
EVIDENCE FOR TORAH M'SINAI II

Witnesses, Prophecy, Jewish Survival, Mitzvot, Torah Scrolls

This is the second Morasha class providing evidence that God gave the Torah to the entire Jewish nation at Mount Sinai. This class will discuss: relying on the descendants of original witnesses to an event; prophecy; mitzvot that demonstrate control of the world; the Torah's honesty and self-critique; the miracle of Jewish Survival; and the accuracy of Torah scrolls.

This class will address the following questions:

- ~ How can we rely on generations of descendants of the original witnesses to national revelation?
- ~ Which unpredictable Torah prophecies have been fulfilled indicating Divine foresight?
- ~ Which mitzvot demonstrate Divine control of nature and history?
- ~ How is the Torah uniquely honest and self-critical?
- ~ What accounts for the miraculous survival of the Jewish people?
- ~ How compatible are Torah scrolls found over the centuries throughout the world?

Class Outline:

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Section II. Conflicting Historical Records

Section III. The Torah's Unique and Unpredictable Prophecies

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Part B. Prophecy of the Destruction and Exile of the Jewish People in 70 C.E.

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SECTION I. RELYING ON THE DESCENDANTS OF ORIGINAL WITNESSES

The Holocaust Analogy

The Holocaust provides a painful yet powerful example of how a religious or political agenda can lead, within a number of decades, to the denial of a historical event known to millions. For those who wish to deny, no eyewitness accounts, and certainly no testimonies of second generation survivors, will suffice to establish the truth. The same principle applies to the giving of the Torah at Sinai. Although those who wish to deny will continue to do so, our knowledge of the event, as passed down from generation to generation, is absolute.

1. Rabbi Lawrence Hajoiff, Analogy to the Holocaust

We rely upon the testimony of the descendants of the original witnesses to the revelation of the Torah at Mount Sinai. There have been multitudes of descendants from the original three million eyewitnesses who have attested to the veracity of the Divine revelation at Mount Sinai, despite the existence of others who dispute the event.

We can draw an analogy, albeit painful, to our own lifetimes. In our own generation we have found numerous, seemingly credible individuals who deny that the Holocaust ever occurred. The result is a strange dynamic – we had millions of eyewitnesses (not to mention films, photographs and documentation) that the Holocaust occurred, yet there are still those who actually contest its authenticity! Nevertheless, the world at large does not deny the historical fact of the Holocaust. We are now at the stage that descendants of the survivors of the Holocaust, the second generation, are being relied upon to attest to its veracity.

2. Partial List of Holocaust Deniers

Mahmoud Ahmadinejad

The President of Iran has said that the Holocaust was fabricated and had been promoted to protect the State of Israel.

Austin J. App

Former professor of English at LaSalle College, Philadelphia, author of numerous neo Nazi pamphlets, one called “Did Six Million really Die? The Truth at Last.”

Arthur Butz

Professor of Engineering at Northwestern University and author of “The Hoax of the Twentieth Century” denying the death camps and the extermination of millions of Jews. He claims that the fabrication of the Holocaust seeks to enlist support for Israel by appealing to peoples’ guilt feelings.

Willis Carto

Founder of the Institute for Historical review (1978) in Torrance CA. The I.H.R. publishes journals and sponsors conventions designed to whitewash Nazi war crimes by denying the Holocaust.

Robert Faurisson

Holds a PhD from the Sorbonne in Paris. He was dismissed from his position as professor of French at Lyon University for revisionist views and was convicted by a French court for defaming the victims of the Holocaust. He claims that the Nazi gas chambers never existed and the facts about the Holocaust and the number of victims have been grossly exaggerated.

George Pape

President of the American Committee of Greater New York (a cultural organization with over 50 branches in the Metropolitan area). Objected to the introduction of teaching the Holocaust in the school system with the words: "There is no real proof that the Holocaust really happened."

3. **Lucy Dawidowicz, Maariv Newspaper, April 30 1981 (Original in Hebrew) – A historical fact can be challenged by someone born after the event.**

Can all these lies change the truth? *Can an honest and intelligent person believe in a criminal and absurd falsehood which claims that Nazi Germany never murdered six million Jews?* Who can give credence to the monstrous lie that Auschwitz never housed gas chambers? To our chagrin, these are not merely rhetorical questions. Before this article, a young man who works on a radio program in North America approached me and asked if I would be willing to debate Robert Faurisson on the air. When I replied angrily that it would be a travesty of justice and decency to give such a man a public platform, the young man answered: "Why are you opposed to dealing with a problem which is up for debate?" I asked him if, in his opinion, the murder of European Jewry was included in the category of "up for debate." Has it not been proven as a historical fact? "I wouldn't know" he answered, "I wasn't born yet; I am only 30."

