

## *The Ikkarei Emunah of Mishneh Torah*

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Rambam in introductory words to the *Moreh HaNevuchim* justifies his writing of the work even though many would not understand it. He closes by explaining, “When I have a difficult subject before me—when I find the road narrow, and can see no other way of teaching a well-established truth except by pleasing one intelligent man and displeasing ten thousand fools—I prefer to address myself to the one man, and to take no notice whatever of the condemnation of the multitude. I prefer to extricate that intelligent man from his embarrassment and show him the cause of his perplexity, so that he may attain perfection and be at peace” (Instruction to readers of *Moreh*.) Rambam would certainly not publish a work containing fundamental principles that were not true in order to satisfy societal concerns.

Rambam dedicated his life to teaching the truth and even danger of death did not dissuade him from writing his true feelings about Mohammed in *Iggeres Teiman*. He closes this letter by writing, “I beg you to send a copy of this missive to every community in the cities and hamlets, in order to strengthen the people in their faith and to put them on their feet... Take adequate precautions lest its contents be divulged to the Gentiles by an evil person and mishap overtake us (G-d spare us therefrom). When I began writing this letter I had some misgivings about it, but they were overruled by my conviction that the public welfare takes precedence over one’s personal safety.” G-d’s seal is *emes* and Rambam never diverged from it, not in his halachic writings, not in his philosophical works, nor in the important letters sent to address the needs of the public.

With our publication of Rabbi Sochaczewski’s and Dr. Shapiro’s views of Rambam’s position on *ikkarei emunah*, I asked R. David Guttmann to present his view on the fourth *ikkar*—especially of his intent on the presumed *bagabab*. Since the issue at hand is so vital—the credibility of what Rambam writes—we felt that it is important that the rejection of the claim that Rambam was sometimes insincere in what he wrote not be dependent on one reading of Rambam, that might be disputed. I would

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like to add another element of doubt to the issue by suggesting that since Rambam's presentation of the *ikkarei emunah* in *Mishneh Torah* differs from that in *Perush HaMishnah*, it raises the possibility that there was a change in his thinking as well.

### The Missing *Ikkar*

Rambam's famous Thirteen *Ikkarei Emunah*, that have been universally accepted by Jewry as the definition of our faith, were written by Rambam in his youth as part of his *Perush HaMishnah* (*Sanhedrin, Pereq 10*). When he wrote his seminal work, *Mishneh Torah*, he did not formulate these *ikkarim* as he did in the *Perush HaMishnah*, where he describes them as the thirteen beliefs that one must profess to be part of *Klal Yisrael* and merit *Olam Haba*. Rather, he constructed *Sefer HaMada*, which he says comprises עיקר דת מש"ר,<sup>1</sup> most of which are found in *Hilchos Yesodei HaTorah*, where he elaborates on many of these fundamentals of our faith. Later, in *Hilchos Avodah Zarah*, he defines the *ikkar* prohibiting idolatry. Then, in the closing book of *Sefer HaMada*, he introduces *Hilchos Teshuvah* by explaining (in the heading to the *halachos*) that it encompasses עקרם הנגדרים עמה בשבילה, fundamental principles that were included because they are relevant [to the mitzvah of *teshuvah*]. In the third chapter, while explaining how judgment is enacted and the consequences of sin, he explains that the harshest of punishments is the loss of *Olam Haba*. Twenty-four types of people lose their *Olam Haba*. The last eleven are people who act in a certain way, such as a משומד לכל התורה, while the first thirteen are issues of belief that parallel the thirteen *ikkarim* of *Perush HaMishnah*. There is, however, a major difference.

In *Perush HaMishnah*, Rambam counts *schar v'onesh* as an *ikkar*. He also says that the main part of it is *Olam Haba*. Yet here in *Hilchos Teshuvah*, in the midst of the explanation of *schar v'onesh* and especially *Olam Haba*, he ignores it when it comes to listing those people who have no portion of *Olam Haba*. The concept is crucial to *Hilchos Teshuvah* and he will highlight it in the fifth chapter to prove that there must be free choice. Otherwise, there would be no sense of justice in reward and punishment promised in the Torah. Nevertheless, people note<sup>2</sup> that he seems to have dropped it as an *ikkar*. Meanwhile, he adds a new *ikkar* to make up thirteen, seemingly artificially splitting the *ikkar* of belief in *Torah min HaShamayim* into

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<sup>1</sup> See *Hakdamah* to *Mishneh Torah*.

