

Unabridged Version

And the fifth consideration is from the perspective of the purpose. And this is that the purpose of this book is to bring a person to reach his true end, and to make known the conclusion and end of the world. And indeed, regarding the end of man, there is a disagreement among the sages of our nation. For the great Rabbi Maimonides thought that the purpose of reward and punishment for a person is designated for his soul after separation from the body, in the world of souls. And he believed also in the principle of the resurrection of the dead, that the souls will return to be connected to bodies in a miraculous manner. And already, the foundations of this opinion are found in the words of Isaiah in his prophecy 31: "Listen diligently to Me, and eat what is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear and come to Me, listen, and your soul shall live," etc. From this it appears that the reward for the commandments is the delight that comes to the soul, its life, and its persistence after the separation from the body.

And a second opinion among our sages, at the head of which are the Gaon Rav Saadia, and Rashi, and the holy Rabbi Nachmanides in his "Shaar HaGemul" held and accepted that the essential reward for the commandments is not for the soul alone in the world of souls, but rather for the soul and the body together in the resurrection of the dead. And that the time that comes after the resurrection is what is called the World to Come. And also this opinion Isaiah validated in his prophecy 32, saying about the reward of the commandments: "And the Lord shall guide you continually, and satisfy your soul in drought, and make strong your bones; and you shall be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail." Because since the reward will be in the world of souls

and also in the world of resurrection, therefore the prophet established both opinions together.

Indeed, regarding the principle of resurrection, the words of the Rabbi Maimonides came very briefly in his commentary to the Mishnah. And aside from that, we found his letter that he wrote about the matter of the resurrection. But regarding some of its foundations, as he left them, the other sages did not agree with him.

And the Gaon in his book "Emunot VeDeot" brought many arguments, questions, and answers in this topic. But even in his words I saw great doubts. And so too in the words of the later ones, that is, the Ramban and Rabbi Hasdai and others.

And I greatly expanded the investigation into this topic—its causes, its beginnings, and resolving the doubts that fall into it. And I clarified the correct from the incorrect among the opinions of these rabbis in the essay "Tzedek Olamim" that I composed. And also in the essay "Nachalat Avot," chapter 4, on the Mishnah "Those born to die, and the dead to live again," I mentioned from it fourteen principles regarding the topic of resurrection, which are depicted like engraved seals in that Mishnah.

And here, I will point out to you the principles that Isaiah clarified in this matter in his prophecies. But do not expect that in each principle I will mention the arguments and proofs and the answers to the doubts that fall into them and the opinions of the sages regarding them. But I will mention them here as statements, in order to explain how many of the wondrous principles and prophecies the prophet Isaiah clarified in this topic that the other prophets did not see.

And I say that the prophet Isaiah saw in the matter of the resurrection more than all the other prophets saw. For he prophesied about this matter in six places in his book:

The first is in the second prophecy, in the section: "And it shall be on that day, the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established," and in the section: "For the day of the Lord of Hosts shall be upon everyone that is proud and lofty."

The second place is in the eleventh prophecy, in the section: "Woe, land of the whirring wings," and in the section: "For thus said the Lord to me, I will sit still and look from My place."

The third place is in the twentieth prophecy, in the section: "From the uttermost part of the earth," and the other sections that follow it.

The fourth place is in the twenty-seventh prophecy, in his words: "Everyone that is called by My name, for My glory I have created him," and the verses that follow it.

The fifth place is in the twenty-eighth prophecy, in the section: "But Zion said, the Lord has forsaken me."

And the sixth place is in the final prophecy, which is prophecy thirty-five, in the section: "Hear the word of the Lord, you who tremble at His word," and onward until the end of the book.

For behold, in these prophecies it is clear to me that Isaiah prophesied about the matter of the resurrection of the dead, as I will prove in their explanation. And from his words, he revealed in this matter fourteen principles, and I will gather them one by one from his prophecies and point them out to you here.

