of security, and enter a structure of emunah. Thus we leave our house, which does not provide protection, and enter this flimsy structure that does provide protection. This is the essence of bitachon.[[12]](#footnote-12)

The obvious conclusion derived from the mitzva of Succah is that our protection does not derive from the wooden or concrete walls of a building, but rather from HaShem. This is not an easy message to assimilate. When we live with the comforts of life, a high tech security system, and a fine home, it is hard to internalize that none of these things provide the slightest protection without HaShem’s desire.

Succoth does *not* come when we are planting because this is a time when we feel vulnerable. After all, there is uncertainty about the quality of the seed, the efficacy of the soil, and the availability of rain. No, Succoth occurs at the time of the harvest. Thus a time when we feel the most secure. It is precisely for this reason that we leave this illusion and live in a way that bends our minds to the reality that all of those items of security are meaningless and that the Succah is all we need because our protection comes from HaShem and from no other place. The Succah comes to inoculate our mind at a time when we feel that there is plenty and that we are self-sufficient. It has been said, in this regard, that the distance between us and HaShem is the thickness of our wallet.

We move into a Succah to teach ourselves that wealth, security, and plenty are not what brings us protection. That is why we read Kohelet (Ecclesiastes) at Succoth. The theme of this book is that all of our material wealth is illusory.

A major theme of Kohelet is the futility of mundane pursuits and pleasures, and the search for deeper meaning to life. Succoth is also known as Chag HaAsif, the Festival of Ingathering. It’s the time of year when the harvest has ended, and the crops are gathered and stored for the coming year. It’s a moment of great satisfaction, as one can see the fruits of his labor before him.

Kohelet shakes our contentment with the reminder that mundane accomplishments are fleeting and empty. Even at the close of the harvest, we must seek real achievement and fulfillment.

Succoth itself demonstrates this theme by the commandment to live in temporary dwellings. We move outside our home, which provides a sense of permanence and comfort, and instead dwell in a flimsy hut. This recalls the transience of physicality, as does the book of Kohelet.

A major mitzva of Succoth is to be joyful. The Torah comes to teach us that the way to have joy, when you have material security, is leave that security and move into this flimsy structure with no obvious protection. This is where we experience joy that is not based on our material things, which can let us down,[[13]](#footnote-13) but rather our joy is in HaShem. The only real joy is the realization that joy cannot be found in the things of this world, it can only be found in HaShem.

The Gemara[[14]](#footnote-14) says that if you have no trouble[[15]](#footnote-15) for forty days, then you are in disastrous trouble. The reason why it signifies trouble, is because it means that you are not worth being sensitized. It is like a father who has tried punishments, scolding, and every other discipline he could imagine, yet his son continues in his bad ways. When this father, finally, leaves his son and ignores his bad behavior, then the son knows that he is really in trouble because he is no longer worth fixing. In the same way, if you have learned to trust in material things for your protection, and you are not awakened by the succah, then there is no hope.

The deep joy that we experience comes from knowing that the pleasures and things of this world are to be enjoyed, but our eyes see that these are all from HaShem. The festive meals, the beautiful succah, the company of family and friends are all to be enjoyed at exactly the same time as we realize that all is from HaShem. This is true joy.

The word schach,[[16]](#footnote-16) סכך,[[17]](#footnote-17) and ‘succah’ both come from the same Talmudic root *sacar*, which means to ‘see through’. One of Sarah’s names was Iscah.[[18]](#footnote-18) This word has the same root as schach and succah and means “to see through”. Just as Sarah had incredible, almost irresistible, physical beauty, so much so that when she was advanced in age Paro[[19]](#footnote-19) desired her for a wife. But, in a deeper sense, this beauty meant that one could see that her spirit on the inside, and at the same time one saw her external beauty, and they were the same. What was on the inside is the same as what was outside, i.e. her deeds. When one looked at Sarah, they saw HaShem. The idea of Tzniut, often translated as modesty or privacy, carries the same idea, and is the ability of a woman to properly wear clothes[[20]](#footnote-20) so that her flesh is covered and her beauty is projected to the world.