<sup>2</sup> See *Mirkeves HaMishneh*, who says it is encompassed by *Techiyas HaMesim* and *Bias HaGoel*.

two—listing denial of *Torah SheBeksav* and *Torah SheBe'al Peh* separately after having combined them in *Perush HaMishnah*.

### Change of Mind

Did Rambam change his mind about whether *schar v'onesh* was an *ikkar emunah* whose denial would preclude one from earning *Olam Haba*?

In an earlier essay,<sup>3</sup> I pointed out how Rambam wrote that in his youth he had been misled in halachah by blindly following the Geonim and he reversed many positions later when he did his independent analysis.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, even in issues of *hashkafah*, Rambam of *Moreh HaNevuchim* had changed quite a bit from the youth he was when he wrote the *Perush HaMishnah*. In defining the seventh of the Thirteen *Ikkarei Emunah*—the belief in the uniqueness of the prophecy of Moshe Rabbenu—Rambam says that to fully explain this phenomenon it would be necessary to discuss the *shiur komah*, the kabbalistic concept discussed in a Geonic work. Rav Kappach<sup>5</sup> points out that Rambam later erased these words so that they were completely removed, rather than in his normal style where the original text could still be discerned. In a *teshuvah* (Blau 117), he later writes of *shiur komah*, “I do not believe that this book was written by the *Chachamim*, and G-d forbid that it be from them, rather it is just a composition by a European expositor and nothing more. In any event the destruction of this book and the obliteration of its mention is a great *mitzvah*—‘the name of other gods dare not be mentioned’—one who has ‘a measure,’ i.e., קומה,

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<sup>3</sup> *Hakirah* 8, “Tradition! Tradition?”

<sup>4</sup> Based on this, I fail to see why Rav Haym Soloveitchik bolsters his argument that Rambam’s *Iggeres HaShmad* was rhetoric with the belief that Rambam was “never young” (Haym Soloveitchik, *Collected Essays, Volume II*, p. 325), i.e., that he had all his major principles fully developed in his early youth. In fact, Rambam was always young and never stopped growing intellectually and refining his positions. Dr. Shapiro and Rabbi Sochaczewski seem willing to accept Prof. Soloveitchik’s claim that in a matter like that addressed in *Iggeres HaShmad* and in that venue, Rambam would write something he did not believe. Rather, in any contradiction between other works and the *Iggeres* we should just assume that Rambam had changed his mind from something he had written elsewhere. More importantly, Rav Soloveitchik admits later (*ibid.*, p. 324ff) that he had overstated his case in at least one crucial issue. Later, he refers to his website to a refutation by a *talmid* (Hillel Novetsky). His response to what he (p. 352) calls “trenchant criticism” ends with “This is my opinion; the reader is free to form his or her own.” Certainly, we should form another opinion. No strong evidence has been presented to cause one to doubt Rambam’s sincerity.

<sup>5</sup> In the notes to his edition of the *Perush HaMishnah*.

is unquestionably a foreign god.” It would seem that even Rambam’s understanding of fundamentals, carefully formulated in *Mishneh Torah*, was not fully developed by him at the time he wrote *Perush HaMishnah*.

In the *Perush HaMishnah* he had promised an elaboration on the prophecy of Moshe, and yet in the *Moreh HaNevuchim* (2:35) he says he will not speak of it when discussing prophecy for it is really another phenomenon. Apparently, even what he felt he could once discuss about man’s potential in interacting with G-d, he no longer felt he could discuss in the area of philosophy. It would seem, discussing what G-d is not—שלילות—had replaced other explanations in Rambam’s mind.

### Change of Heart

We have seen that in his pseudo-presentation of the *Ikkarim* in *Hilchos Teshuvah*, he does not single out the thirteen principles of faith but integrates them into a larger group of twenty-four types of people who forfeit *Olam Haba*. In *Perush HaMishnah*, he elaborates on these concepts and says that these beliefs must be held for one to be included within כל ישראל שיש להם חלק לעולם הבא. Here, however, he presents the beliefs as denials of fundamentals and not in the positive way of requiring belief in order for one to be included. It would seem this itself signifies a major change of heart. He says that *Sefer HaMada* is for the presentation of *yesodei emunah* and in *Hilchos Yesodei HaTorah* he presents some of these *ikkarim* in an elaborate fashion. In describing what constitutes rejection, however, he only defines simple principles. It would seem that only the rejection of bonding with Israel and its beliefs actively, verbally, excludes one and subjects him to *Kares*.<sup>6</sup>

With regard to earlier *ikkarim*, the abstract presentation of the *ikkarim* of מציאות ה' וייחודו is expanded upon in the first chapter of *Hilchos Yesodei HaTorah* לא נמצאו אלא מאמיתת המצאו האומר שאין שם אלו-ה, ואין לעולם מנהיג. Only the denial of fundamental basic beliefs constitutes the violation, even though the *ikkar* itself is dense and abstract. This approach is true for all of the first four *ikkarim*.<sup>7</sup>

It would seem Rambam had moved away from expecting the individual to grasp abstract ideas.