4. **The World Gathering of Jewish Holocaust Survivors, Jerusalem, June 14-18, 1981 – The corroboration of a historical fact becomes the responsibility of the subsequent generations of survivors.**

Ernest Michel: Chairman of the Gathering

My name is Earnest Michel, Auschwitz number one-zero-four-nine-nine-five. Like many of you I had a dream, that one day – if we live – we could come and stand together.

This is a reunion of a special group of people for which there is no parallel anywhere. We want to stand together once more before time runs out united in freedom as we were in slavery. We want to see in each other's eyes and in the eyes of our children the proof of our survival and the joy from being alive and free. But there is more than that; we survivors want to tell those who try to rewrite history and deny that the Holocaust ever happened. Our eyes have seen, our ears have heard, our nostrils were filled with acrid fumes from the gas chambers drifting over our camp year after year. These hands (Michel lifts his hands up in the air) have carried more corpses than we care to remember. So don't tell us it never happened: we were there.

Represented here were almost one thousand members of the second generation. I am pleased to announce that they have formed here in Jerusalem a second generation international network whose major purpose will be to carry on the memory of the Holocaust.

Thursday evening was the closing ceremony at the Western Wall. With six thousand memorial candles lit ... This was the evening of the future, the transmission of the legacy. In six languages (Hebrew, Yiddish, English, French, Ladino, and Russian) a survivor read the legacy, and the son or grandson of a survivor received it. For forty-five minutes, ten thousand people sat in perfect silence as an Israeli, an Australian, a New Yorker, a Parisian, and another Israeli read it in each of the six languages.

5. **Elie Wiesel, Speaking at a Press Conference The critical role of transmission.**

The second generation is the most meaningful aspect of our work. Their role in a way is even more difficult than ours. They are responsible for a world they didn't create. They who did not go through the experience must transmit it.

Just as it is essential for those who did not experience the Holocaust to transmit the event to future

generations, so too has each generation since the giving of the Torah been entrusted with transmitting the National Revelation at Mount Sinai.

SECTION II. CONFLICTING HISTORICAL RECORDS

The technique of finding conflicts between the Bible and ancient historical records is often employed by skeptics to show that the Bible is not authentic. This method is dishonest, because the bias and inherent inaccuracy of ancient records (other than the Bible) are well known.

1. **Rabbi Dovid Gottlieb, Living Up to the Truth, 1996, p. 35 – The existence of conflicting records.**

The Torah contains a vast amount of historical material. Evidence that the Torah is true must also apply to this material. Since questions have been raised about the factual accuracy of the Bible as an account of ancient history, we ought to discuss that for a bit.

The Bible talks about the lives of the Patriarchs, wars, migrations, famines, marriages, and all kinds of other events in ancient history. How reliable is that record? Here is a popular way to investigate the reliability of the Bible. The Bible is what is in question and therefore we should not assume that it is true. Now, if we can find other ancient records, for example, ancient hieroglyphics, Syrian records, or Babylonian records, then we could check the Bible against them. If the Bible agrees with them that is indication and evidence that the Bible is correct. If the Bible disagrees with them, then that shows that the Bible is incorrect. That is an objective, neutral way of assessing whether the Bible's account of history is correct or incorrect.

Does that strike you as fair? I should hope not because it isn't fair. The mere fact that the Bible would contradict other ancient records doesn't prove that the Bible is wrong. Maybe the other records are wrong! A mere contradiction only shows that somebody is wrong. Why assume that the Bible is wrong? That would just be a hidden prejudice against the Bible. When there is a contradiction between the Bible and other ancient sources, then the question has to be raised: How can we best understand the nature of the contradiction, and which source do we rely upon?

2. **Ibid. – History and national glorification.**

Now, in making that evaluation you must know one fact – all ancient histories were written as propaganda. This is something upon which historians and archaeologists agree. The function of ancient histories was to glorify contemporary powers, and therefore they would not record their own defeats. After all, the scribes were their employees. You see this, for example, in the following type of historical chain of events. You read in the hieroglyphs that Pharaoh I raised a great army and conquered a number of provinces, and his son Pharaoh II raised even a larger army and conquered more provinces. Then, there is a hundred year gap in the history. What happened during those 100 years? For that you have to go to the Babylonian records. That is when the Babylonians were defeating the Egyptians. The Egyptians don't record that because that doesn't glorify their empire. They just leave it out.