In the same way, one could look through the succah’s temporary roof[[21]](#footnote-21) and see the stars. But, **the deep meaning is that Succoth is a time to see through physicality to what is beyond**. That is why the Succah has such a high place in the Torah. This ability suggests that we should be very careful about how we conduct ourselves in our succah. We should be mindful of what we are supposed to achieve. To our physical eyes it is just a hut, but to our spiritual eyes we see a place of intense spirituality. So, Succoth is a time to build emunah.

The succah is really beyond words, but we have only words to convey the meaning of this deep spiritual item. We want to reach beyond the words. The words can bring us to the brink, but our own inner daat[[22]](#footnote-22) must take over from the words and carry us to the real understanding. Emunah is the zone beyond the brink, it is true knowledge that cannot be put into words.

Emunah is the underlying assumption for all of the mitzvot[[23]](#footnote-23) in the Torah, in a sense it is the first commandment upon which all others depend. Maimonides[[24]](#footnote-24) holds this to be the first commandment; others hold that it is even more fundamental than a commandment, it is the substrate on which all the commandments depend. Emunah reaches into every other facet of Torah and of life!

The area of emunah, lets call it the knowledge of something higher, is knowing that HaShem exists and understanding the nature of our relationship. Many folks say that if they could just see a miracle, then they would believe in HaShem. But this is not the way of the world. Consider the following hint:

***Luqas (Luke) 16:19*** *There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: 20 And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, 21 And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man’s table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. 22 And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; 23 And in hell he lifts up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. 24 And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. 25 But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. 26 And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence. 27 Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father’s house: 28 For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. 29 Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. 30 And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. 31 And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.*

If we saw a miracle today, tomorrow we would wake up and suspect that we ha been dreaming. Doubt would immediately spring up in our imagination. The person who ‘needs’ a miracle to believe in HaShem will probably not use the miracle correctly and the miracle would be wasted. Emunah is not like this. The kind of person who has emunah does not need a miracle because he has already seen through the mask of nature and ‘knows’ HaShem. The reason that our generation does not experience miracles is because we would not use them correctly, and we would then become more culpable. Our tendency would be to take the miracle and explain it in a natural way, as though we could explain it through the laws of nature. Just as we do today when incredible coincidences occur.

The question that most people want to know is: Can we ‘KNOW’ that HaShem exists and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him?[[25]](#footnote-25) In summary, how can emunah ever be meaningful? The existence of HaShem is either definitely knowable, or it is not. If it is knowable with a definite clarity, then emunah would seem to be the wrong idea. But if HaShem’s existence is not knowable objectively, then emunah would seem arbitrary, no more than a personal emotion, really. And quite possibly a smokescreen, a confusing, deluding and enslaving thing. Can you know it as solidly as you know something in the physical world, or is it intrinsically unknowable? So what is emunah?

What we mean by emunah is not belief. We do not commit ourselves to something that is the product of imagination. We have not committed ourselves to HaShem throughout history because we decided subjectively and personally that such commitment was a good idea. Our commitment is based on knowledge. We assert that the object of our “faith” can be established and known. That *knowledge* is enlightenment itself, and that is the real value, not belief.

In fact, clarity of knowledge is exactly what we are seeking. Torah study is a demanding and rigorous training in objectivity. Torah students are not encouraged to accept anything uncritically and thoughtlessly; they are encouraged to think powerfully and logically. Torah learning is not an appeal to the emotions; it is a very demanding appeal to the intellect. To study Torah effectively you must be able to ask the most penetrating questions and learn to accept only completely satisfactory answers; only the highest standards of thought and logic are valid. We are not afraid of questions. On the contrary, asking difficult questions that cut to the root of an issue is the basis of learning.

Let’s assume that knowledge of HaShem is knowable, and let’s explore that pathway.

When we begin to learn any profession, we start at a point where we are told what to look for and what to expect, but when we try to do it for the first time, then we find that it seems impossible. It is like riding a bike. The first time we actually try it we find that it seems impossible to actually ride it. We watch someone else riding and it seems possible and even easy, yet when we try, we find it impossible. After we go through the process, the training, we, eventually, begin to be able to ride. Eventually, we find it to be so easy that it was hard to imagine that we first thought that it was impossible. With a bit a practice we can do unbelievable tricks that boggle the imagination.

