

## שיעור 13

Perek Echad

## שיעור ה

Shloshah Perakim

מִשֶׁךְ תִּסְדֹּף לִידְעִיךָ, וְצַדִּיקְתָּךְ לִישְׁרֵי לְבָבְךָ.  
 [1][2] Extend Your kindness to those who know You, and Your charity to the upright of heart.

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## 1. The Rebbe Maharash's Hadran

The Rebbe Maharash once delivered a *Hadran*<sup>1</sup> in which he pointed out that the Talmud opens with the letter Mem, “*Mei'eimasay korin es shema*,”<sup>2</sup> and concludes with a Mem, “*Hashem yevarech es amo bshalom*.”<sup>3</sup> The first Mem is open (מ), while the final one is closed (ם). Additionally, the Talmud begins on a topic regarding the kohanim, whose task it is to bless the people of Israel with peace, and it concludes with peace as well — “Hashem should bless His people with peace.”

A similar point can be made here: The Rambam begins *Mishneh Torah* with an open Mem, “*Meshoch chasdecha...*” and concludes with a closed Mem, “*kamayim layam mechasim*.”<sup>4</sup> The opening and closing of *Mishneh Torah* are also connected by their content: They both speak of the pursuit of “knowing Hashem.”

It is worthy to mention that according to the Rambam, the knowledge of Hashem will envelope all humanity when Moshiach comes, not only the Jewish people. The Rambam cites the verse, “The world will be filled with the knowledge of Hashem as the waters cover the ocean bed,” which indicates that the entire universe, spiritual and physical beings, will be filled with knowledge of Hashem. However, he states that the Jewish people will engage with this knowledge to a greater degree: “The Jews will be great Sages and know the hidden matters, grasping the knowledge of their Creator.”

*Yein Malchus, Sefer Mada 1.*

## 2. “Extend Your kindness to those who know You, and Your charity to the upright of heart”

This verse was chosen as the opening of *Sefer Mada* because it is a reflection of it. “Those who know you,” parallels the first mitzvah, “to know that there exists a First Being.” “The upright of heart”

corresponds to the laws of Teshuva at the conclusion of this Sefer, for Teshuva is essentially the cleansing of one's heart.<sup>5</sup>

Now, the Talmud seems to indicate that kindness is greater than charity: “Acts of kindness are superior to charity . . . charity is given to the poor, while acts of kindness are both for the poor and for the rich.”<sup>6</sup> If so, according to the rule in Torah study that the lesser comes before the greater, the verse here should have written charity first!

The explanation:

From the perspective of the human being, Hashem's charity is greater than His kindness. Although Hashem's kindness is unlimited, it is channeled into our reality in a limited form. Charity, on the other hand, must consist of ten or twenty percent of the owner's possessions. In practical, material terms, this means an unlimited G-dly blessing.

According to Torah's inner dimension:

The Rambam begins his work by stating that “the foundation of all foundations and the pillar of wisdoms is to know that there exists a First Being.” However, he continues that “the truth of the concept cannot be grasped or comprehended by human intellect.”<sup>7</sup> How then can we be commanded to know it?

The answer can be found in this opening verse. We do not understand by our own virtue; rather, by striving to “know You,” we arouse Hashem's kindness to draw us close and allow us to understand more than humanly possible.

Furthermore: The word for “extend” (*meshoch*) can also mean to “draw close,” or to “acquire.” We gain the ability to understand these matters only because Hashem draws us close and “acquires” us, raising us to a level where that comprehension is possible.

We can add: “Those who know You” in the beginning of the verse complements “the upright of heart” later in the verse; the greater one's knowledge

סופית.

5. תניא פכ"ט (לו, ב.) וראה רמב"ם הלכות תשובה פ"ב ה"ב.

6. סוכה מט, ב.

7. פ"א ה"ט.

1. מאמר ד"ה מאימתי קורין את שמע תרמ"ב.

2. ריש מסכת ברכות.

3. סיום מסכת עוקצין.