<sup>6</sup> See *Hakirah* 20, “Israel’s Inheritance: *Olam Haba*.”

<sup>7</sup> Note how in the *Moreh* (1:35) he explains that we start with belief and acceptance and work our way up to ידיעה.

## מין - Change of Presentation

טו [ז] חמישה הן הנקראין מינים: האומר שאין שם אלוה, ואין לעולם מנהיג; והאומר שיש שם מנהיג, אבל הם שניים או יתר; והאומר שיש שם ריבון אחד, אלא שהוא גוף ובעל תמונה; וכן האומר שאינו לבדו ראשון וצור לכול; וכן העובד אלוה זולתו, כדי להיות מליץ בינו ובין ריבון העולמים. כל אחד מחמישה אלו מין.

The different issues regarding מין are presented in a “not only this, but also this” fashion, of a more demanding abstraction of G-d. This explains why *min* incorporates *avodah zarah* for by its practice the total transcendence of G-d is lost. These are all steps in *אין עוד מלבדו* (there is no existence beside His). It would seem with regard to this fifth *ikkar* of *avodah zarah* there is a meaningful change. In *Mishneh Torah*, the principle is very brief, and<sup>8</sup> it is not a matter of belief but of an action that demonstrates a belief.<sup>9</sup> It is one who worships *avodah zarah* as an intermediary. This would seem strange, for if he worships it as a god, certainly it is worse. Yet Rambam is precise. One who worships the idol with the belief it is G-d would have beliefs that violate the earlier *ikkarim*. Here we add one who perhaps has sound *bashkafos* with regard to the first four *ikkarim* and would only worship an object as an intermediary. In the *ikkarim*,<sup>10</sup> however, this concept is more broadly defined and apparently includes that one must not believe that it is proper to worship them and one must not believe<sup>11</sup> they have *שלטון ובחירה* (power and choice). In *Mishneh Torah*, only the practice itself is a violation of the *ikkar*.<sup>12</sup>

In the fourth *ikkar* Rambam had stated *הוא הקדמון בהחלט, וכל נמצא* and *זולתו הוא בלתי קדמון ביחס אליו*. This language seems to leave room for

<sup>8</sup> As noted in *Hakirah* 20, “Israel’s Inheritance: *Olam Haba*.”

<sup>9</sup> In the *ikkarim* the operative phrase in Kappach’s translation is *אמצעים להגיע בהם* which might mean to experience the Divine Presence, which would be quite different from what he says here.

<sup>10</sup> והיסוד החמישי שהוא יתעלה הוא אשר ראוי לעבדו ולרוממו ולפרסם גדולתו ומשמעתו. ואין עושין כן למה שלמטה ממנו במציאות מן המלאכים והכוכבים והגלגלים והיסודות וכל מה שהורכב מהן, לפי שכולם מוטבעים בפעולותיהם אין להם שלטון ולא בחירה אלא רצונו יתעלה, ואין עושין אותם אמצעים להגיע בהם אליו, אלא כלפיו יתעלה יכוונו המחשבות ויניחו כל מה שזולתו. וזה היסוד החמישי הוא האזהרה על עבודה זרה, ורוב התורה באה להזהיר על זה.

<sup>11</sup> To the point of saying it openly. See *Hakirah*, “Israel’s Inheritance,” noted above.

<sup>12</sup> We should realize, however, that perceiving as a מליץ is worse than *אנוש* who saw it as a way of showing respect for G-d. Thus, his act may be the core of ה' as Rambam refers to it (*Hilchos Avodah Zarah* 2:1)—meaning this is how *avodah zarah* began, but as מליץ it has extended into more serious *avodah zarah* which contains fundamentally faulty beliefs.

Plato's belief of primeval matter that coexists eternally with G-d. According to one manuscript, Rambam went back to explain the difference between the philosophical truth that he was stating and the fact that is stated in the *mikra* and part of our *mesorah* but not part of this *ikkar emunah*.

