

HALACHIC AND HASHKAFIC ISSUES IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

202 - EMUNA & BELIEF - PART 1 OU ISRAEL CENTER - WINTER 2020/21

- As we approach Parashat Yitro and the public reading of the 10 Commandments¹ we should spend a little time looking at the first², and most fundamental mitzva of the 613 - Emuna.

A] ANOCHI: THE FIRST MITZVA

1. אֲנֹכִי ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִיךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם מִבֵּית עַבְדִּים לֹא יִהְיֶה לְךָ אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים עַל-פְּנֵי: שמות פרק כ (ב - ג)

The 10 Commandments open with the statement 'Anochi Hashem Elokecha' - I am the Lord your God. What is the nature of this statement? Is it an introduction? A mitzva? A foundational concept?

2. (ב - ג) אֲנֹכִי ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ - הדבור הזה מלמד עשה. אמר אנכי ה' - יורה ויורה אותם שידעו ויאמינו כי יש ה'. והוא אלהים לבד. כלומר הוזהר, קדמון. מאתו היה הכל בחפץ ויכולת. והוא אלהים לבד, שחייבים לעבוד אותו. ואמר אשר הוצאתיך מארץ מצרים - כי הוצאתם משם תורה על המליחות ועל החפץ. כי בידעיה ובהשגחה ממנו ילאנו משם. וגם תורה על החדוש, כי עם קדמות העולם לא ישתנה דבר מטבעו. ותורה על היכולת. והיכולת תורה על הייחוד. כמו שאמר (לעיל ט:יד) צעצור תדע כי אין כמוני בכל הארץ. וזה טעם אשר הוצאתיך, כי הם היוודעים ועדים בכל אלה.

רמב"ן שמות כב

The Ramban understands that this statement is a mitzva - to know (yedia) and to believe (emuna) that there is a God. He also breaks down the aspects of this knowledge and belief into many subcategories: (i) that God exists; (ii) that He is a personal God, involved in each individual's life³; (iii) that he is Eternal and beyond time; (iv) that we have a correlative obligation to serve Him; (iv) that God knows and is actively involved in the world (hashgacha); (v) that the world is created (chidush) and not eternal (kadmut) since it can be changed by God; (vi) that God is One unlike anything else in the universe; (vii) that we are witnesses to this through the process of Yetziat Mitzrayim, Matan Torah and the mesora of those events which has been passed down to us.

3. א מצות עשה להאמין כי אותו שנתן לנו את התורה בהר סיני על ידי משה רבינו הוא ה' אלקינו שהוציאנו ממצרים. שנאמר (שמות כב) אֲנֹכִי ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִיךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם

ספר מצוות גדול עשין רמזי מצוות עשה

The Smag⁴ understands that Anochi is the mitzvah of emuna in Torah Min HaShamayim - to recognize that Torah comes from God.

4. סימן א - לידע שאותו שברא שמים וארץ הוא לבדו מושל למעלה ולמטה ובארבע רוחות כדכתיב אנכי ה' אלהיך (שמות כ')

ספר מצוות קטן הקדמה ותוכן עניינים

The Smak⁵ understands that Anochi is the mitzvah of emuna in Hashgachat Hashem - to recognize that God runs the world.

- Note that these authorities count Anochi as the first of all the Mitzvot. We will see below that this is also the position of the Rambam.

1. For a general shiur on the 10 Commandments and aspects of their public reading see <http://rabbimanning.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/The-10-Commandments-1.pdf> and <http://rabbimanning.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/The-10-Commandments-1.mp3>
 2. Emuna was not the first mitzva given to the Jewish people; that was the mitzva of Kiddush hachodesh, given to the people while still in Egypt. But Emuna is listed as the first mitzva in the Rambam's Sefer HaMitzvot.
 3. The first two of the Dibrot are worded in the second person singular - *lecha*. From the third commandment onwards they shift to the third person.
 4. Sefer Mitzvot Gadol - completed by R. Moshe of Coucy in 1247.
 5. Sefer Mitzvot Katan - completed by R. Yitzchak of Corbeille in 1277.

B] ANOCHI: IS IT A MITZVA AT ALL?

5. ראיתי לזעל בהלכות שלא ימנה אותה מורה בכלל תרי"ג. ... והנראה מדעתו שלזעל בהלכות שאין מנין תרי"ג מלות אלא גזירותיו יתע' שגזר עלינו לעשות או מנענו שלא נעשה. אבל האמונה במליאותו יתע' שהודיע אותה אלינו באותות ומופתים ובגילוי השכינה לעינינו הוא העיקר והשורש שממנו נולדו המלות לא ימנה בחשבון

השגות הרמב"ן לספר המצוות לרמב"ם מצות עשה א

The Ramban (in his commentary on the Rambam's Sefer HaMitzvot) brings the view of the Behag⁶ - that 'Anochi' is worded as a statement and not a command. It is in fact the underpinning of emuna, and not the mitzvah of emuna.

• Rav Chisdai Crescas, in the introduction to his philosophical work Or Hashem, points out that it is circular reasoning to speak of God commanding us to believe in God. No one can believe in God because God commanded him to do so, for if he obeys God's command, that means that he already believed in God. Conversely, for someone who does not believe in God, telling them that God commands belief is irrelevant. Therefore, concludes Crescas, it is illogical for God to command that you believe in Him.