4. ולהוסיף שמנהג ישראל בכתיבת שמו של הרמב"ם שמ"ם ראשונה פתוחה והשניה סתומה אף שבר"ת אין הכרח שהאות האחרונה תהיה

## סֵפֶר ראשון וְהוּא סֵפֶר הַמִּדְעָה

הַלְכוֹתָיו חֲמֵשׁ, וְזֶה הוּא סֵדוּרָן:  
הַלְכוֹת יְסוּדֵי הַתּוֹרָה, הַלְכוֹת דְּעוֹת,  
הַלְכוֹת תְּלִמּוּד תּוֹרָה, הַלְכוֹת עֲבוּדָה  
וְזֶה וְחֻקּוֹת הַגּוֹיִם, הַלְכוֹת תְּשׁוּבָה.

### הַלְכוֹת יְסוּדֵי הַתּוֹרָה

יֵשׁ בְּכָלֶלָן עֶשֶׂר מִצְוֹת – שֵׁשׁ מִצְוֹת  
עֲשֵׂה, וְאַרְבַּע מִצְוֹת לֹא תַעֲשֶׂה; וְזֶה  
הוּא פְּרִטָּן: (א) לִידַע שְׂיֵשׁ שֵׁם  
אֱלֹהִים; (ב) שְׂלֹא יַעֲלֶה בְּמַחְשְׁבָה  
שְׂיֵשׁ שֵׁם אֱלֹהִים זוּלָתֵי ה'; (ג) לִיְחַדְדוּ;  
(ד) לְאַהֲבֵהוּ; (ה) לְיִרְאַה מִמֶּנּוּ;  
(ו) לְקַדֵּשׁ שְׁמוֹ; (ז) שְׂלֹא לְחַלֵּל אֶת  
שְׁמוֹ; (ח) שְׂלֹא לְאַבֵּד דְּבָרִים שְׁנֻקְרָא  
שְׁמוֹ עֲלֵיהֶן; (ט) לְשִׁמַּע מִן הַנְּבִיא  
הַמְדַבֵּר בְּשְׁמוֹ; (י) שְׂלֹא לְנַסּוֹתוֹ.  
וּבְאוּר הַמִּצְוֹת הָאֵלוּ – בְּפָרְקִים אֵלּוּ.

## Book One, that is the Book of Knowledge

Its laws are five, and this is their order: the Laws of the Foundations of Torah, the Laws of Ethical Behavior, the Laws of Torah Study, the Laws of Idol Worship and Gentile Practices, the Laws of Repentance.

### The Laws of the Fundamentals of Torah

[3]They include ten commandments: six positive commandments and four negative commandments, and this is their enumeration: (1) To know that there is a G-d. (2) Not to give rise to the thought that any G-d exists besides Hashem. (3) To recognize that He is One. (4) To love Him. (5) To fear Him. (6) To sanctify His name. (7) Not to desecrate His name. (8) Not to destroy things upon which His name is declared. (9) To listen to the prophet who speaks in His name. (10) Not to test Him. The chapters ahead will clarify these commandments.

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and appreciation of G-d's true existence, the greater his desire to return his spirit to him<sup>8</sup> i.e., Teshuva.

Concurrently, "The upright of the heart" also contributes to "Those who know You" at the beginning of the verse. Being that this wisdom is Divine, one must have a pure and upright heart to connect to it.

Yein Malchus, *Sefer Mada* 16.

### 3. "They include ten commandments"

At the beginning of each volume and in the main introduction to his work, the Rambam lists the sets of Halachos (*Hilchos Yesodei Hatorah*, *Hilchos De'os*, and so on) and also lists the number of mitzvos which are explained in that section. He also occasionally uses numbers to help the reader keep track.<sup>9</sup>

However, he does not list the number of chapters and "*halachos ketanos*"<sup>10</sup> in each section. This is

surprising, especially taking into account that these divisions are precise and new laws are derived from them.<sup>11</sup>

Some volumes of *Mishneh Torah* have a summary at the end which indeed lists the number of chapters in that volume. But they are not included in every volume<sup>12</sup> and they are not found in all manuscripts. It is not at all clear that they were written by the Rambam himself.

There is one manuscript which the Rambam signed to affirm that he had edited and approved the text,<sup>13</sup> and that edition does have such summaries. However, it seems that the Rambam's approval pertains only to the Halachic rulings therein, and not to grammar (like masculine and feminine terminology or the use of the final Mem) or details like the summary.