The first principle is the truth of the doctrine of resurrection—that is to say, those who have died and whose spirits have separated from their bodies will return again to this physical life. Regarding this, it says in the twentieth prophecy: "Your dead shall live, my dead bodies shall arise; awake and sing, you who dwell in the dust." Similarly, the angel said to Daniel: "And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake." For he described them with the term "sleep" to indicate that they are not dead in the sense that one might say, "The dead shall not live," but rather they are like those asleep in their graves. And just as one who is asleep has suspended sensations and then his soul returns to him and he awakens, so too the dead are as if asleep and will awaken from their sleep at the resurrection. Regarding this, it says, "They shall be gathered together as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison, and after many days they shall be visited," according to the true interpretation, that the dead at their resurrection will be as though they had not died but had been confined and are now being released. And it says, "Death will be swallowed up forever" — meaning, death will not be eternal but only until a limited time, at which point the resurrection will occur.

The second principle is that the resurrection of the dead will not be merely the soul returning to a body, and that body being something different from the one that perished, as the Christian sages believed. For if that were so, it would be reincarnation into another body or a completely new creation—not resurrection of those who had already died. Rather, the Torah's belief is that the same original body will be reconstituted from the same elements, in the same qualities and proportions and with its original composition, and the same soul that was in it originally. Regarding this, it says in the eleventh prophecy: "For thus said the Lord to me: I will be still and observe from My dwelling-place" — meaning that the prophet will rest from the noise of this world, which is a metaphor for death, and then he

will return to observe from his place, that is, his original body. And it describes the form of the resurrection by saying: "As the heat under a clear light, as a cloud of dew in the heat of harvest," as will be explained further in its place. And in the second prophecy it says: "The windows from on high are opened" — meaning that the soul returns, and "the foundations of the earth do shake" — meaning the parts of the body return to their original structure, and the recombination and interaction of the components is called a quake. Regarding this, it says, "The earth is utterly broken, the earth is torn apart," etc.

The third principle concerns the agent of resurrection. You should know that among the ancient Indian sages who dealt with astronomy, some affirmed the resurrection of the dead, but said it was necessitated by the cosmic order. That is, at a certain time the alignments and motions of the stars and constellations would bring about the destruction of the natural order and a return to its original state. They proposed various durations: some said the world's lifespan is 4,320,000 years; some said 36,000 years; some 360,000; others 12,000 (corresponding to the zodiac); others 49,000 (based on the seven ruling planets, each ruling for 7,000 years); and some said 7,000 years, each planet ruling for 1,000 years. All this was recorded by Rabbi Abraham bar Chiyah in his book "Megillat HaMegalleh," where he also proved these opinions were baseless according to true wisdom. Even according to their theory, resurrection would merely be a re-creation over time, not a resurrection. But the prophet Isaiah, who stood in the counsel of God, clarified that the resurrection will occur through a wondrous miracle, and the one who performs it will be the Holy One, not the cosmic order. As it says in the twentieth prophecy: "On that day the Lord will punish the host of the high ones," and: "They shall be gathered as prisoners," and: "The moon shall be confounded and the sun ashamed, for the Lord of Hosts shall reign in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem." Therefore,

the time of resurrection is called "the day of the Lord," since it will be miraculous, like the initial intentional creation, not according to nature.

The fourth principle concerns the form of resurrection. Many doubts arose among the ancient Ishmaelites, Christians, and even among sages of our nation: how can the original body, which has decomposed and scattered many times, return to existence? Because of this, some later Jewish sages faltered and said that the resurrection is merely a metaphor for the ingathering of exiles; that "awake and sing, you who dwell in the dust" means, metaphorically, the raising of the downtrodden; and that "He will revive us after two days, on the third day He will raise us up" refers to spiritual revival. But all this denies the truth of Scripture and is outright heresy. For resurrection is affirmed by the Torah and accepted by nations in their lands. As for how the body returns, the Gaon explained that a person's body does not fully dissolve into the basic elements but remains inscribed and separate within them, preserved for reformation into the resurrected body. Even more fitting is to say that the Holy One will create new bodies from the dust of the earth with heavenly dew, just like the body of Adam was formed at creation. These new bodies will be exactly like the original ones, with the same proportions and temperaments. And since characteristics follow temperament, it must be that they will be identical to the original bodies. And because the matter is the same and the soul, which is the distinguishing essence, is the same one that was there before, it is accurate to say that it is the same people returning to life. Rabbi Hasdai noted this, and Isaiah prophesied this principle, saying in the eleventh prophecy: "For thus said the Lord to me: I will be still and observe from My dwelling-place, as the heat under a clear light, as a cloud of dew in the heat of harvest," hinting that his place and body in resurrection will be like his original body, with natural heat and moisture, and in general with the same faculties. And he also said in the twentieth prophecy: "Your dead shall live,