SECTION III. THE TORAH'S UNIQUE AND UNPREDICTABLE PROPHECIES

One method by which the authenticity of the Torah can be proved is the veracity of its prophecies. The Torah contains many prophecies of events either unknown, or very unlikely at their time of writing. The coming to fruition of these prophecies is a strong indication of the Torah's Divine source.

PART A. HOW PROPHECY INDICATES THE DIVINITY OF TORAH

1. **Proofs, Ner LeElef, 2004 <http://www.nerleelef.com/booklets.htm> – Predictions that could not have been known or forecast.**

The Torah contains laws and predictions that a human being could not have conceivably known or predicted. For example: The generation who received the Torah at Mount Sinai will die out over forty years; the next generation will inherit Eretz Yisroel by conquering the mighty Canaanites; it will then be divided in a very specific way amongst the tribes. There are a tremendous number of very precise variables here that could have happened in a different way: the fate of the entire first and second generations, the outcomes of the wars with the Canaanites, etc.

Other prophecies include:

1. Anti-Semitism
2. The Jewish people will remain few in number
3. The Jewish people will be scattered over the earth
4. Despite great anti-Semitism they will always survive
5. They will always remember the Torah
6. The Western Wall will never be destroyed

Not only does the Torah make these general predictions, but it also makes detailed predictions about very specific events:

1. A detailed description of the destruction of both Temples
2. A description of the nation who will destroy the Second Temple
3. The Jews will be taken to Egypt by ships and sold as slaves

2. **Rabbi Dovid Gottlieb, Living Up to the Truth, pp. 31-33 – Case in Point: Prophecy if Jews do not maintain Torah standards.**

In Devarim 28:30 there is a prediction of what will happen to the Jewish people if they don't live up to the standards of the Torah. It predicts conquest accompanied by wanton slaughter of the population: men, woman, children, old, young, and so on. It predicts an exile resulting in world-wide scatter, and that during this period of world-wide scatter, Jews will have no independent government. One result of the exile is that some Jews will be brought back by boat to Egypt to be sold as slaves, and they will not be purchased. Nevertheless, the Jewish people will survive, will never completely be destroyed, and will ultimately return to the Land of Israel. It also predicts that the conqueror will speak a language that the Jewish people don't understand.

3. **Ibid. – Unique predictions, which are otherwise unexplainable.**

As it is explained in Chapter II of Living Up to the Truth, what is crucial about this prediction is that it should be a *unique* prediction, namely, a prediction no one else can explain. Because if it is a prediction that other people can explain, it no longer functions as a crucial experiment. It no longer distinguishes between what you are claiming and what others can claim. So, let's ask ourselves about each of the details in this prediction, whether their coming true could have been explained

prediction that other people can explain, it no longer functions as a crucial experiment. It no longer distinguishes between what you are claiming and what others can claim. So, let's ask ourselves about each of the details in this prediction, whether their coming true could have been explained by a sociological analysis of the times or by a competing ideology – or whether it is something that someone could explain only from the Jewish point of view.

4. **Ibid. – Fulfilled Torah prophecies cannot undermine Jewish claims.**

[Of course, if someone should agree with our prediction *from our sources*, then his making that prediction cannot count for him *against us*! If Christians and Moslems accept Devarim 28:30 (Deuteronomy) and predict that the Jews will be exiled as a result of their failure to live up to the Torah, when that prediction comes true it does not give Christianity and Islam positive evidence against Judaism, since we all agree on that prediction.]

Now, let's see which of the details of this prediction could have been explained by an observer with a point of view other than that of the Torah. The prediction of conquest is not very difficult. Everybody gets conquered sooner or later.

PART B. PROPHECY OF THE DESTRUCTION AND EXILE OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE IN 70 C.E.

1. **Ibid. – Destruction and exile – rare events predicted and fulfilled.**

There was a prediction of total destruction: a decimation of the population and exile. That was rare in the ancient world. It happened, but it was rare because the purpose of conquest was economic. Typically it was a question of acquiring colonies and taxing them. You can't tax people if you slaughter the population and exile them. Now, I'm not talking about theft. Of course you want to take all the gold and silver, gems, fine linen and so on. You may take the young, fine, strong men off as slaves. But, you don't wantonly slaughter the rest of the population because there is no point in destroying your tax base! During their 300 years of rule, the Romans did this only to Carthage and the Jews. So, the prediction of the wanton slaughter of the population and exile were predictions that could not be anticipated to really occur because they were not the normal procedure in the ancient world.