On a similar note: At the very end of *Mishneh Torah*, various manuscripts and editions state the

8. וברמב"ם הוצאת פרנקל (ירושלים תשל"ה) תוקן פיסוק ההלכה ברמב"ם בב"מ – ראה הקדמת המו"ל לס' זמנים 12, ב.

12. לדוגמא – ספר מדע.

13. צילום נדפס ברמב"ם הוצאת פרדס בסופה.

8. ראה קהלת יב, ז.

9. יד מלאכי כללי הרמב"ם אות לד. וראה גם אגרת תחיה"מ שלו – ע' עד בהוצאת קפאח.

10. כלשונו בסוף ההקדמה.

11. ראה לדוגמא הל' ת"ת לאדה"ז פ"א קו"א סק"א (גא, תתרו, א).

## [4] Chapter 1

## פְּרָק א

**1.** [5][6]The [7]foundation of all foundations and the pillar of wisdoms is [8][9][10]to know that there exists [11]a First Being. [12]He brings into being all that exists; and [13]all that exist, from Heaven and Earth and all that is between them, do not exist but from the absolute truth of His existence.

**א.** יסוד היסודות ועמוד ההקמות, לידע שיש שם מצוי ראשון. והוא ממציא כל הנמצא; וכל הנמצאין מן שמים וארץ ומה שביניהן, לא נמצאו אלא מאמתת המצאו.

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number of chapters contained in the entire work, but no version of those numbers is accurate.<sup>14</sup> However, this could be resolved by the fact that the Rambam edited the work several times. In some manuscripts we see that he crossed out his own handwriting.<sup>15</sup> There is one instance where he changed “Chapter 8” to “Chapter 11” — without changing the numbers of the chapters which followed.

*Likkutei Sichos vol. 27 pg. 231 fn. 26 and in the margin.*

## 4. Chapter 1

A well-known principle<sup>16</sup> in *Mishneh Torah* is that the Rambam relies on the student’s knowledge of earlier chapters when composing his later chapters. This has practical relevance; at times, he does not spell out matters of law which were spelled out in previous sections.

Therefore, one cannot study the Rambam’s work haphazardly, reading random sections by themselves. Without reading the work sequentially, one may reach mistaken conclusions about his study.

This is not the case with Talmud. Although Rabbi Yehudah Hanasi organized the Mishnah in a specific order,<sup>17</sup> one need not know preceding tractates to understand the Halachic rulings.

There is also — obviously — no value to the opinion that the first five chapters of *Hilchos Yesodei Hatorah* are irrelevant or unnecessary to study; that is in direct contradiction with the principle that his work must be studied sequentially.

*Likkutei Sichos vol. 27 pg. 232 in the margin.*

## 5. “The foundation of all foundations”

As we mentioned earlier, the Abarbanel explains<sup>18</sup>

17. ב"ק קב, א. תוסי' ריש מס' ב"מ. ועוד. וכמבואר גם בהקדמת הרמב"ם לפי"מ ד"ה וחלק הששי.

18. שם.

19. וידוע שכו"כ הלכות ברמב"ם מקורם בוהר. וראה הרמב"ם והוהר (סיני כרכים לב – לד) להר"ר מרגליות ושי"ן.

that a person cannot be commanded to believe in certain matters. Therefore, the Rambam’s view of this commandment is “to learn the matters which will bring a person to these beliefs.”

The Rambam therefore does not suffice with the first seven halachos about Hashem’s existence, and continues to bring verses through the end of the chapter to demonstrate that Hashem does not have a physical body and that the physical descriptions of Hashem in the Torah are allegorical, and that Moshe understood this about the nature of G-dliness and so on — because this knowledge is vital to fulfilling the commandment to know Hashem.

We can also suggest that the Rambam’s source for this statement is the Zohar’s teaching on the verse “And you will know that I am Hashem, Your G-d.”

The Zohar<sup>19</sup> states: “This commandment is the first of all commandments . . . to know Hashem . . . the Supernal Ruler Who is the Lord of the world and Who created all the worlds, heaven and earth, and all their hosts.”

This is strikingly similar to the Rambam’s statement here, “The foundation of all foundations . . . to know that there exists a First Being” who created “all that exists, from Heaven and Earth and all that is between them...” and in Halacha 5: “This Being is the G-d of the universe, Lord of all the Earth.”

