

“Ani Ma’amin – I Believe” Part 3
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Readings

Torah: Deuteronomy 28:1-14, 30:11-20, 28:13-14

Haftarah: Isaiah Chapters 53 & 27; Joel 2:1-13

Apostolic: Matthew 5:13-20; Romans 11:13-27; John 5:21-32

Well, believe it or not, here we are for the final part of my teaching on **Ani Ma’amin**, “I Believe.” Believe it or not, it was four and a half months ago that I first began tackling this traditional statement of faith with you. My apologies for the stopping and starting, but we had some important festivals and events interceding! This teaching analyzes the **Ani Ma’amin**, which was written by Maimonides in the twelfth century as a statement of faith for Judaism, to counter the other Statements of Faith circulating at that point from Christianity and Islam. In this analysis, I have been reading first the traditional version of each point, explaining it, then giving my suggested rewording, if any, and the reasons for it. While I will read the actual revised version at the end, I won’t review the analysis of the previous points – the teachings are available to you on the internet or I can print them up for you – but let’s review briefly the format of the **Ani Ma’amin**:

The recitation consists of thirteen lines, each beginning with the phrase "**Ani ma'amin be-emunah shelemah**" ("I believe with a perfect faith"). What does that mean? Obviously, nothing about us is perfect in and of ourselves. Only with Messiah can we become perfected. Therefore, while we may say that we believe with a perfect faith, it is in the same vein as saying we are to be perfect as Messiah is perfect – we keep making t’shuvah (returning, repentance) towards an absolute truth, trusting that, through the ministration of the Messiah’s blood and the Shekinah, the Holy Spirit, we are proceeding towards our goal.

Last time, we finished with Point Seven, so let’s move on to the eight line of the traditional **Ani Ma’amin**, which is:

I believe with a perfect faith that the entire Torah that is now in our possession is the same that was given to Moses, our teacher, peace be upon him.

Now, just as it is, we can certainly agree with this. However, because of the anti-Torah stance of mainstream Christianity, and the impact this has made on mainstream Judaism, I feel this point needs to be expanded upon, in order to be clear about what we believe:

I believe with perfect faith that the entire written Torah that is now in our possession is the same that was given to Moses, our first teacher, peace be upon him, and that this instruction, as amplified and explained (though never contradicted or changed) in the **Tanakh** (Prophets and Writings) and the **Ketuvei HaShelichim** (Writings of the Apostles) is how God calls His Redeemed People Israel – whether their individual background is Jewish or of the Nations – to live.

You see what I mean? This point now responds to those on both sides who think we have – or should have – abrogated Torah as the instruction by which to live our lives. Also, the addition of the qualifier “written” before “Torah” shows that we believe that what we received from Moses – and that which can never be changed – is the written Torah as extant in Tanakh, not the so-called “Oral Torah,” the traditions as recorded in Mishnah, the first part of the Talmud. This is not to say we dismiss the Talmud. Rather, we accept it for it is – the historical record of the discourses and rulings made by many wise and learned men on the Torah. It is extremely valuable, but it is not to be swallowed whole as THE way to keep Torah... afterall, there are disagreements even within Talmud.

The ninth point of the classical **Ani Ma'amin** reads:

I believe with a perfect faith that this Torah will not be exchanged, and that there will never be any other Torah from the Creator, blessed be His name.

While the last point spoke of the past, this point speaks of the future. Again, I believe we could just say this, but again, because of the anti-Torah stance of mainstream Christianity, and the impact this has made on mainstream Judaism, I feel this point needs to be expanded upon, in order to be clear about what we believe:

I believe with a perfect faith that this Torah will not be exchanged, and that there will never be any other Torah from the Creator, blessed be His name, although it will be renewed and written upon our hearts at the time of the coming of the Kingdom.

Let me state boldly that I am simply standing with our Messiah Yeshua when I say points eight and nine, to quote Him from Matthew 5:17-19 –

Do not think that I came to abolish the Torah or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill. For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Torah until all is accomplished. Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

Continuing from there, we proceed with the tenth point of the classical **Ani Ma'amin**:

I believe with perfect faith that the Creator, blessed be His name, knows all the deeds of human beings, and all their thoughts, as it says: “Who fashioned the hearts of them all, Who comprehends all their actions.”

Amen? We read in Psalm 33:13-15:

The LORD looks from heaven; He sees all the sons of men; from His dwelling place He looks out on all the inhabitants of the earth, He who fashions the hearts of them all, He who understands all their works.

The only change I believe should be made to this point is to take the statement that He fashioned the hearts to the present tense, to match the Scripture, that He fashions the hearts of men, because not only did He do it once, when He made us, but He continually is working on our hearts, perfecting them with His Torah.

The eleventh point of the classical Ani Ma'amin reads:

I believe with a perfect faith that the Creator, blessed be His Name, rewards those that keep His commandments and punishes those that transgress them.

