THE 13 PRINCIPLES: # 8: The divine origin of the Tora

In the commentary to the Mishna, where Maimonides formulated for the first time the Thirteen Principles of Judaism, he included within the Eighth principle –the one that asserts that the Tora is from Divine origin (see **here**)– our belief that the Oral Tora is Divine as well. In other words, the "accepted explanations" of the Mitzvot were also transmitted to Moses by God.
For example, Lulab, Tefilin, Shofar none of these Mitzvot are explicitly *described* in the written Tora. Regarding Tefilin, for instance, the Tora just says (Deuteronomy 6:8) that "You should bind [the words of the Shema Israel] as a sign on your hand and as frontals on your forehead".

The Oral Tora instructs us the way of *binding these words in our hand* , i.e., writing the words of the Shema Israel in parchment; introducing these parchments into squared black boxes made of hard leather; the hand Tefilin having one compartment and the head Tefilin four; etc, etc. All these instructions, we believe, were not made up by Moses or by the rabbis. They were received by Moses from God. Moses said: *'Through this you shall know that God sent me to do all these things, and I did not do it on my own accord'* (Numbers 16:28)
In the introduction to Mishne Tora Maimonides elaborates more on this principle: "Every commandment given to Moses on Mount Sinai was given together with its explanation. (*pirush*). God told Moshe (Exodus 24:12): 'I'm giving you the tablets of stone, the Tora and the instruction'. 'Tora', refers to the Written Tora, while 'instructions' means its explanation. We are thus commanded to perform and keep the 'Tora' according to these 'instructions'. These instructions is what we call the Oral Tora (Tora shebe'al pe)… These instruction were not written down [by Moshe] but were orally taught to the elders, to Joshua and to the rest of the People of Israel".
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the basic Principles of Judaism

***“Maimonides Principles: The Fundamentals of Jewish Faith”**, written by a distinguished Rabbi of our time **Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan z’l**.*