*Likkutei Sichos vol. 26 pg. 115.*

## 6. “The foundation of all foundations . . . is to know that there exists a First Being”

These words serve as a lesson in our service to our Creator:

14. לדוגמא בסיום הספר – תתקפ"ב פרקים, ובכמה כתי"י – תתקפ"א וכולם אינם תואמים את מספר הפרקים שלפנינו – אלף.

15. ראה בצילומים מכת"י הרמב"ם שנדפסו בהוצאת שליוינגר בסופה ועוד.

16. יד מלאכי כללי הרמב"ם אות ו'.

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Regardless of how much effort we invest in any given project, we must always remember that “the foundation of all foundations and the pillar of wisdom is to know that there exists a First Being,” i.e., to have steadfast faith in Hashem that He will come to our assistance.

Moreover:

The Rambam writes that “most of the Torah’s laws are nothing other than . . . to improve one’s character and make one’s conduct upright,”<sup>20</sup> i.e., to help a person — and the entire world — fulfill the will of the A-lmighty. The very basis for this pursuit is recognizing Hashem’s presence, “to know that there exists a First Being.” When Hashem is a part of our lives, our conduct will naturally follow His will.

*Likkutei Sichos vol. 11 pg. 339. Sefer Hasichos 5749 vol. 1 pg. 149.*

**7. “Yesod Hayesodos Va’amud Hachachmos” — Hashem’s Name.**

The Rambam famously included concepts from the inner dimensions of Torah in his *Mishneh Torah*, albeit in a concealed manner.<sup>21</sup> Rabbi David the *Nagid* (the Rambam’s grandson) points out that *Mishneh Torah* begins with four words that spell out Hashem’s name, *Yud-Hei-Vov-Hei*.<sup>22</sup>

*Haggadah Shel Pesach Im Likkutei Ta’amim Minhagim U’Biurim pg. 421 and in fn. 50.*

**8. “To know”**

Should one believe in Hashem with simple faith or intellectually explore and examine His existence?

Both aspects are necessary, and they complement each other: The first and foremost foundation is a firm belief in Hashem. But you are immediately obligated “to know that there exists a First Being,” as the Rambam rules here.

The Mishnah teaches, “If someone says, ‘I did not toil, but I nevertheless succeeded,’ do not believe him.”<sup>23</sup> In that light, a person is obligated to toil and make an effort to understand these matters to the

best of his abilities. Whatever is beyond his abilities, he should accept with simple faith.<sup>24</sup>

*Likkutei Sichos vol. 11 pg. 279.*

**9. “To know that there exists a First Being”**

The Rambam here writes that the obligation is to know, but in *Sefer Hamitzvos*, the Rambam writes that the commandment is to believe.

There are several ways to resolve the contradiction:

1. *Mishneh Torah* constitutes the Rambam’s final opinion, being that *Sefer Hamitzvos* was written as a prelude to *Mishneh Torah*.<sup>25</sup>

2. The Rambam was more specific in *Mishneh Torah*, being a book of laws.<sup>26</sup>

3. *Sefer Hamitzvos* may have been mistranslated<sup>27</sup> — unlike *Mishneh Torah*, which the Rambam wrote in Hebrew.

4. Based on the available Arabic manuscript of *Sefer Hamitzvos*, it is indeed likely that the correct translation is “to know,” similar to Rambam’s wording in his Index of Mitzvos at the beginning of *Mishneh Torah*.<sup>28</sup>

*Likkutei Sichos vol. 11 pg. 339.*

**10. “To know that there exists...”**

The Rambam writes here that all creations stem from the “truth” of His Being.

Can falsehood stem from truth? The Midrash states that before the creation of the world, “Truth said: It should not be created because it is full of falsehood,”<sup>29</sup> which seems to indicate that truth and falsehood are a contradiction.

The explanation:

From the perspective of truth within *Seder Hishtalshelus* — the truth within the context of creation and universe — there is a contradiction between truth and falsehood. However, from the perspective of “Hashem’s truth,” even the greatest falsehoods derive from “the truth of His existence.”

ובכ"מ.  
 25. הרמב"ם בהקדמתו.  
 26. יד מלאכי כללי הרמב"ם כג.  
 27. שם כב.  
 28. ראה סהמ"צ הוצאת הר"ח העליר.  
 29. ב"ר פ"ח, ה.