Again, totally true... as far as it goes. Certainly, we believe in the rewards and punishments for keeping and transgressing the commandments, as we read clearly in Deuteronomy Chapters 28 & 30, which I won't read now, but which are encapsulated well in:

Deuteronomy 28:13-14

The LORD will make you the head and not the tail, and you only will be above, and you will not be underneath, if you listen to the commandments of the LORD your God, which I charge you today, to observe them carefully, and do not turn aside from any of the words which I command you today, to the right or to the left, to go after other gods to serve them.

and:

Deuteronomy 30 from vv. 14-16 & 19-20

But the word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may observe it. See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, and death and adversity; in that I command you today to love the LORD your God, to walk in His ways and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His judgments, that you may live and multiply, and that the LORD your God may bless you... I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. So choose life in order that you may live, you and your descendants, by loving the LORD your God, by obeying His voice, and by holding fast to Him; for this is your life and the length of your days...

But there is more to be said in our Messiah Yeshua. For His sacrifice has redeemed us from the ultimate punishment for our transgressions – the second death, the death that is final and destroys the soul. And it is this sacrifice that has enabled our friends from the Nations to join those of us who are Jews in being grafted into the Tree of Israel, so we have my variation on this eleventh point:

I believe with a perfect faith that the Creator, blessed be His Name, blesses those that keep His commandments and punishes those that transgress them, and has provided through the sacrifice of Yeshua HaMashiach for the salvation of man from the ultimate punishment for those transgressions, grafting and regrafting all those who Believe into the Tree of Israel.

This is wholly in keeping with the prophecies of Messiah in Isaiah 53 and the statements made by Rabbi Paul about the grafting of those of the Nations and the re-grafting of Jews into the Tree of Israel in Romans 11. Building from there, we proceed with the twelfth point of the classical **Ani Ma'amin**:

I believe with a perfect faith in the coming of the Messiah; and even though he may tarry, nonetheless I wait every day for his coming.

Of course, what we would say is:

I believe with perfect faith in the returning of the Messiah; and even though He may tarry, nonetheless I wait every day for His coming.

Not that we are waiting for some glorious Rapture to remove us from the scene before the seven years of Tribulation! We are waiting – through the years of Tribulation – for Him to return to gather us together in safety before pouring out His Wrath upon all mankind, as we are plainly shown in Isaiah Chapters 27 & 28 and Joel Chapter 2; but also in:

Matthew 24: 4-31

And Yeshua answered and said to them, “See to it that no one misleads you. For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will mislead many. You will be hearing of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not frightened, for those things must take place, but that is not yet the end. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and in various places there will be famines and earthquakes. But all these things are merely the beginning of birth pangs. Then they will deliver you to tribulation, and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations because of My name.

At that time many will fall away and will betray one another and hate one another. Many false prophets will arise and will mislead many. Because lawlessness is increased, most people's love will grow cold. But the one who endures to the end, he will be saved. This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come.

Therefore when you see the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains. Whoever is on the housetop must not go down to get the things out that are in his house. Whoever is in the field must not turn back to get his cloak. But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! But pray that your flight will not be in the winter, or on a Sabbath. For then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will. Unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short.

Then if anyone says to you, ‘Behold, here is the Christ,’ or ‘There He is,’ do not believe him. For false Messiahs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect. Behold, I have told you in advance. So if they say to you, ‘Behold, He is in the wilderness,’ do not go out, or, ‘Behold, He is in the inner rooms,’ do not believe them. For just as the lightning comes from the east and flashes even to the west, so will the coming of the Son of Man be. Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather.

But immediately after the tribulation of those days THE SUN WILL BE DARKENED, AND THE MOON WILL NOT GIVE ITS LIGHT, AND THE STARS WILL FALL from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the SON OF MAN COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF THE SKY with power and great glory. And He will send forth His angels with A GREAT TRUMPET and THEY WILL GATHER TOGETHER His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other.”

There’s a lot to unpack there! So, I invite you to be here every Shabbat beginning October 2, as I Drash Through the Gospels & Acts! Now that the commercial is over, I hope you see that we have incredible proofs to Messiah’s Return, and what it will be like. So let no one deceive you on this point.

And now, the thirteenth and final point of the classical **Ani Ma’amin**:

I believe with perfect faith that there will be a revival of the dead at the time when it shall please the Creator, blessed be His name, and His mention shall be exalted for ever and ever.

Again, fine, as far as it goes, but I believe we need some further clarification:

I believe with perfect faith that there will be a revival of the dead to judgment – some to life eternal through the atonement of the Messiah, others to death in the fiery pit – at the times appointed by the Father, blessed be His name, and His name shall be exalted forever and ever.

Why times? There is a good deal of question as to how many resurrections there will be, if there are general resurrections or specific resurrections, etc. We read in the Apostolic Writings primarily various statements that make it hard to be definitive. But there are certainly at least two, as we read in:

Revelation 20 vv.4-8 & 12-15

Then I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and they came to life and

reigned with Christ for a thousand years. The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years. When the thousand years are completed, Satan will be released from his prison, and will come out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together for the war ...