ודע כי היסוד הגדול של תורת משה רבינו הוא היות העולם מחדש, יצרו ה' ובראו  
אחר ההעדר המוחלט,  
וזה שתראה שאני סובב סביב ענין<sup>13</sup> קדמות העולם לפי דעת הפילוסופי הוא כדי  
שיהא המופת מוחלט על מציאותו יתעלה כמו שביארתי וביררתי במורה.

He did not say that this *ikkar* is anything other than how he defines it.<sup>14</sup> The first four *ikkarim* are primarily what Rambam refers to in the *Moreh* as “true beliefs”<sup>15</sup>—absolute truths independent of the rules that govern the universe G-d created and which can be understood about the nature of G-d “after the acquisition of many kinds of knowledge.” Here in *Hilchos Teshuvah* (3:7) he seems to reject Plato's belief outright as a necessity for earning *Olam Haba*, שאינו לבדו ראשון וצור לכל. Indeed, this is how *Kesef Mishneh* (ibid.) learns and how he interprets Raavad's understanding of Rambam.

Based on *Moreh HaNevuchim* 1:16, however, R. David Guttman contends the word צור was specifically chosen to connote prime mover rather than Creator.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, I would add that the *Sifrei* on הצור תמים פועלו relates צייר שצר בו את העולם תחלה וצר בו את האדם שנ' וייצר צור and in fact Raavad may see a reference to the *Sifrei* in Rambam's choice of words, perhaps assuming that Rambam picks the term צור based on the understanding of the *Sifrei*. He thus comments:

וכן האומר שאינו לבדו הראשון. א"א כאותו שאמר אלקיכם צייר גדול היה  
אלא שמצא לו סמנים גדולים תהו ובהו חושך ומים ורוח ובהם עשה מה שעשה.

He may not be interpreting what a מין is, but commenting on what may be Rambam's intent in using the term צור.

<sup>13</sup> Shelot translates קדמותו rather than קדמות העולם but interprets it to be referring to קדמות העולם. I am not convinced, however, that he or Kappach is correct. I refer readers to David Guttman's explanation of the *hagabah* but I believe Rambam's exact meaning is unclear.

<sup>14</sup> See R. David Guttman's essay on how to read the *hagabah* and exactly why Rambam does not want to change this *ikkar*. He proves from the use of מענה that Rambam did not mean to exclude Plato's concept.

<sup>15</sup> See *Moreh HaNevuchim* 3:28 on true beliefs vs. necessary beliefs. All of them are true but the first group is independent from Creation and deal with the nature of G-d. See R. Sochaczewski's essay in *Hakirah* 31. See also *Hakirah* 11, “Reading Rambam in Haifa and Studying Rambam in Brooklyn.”

<sup>16</sup> See David Guttman's essay.

If that is the case, then Rambam even in *Mishneh Torah* does not brand a Plato follower as a מין. If *Kesef Mishneh* is correct, he has widened the category of מין in *Mishneh Torah*. If he is wrong, does this mean that this belief is acceptable? In the opening of *Hilchos Yesodei HaTorah*, it would seem that he does reject the concept of pre-existing matter when he says:

ואם יעלה על הדעת שהוא אינו מצוי, אין דבר אחר יכול להימצאות ואם יעלה על הדעת שאין כל הנמצאים מלבדו מצויים, הוא לבדו יהיה מצוי ולא ייבטל הוא לביטולם.

But others, and R. David Guttman is amongst them, say that Rambam everywhere only refers to ontological precedence—the first source, the prime mover. Still, while this may be true—is there no loss of *Olam Haba* in holding this belief? The language in the first *ikkar* in *Perush HaMishnah* is similar to that in *Hilchos Yesodei HaTorah*. Perhaps, therefore, Rambam has precluded Plato's view already in the first *ikkar*, but if so, was it really necessary to clarify his rejection of the view with a *hagahah* on the fourth *ikkar*? Are we really sure Rambam wrote this *hagahah* that only appears in one manuscript?

There are several matters of uncertainty with this issue and without their resolution, it is improper to make the radical suggestion that Rambam was insincere. In the *Moreh HaNevuchim* (2:13), Rambam is quite explicit about the centrality to Judaism of G-d's total *kadmus*. It is implausible that Rambam would countenance Plato's view as acceptable in Judaism, and it must be part of our *ikkarei emunah*—so if it is not in the first four *Ikkarim* is it possible that it is to be found elsewhere? To answer this question, let us now turn to the issue we raised at the beginning of this essay. What happened to *schar v'onesh*?