2. **Ibid. – The prediction of the conqueror speaking a foreign language.**

Now, let's take the prediction that the conqueror will speak a language that you don't understand. Why should I think that? Neighboring countries typically understood one another's languages. There was enough commerce and travel for each to be familiar with the language of the other. Couldn't we have been conquered by a neighbor? Alternatively, couldn't we be conquered by a country that spoke an "international language?" Many Jews understood Greek. Greek was in those days similar to what English is today. Business contracts, trade and diplomacy were conducted in Greek. Had any Greek-speaking nation conquered and exiled us, this prediction would have been false. But the Romans conquered us and they spoke Latin. Latin was a language with which Jews were not familiar.

3. **Ibid. – Worldwide dispersion, some exiles are taken to Egypt in boats.**

If a nation is going to be exiled, who says that it will end up all over the world? Why should that be an automatic consequence of exile? Not everyone who was exiled from their countries ended up with identifiable communities all over the world. Even when the Babylonians exiled us five hundred years earlier, we didn't end up all over the world. The vast majority of the population was taken off to Babylon, a large group went to Alexandria in Egypt, but there were many places in the world without identifiable groups of Jews.

If they were going to end up in exile, how could one predict with confidence that some of them will be taken back to Egypt in boats to be sold, and that there will not be anybody there to buy them? Why should one think that? It is true that there was a slave trade flourishing and that there were known slave routes, but who is to say that it would definitely happen?

4. **Ibid. – No independent Jewish government established in exile.**

If you are going to predict exile scattered all over the world, how can you be sure that at no point will any Jewish society form an independent government in some portion of the earth's surface? Don't forget, we are talking about two thousand years ago. Two thousand years ago the world wasn't organized with maps and boundary lines so that every square millimeter of the earth's surface belongs to one nation or another, and sometimes to two or three. On the contrary, there were vast areas of the earth's surface that were unclaimed, unsettled, and simply wild: for example, parts of Russia, North Africa, the Arabian Peninsula, and Central Africa. Who is to say that Jewish exiles would not form an independent society in one of these places?

Now that means that for each of these predictions, if I don't have a Jewish perspective, and I look at it neutrally, or I look at it as a Buddhist, a Hindu, or a Taoist, a Confucianist, or as an atheist, I would expect them not to occur, and I would not be able to explain them if they did occur.

PART C. ASSIGNING PROBABILITY TO DETAILED PREDICATIONS

1. **Ibid. – Assigning probabilities to the predictions of Devarim 28-30.**

If I were to assign probabilities to each of these detailed predictions from any of those non-Jewish points of view, the probabilities would be very low. Total destruction and exile; let's say that this occurred in 10% of all ancient wars. Then a non-Jewish observer would give it a probability of 1/10. How often did the conqueror speak an unknown language? We don't know. Neighbors did fight, and the languages of great empires were widely known. Let's say generously that it happened a quarter of the time giving us a probability of 1/4. Being scattered all over the world as a result of exile, as far as I know, didn't happen at all. Strictly, I suppose the probability should be zero! But let's be generous and give it a probability of 1/10. To take a nation that is scattered all over the world and thus be unable to organize itself into an independent society, again, I don't know what the probability of that would be, so I'll give it a probability of 1/4. To survive under these conditions and return to one's land has never happened in the history of the world – strictly speaking we should give it a probability of zero! But let's be generous and say 1/10.

2. **Ibid. – Low probability for prophecy sequence is evidence for Torah truth.**

Now, when you have predictions for a sequence of events and each event has a probability, and you want to know the probability of them all coming true, you multiply the probabilities. So, we multiply $1/10 * 1/4 * 1/10 * 1/4 * 1/10$ and we come out with a probability of 1/16,000. This is a very small number. That is the confidence that a neutral observer would have in this prediction. What is the likelihood that a prediction like this would come true? One chance in every sixteen thousand tries. Given the evidence the observer had to go on, there is no way for him to explain why it came true.

But, it happened. That being the case, this is what I called earlier a unique prediction. It is a prediction whose truth no one else can explain. Had anyone seen the prediction before it happened, the response should have been that this is fantasy. Therefore, when it comes true, it contributes to the truth of Judaism. It is a relevant piece of evidence.

SECTION IV. MITZVOT THAT DEMONSTRATE DIVINE CONTROL OF NATURE AND HISTORY

Apart from prophecies that were fulfilled, the authenticity of the Torah emerges from a number of mitzvot that no human would establish, since they are extraordinary in their scope and could potentially endanger the entire Jewish People such as the *Shmittah* (Sabbatical year) and the Pilgrimage Festivals. They could only have been legislated by a Higher Authority possessing the ability to provide bumper crops prior to the *Shmittah* year and protect the nation during the festivals.