And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

And so, we have come to the end of our journey through Ani Ma'amin. Now, I will reiterate the revised points of the Ani Ma'amin. You are free to join me if you wish:

Ani Ma'amin as modified for Messianic use from Maimonides

I believe with a perfect faith that the Creator, blessed be His Name, is the Creator and Guide of everything that has been created; He alone has made, does make, and will make all things. [Genesis/Beresheit 1; Gospel According to John/B'Sorah v'Yochanan 1]

I believe with a perfect faith that the Creator, blessed be His Name, is One, and that there is no unity in any manner like His, and that He alone is our God, who was, and is, and will be. [Deuteronomy 6:4; Gospel According to Matthew/B'Sorah v'Mattityahu 22:36-40; Gospel According to John/B'Sorah v'Yochanan Chapter 10]

I believe with a perfect faith that the nature of ADONAI is a compound unity (echad) manifesting Himself in three primary ways to us (**HaAbba** [The Father], **HaBen** [The Son, Yeshua/Jesus, the Messiah, the Middle Pillar of the Godhead, the physical, human manifestation of God] and **Shekinah** [the Dwelling of God with Man, also called the Holy Spirit/Breath]. [Exodus 24:9-11]

I believe with a perfect faith that the Creator, blessed be His Name, is the first and the last. [Gospel According to John/B'Sorah v'Yochanan 1; Isaiah 44:6; Revelation 22:13]

I believe with a perfect faith that to the Father, blessed be His Name, and to Him alone, it is right to pray, and that we should pray to Him in the Name of the Son, the Creator. [Gospel According to Matthew/B'Sorah v'Mattityahu 6:9-10; First Letter to the Corinthians 1:2; Ephesians 5:20]

I believe with a perfect faith that all the words of the prophets are true. [Gospel According to Matthew/B'Sorah v'Mattityahu 5:17]

I believe with a perfect faith that the prophecy of Moses, our teacher, peace be upon him, was true, and that the prophecy of Moses, “The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him you shall lend an ear,” speaks of our teacher Yeshua the Messiah, and it is He to whom I shall lend my ear. [Deut. 18:15-19; Yesha’yahu/Isaiah 51:16; Gospel According to Luke/B’Sorah v’Uri 2:25-34; Gospel According to John/ B’Sorah v’Yochanan 5:39-47, 8:25-30, 12:44-50, 17:5-8; Ma’aseh Shelichim/Acts of the Apostles Chapter 3]

I believe with a perfect faith that the entire written Torah that is now in our possession is the same that was given to Moses, our first teacher, peace be upon him, and that this instruction, as amplified and explained (though never contradicted or changed) in the **Tanakh** (Prophets and Writings) and the **Ketuvei HaShelichim** (Writings of the Apostles) is how God calls His Redeemed People Israel – whether their individual background is Jewish or of the Nations – to live. [Gospel According to Matthew/B’Sorah v’Matityahu 5:17-19]

I believe with a perfect faith that this Torah will not be exchanged, and that there will never be any other Torah from the Creator, blessed be His name, although it will be renewed and written upon our hearts at the time of the coming of the Kingdom. [Gospel According to Matthew/B’Sorah v’Matityahu 5:17-19]

I believe with a perfect faith that the Creator, blessed be His name, knows all the deeds of human beings, and all their thoughts, as it says: “Who fashions the hearts of them all, Who comprehends all their actions.” [Tehillim/Psalms 33:15]

I believe with a perfect faith that the Creator, blessed be His Name, blesses those that keep His commandments and punishes those that transgress them, and has provided through the sacrifice of Yeshua HaMashiach for the salvation of man from the ultimate punishment for those transgressions, grafting and regrafting all those who Believe into the Tree of Israel. [Deuteronomy/Devarim Chapters 28 & 30; Yesha’yahu/Isaiah Chapter 53; Gospel According to Matthew/B’Sorah v’Matityahu 5:17-18; Gospel According to Mark/B’Sorah v’Mordechai 16:20; Igeh’ret et haRomim/Letter to the Romans Chapter 11]

I believe with a perfect faith in the returning of the Messiah; and even though He may tarry, nonetheless I wait every day for His coming. [Isaiah/Yesha’yahu Chapters 27 & 28; Joel/Yoel Chapter 2; Gospel According to Matthew/B’Sorah v’Matityahu Chapter 24; First Letter to the Corinthians/Igeh’ret Rishon et haCorintim Chapter 12; First Letter to the Thessalonians/Igeh’ret Rishon et haTesolonikim Chapter 4]

I believe with a perfect faith that there will be a revival of the dead to judgment – some to life eternal through the atonement of the Messiah, others to death in the fiery pit – at the times appointed by the Father, blessed be His name, and His name shall be exalted forever and ever. [Gospel According to Matthew/B’Sorah v’Matityahu Chapters 11 & 12; Gospel According to John/B’Sorah v’Yochanan Chapter 5; Letter to the Romans/Igeh’ret et haRomim 2:1-8, 14:10; First Letter to the Corinthians/Igeh’ret Sheni et haCorintim Chapter 4; Letter to the Hebrews/Igeh’ret et Ivrim Chapters 9 & 10; Peter’s Second Letter/Igeh’ret Sheni v’Kefa; Revelation to John/Hitgalut et Yochanan Chapter 20]

Now that’s something you can believe with a perfect faith.