### The Substitute *Ikkar*

We noted at the onset, that Rambam seems to have substituted the *ikkar* of the immutability of *Torah SheBe'al Peh*, which he had originally included in the overall *ikkar* of the immutability of the entire Torah, in place of *schar v'onesh*. In fact, his splitting of this *ikkar* is not an artificial device, but apparently another fundamental change in its own right. In the *ikkarim*, when he speaks of *Torah SheBe'al Peh* he merely speaks of the *perushim hamekubalim*, the *psbat* in various *pesukim* that are not obvious meanings of the *mikra*.<sup>17</sup> Indeed, this limited set should be rightly included under one

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<sup>17</sup> ושהוא במעלת לבלר שקורין לפניו והוא כותב כולה תאריכיה וספוריה ומצותיה. וכן פירושה המקובל גם הוא מפי הגבורה.

See Rambam's introduction to *Perush HaMishnah* with regard to *perushim mekubalim*.

*ikkar* rooted in *Torah She'bekesav*. The *ikkar* is only explaining that the unique transmission of the Torah included no input from Moshe Rabenu—but is all from G-d.<sup>18</sup>

Here in *Mishneh Torah*, Rambam has recast the *ikkar* of *Torah SheBe'al Peh* adding **וביתוס** כגון **צדוק** **וביתוס**. To appreciate what Rambam is trying to convey, we must look at his commentary to *Avos* (1:3):

והיו לזה החכם שני תלמידים, שם האחד צדוק ושם האחר ביתוס, וכאשר שמעוהו שאמר זה המאמר, יצאו מלפניו, ואמר אחד מהם לשני: **הנה הרב כבר באר בפירוש שאין שם שכר ולא עונש, ואין שם תקוה כלל, כי לא הבינו כוונתו עליו השלום.** ונתחברו זה לזה, ופרשו מן התורה. והתקבצה לזה כת ולזה כת, יקראום החכמים צדוקין וביתוסיין. והיות שלא יכלו לקבץ קהילות לפי מה שהגיע להם מן האמונה - כי זאת האמונה הרעה תפריד הנקבצים, כל שכן שלא תקבץ הנפרדים - הלכו אחר אימות הדבר אשר לא יכלו להכזיבו אצל ההמון, ולו הוציאו אותו מפייהם היו נהרגים, רצוני לומר: נוסח התורה, וצייר כל אחד מהם בלב סיעתו שהוא מאמין בנוסח התורה, וחולק על הקבלה, ושהיא קבלה בלתי נכונה. וזה כדי שיפלו מהם כל ההלכות המקובלות והגזרות והתקנות, הואיל ולא יכלו לדחות הכל, הכתוב והמקובל. ויתרחב להם גם כן הפתח לפירוש, לפי שכאשר חזר הפירוש אל בחירתו - יקל במה שירצה ויחמיר במה שירצה לפי מטרתו, הואיל ואינו מאמין בעיקר כולו, ולא ביקשו אלא דבר שיהיה נוח לקצת בני אדם. ומני אז צמחו אלה הכתות הארורות, קהילות המינים אשר ייקראו בארץ הזאת - רצוני לומר: מצרים - קראין, ושמש אצל החכמים צדוקין וביתוסיין, והם אשר החלו להטיל דופי בקבלה, ולפרש הכתובים כפי מה שיראה לכל אדם, מבלי השמע לחכם כלל, בניגוד לאומרו יתעלה: (דברים יז יא) "על פי התורה" וכו' "לא תסור" וכו'

They interpreted their rebbi to mean<sup>19</sup> that there was no *schar v'onesh*. They accepted it, and thus saw no value in religion and made another religion to give themselves power. This religion was totally of their own making—only using the Torah script as an excuse to legislate. Is it a coincidence that they did not believe in this principle of reward, and now they themselves (as the prototypes of those not believing in the *mesorah*) are substituted by Rambam as a new *ikkar*?

<sup>18</sup> I am surprised that Dr. Shapiro saw this in any other light. See the Shapiro, Sochaczewski debate.

<sup>19</sup> His teaching was that one should not serve G-d on the condition of receiving a פרס. Rambam explains פרס as something not earned and David Guttmann says that he is basing himself on the principle that via G-d there is only חסד. I understood that he is explaining their mistake—that G-d does indeed give us what we earn, and this is our soul and the benefit of our good actions—and only the extra (a prize) should not be expected.