PART A. SABBATICAL AND JUBILEE YEARS

Proofs, Ner LeElef, 2004 <http://www.nerleef.com/booklets.htm>

1. *Shmittah* (The Sabbatical Year) and the Pilgrimage Festivals

The mitzvot of *Shmittah* and the Pilgrimage Festivals could only have been given by a being who could control nature (*Shmittah*) and history (Pilgrimage Festivals). Had Moshe invented the Torah, he would have been foolish to include these laws, for after the first *Shmittah* the whole nation would have starved and Moshe would have been revealed to be a trickster. Similarly with the Pilgrimage Festivals – after the nations surrounding Israel realized that three times a year the entire nation abandons the whole country and leaves it undefended to go to Jerusalem, they would have invaded on the next festival, occupied the whole country unimpeded, and besieged Jerusalem. As with *Shmittah*, a total national disaster would have probably ensued.

2. Sources for Sabbatical and Jubilee Years, Vayikra (Leviticus) 25:3-4, 20-22

Six years you shall sow your field ... But in the seventh year shall be a Sabbath of rest to the land ...

And if you shall say, "What shall we eat the seventh year? Behold, we shall not sow, nor gather in our produce," then I will command my blessing upon you in the sixth year, and it shall bring forth fruit for three years. And you shall sow the eighth year, and eat still of the old crop until the ninth year; until its crops come in you shall eat of the old store.

שש שנים תזרע שדך ... ובשנה השביעית שבת שבתון יהיה לארץ...

וכי תאמרו מה נאכל בשנה השביעית הן לא נזרע ולא נאסף תבואתינו: וצויתי את ברכתי לכם בשנה הששית ועשה את תבואתה לשלש השנים: וזרעתם את השנה השמנית ואכלתם מן התבואה ישן עד השנה התשיעית עד בא תבואתה תאכלו ישן

No human would have dared to suggest such an agricultural system. He would surely know that after the first *shmittah*, the game would be up. All human systems would suggest some system of crop rotation.

3. Kli Yakar, *Ibid.* 25:2 – *Shmittah* opposes any natural method of agriculture

... God completely removed them from the natural way of the world because it is the usual practice of the other nations to plant for two years followed by one fallow year ... Furthermore, a double miracle occurred during each *Shmittah* cycle.

... הוציאם ה' מן המנהג הטבעי לגמרי כי בשש שנים דרך האומות לעשות שני שנים זרע ושנה אחת בור ... ועוד גם בתוך נס שאחר שזרעתה שש שנים אם בשנה הששית לא יכחיש חילה לכל הפחות לא יוסיף לה זה כח ואמר ד' אדרבה שבשנה הששית יוסיף לה כח...

One would expect that by the sixth year the ground would have lost its ability to be productive. Here God tells us just the opposite – that each sixth year, the land will have increased productivity!

PART B. PILGRIMAGE FESTIVALS

1. Pilgrimage Festivals: Shemot (Exodus) 34:23-24 – Three times annually all adults traveled en-masse to Jerusalem.

Three times each year all the men will appear before the Lord, the God of Israel. For I will cast out the nations before you, and enlarge your borders; nor shall any man desire your land, when you shall go up to appear before the Lord, your God, three times a year.

שלוש פעמים בשנה יראה כל זכורך את פני האדון ה'
אלוקי ישראל: כי אוריש גוים מפניך והרחבתי את
גבולך ולא יחמוד איש את ארצך בעלותך לראות את
פני ה' אלוך שלוש פעמים בשנה

No human would dare suggest such suicide – to completely remove all able-bodied men from the entire countryside three times a year.

2. Rabbi Samson Rafael Hirsch, *ibid.* – Relying on Divine protection.

... Every soldier will be gathered at the center point in Jerusalem at the Temple ... and no covetous enemy will dare cross the border into the rich unprotected land lying open before him. Israel's land will not be protected by an army at its frontiers, but from its central point by its devotion to, and acknowledgment of, God.

3. Talmud Yerushalmi (Jerusalem Talmud), Peah 3:7 – Divine protection of assets.

During one of the pilgrimage festivals, one of the travelers to the Temple in Jerusalem left his wheat unguarded in his field. Upon his return he found lions surrounding [and guarding] it. Another traveler left his chicken pens [unguarded,] and upon his return found cats ripped apart near them. Another traveler left his home unlocked, and upon his return found a snake curled around the lock guarding it.