20. רמב"ם סוף הלכות תמורה.  
 21. ראה סה"ש הש"ת ע' 41 ובהערה שם. לקו"ש ח"ג ע' 768 ובהערה שם.  
 22. הובאו בשם הגדולים להחיד"א מע' הרמב"ם.  
 23. אבות פ"ה מ"ב.  
 24. ועיין גם מצות האמנת האלקות להצ"צ. קוני תורת החסידות פ"ג.

“The truth of His existence” is such that it is unlimited and does not need to be recognized by the world. Even the greatest contradictions to G-dliness and the greatest falsehoods “do not exist but from the absolute truth of His existence.”

This is indicated in the Hebrew terminology here, “*sheyesh sham matzui rishon*,” lit. “that there is *there* a First Being.” The word *sham* seems unnecessary;<sup>30</sup> it teaches us that the First Being is also found “there,” in the “place of the *kelipos* and impurity.”<sup>31</sup>

We can thereby explain (on a deeper level) the words of the Rambam in the following halacha: “if it should come to mind that He does not exist...” The Rambam thus indicates that on the basis of Hashem’s eternal truth, it is clear that He is present even in those places where His existence is questioned. (This is similar to the teachings of our Sages that both the good and bad are expressions of His greatness).<sup>32</sup>

*Likkutei Sichos vol. 16 pg. 44 and fn. 26.*

### 11. “A First Being”

The “First Being” implies that there could be “second” and “third beings” similar in nature to Him. Doesn’t Hashem infinitely transcend any other being?

The explanation:

There are two elements to being the “first.” On one hand, as the *peirush* writes, “Nothing preceded Him, because He has no beginning and no end.” On the other hand, being first indicates that there could be a second.

With these words, the Rambam teaches us that “knowing Hashem” is not limited to the recognition that Hashem is a First Being that exists simply because He exists. Rather, it is also important to recognize that He is First, i.e., that He is also the source of all existence, and that all creations “do not exist but from the absolute truth of His existence”

This is expressed in the term “*Matzui Rishon*, First Being,” indicating that all other beings derive their existence from Him.

*Sefer Hasichos 5748 vol. 2 pg. 411 in the margin.*

### 12. “...Who brings into being all that exists”

“*Vehu mamtzi kol nimitza*,” means, “He brings into being all existence,” in present tense. Hashem brings all beings into existence at every single moment, and therefore, the true nature of our existence is the existence of Hashem alone.

This will be revealed during the era of Moshiach, as the verse states, “The world will be filled with the knowledge of Hashem as the waters cover the ocean bed.” In other words, all creatures will recognize the truth, that “all that exist, from Heaven and Earth . . . do not exist but from the absolute truth of His existence.”

*Likkutei Sichos vol. 27 pg. 248.*

### 13. “All that exist . . . not exist but from the absolute truth of His existence”

With these words, the Rambam emphasizes that this is the case with each individual creature, and not only the general creation of the universe. As he writes further, “All those who exist . . . from the first form to the small mosquito in the Earth’s center, came into existence by the power of His truth.”<sup>33</sup>

Furthermore: Every creature is made up of three components:

1. The very fact of his existence.
2. The unique characteristics that define its nature and make it distinctive (like the nature of fire or water).
3. Characteristics that are not a fundamental part of its nature.

The Rambam here emphasizes that all three elements *All* that exist are brought into existence only through the true existence of the Creator.

This idea was expressed through the *tachash* skins on the Mishkan. Our holy books explain<sup>34</sup> that by gazing at the physical image of the Mishkan, “it was possible to comprehend the heavenly images which are their counterpart.” This indicates that even the colors on the *tachash*, which are merely an external factor in the animal, were brought into existence only through the true existence of the Creator.

*Likkutei Sichos vol. 31 pg. 139.*

33. פ”ב ה”ט.

34. רבינו בחיי תרומה כה, ט. ובכ”ב.

30. ראה מפרשי הרמב”ם שם.

31. לקוטי תורה ראה לב, רע”ג.

32. יל”ש נחמיי רמז התרעא. וראה יומא סט, ב.