Something which is unknown can be taught so that it becomes known. This process is normally called training. Thus the act of riding a bicycle is not faith, it is not blind; it is knowledge. If it is possible to know HaShem, then it is not faith, in the traditional meaning of the word; it is called knowledge. Like learning to ride, it is hard to acquire this knowledge and there may be many mishaps along the way, but it is possible if we persevere and patiently learn.

On the other hand, if knowledge of HaShem is not knowable, then you are in even bigger trouble. If I accept, with blind faith, that which is unknowable, then I am no better off than the one who believes in Santa Claus or the Easter bunny. Without knowledge, belief is just silly. The Christian idea of ‘faith’ as a blind belief in that which is unknowable that faith is directly contrary to the concept of emunah.

At a superficial level, it is possible to know HaShem. At some point, however, there is gap where we do not know. Consider that there is nothing in life which is ultimately knowable. The knowledge of HaShem is an expanded level of the knowledge of ourselves; knowledge of our own existence. Along with this knowledge, of self, is an awareness of something beyond that self. The most important tool in the knowing of something higher is the knowledge of your own existence; and knowing that you exist is not logical as it cannot be proven.

All of the *most* important things in life cannot be proven. For example, it is impossible to prove that you exist. “I think therefore I am”,[[26]](#footnote-26) means that I know that I am. This is *not* a formal demonstration of the fact.

Knowing that you have free will is not something that can be proven, you cannot demonstrate it. Knowing that you are human and not an animal cannot be demonstrated, it is unknowable. If you say that there is a demonstrable difference between me and an animal, you are saying something that is not demonstrable.

This line of thought can be continued by asking how you know that your parents are really your parents? The most basic things in our awareness live is an area which is not amenable to proofs. Consider that it is impossible to prove that you are awake right now. After all, in a dream we ‘know’ that it is real and our body reacts accordingly. Yet, when you wake up, you instantly know that a dream was just that. The dream was not real, despite the fact that we thought it was. This demonstrates how difficult it is to know that you are awake right now, you could be dreaming. Thus, the basic, important things in life are unknowable.

There nothing that you can know and no amount of miracles will change this situation. If Aristotle[[27]](#footnote-27) would have been at Mt. Sinai, he would have been able to bring Moshe Rabbenu[[28]](#footnote-28) a thousand proofs that it had never happened; after they had been there, it still would have been impossible to prove it! How do you prove that the Infinite G-d came down and met with finite people? It is not possible to prove this! Logically, Descartes would have been right, while being wrong in fact.

So, is there a leap of faith in accepting HaShem’s existence? Surely there must be when we can’t even prove our own existence! In Judaism we are going to look for ‘good enough’ evidence that I can act on the consequences. This will begin with common sense understanding that *I am here*, that *I am real*, and that I am not dreaming when I am not. This is good enough and I posit my life on those principles.

Consider that all other religions, save Judaism, are based on the testimony, or vision, of a single person. Judaism is based on the testimony of more than six million people who stood at the foot of Mt. Sinai and personally heard the voice of HaShem. Then, every year, they faithfully transmitted that testimony to their children at the Passover seder. *Jews all over the world* tell the same story to their children at the seder table. So, all over the world, Jews share the testimony of the events at Sinai! Remarkably, no other religion has ever claimed that this testimony was falsified. It is difficult to falsify because more than six million men, women, and children heard the voice of HaShem. They then testified this experience to their children for the last eighty generations.

Understanding that HaShem created the world can be found in the complexities of our created world. In the same way that a watch found in the wilderness is presumed to have been created by a man.[[29]](#footnote-29) Even a single living cell[[30]](#footnote-30) in man, animals, or plants give evidence that they, too, have a Creator.[[31]](#footnote-31)

Those who deny the creation are unable to explain how simple molecules came to be. A grain of dust on the moon is so complex that it boggles the mind. Even today we do not understand the atomic forces that go into such a simple thing. The way deniers explain this dust is to simply say that it has always existed. This lets them off the hook so that they do not need to explain its complexities.

Things in this world do not become more complex by themselves. It is axiomatic that everything will naturally decay. This is summed up in the second law of thermodynamics, which states that the entropy[[32]](#footnote-32) of any isolated system always increases. If a watch sits in the wilderness it begins to rust and decay. Eventually it will no longer be recognized as a watch. This is the nature of our world.