my dead bodies shall arise; awake and sing, you who dwell in the dust, for your dew is as the dew of light, and the earth shall cast forth the shades." He revealed here that a dew from God will descend upon the earth's dust, and that dew will have the power of the male seed to give form, and the earth will be prepared like the female seed to be the material for that body.

The fifth principle concerns the purpose of the resurrection. Since every natural action is directed toward a defined purpose, and all the more so divine actions, which are more perfect and therefore must have an even more essential purpose, it is fitting that we should seek the purpose behind this great wonder. Why should the soul, after having been in the spiritual realm receiving reward or punishment, return to dwell again in the afflicted body after having already departed from it?

Now, Rabbi Maimonides in his Epistle on Resurrection did not provide a clear answer to this. The Gaon, followed by the Ramban, Rabbi Hasdai, and other sages, said that the purpose of the resurrection is so that the complete servant—that is, the human being composed of body and soul—can receive the reward for his service or punishment for his rebellion. But I have explained in my essay "Tzedek Olamim" that this view is incorrect, for the reward and punishment for the commandments pertains to the soul alone, not the body. And if both were obligated to receive it, they should have received it in this world and not require the wonder of resurrection. Therefore, I say that we should envision a specific purpose for the resurrection for Israel alone, and a more general purpose for all nations.

The specific purpose for Israel is this: that those who feared God and honored His name, who died in exile with embittered souls and did not partake of the goodness, will merit the salvation of God in the future

redemption. Isaiah confirmed this in the twentieth prophecy when he responded in God's name to the prophet's lament about the dead in exile, saying, "The dead shall not live, the shades shall not rise"; and God answered: "Your dead shall live, my dead bodies shall arise," as will be fully explained there. And in the thirty-fifth prophecy he also said: "Who has heard such a thing? Who has seen such things?... Zion has both labored and borne her children... Shall I bring to the point of birth and not bring forth?" Rejoice with Jerusalem and be glad with her, all who love her; delight in her, all who mourned for her" — meaning that those who died in exile will rise in the resurrection and rejoice in Jerusalem. And he said: "You shall see, and your heart shall rejoice, and your bones shall flourish like the grass," etc.

But the general purpose of the resurrection for all nations is as follows: since they remained in their lands with distorted beliefs and false religions — some worshiping the sun and moon, others attributing divinity to various entities — and all of them missing the true purpose for which they were created, God, so that humanity should not have been created in vain, saw fit to show them the path they should follow and the deeds they should do, in such a way that sin would be eliminated from the earth, iniquity would close its mouth, and idols would be utterly destroyed. Then all the inhabitants of the world would recognize and know that God is King and ruler over the nations.

Therefore, God will create a new wonder in the world—to revive the dead who have already died: among them righteous ones, prophets, sages of the generations known by name, and also the wicked—kings, emperors, and great figures of the world, including some who died recently and are recognizable to all. They will all, with one voice, testify and declare: "The Lord is God, the Lord is One, and His name is One. Truly our ancestors

inherited falsehood, vanity in which there is no benefit. Moses and his Torah are true." When people see the deeds of God, that He is awesome, and when the resurrected declare the eternal reward of the souls of the righteous of Israel and the punishment of the wicked and sinners, and they clarify the divine truth and the delusions of men in their beliefs, the hearts of people will be stirred, and they will abandon their idols and false religions and turn to the words of the resurrected. They will no longer follow futility. This is the great and awesome day of the Lord spoken of by the prophets.