Rabbi Pinchas recounted the following incident: Two brothers who resided in Ashkelon had non-Jewish neighbors. These neighbors plotted to take advantage of the brothers' ritual ascent to Jerusalem in order to plunder the belongings they had left behind. After the brothers departed on their journey, God sent angels to live in their home. When the brothers returned after the holiday, the gentiles asked them, "Where have you been?" They replied, "In Jerusalem."

מעשה באחד שהניח את כריו ובא, ומצא אריות
סובבים אותו. מעשה באחד שהניח בית של תרנגולים,
ובא ומצא חתולים מקורעים לפניו. חד בר נש שביק
ביתו פתוח, ואתא ואשכח חכינה כריכה על קרקסו.

רבי פנחס משתעי הדין עובדא. תרין אחין הוון
באשקלון. הוו להון מגורין נוכראין אמרין, כדין אילין
יהודאין סלקין לירושלם, אגון נסבין כל מה דאית להון.
מן דסלקין, זימן להם הקב"ה מלאכים נכנסים ויצאים,
בדמותן... אמרו לון, אן הויתם. אמרו לון, בירושלם.

They asked, “Who did you leave behind in your home?” They answered, “No one.” [Having grasped the miracle performed by God] the gentiles exclaimed, “Blessed is the God of the Jews, Who does not abandon them, and surely will never abandon them in the future.”

אמרו לון, ומאן שבקותון בגו ביתא אמרו, ולא בר נש.
אמרו, בריך אלקהון דיהודאי דלא שבקון ולא שביק
להון.

SECTION V. THE TORAH IS UNIQUELY HONEST AND SELF-CRITICAL

We have already mentioned the dishonesty and bias of classical ancient sources. Of all ancient sources, only the Torah chronicles the defeats and failures of its subject – the nation of Israel and its leaders – alongside their victories and triumphs.

1. **Proofs, Ner LeElef, 2004 <http://www.nerleef.com/booklets.htm>, p. 33 – The Torah is critical of the Jewish people.**

The accuracy of the text is confirmed by the honesty with which the Torah criticizes the Jewish nation whenever they engage in negative behavior. History is most often changed by the desire of the national scribes to present the best face of their country, even if this means massive re-writes of history. Even in our own time, we have witnessed Communist, African, Arab, Nazi and other countries manipulate and distort history to place themselves in the best light. Not so the Torah. The willingness of the Torah to show the Jewish people in a bad light, whenever this was so, is a further guarantee of its historical accuracy. Time and time again the Jews are shown transgressing, doubting Moshe and even God and being punished for it. Some examples: the Golden Calf, the incident of the Complainers in the desert and the plague, Korach, the Waters of Contention, Kozbi, and the gatherer of sticks.

2. **Ibid. – Jewish Leaders and role models make mistakes.**

Moreover, not only is this true of the nation as a whole, but also of the “heroes” of the Torah and the leaders of the people. The Torah records Miriam and Aaron speaking pejoratively about Moshe. Furthermore, Moshe was criticized for not sanctifying God when striking the rock in the desert instead of speaking to the rock to bring forth water.

No other nation has been as willing to portray its negative side in the name of historical truth.

SECTION VI. JEWISH SURVIVAL

One of the most remarkable phenomena of world history is the survival of the Jewish people. Against all the odds, without power or autonomy, scattered across the entire globe, the Jews have proved eternal while other powers and cultures have vanished. The prediction of this extraordinary survival by the Torah underscores its Divine source.

PART A. THE PROMISE TO AVRAHAM (ABRAHAM)

1. Bereishit 17: 7 – God forges an eternal covenant with Abraham and the Jewish people.

I will establish my covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you throughout the generations as an everlasting covenant, that I will be God for you and for your descendants after you.

והקמתי את בריתי ביני ובינך ובין זרעך אחריו לדורות
לברית עולם להיות לך לאלהים ולזרעך אחריו:

PART B. SURVIVAL IN EXILE

1. Rabbi Yehudah HaLevi, *The Kuzari*, Metsudah Edition, pp. 12-19 19 – Survival in hostile conditions for 2,000 years.

And the source of our survival under our present circumstances of dispersion and exile is none other than the living God.

It is inconceivable that any other nation could have survived an exile as long [1,911 years] and troubled as the present without assimilating among other nations. History is replete with nations which arose after us and perished without leaving a trace. Among them are Edom, Moab, Ammon, Aram, the Philistines, the Chaldeans, the Persians, and many others.