All proofs of HaShem’s existence are proofs by exclusions. We do not follow a process whereby we derive HaShem’s existence, but rather we try see if the world could be explained in its own terms, and we find that difficult to do. So, we take the world, or even a single molecule, and ask whether this could have happened by accident. Does this look like creation by random processes?

Consider that sodium is a metal that explodes when exposed to the air, and chlorine is a deadly gas. Yet when combined they form table salt.[[33]](#footnote-33) Could this have happened by accident? Is it reasonable to assume that this could have happened through random processes? It boggles the mind to even contemplate this. This implies that something else must have created these wondrous materials. This is an argument by exclusion. Consider what Sherlock Holmes said, “When you have eliminated the impossible, whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth?”[[34]](#footnote-34) We cannot prove HaShem’s existence by derivation, therefore we must prove it by exclusion because there is no other way.

A proof by exclusion can show what *did not* create this wondrous molecule, but, it cannot prove what *did* create it. Scientific analysis can bring us to the brink of understanding, but it cannot send us over the brink to the point of knowledge. To accomplish this, we need Torah. The point of the scientific processes is to shake us up and help us understand that creation must be something beyond the realm of science. In order to achieve true knowledge, we need the experience of Torah. This where the ‘leap of faith’ comes in. Emunah has this aspect of blind faith, but it comes after we know that all other possibilities have been excluded.

When Abraham is commanded to leave his home on the journey that begins Jewish history, he is not told the destination:

***Bereshit (Genesis) 12:1*** *Go from your land, from your birthplace and from your father’s house to the land which I shall show you.*

This is the classical structure of a test. The point of departure is clear; there is no doubt that he must go. The test is the journey that leads into the unknown; what he will find and what he must go through on that journey are not clear at all. The destination will become clear only when he gets there; the entire journey must be made only on the strength of the command to travel.

This is where we meet the element of the unknown in ordeals, and this is the element of truth in the world’s translation of emunah, as blind. If there is a blindness in tests, it is this: the destination is always hidden. You can never know what the end of the road will be until you are there because the end of the road is really the greater form of yourself that the journey is building. Each of life’s ordeals is an opportunity to become what you must be; you will know the meaning of that, only when you have made it real.

So, is it knowable or not? The Jewish answer is that it is knowable within certain limits. What is knowable is only that a certain thing must be, but getting into that thing and where it takes you is completely unknowable.

The correct translation of emunah is not *faith* but *faithfulness*, *loyalty*. The concept is this: when you have acquired spiritual knowledge, when you know clearly that what meets the eye is not all there is; the question, then, is will you be loyal to that knowledge? Will you live up to it? The problem of emunah is not how to gain knowledge of the spiritual world, it is the challenge of being faithful to that knowledge. In the gap between impersonal truth and direct personal experiential contact with that truth to the extent that no disloyalty can enter, then emunah becomes a possibility and an obligation.