According to Rambam, they argued even on *takanos* and went much further than what is described in the *ikkarim*. We thus certainly cannot understand him to be referring to them in the *ikkarim* in the *Perush HaMishnah*. I believe combining what he writes here with what we find in *Avos D'Ray Nosson* (5:2) will clarify further what Rambam had in mind in the *Hilchos Teshuvah* version of this new *ikkar*.

אנטיגנוס איש סוכו היו לו שני תלמידים שהיו שונין בדבריו, והיו שונים לתלמידים, ותלמידים לתלמידיהם. עמדו ודקדקו אחריהן, ואמרו: מה ראו אבותינו לומר דבר זה, אפשר שיעשה פועל מלאכה כל היום ולא יטול שכרו ערבית? אלא, אילו היו יודעין אבותינו שיש עולם אחר, ויש תחיית המתים, לא היו אומרים כך. עמדו ופירשו מן התורה, ונפרצו מהם שתי פרצות: צדוקין וביתוסין צדוקים על שום צדוק, ביתוסין על שום ביתוס. והיו משתמשין בכלי כסף וכלי זהב כל ימיהם, שלא היתה דעתן גסה עליהם. אלא צדוקים אומרים: מסורת הוא ביד פרושים שהן מצערין עצמן בעולם הזה, ובעולם הבא אין להם כלום

Specifically, their mistake was that they understood there was no *Olam Haba* and *schar mitzvah mitzvah*, meaning prosperity spurred by a Torah lifestyle is all that exists. We can readily understand how this can happen. Rambam (*Hilchos Teshuvah* 10:1-6) says that only the top *talmidim* can learn the concept of *avodah me'abavah*. Thus some, not being of sufficient stature, after reading all the deep philosophy of Rambam will claim that he himself does not (ח"ו) believe in *Olam Haba*.<sup>20</sup> These *talmidim* walked out feeling that the rabbis themselves are misleading the masses about the *mesorah* that they themselves have. They thus told their followers to enjoy the wealth that can be produced via the Torah in this world. This is מכחיש מגידיה. While in the next *ikkar* the Christians who say the law has changed are the prototype, here it is the purveyors of new movements within Judaism—keeping the *mitzvos*, but denying what was the original intent, denying the final goal of *Olam Haba* and legislating accordingly.

### Changed Perspective

Our understanding of *Olam Haba* is only via the teaching of *Chazal*.<sup>21</sup> In adding this *ikkar* of *Torah SheBe'al Peh*, Rambam, in fact, validates *schar v'onesh* both in this world and in the World to Come.<sup>22</sup> The scope, however, is much broader, ratifying other fundamental teachings of *Chazal* in

<sup>20</sup> The Straussians referred to in the Shapiro–Sochaczewski debate.

<sup>21</sup> In fact, even the first of the *ikkarim* were originally the domain of our own philosophers, and part of our *mesorah*. See *Moreh HaNevuchim* (2:11) and *Hakirah* 8 “Tradition! Tradition? Rambam and the Mesorah.”

<sup>22</sup> As Rambam presents their relationship in chapter 9 of *Hilchos Teshuvah*.

defining the religion. One could have theoretically had a Judaism without *Olam Haba* since the concept of *avodah m'abavah* is central to our belief. We know, however, it exists from the teachings of *Chazal*. In fact, the validity of the Torah depends upon it and בהירה, free choice—which is עמוד התורה, “the pillar of the Torah”—is also related to it, as Rambam explains in the fifth chapter of *Hilchos Teshuvah*.<sup>23</sup> We do not say that one who cannot conclude this on his own has failed in his understanding. It is only that he does not rely on מגידה.

By a lack of acceptance of the early *ikkarim*, one is disputing something that is true based on philosophy. Even Aristotle accepted G-d's existence and Unity. Elements of these *ikkarim* were perhaps lost by the time of Rambam, and he is able to reconstruct them based on Greek philosophy<sup>24</sup> as true beliefs that do not need a *mesorah* and can be recreated via logic. By contrast, *schar v'onesh* of *Olam Haba* is not a philosophically provable truth, nor is it explicit in the Torah as is Creation. Thus, our belief in it comes under the category of accepting the religion of the rabbi. Rambam in the eighth chapter of *Hilchos Teshuvah* (8:1) in describing *Olam Haba* bases it on מפי השמועה, part of our tradition, *Chachamim Rishonim*, the prophets and Dovid HaMelech. All these are מגידה. In the *ikkarim*, he had already pointed out that to contradict the coming of Mashiach is to contradict what is explicit in the Torah. When asked about *Techiyas HaMesim*, he has little to say—it is part of our *mesorah*.<sup>25</sup> A subtle change to Rambam's thinking is in deciding that even less is to be expected to be understood conceptually than he earlier stated. It would seem that Rambam has changed his perspective. While writing the *Perush HaMishnah* he had more of a tendency to see aspects of our religion as philosophically based, while later he saw them more as matters of *mesorah*.

