



"KNOWING G-D"

Farbrenge – 11 Nissan, 5745-1985

When concluding the study of a tractate of Talmud we recite a prayer for Divine assistance, "as You helped me finish this tractate may You help me to begin and conclude other tractates." But Maimonides places great emphasis on the practical application; study of Halacha that leads to deeds. So the true way to study Rambam is to apply it practically.

It would therefore be appropriate upon concluding the study of his codes, not to be content with a prayer "to begin again." Rather, we must actually begin again, reading from the printed page.

The final law reads: "At that time," referring to the days of Moshiach, "there will be no hunger and no wars, no jealousy nor competition." The pursuit of knowledge of G-d will be our preoccupation to "grasp the wisdom of their Maker".

In what manner will they pursue this knowledge? To "fill the earth." "Fill," implies that it leaves no room for anything else. The only pursuit and endeavor will be to know G-d.

Then he adds, "as water covers the ocean." When one looks at the sea he knows it is covering something and "everything in the ocean has a counterpart on land and everything on land has a counterpart in the ocean" so there are many creatures there. Yet when he looks, the human eye sees only water, for the waters conceal the ocean bed and all its creatures, and all that's seen is the water.

So too, when we will look at the world "in that time" we will see only the water, which will "cover" the world. What is the "water"? "The knowledge of G-d". And it will cover the world just as water covers the ocean.

Those are the final words of the Laws of Kings & Their Wars.

To immediately join the beginning to end: As mentioned, Maimonides wants us to study in actual fact, and not be content with the prayer and hope "to begin and complete other Tractates..." So let us begin again.

In the first chapter of Laws of Torah Fundamentals, Maimonides begins: "The foundation of all foundations and the pillar of all wisdom is to know that there is a Primary Being" – referring to G-d who creates the world and all that it contains.

Thus, Maimonides continues "and He gives being to the beings of Heaven and Earth and everything in them."



פרשת ויצא

Studying this law after having concluded the entire work moves us to greater knowledge. We must assume that this Halacha offers deeper meaning than the words with which we ended the study, "as water conceals the ocean."

What more do we know? The final words tell us, that while we see only water, we are aware that the ocean contains many creatures. And while we know that there is an ocean floor we see only the surface of the water. The knowledge of His Being submerges all else.

Then we reach a higher knowledge of G-d. We come to realize that there exists only One Primal Being and He makes all beings exist. Not "made" in the past tense, He causes all beings to exist constantly, "for if His creative force should cease, all existence would revert to nothingness."

Now, when we see created beings, we know more than before. Not as in the conclusion, G-dliness to the exclusion of all else, "as water covers the ocean." We now know much more: We know that every moment of a being's existence is due to the presence of G-d. At this very moment it is being caused to exist by the Primary Being who creates all beings.