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1. The Hebrew word succōt is the plural of succah, "booth" or "tabernacle", which is a walled structure covered with schach (plant material such as overgrowth or palm leaves). A succah is the name of the temporary dwelling in which farmers would live during harvesting, a fact connecting to the agricultural significance of the holiday stressed by the Book of Exodus. As stated in Leviticus, it is also intended as a reminiscence of the type of fragile dwellings in which the Israelites dwelt during their 40 years of travel in the desert after the Exodus from slavery in Egypt. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Zohar Emor 103a [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Bamidbar (Numbers) 20:1-2 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Bamidbar (Numbers) 13:20 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Bereshit (Genesis) 9:25 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Bereshit (Genesis) 24:31 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. The essence of a succah is its shade. A succah that has more sun than shadow is invalid. Our Sages teach that when we sit in the succah, we are sitting in "the shadow of faith". The spiritual masters derived this phrase from a verse in the Song of Songs 2:4, *"In His shadow, I delighted there and there I sat, and the fruit of His Torah was sweet to my palate."* - Faith is like a shadow. Faith is the knowledge of something that you cannot see. We can ***know*** there is a G-d but we cannot see Him. We can perceive the shadow of His existence, but we cannot see the Reality itself directly. We can experience closeness to G-d through tasting "the fruit of His Torah". We can experience the sweetness of that Existence that is beyond, but, for the very reason that He is beyond, we can never see that Existence.  [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Much of this paper is based on a shiur given by Rabbi Dr. Akiva Tatz, “Succoth in the Shadow of Faith”, and his book: Letters to a Buddhist Jew, with David Gottlieb. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. The dictionary gives the following religious definition: strong belief in G-d or in the doctrines of a religion, based on spiritual apprehension rather than proof. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Strong’s number 0530 - אמונה [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Strong’s number 0529 - אמון [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Generally translated as “trust”, *bitachon* is a powerful sense of optimism and confidence based not on reason or experience, but on emunah. You know that “HaShem is good and He’s the only one in charge,” and therefore you have no fears or frets. Strong’s number 0982 - בטח. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Matthew 6:19-20 Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Arachin 16b [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. A Divine visitation [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. The roofing material for a succah - The roof must be made from material that grows from the ground – i.e. branches or leaves (but not metal, or any food).  [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. The word *succah*comes from the same root as *schach*. In other words, the roof of the succah is the essence of the succah. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Bereshit (Genesis) 11:29 [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Pharaoh [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Her clothes simultaneously conceal and reveal. She does not wear a sack to accomplish this, but rather she wears elegant clothes that radiate her beauty while covering her arms, legs, and torso. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. The is composed of loose tree branches that provide more shade than sun and are loose and thin enough so that rain get through and one can see the stars. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Daat or Daas ("Knowledge", Hebrew: דעת) is a Hebrew word that means *Knowledge*. In the branch of Jewish mysticism known as Kabbalah, Daat is the location (the mystical state) where all ten sephirot in the Tree of Life are united as one. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. In its primary meaning, the Hebrew word mitzvah (plural מִצְווֹת mitzvot [mit͡sˈvot], Biblical: miṣwoth; from צִוָּה ṣiwwah "command") refers to precepts and commandments commanded by G-d. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Moshe ben Maimon, acronymed Rambam (Hebrew: רמב״ם‎‎ – for "Rabbeinu Moshe Ben Maimon", "Our Rabbi/Teacher Moses Son of Maimon"), and Graecized (and subsequently Latinized) Moses Maimonides, a preeminent medieval Sephardic Jewish philosopher and astronomer, became one of the most prolific and influential Torah scholars and physicians of the Middle Ages. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Bereans (Hebrews) 11:6 [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Cogito ergo sum is a Latin philosophical proposition by René Descartes usually translated into English as "I think, therefore I am".  [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Aristotle; 384–322 BC) was a Greek philosopher and scientist born in the city of Stagira, Chalkidice, on the northern periphery of classical Greece. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Moses, Our Teacher/Rabbi. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Watchmaker analogy. The watchmaker analogy or watchmaker argument is a teleological argument, which by way of an analogy, states that design of creation (like a watch) implies a designer. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. The living cell is best thought of as a supercomputer – an information processing and replicating system of astonishing complexity. DNA is not a special life giving molecule but a genetic data bank that transmits its information using a mathematical code. Most of the workings of the cell are best described as…information, or software. Trying to make life by mixing chemicals in a test tube is like soldering switches and wires in an attempt to produce Windows 98. It won’t work because it addresses the problem at the wrong conceptual level. (Dr. Paul Davies, Origin of Life expert, Physicist, Arizona State University) [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. “Although a biologist, I must confess I do not understand how life came about…I consider that life only starts at the level of a functional cell. The most primitive cells may require at least several hundred different specific biological macro-molecules. How such already quite complex structures may have come together remains a mystery to me. The possibility of the existence of a Creator, of G-d, represents to me a satisfactory solution to this problem.” (Dr. Werner Arber, Nobel Prize-Medicine, 1978) [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. A thermodynamic quantity representing the unavailability of a system's thermal energy for conversion into mechanical work, often interpreted as the degree of disorder or randomness in the system. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Sodium chloride [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Sherlock Holmes in *The Sign of the Four* (Doubleday p. 111) [↑](#footnote-ref-34)