With regard to the fourth *ikkar*, Plato's position on *kadmus* is perhaps precluded by simple *psbat* in בראשית ברא אלקים as Rambam says in *Moreh HaNevuchim*. If one wishes to argue this point, as Rambam says is possible, certainly it is precluded by our allegiance to מגידה<sup>26</sup> whose explanations

<sup>23</sup> *Hilchos Teshuvah* 5:3. It too is not defined as an *ikkar*.

<sup>24</sup> See R. David Guttman's essay where he explains, based on *Moreh Nevuchim* 1:71, how Rambam was concerned with proving G-d's existence philosophically.

<sup>25</sup> See *Iggeres Techiyas HaMesim*.

<sup>26</sup> The only time Rambam uses the term ברא is in *Hilchos Avodah Zarah* 1:3 describing Avraham Avinu's discovery of the Creator והוא ברא הכל. Perhaps the understanding began with Avraham. See *Moreh* 2:16 where Rambam emphasizes that Creation is based on prophecy.

are also part of the *ikkarei emunah* as stated in *Mishneh Torah*.<sup>27</sup> Just as the first three *ikkarim* were philosophical concepts, the fourth did not incorporate *yesh m'ayin* which is purely a matter known by the *mesorah*. Rambam perhaps maintained this presentation in *Mishneh Torah* and perhaps not—depending on our reading, as explained above.<sup>28</sup> With regard to these readings, however, we need to add one more element. In *Mishneh Torah* there is no explanation of the philosophical truths Rambam deals with in *Moreh HaNevuchim*. Here we do not know what we all now know but few really understand—that time itself was created. This concept is at the root of the understanding of the fourth *ikkar*. To us his statements in the first *halachos* of *Yesodei Torah* and later in *Hilchos Teshuvah* imply an understanding that precludes Plato and primal matter and his intent should be taken as such—as we think in terms of precedence of time. Later in *Moreh HaNevuchim*, where we learn a bit of *Maaseh Bereishis* and *Maaseh Merkavah*, and the readers can relate to a concept of ontological precedence, he explains clearly:

First Theory—**Those who follow the Law of Moses**, our Teacher, hold that the whole Universe, i.e., everything except G-d, has been brought by Him into existence out of non-existence. In the beginning G-d alone existed, and nothing else; neither angels, nor spheres, nor the things that are contained within the spheres existed. He then produced from nothing all existing things such as they are, by His will and desire. Even time itself is among the things created; for time depends on motion, i.e., on an accident in things which move, and the things upon whose motion time depends are themselves created beings, which have passed from non-existence into existence. We say that G-d existed before the creation of the Universe, although the verb existed appears to imply the notion of time; we also believe that He existed an infinite space of time before the Universe was

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<sup>27</sup> Much is made of the point that Rambam says that if Plato was proven we would have to explain *Bereishis* according to Plato, thus implying this is a real possibility. Dr. Shapiro considers it a contradiction to what Rambam writes a few chapters away, of it being a fundamental of *Toras Moshe*. This, in fact, proves what Rambam's meaning is. On a theoretical basis, if Plato had been proven true then *Chazal* would have handed down to us a somewhat different religion—but in fact, it is impossible to prove Plato correct. The proof that this is his meaning is that he later says that if Aristotle was proven we would have to rewrite our whole religion; he obviously did not entertain the possibility of doing so. Aristotle cannot be proven correct philosophically. Rabbi Sochaczewski answers along this line in his original essay.