**ב.** ואם יעלה על הדעת שהוא אינו מצוי, אין דבר אחר יכול להמצאות.

**2.** And if it should come to mind that He does not exist – nothing else could exist.

**ג.** ואם יעלה על הדעת שאין כל הנמצאים מלבדו מצויין, הוא לבדו יהיה מצוי ולא יבטל הוא לבטולן; שכל הנמצאים צריכין לו, והוא ברוך הוא אינו צריך להן, ולא לאחד מהן. לפיכך אין אמתתו באמתת אחד מהן.

**3.** And if it should come to mind that no being but Him would exist – He alone would still exist, and would not cease to be because they would become nil; for all beings need Him, and He, blessed be He, does not need them, or any one of them. Therefore, the absolute truth of His existence is unlike the truth of any one of them.

**ד.** הוא שהנביא אומר: "וה' אלהים אמת" – הוא לבדו האמת, ואין לאחר אמת באמתו. והוא שהתורה אומרת: "אין עוד מלבדו", כלומר – אין שם מצוי אמת מלבדו כמותו.

**4.** That is the meaning of the prophet's words: "And Hashem, G-d, is true" – He alone is true, and no other has truth like His. That is the meaning of what the Torah states: [14] "There is no other but Him," meaning, there is no true existence like His, other than Him.

**ה.** המצוי הזה – הוא אלהי העולם, אדון כל הארץ. והוא המנהיג הגלגל בכח שאין לו קץ ותכלית, בכח שאין לו הפסק; שהגלגל סובב תמיד, ואי אפשר שיסב בלא מסבב; והוא ברוך הוא המסבב אותו, בלא יד ולא גוף.

**5.** This Being is the G-d of the universe, Lord of all the Earth. He controls the sphere [which encompasses the universe] with power that has no end or limit, with power that is unending; for the sphere revolves constantly, and it cannot revolve without one who turns it; and it is He, blessed be He, who turns it, without hand or body.

**ו.** וידיעת דבר זה – מצוות עשה, שנאמר: "אנכי ה' אלהיך". וכל

**6.** [15] Knowing this concept is a positive commandment, as it states: "I am Hashem

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**14. "There is no other but Him . . . there is no true existence like His"**

The verse, "There is no other but Him" implies that there is no other existence other than Hashem. This could lend one to err that the world does not exist and there is therefore no value in fulfilling the Torah and Mitzvos in this world, G-d forbid. The Rambam therefore clarifies that there is a state of existence separate from Hashem. However, "there is no true existence like His."

*Likkutei Sichos vol. 24 pg. 43.*

**15. "Knowing this concept is a positive commandment"**

The Abarbanel in *Rosh Amanah*<sup>35</sup> writes that the commandment to believe in Hashem entails "investigating and evaluating" His existence. The Rambam, however, does not bring proof; he simply mentions various details about the nature of Hashem's existence. This implies (to some extent) that in his opinion, the obligation to know Hashem includes knowing these details, but does not include "investigating and evaluating" His existence.<sup>36</sup>

*Sefer Hasichos 5748 vol. 1 pg. 207.*

35. כל נמצא, על דרך הלשון "ואם יעלה על הדעת שאין כל הנמצאים מלבדו מצויים הוא לבדו יהי מצוי בו" (שבהלכה ג) שאין זה הוכחה. ושני פרטים אלה (שבלעדו ית' "אין דבר אחר יכול להמצאות" ו"שהוא לבדו יהי מצוי" גם בהעדר הנמצאים) – הם כמו הקדמה לסיום (בהלכה

35. פרק י"ו.

36. ומה שכתב בהלכה ב' "ואם יעלה על הדעת שהוא אינו מצוי אין דבר אחר יכול להמצאות" – אין כוונתו להוכיח את מציאותו יתברך ממציאות הנמצאים, אלא פרט במה שכתב (בהלכה א') ש"הוא ממצוי

your G-d.” [16] Anyone who brings to mind the thought that there exists a god other than Hashem – transgresses a negative commandment, as it states, “You shall not have other gods before Me,” and denies a fundamental tenet of faith, for this is the great tenet on which everything is dependent.

**7.** This G-d is One – he is not two or more than two, but One, and no other unified thing in the universe is comparable to His unity; not ‘one’ as a category including many individual entities, and not ‘one’ like a body which is composed of parts and dimensions; rather, He is unified, and there exists no other unity like His in the universe.