PART C. SURVIVAL AGAINST ALL ODDS

1. Mark Twain, *Concerning the Jews*, Harper's Magazine, March 1898 – Not only is their survival unprecedented, the Jews have excelled in contributing to world culture out of proportion to their numbers.

If the statistics are right, the Jews constitute but one percent 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 also way out of proportion to the weakness of his numbers.

He has made a marvelous 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 splendor, 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 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?

SECTION VII. UNIFORMITY OF TORAH SCROLLS WORLDWIDE

Another pointer to the Divine origin of the Torah is the uniformity of Torah scrolls over the course of history. The remarkable conformity of Torah scrolls, notwithstanding thousands of years of scattered exile, is a “supernatural” phenomenon.

PART A. PROCESS OF VERIFYING THE TORAH TEXT

1. Devarim Rabbah 9:9 – System for verification of authenticity.

The Sages said, “Since Moshe (Moses) knew that he was to die on that day, what did he do?” Rabbi Yanai said, “He wrote thirteen copies of the Torah; twelve he gave to the twelve tribes, and one he put in the Ark. So that if one would want to make a false change in the text, there would always be a copy in the Ark against which the change could be verified.”

רבנן אמרי כיון שידע משה שהיה לו למות באותו היום
מה עשה. א"ר ינאי כתב י"ג תורות י"ב ל"ב שבטים
ואחת הניח בארון. שאם יבקש (אחד) לזייף דבר שיהיו
מוצאים אותה שבארון.

PART B. RIGOR OF WRITING AND CHECKING NEW TORAH SCROLLS

1. Yehoshua (Joshua) 1:1-2, 6-8 – Leaders after Moshe Rabbeinu are responsible for ensuring the reliability of the Torah.

Now it came to pass after the death of Moshe the servant of God, that God spoke to Yehoshua the son of Nun, assistant of Moshe, saying, “Moshe My servant is dead, now therefore arise, cross this Yarden (Jordan), you, and all this people, to the land which I give to them, to the Children of Israel ...

“Be strong and courageous for it is you who will cause this people to inherit the land that I have sworn to their fathers to give to them. Only be strong and very courageous, to observe to do according to the entire Torah which Moshe My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may have success wherever you go. This book of the Torah shall not depart from your mouth, rather you shall meditate on it day and night, so you may observe to do according to all that is written in it; for then you shall make your ways prosperous, and then you will act wisely.”

ויהי אחרי מות משה עבד ה' ויאמר ה' אל יהושע בן נון
מושרת משה לאמר. משה עבדי מת ועתה קום עבר את
הירדן הזה אתה וכל העם הזה אל הארץ אשר אנכי נתן
להם לבני ישראל... חזק ואמץ כי אתה תנחיל את העם
הזה את הארץ אשר נשבעתי לאבותם לתת להם.

רק חזק ואמץ מאוד לשמר לעשות ככל התורה אשר
צוה משה עבדי אל תסור ממנו ימין ושמאל למען
תשכיל בכל אשר תלך. לא ימוש ספר התורה הזה
מפיך והגית בו יומם ולילה למען תשמר לעשות ככל
הכתוב בו כי אז תצליח את דרכך ואז תשכיל.

2. Talmud Bavli, (Babylonian Talmud), Eruvin 13a – Scribes must take great care when writing Torah scrolls.

When [Rabbi Meir] came to Rabbi Yishmael to learn Torah, he was asked, “What is your profession, my son?” “I am a scribe,” was the reply. He said to him, “My son, be careful with your work, for it is the work of Heaven. Should you perhaps omit one letter or add one letter – you could thereby destroy the entire world.”

וכשבאתי אצל רבי ישמעאל אמר לי בני מה מלאכתך
אמרתי לו לבלר אני אמר לי בני הוי זהיר במלאכתך
שמלאכתך מלאכת שמים היא שמא אתה מחסר
אות אחת או מויתר אות אחת נמצאת מחריב את כל
העולם כולו

3. Rashi, *ibid.* – Mistakenly omitting or adding letters.

It is written in the Torah, “And God is True.” If one omits the *alef* he causes destruction. [Since this results in the Hebrew word – מת.]

It is written in the Torah, “And God spoke.” If one letter [*vav*] is added and he writes: “And they spoke,” he causes destruction.