And on this Isaiah said in the second prophecy: "And it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established at the top of the mountains," etc., and "Many nations shall go and say," etc. And he said, "For the day of the Lord of Hosts shall be upon everyone that is proud and lofty." That whole section refers to this, as will be explained. And in the twentieth prophecy, he said: "From the uttermost part of the earth we have heard songs, glory to the righteous"; and he said: "And He will destroy on this mountain the covering that covers," etc. These passages will be explained in their places, and they are undoubtedly referring to this matter.

The sixth principle concerns the material of the resurrection—that is, who will be resurrected. Will it be all human beings ever created from the six days of creation until the time of resurrection? That is impossible, for the earth cannot contain them all. And if not all, but only some will rise, then who? How can we know who they are? Is it random or selective?

The Gaon, the great Rabbi Maimonides, the Ramban, Rabbi Hasdai, and their students all concluded that only the righteous of our nation will rise at the resurrection. They supported this view with the statement of the

sages in Bereishit Rabbah: Rain is for both the righteous and the wicked, but the resurrection is for the righteous only. But this is a strange view, for Scripture says: "And many of those who sleep in the dust shall awake—some to everlasting life and some to shame and everlasting disgrace." If only the righteous rise, then surely they are few, and would be written as "a child could count them." How then could it say, "many"? And more explicitly, Scripture cries out: "some to everlasting life and some to shame." Isaiah also says: "And they shall go forth and see the corpses of the men who rebelled against Me," showing that even some of the wicked will rise to receive their punishment.

Indeed, this belief is rooted among all nations, as if the truth is imprinted on their lips. As for the rabbinic saying that rain is for both the righteous and wicked, but resurrection is for the righteous only, they did not mean to deny resurrection to the wicked but to clarify the benefit and reward of resurrection—unlike rain, which benefits all alike, both righteous and wicked. The resurrection will bring benefit and reward only to the righteous; the wicked will be exposed for punishment and public shame.

Also, that teaching from Bereishit Rabbah, as cited in Tractate Ta'anit, was said by Rabbi Abbahu, but not all sages accepted it. For they said it contradicts Rav Yosef, who said: "Because it is equivalent to resurrection, they established it in the blessing of resurrection." And you can see that the Talmud follows Rav Yosef's view, as I explained in Tzedek Olamim.

Isaiah also clarified that people from the nations will rise at the resurrection, including kings and governors from every region, meaning that in each region specific people will rise to proclaim the truth of God. They will serve as faithful witnesses to the truth of His divinity. This is the meaning of his words in the eleventh prophecy: "Woe, land of the whirring wings," as will be explained. And in the twentieth prophecy he said: "The

Lord of Hosts will make for all peoples a feast of fat things, a feast of wines." And our sages interpreted in Pirkei deRabbi Eliezer on the verse "Your dead shall live, my dead bodies shall arise," that all the dead will rise at the resurrection except for the generation of the Flood, as it says: "The shades shall not rise, the dead shall not live." These refer to the nations who are like the carcasses of animals—they will rise, but not live.

In the twenty-seventh prophecy, he said regarding the resurrection: "Everyone who is called by My name and whom I created for My glory," etc. "Let all the nations be gathered together," because those who rise will proclaim the truth of God and reveal judgment in Gehinnom. Therefore it says: "Let them bring their witnesses and be justified; let them hear and say, it is true." "You are My witnesses," says the Lord, "and My servant whom I have chosen" — "You are My witnesses" refers to the nations, and "My servant" refers to Israel.

The seventh principle is about the state and appearance of those who rise. Since the human body changes daily due to food and environmental effects, and especially through the stages of life—childhood, youth, maturity, old age, and decline—we must ask: in which form will they rise? As young or old? With their former stature and youth or their later decline? The answer is: they will rise in the exact state they were at the time of their death—young or old. The sages even said they will rise with the same defects they had at death so they will be recognizable to others, and people will be more emotionally impacted by their words. This relates to the verse: "And he will turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers." Regarding this, Isaiah said in the twentieth prophecy: "And on this mountain He will remove the covering that covers all peoples" — meaning God will reveal those hidden under the earth, hence the double expression "the covering that covers."