הַמַּעֲלָה עַל דַּעְתּוֹ שֵׁשׁ שָׁם אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים חוּץ מִזֶּה – עוֹבֵר בְּלֹא תַעֲשֶׂה, שְׂנֵאָמַר: “לֹא יִהְיֶה לְךָ אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים עַל פְּנֵי, וְכֹפֵר בְּעֶקֶר, שֶׁזֶּה הוּא הַעֶקֶר הַגָּדוֹל שֶׁהַכֹּל תְּלוּי בּוֹ.

**ז.** אֱלֹהִים זֶה אֶחָד הוּא – וְאֵינוּ לֹא שְׁנַיִם וְלֹא יֵתֵר עַל שְׁנַיִם, אֲלֵא אֶחָד, שְׂאִין בְּיַחְדוֹ אֶחָד מִן הָאֲחֵדִים הַנִּמְצָאִין בַּעוֹלָם; לֹא אֶחָד כְּמִין שֶׁהוּא כּוֹלֵל אֲחֵדִים הַרְבֵּה, וְלֹא אֶחָד כְּגוֹף שֶׁהוּא נִחְלָק לְמַחְלָקוֹת וְלִקְצוּוֹת; אֲלֵא יְחוּד שְׂאִין כְּיַחְדוֹ יְחוּד אֲחֵר כְּמוֹתוֹ בַּעוֹלָם.

Pardes Hamelech

### 16. “Anyone who brings to mind . . . transgresses a negative commandment”

According to the Rambam, the verse, “You shall have no other gods” is a prohibition against polytheism.<sup>37</sup> *Ramban*,<sup>38</sup> *Semag*,<sup>39</sup> and others agree. *Bahag*,<sup>40</sup> *Rashi*<sup>41</sup> and others disagree and maintain that it is a prohibition to retain graven images.

We may suggest, however, that even *Bahag* and *Rashi* agree with the Rambam. We could interpret their opinion to be that this prohibition – in addition to commanding us to believe in one G-d – also prohibits retaining graven images.<sup>42</sup> In other words, although “You shall have no other gods” prohibits specifically graven images, its goal and context is to negate all forms of idol worship and promote the belief in only one G-d. This would be

comparable to the prohibition of kindling a fire on Shabbos; although the specific commandment is to not make a fire on Shabbos, its context is to promote the active observance and holiness of Shabbos.

Additionally, *Rashi* and *Bahag* don’t necessarily take the prohibition of “You shall have no other gods” out of its simple context, i.e., the prohibition to worship other deities. Rather, since the Torah has various mentions of this same prohibition, they attempt to explain the unique message of each one, choosing to teach this one as the prohibition to retain graven images.

This resolves the questions posed on *Rashi* and *Bahag*’s opinion from the Talmud’s inference<sup>43</sup> that this verse refers specifically to the prohibition of idol worship.<sup>44</sup>

*Likkutei Sichos vol. 11 pg. 280.*

ובחינות” בספר הלכות שלו, הוא לפי שההלכה היא רק שצריך לדעת בחקירות והבחינות, אבל החקירות והבחינות עצמם אינם הלכה (משא”כ בנוגע לפרטים – ההלכה היא לא רק שצריך לדעת אותם, אלא, גם הפרטים עצמם הם הלכה). ועצ”ע בכ”ו.

37. ועיין ג”כ סהמ”צ מל”ת א.

38. על סהמ”צ מע”א וּמל”ת ה.

39. מל”ת א.

40. כפי גירסתנו וכפי הרמב”ן שם.

41. שמות כ, ג.

42. וכמש”פ בביאור מהרי”פ פערלא לטהמ”צ להרס”ג מ”ע ג – ד.

43. ראה גיטין נו, ב. ירושלמי קדושין פ”א ה”ב. שמו”ר פמ”ד, ט.

המד”ר פ”ח ד. זח”ב פו, א. ועוד.

44. וסרה ג”כ קושיית הרמב”ן בפי”ע ה”ת.

(ג) “שכל הנמצאים צריכין לו והוא אינו צריך להם כו”.