<sup>28</sup> Depending on whether we accept R. David Guttmann's or Dr. Shapiro's or R. Sochaczewski's reading of Rambam in *Mishneh Torah*.

created; but in these cases we do not mean time in its true sense. We only use the term to signify something analogous or similar to time. For time is undoubtedly an accident, and, according to our opinion, one of the created accidents, like blackness and whiteness; it is not a quality, but an accident connected with motion. This must be clear to all who understand what Aristotle has said on time and its real existence. (*Moreh HaNevuchim* 2:13)

Here we get the explanation of *yesh m'ayin* as related to us by מגידיה.<sup>29</sup>

### אפיקורוס

Turning back to *Mishneh Torah*, following מין comes the new category אפיקורוס. This is made up of deniers of prophecy (*ikkar* 6), deniers of the unique prophecy of Moshe Rabbenu (*ikkar* 7) and the denial that G-d knows of man's actions (*ikkar* 10). In *Perush HaMishnah* he had defined אפיקורוס consistently with the definition based on the Talmud.

ומלת אפיקורוס היא מלה ארמית ענינה ההקלה והזלזול בתורה או בחכמי התורה,  
ולפיכך מניחים שם זה בסתם על מי שאינו מאמין ביסודות התורה או מבזה את  
חכמיה או איזה ת"ח שיהיה או רבו.

In the *Moreh*, Rambam took the term to mean the group of Greek philosophers who believed that the world is random (*Moreh* 3:17, 2:32) and reject prophecy. Here in *Mishneh Torah* the definition encompasses those who feel there is no connection between man and G-d; man cannot know what G-d wants nor does G-d know what man does. While this definition is in line with that in the *Moreh*, it also reflects the view expressed by *Chazal*—it is a rejection of the Judaism of the prophets and the *Chachamim*. While the first principles were philosophical truths in need of no *mesorah*, at this point Rambam begins with those parts of Judaism that are based upon our *mesorah*. Primary in this is the concept that it is possible to have a *mesorah* directly from G-d.

<sup>29</sup> In another essay, *Hakirah* 11, “Completing Creation,” I discuss the statement in *Moreh HaNevuchim* where Rambam says that the donkey seen by Bilaam was only a vision he saw in a dream. Yet in *Perush HaMishneh* he describes it literally as one of the ten things created *bein HaShemashos*. Sometimes Rambam just uses the terminology of *Chazal* for the common man, and then in the *Moreh* he explains what *Chazal* meant by it. I believe that this is the point being made by R. Moshe Maimon in Dr. Shapiro's citation of him, also referred to by R. Sochaczewski. When discussing those who mock *Aggados Chazal* in his *Introduction to Perek Chelek* Rambam notes their inability to discern language that has a double meaning.

### Change in Organization

In the *ikkarim*, in ידיעה, G-d's knowledge (*ikkar* 10), the most essential element is that G-d has not left the earth, which would seem preparatory to *schar v'onesh* (11), which encompasses G-d's *hashgachah*, and is followed by *Mashiach* (12) and *Techiyas HaMesim* (13). Thus, this last group of four is G-d's direct one-sided involvement with and guidance of man. It culminates with *Techiyas HaMesim*, the final step of G-d's involvement with man. Rambam had been moving in that direction, starting with *ikkar* 6, of prophecy and then through G-d's teaching of the Torah (7, 8) through Moshe Rabbenu. Here in *Mishneh Torah* he places ידיעה earlier<sup>30</sup> and his language is more pointed than in the *ikkarim*, יודע מעשה בני אדם. Here it is meant to be perceived as part of a group that together defines G-d's interaction with man, with prophecy being viewed from the perspective of man knowing of G-d. This is then to be followed by the culmination of this reciprocal relationship in the giving of the eternal Torah.<sup>31</sup> In this presentation *Mashiach* (13) is the final step, rather than *Techiyas HaMesim* (12) as we are dealing with a reciprocal relationship and the culmination of it is with *Mashiach* the man leading Israel to closeness with G-d. *Mishneh Torah* as well ends with the description of man's knowledge of G-d that will exist in the days of *Mashiach* (*Hilchos Melachim* 12:5). ❧

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<sup>30</sup> We might take him to mean what he says in *Yesodei HaTorah*, שהוא מפני לפיכך מפיני שהוא, ידיעה--שהכול נסמך בהווייתו לו יודע עצמו, ידע הכול--שהכול נסמך בהווייתו לו. Perhaps this includes the universe as emanation from G-d, and unrelated to Reward, but G-d transcendent above it, yet man is in constant contact with G-d. But then, perhaps it belongs earlier, as it is placed in Chapter 2 of *Hil. Yesodei HaTorah*, much before prophecy, and is somewhat an element of the knowledge of G-d. This concept of ידיעה is not presented in *Hilchos Teshuvah*. This understanding too is to be gained by the *mesorah*.

<sup>31</sup> "Principles" 9, 10, and 11 in *Mishneh Torah*.