The eighth principle is that those who rise will recognize their relatives and loved ones. Since recognition is a function of physical faculties, once they return with body and soul, they will fully recognize one another. This recognition will amplify the emotional impact. Since, as stated, they will rise with their features and defects, the identification will be clear. The sages said: "And we will raise over him seven shepherds and eight princes of men." Who are the shepherds? They said: David in the center, with Seth, Enoch, and Methuselah to his right, and Abraham, Jacob, and Moses to his left. The eight princes are Jesse, Saul, Samuel, Amos, Zephaniah, Hezekiah, Elijah, and the Messiah. This shows that the resurrected will be known by name. And on this Isaiah said in the twenty-seventh prophecy: "You are My witnesses," says the Lord, "and My servant whom I have chosen" — to show that those who rise will be identifiable as from the nations or from Israel.

The ninth principle is that those who rise will eat, drink, and use their senses, according to Maimonides. Their limbs and senses will not be in vain. Isaiah made this clear in the thirty-fifth prophecy, saying: "So that you may nurse and be satisfied from the consolations of her glory; so that you may drink deeply and delight in the abundance of her splendor." And he said: "You shall see, and your heart shall rejoice, and your bones shall flourish like the grass" — to show they will enjoy physical pleasures in the chosen land.

The tenth principle is that the wicked and gentiles who rise at the resurrection will receive physical punishment in this world, in front of others, and will acknowledge the justice of their fate. People will see from their punishment that their beliefs were false, and that they are accountable. About this Isaiah said in the final prophecy: "And they shall go out and see the corpses of the men who rebelled against Me, for their worm shall not die, and their fire shall not be quenched; and they shall be

an abhorrence to all flesh." Because of this, "from new moon to new moon and from Sabbath to Sabbath, all flesh will come to bow," for all will accept His sovereignty.

The eleventh principle is that in the generation of resurrection, pride and arrogance will be abolished from people. When they see the resurrected, they will be humbled, and will know that their deeds were vain, their thoughts empty, and their pursuits foolish. They will recognize that success and happiness come only through complete faith, through calling upon God and serving Him. They will despise worldly honor and greatness, and understand that power holds no sway in death. Isaiah clarified this in the second prophecy, in the section: "For the day of the Lord of Hosts shall be upon everyone that is proud and lofty... the haughtiness of man shall be bowed down, and the pride of men shall be brought low, and the Lord alone shall be exalted on that day."

The twelfth principle is that in the generation of the resurrection, there will no longer be kings or rulers among people. Instead, all will be equal, as they were at the beginning of creation in the generation of Adam. There will be no need for kings—not for war, since peace will reign with none to threaten, nor for judgment, for judgment will belong to God, and "the Lord will be King over all the earth." Isaiah also prophesied this in that same second prophecy, saying: "For from Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem; and He shall judge among the nations, and rebuke many peoples," and "they shall beat their swords into plowshares," etc., and "nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." And at the end of that section he said: "Cease from man, whose breath is in his nostrils; for what is he to be accounted of?"