וה' אלהים אמת אם תחסר אל"ף הרי אתה מחריב,

וידבר ה' אם תוסיף אות אחת ותכתוב וידברו נמצאת מחריב:

To eliminate any chance of human error, the Talmud enumerates more than twenty factors mandatory for a Torah scroll to be considered “kosher” (valid). This is the Torah’s built-in security system. Should any one of these factors be lacking, it does not possess the sanctity of a Torah scroll, and cannot be used for a public Torah reading.

The meticulous process of hand-copying a scroll takes about two thousand hours (a full-time job for one year).

4. Factors disqualifying Torah scrolls (Based on Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 32, 143 and Yoreh Deah 272)

Throughout the centuries, Jewish scribes have adhered to the following guidelines:

- A Torah Scroll is disqualified if even a single letter is added.
- A Torah Scroll is disqualified if even a single letter is deleted.
- The scribe must be a learned, pious Jew, who has undergone special training and certification.
- All materials (parchment, ink, quill) must conform to strict specifications, and be prepared specifically for the purpose of writing a Torah Scroll.
- The scribe may not write even one letter into a Torah Scroll by heart. Rather, he must have a second, kosher scroll opened before him at all times.
- The scribe must pronounce every word out loud before copying it from the correct text.
- Every letter must have sufficient white space surrounding it. If one letter touched another in any spot, it invalidates the entire scroll.
- If a single letter was so marred that it cannot be read at all, or resembles another letter (whether the defect is in the writing, or is due to a hole, tear or smudge), this invalidates the entire scroll. Each letter must be sufficiently legible so that even an ordinary schoolchild could distinguish it from other, similar letters.
- The scribe must put precise space between words, so that one word will not look like two words, or two words look like one word.

- The scribe must not alter the design of the sections, and must conform to particular line-lengths and paragraph configurations.
- A Torah Scroll in which any mistake has been found, cannot be used, and must be fixed within thirty days, or buried.

PART C. SUCCESS OF THE VERIFICATION SYSTEM

1. Comparing Torah scrolls worldwide to those in Yemen, the only place where discrepancies exist; and these differences are only in spelling, not in meaning.

Maintaining the accuracy of any document as ancient and as large as the Torah is very challenging even under the best of circumstances. But consider that throughout history, Jewish communities were subject to widespread persecutions and exile. Over the last 2,000 years, Jews have been spread to the four corners of the world, from Yemen to Poland, from Australia to Alaska.

Furthermore, the destruction of the Temple 1,900 years ago saw the dissolution of the Sanhedrin, the Jewish central authority which traditionally unified the Jewish people when disagreements occurred.

Let's investigate the facts as we have them today. If we collect the oldest Torah scrolls and compare them, we can see if any discrepancy exists, and if so, how much.

How many letters are there in the Torah? 304,805 letters (or approximately 79,000 words).

The fact is, that after all the trials and tribulations, communal dislocations and persecutions, only the Yemenite Torah scrolls contain any difference from the rest of world Jewry. For hundreds of years, the Yemenite community was not part of the global checking system, and only a total of nine letter-differences are found in their scrolls.

Furthermore, these are all spelling differences – in no case do they change the meaning of the word. For example, how would you spell the word “color?” In America, it's spelled C-O-L-O-R. But in England, it's spelled with an extra “U”: C-O-L-O-U-R.

Such is the nature of the few spelling differences between Torah scrolls today. The results over thousands of years are remarkable!

PART D. ACCURACY OF TORAH SCROLLS COMPARED TO OTHER TEXTS

1. Comparison to the Christian Bible

But how impressive is this compared to other similar documents, such as the Christian Bible? (Both books contain approximately the same number of words.) First of all, which would you expect to be more successful in preserving the accuracy of a text? The Christian Bible. For several reasons. First, the Christian Bible is about 1,700 years younger than the Torah. Second, the Christians haven't gone through nearly as much exile and dislocation as the Jews. Third, Christianity has always had a central authority (the Vatican) to ensure the accuracy of their text.

What are the results? The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, a book written to prove the validity of the New Testament, says: “A study of 150 Greek [manuscripts] of the Gospel of Luke has revealed more than 30,000 different readings ... It is safe to say that there is not one sentence in the New Testament in which the [manuscript] is wholly uniform.” Other scholars report there are some 200,000 variants in the existing manuscripts of the New Testament, representing about 400 variant readings which cause doubt about textual meaning; 50 of these are of great significance.

The Torah has nine spelling variants – with absolutely no effect on the meaning of the words. The Christian Bible has over 200,000 variants and in 400 instances the variants change the meaning of the text.

The point of course is not to denigrate Christianity. Rather, this comparison demonstrates the remarkable accuracy of the Jewish transmission of the Torah.