ומה שבהלכה ז’ מביא הוכחה שאינו גוף (ויאילו היה היוצר גוף כו’), אף “שמפורש בתורה ובנביאים שאין הקב”ה גוף” (שם ה”ח) – דשאני התם שמכיון שבתורה נאמר גם “ותחת רגליו, כתובים באצבע אלקים כו’” (שם ה”ט) יש מקום לשאול מאי אולמי’ דהאי קרא מהאי קרא, ולכן, יש צורך להוכיח שהפסוקים שמביא בהלכה ט’ הם “לפי דעתן של בני אדם... ודברה תורה כלשון בני אדם”, והפסוקים שמביא בהלכה ח’ הם כפשוטם. ויש לומר, שגם הוכחה זו היא הלכה (ויומתק שכתבה בספר הלכות שלו), כי, כדי שהידיעה שאין לו גוף תהיה ידיעה ברורה – אף שמפשטות הכתובים לא משמע כן (ועיין רב”ד הל’ תשובה פ”ג ה”ז) – צריך להוכחה שתוארים אלה אינם כפשוטם.

ולדעת האברבנל שבמצות ידיעת ה’ נכלל גם ידיעת “חקירות והבחינות” – צריך לומר, שהטעם שהרמב”ם אינו מביא “חקירות

אלו היו האלהות הרבה – היו גופין ויגויות, מפני שאין הנמנין השוין במציאותן נפרדין זה מזה אלא במארעין שיארעו הגופות והגויות. ואלו היה היוצר גוף ויגויה – היה לו קץ ותכלית, שאי אפשר להיות גוף שאין לו קץ. וכל שיש לו קץ ותכלית, יש לכוונו קץ וסוף.

Were there many gods, they would have body and form, because similar entities are separated from one another only by circumstance of body and form. And if the Creator had body or form – He would have an end and limit, for it is impossible for there to be a body without limit. And anything with an end and limit is of finite and limited power.

ואלהינו ברוך שמו, הואיל וכוונו אין לו קץ ואינו פוסק, שהרי הגלגל סובב תמיד, אין כחו פח גוף. הואיל ואינו גוף, לא יארעו לו מארעות הגופות כדי שיהא נחלק ונפרד מאחר; לפיכך, אי אפשר שיהיה אלא אחד. וידיעת דבר זה – מצות עשה, שנאמר: "ה' אלהינו, ה' אחד".

Our G-d, blessed be His name, since his power is infinite and uninterrupted – for after all, the sphere revolves constantly – his power is not corporeal. Since he is not corporeal, circumstances which affect bodies, resulting in division and separation, do not apply to Him. Therefore, it is impossible that he be anything but One. Knowing this concept is a positive commandment, as it states: "Hashem our G-d, Hashem is One."

**ה.** הרי מפרש בתורה ובבבאי, שאין הקדוש ברוך הוא גוף ויגויה, שנאמר: "כי ה' אלהיכם, הוא האלהים בשמים ממעל ועל הארץ מתחת", והגוף לא יהיה בשני מקומות; ונאמר: "כי לא ראייתם כל תמונה", ונאמר: "ואל מי תדמיוני, ואשונה"; ואלו היה גוף, היה דומה לשאר גופים.

**8.** It is explicitly stated in the Torah and prophets that Hashem does not have a body or corporeal form, as it states: "For Hashem your G-d, is G-d in the Heavens above and on the Earth below," and a body cannot exist in two different places; and it states: "For you did not see any image," and it states: "To whom shall you compare me, that I be equal"; and if He were corporeal, He would be comparable to other bodies.

**ט.** אם כן, מה הוא זה שנאמר בתורה: "ותחת רגליו", "כתובים באצבע אלהים", "יד ה'", "ציני ה'", "אזני ה'", וכו' צא בדברים האלו? – הכל לפי דעתן של בני אדם הוא, שאינן מכירין אלא הגופות; ודברה תורה כלשון בני אדם. והכל כנויין הן, כמו שנאמר: "אם שנותי ברק חרבי"; וכי חרב יש לו, ובחרב הוא הורג? ! אלא משל, והכל משל.

**9.** If it is so, what is meant by that which is stated in the Torah: "And under his feet," "Inscribed by the finger of G-d," "G-d's hand," "G-d's eyes," "G-d's ears," and the like? It is all in relation to the human ability to grasp, for they recognize only corporeal terms; the Torah uses human terms. All these are but descriptive terms, as it states: "If I sharpen my lightning sword"; Does He have a sword, and does He kill with a sword? It is a metaphor, as they are all metaphors.