The thirteenth principle is that in the generation of the resurrection all forms of idolatry, images, and false gods will be nullified, because the resurrected will declare that it was for these sins their punishment was sealed. Isaiah said in that same second prophecy: "And the idols shall utterly pass away," and: "In that day a man shall cast away his idols of silver and his idols of gold, which they made each one for himself to worship, to the moles and to the bats, to go into the clefts of the rocks and into the tops of the ragged rocks, for fear of the Lord and for the glory of His majesty, when He arises to shake terribly the earth." And since it says afterward: "Cease from man," it is also appropriate to apply this to the belief in Jesus, that they will cease believing in him and those who follow after him. For he was but a man, like one of us, with breath in his nostrils—and what is he worth? Regarding this, in the twentieth prophecy it says: "From the uttermost part of the earth have we heard songs, glory to the righteous." "Uttermost part" ("kanaf") indicates hiddenness, as the Guide for the Perplexed explains, on the verse: "He shall not uncover his father's skirt (kanaf)." The nations will say that from the hidden parts of the earth—i.e., from the resurrected who were buried—they have heard songs proclaiming glory to the righteous, meaning that in the world of souls the righteous (i.e., Israel) will have great reward and honor. Therefore, the nations will lament and say, "Secret to me, secret to me, woe is me," for traitors have betrayed, those who abandoned their religions. Even their sages who followed after them were traitors, for they all betrayed the truth by turning their hearts backward in their false beliefs.

The fourteenth principle is that the time of the resurrection will coincide with, or be close to, the time of the ingathering of the exiles. Therefore, you always find in the words of the prophets that the resurrection is mentioned near the mention of redemption. Isaiah made this clear in the eleventh prophecy, in the section: "I will be still and look from My dwelling," where

he said: "For before the harvest, when the blossom is over and the flower becomes a ripening grape, He will cut off the sprigs," etc. In the twentieth prophecy, right after saying: "Your dead shall live," he says: "Come, My people, enter into your chambers," and immediately recalls the redemption: "In that day the Lord will punish with His great sword," and: "In that day a great shofar will be blown." In the twenty-seventh prophecy he says: "Fear not, for I am with you; from the east I will bring your seed," etc., and: "Everyone that is called by My name, and for My glory I created him, I formed him, yes, I made him," and other verses, as will be explained in their context.

Thus, we have explained from Isaiah fourteen upright principles regarding the resurrection, for just as he gave fourteen promises about the redemption, so too he established fourteen principles regarding the resurrection of the dead. Truly, the hand of the Lord was great upon him in this matter. You will not find anything like this in any other prophet. For although Ezekiel prophesied about the resurrection, and so too Zechariah and Malachi, they only clarified a few of these principles.

Behold, then, it is evident that regarding the ultimate purpose of man, Isaiah saw what Ezekiel son of Buzi and the other prophets did not see. And as for the ultimate conclusion—that is, the end and destruction of the world—this too is a matter of Divine proclamation, that the world will perish and end. As he said in the twenty-eighth prophecy: "Lift up your eyes to the heavens and look upon the earth beneath; for the heavens shall vanish like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner," etc. And in the thirty-first prophecy he said: "For the mountains shall depart and the hills be removed." So he also prophesied about the end and destruction of the world more explicitly than any other prophet.

Therefore, because of these five considerations, it is fitting that our ancestors placed the book of Isaiah at the head of the prophetic books. And I too have chosen their path to explain it first. To make the memory of the prophecies and their contents easier, I have divided his prophecies according to their topics and connections and treated each one separately. At the beginning of each prophecy I posed six questions, as I did in my commentary on the earlier prophets. And at the start of each prophecy I mention its general theme. In places where the topic required lengthy treatment, I did not cut it short.

Additionally, I inform you here that Isaiah contains many varied prophecies on the same topic. For example, he prophesied many times about Sennacherib and the fall of Babylon. The same is true of the redemption and resurrection. But each prophecy was in a unique style, just as other prophets did, like Jeremiah who repeatedly prophesied about the fall of Egypt. Because of their differing styles, the prophecies were separate in wording though unified in content. The repetition of prophecy in these cases indicates the certainty of the promise and the generosity and kindness of the Giver, may He be blessed.

You will also see in the prophets' words that they often refer to the nation in various ways: sometimes in the masculine (as a people), sometimes in the feminine (as a congregation); sometimes in singular (representing the collective), sometimes in plural (reflecting the multitude). Sometimes they speak in the second person, sometimes in third—for this suits the modes of teaching and rebuke. Sometimes future events are described in the past tense, as if the prophets had already seen them fulfilled. And sometimes past events are described in the future tense, for the future often carries a present sense, as if they were happening in that very moment.