C] ANOCHI: BOTH MITZVA AND THE FIRST OF THE 13 IKARIM

6. *The First Principle of Faith* - The existence of the Creator (praised be He) - that there is an existent Being invested with the highest perfection of existence. He is the cause of the existence of all things. In Him they exist and from Him emanates their continued existence. This is the first cardinal doctrine of faith, which is indicated by the commandment, "I am the Lord your God"

The First Ikar from the Rambam's Introduction to Perek Helek⁷

• The First Ikar does not posit God as a TEMPORAL cause (ie first in time), but rather as an ONTOLOGICAL cause (ie fundamental in existence). This means that, for the Rambam, it does not propose specifically that God came before creation (this is in fact the 4th Ikar). God could determine and cause existence without necessarily being prior to it.

7. ולהיות היסוד הזה כן אמר עליו בספר המדע 'יסוד היסודות ועמוד החכמות', להגיד שיסוד הזה - ר'ל היותו מחוייב המציאות - אינו במדרגה שוה לשאר היסודות אבל הוא יסוד ושורש לכולם

ראש אמנה סוף פרק ז'

This Ikar is in fact the foundation of all the others.

D] ANOCHI IN HALACHA - THE QUEST FOR KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

8. א יסוד היסודות ועמוד החכמות, לידע שיגש שם מציא ראשון. והוא ממציא כל הנמצא. וכל הנמצאים מן שמים וארץ ומה ביניהם, לא נמצאו אלא מאמתת המצא. ואם יעלה על הדעת שהיה על הדעת שהיה אינו מציא, אין דבר אחר יכול להמצאות. ואם יעלה על הדעת שאין כל הנמצאים מלבדו מציאים, הוא לבדו יהיה מציא ולא יבטל הוא לבטולם. שכל הנמצאים צריכין לו; והוא ברוך הוא אינו צריך להם, ולא לאחד מהם.

ב לפיכך אין אמתתו באמתת אחד מהם. הוא שהנביא אומר וה' אלהים אמת (ירמיהו י"ג). הוא לבדו האמת, ואין לאחר אמת באמתו. והוא שהתורה אומרת אין עוד, מלבדו (דברים ד:לה) - כלומר אין שם מציא אמת מלבדו כמותו.

ג המצוי הזה - הוא אלוה העולם, אדון כל הארץ. והוא המנהיג הגלגל בכוח שאין לו קץ ותכלית, בכוח שאין לו הפסק. שהגלגל סובב תמיד ואי אפשר שיסב בלא מסבב. והוא ברוך הוא המסבב אותו, בלא יד ולא גוף.

ד וידעת דבר זה מצות עשה, שנאמר אנכי ה' אלהיך (שמות כ"ב; דברים ה:ו). וכל המעלה על דעתו שיגש שם אלוה אחר, חוץ מזה - עובר בלא תעשה, שנאמר לא יהיה לך אלהים אחרים, על-פני (שמות כ"ב; דברים ה:ו), וכפר בעיקר, שזה הוא העיקר הגדול שהכל תלוי בו.

רמב"ם הלכות יסודי התורה פרק א

The Rambam begins his Mishne Torah with two Torah mitzvot (a positive and a negative). Note that the Rambam is very clear that this mitzvah is to KNOW that God exists. He does not use the word 'emuna'.

9. ואתה שלמה בני דע את אלקי אביך ועבדהו בלב שלם ובנפש חפצה כי כל לבבות דורש ה' וכל יצר מחשבות מבין אם תדרשנו ימצא לך ואם תעזבנו יזיחך לעד

דברי הימים א' כ"ט

Shlomo is commanded by his father David to 'know' God.

6. Ba'al Halachot Gedolot - written in the mid 8th Century, possibly by R. Shimon Kayara in Bavel or R. Yehudai Gaon.

7. Translation from 'With Perfect Faith' - Rabbi J. David Bleich, p. 36

10. רק דע - אם באמונות ודעות לא די שסמך על הקבלה בלבד רק דע את חלקי חניך - ע"פ ידיעת השכל והאמתיות ע"פ ידיעת השכל

מלבי"ם דברי הימים א' כח:ח - באור הענין

The Malbim explains that, when it comes to matters of understanding God, it is not sufficient to rely solely on tradition. One must also try to understand these issues in a logical and rational way

11. המצוה הראשונה: היא שנצטוו להאמין האלוהות. והוא: שנאמן שיש שם עלה וסבה שהיא הפועל לכל הנמצאים, וזהו אמרו ית' אנכי ה' אלקיך. ובסוף גמר מכות (כג) אמרו: תרי"ג מצות נאמרו לו למשה בסיני. מאי קרא? תורה צוה לנו משה כלומר מנין ת-ו-ר-ה. והקשו על זה ואמרו: תורה בגימטריא הכי הוא? שית מאה וחדסרי הוא? והיתה התשובה: אנכי ה' אלקיך ולא יהיה לך מפי הגבורה שמעום. הנה נתבאר לך כי אנכי ה' מכלל תרי"ג מצות, והוא צווי להאמין כמו שבארנו

ספר המצוות לרמב"ם מצות עשה א

*In Sefer Hamitzvot, the Rambam uses the expression להאמין. Is that the same as לידע in the Mishna Torah?*⁸

- What does it mean to say that the first two mitzvot were given directly by God to the people?

12. They also have a statement formulated in several places in the Midrashim and also figuring in the Talmud. This is their statement: *They heard 'I and 'You shall not have' from the mouth of the 'the Force'. They mean that these words reached them just as they reached Moses our Master and that it was not Moses our Master who communicated them to them.* For these two principles, I mean the existence of the Deity and His being One, are knowable by human speculation alone Thus these two principles are not known through prophecy alone As for the other commandments, they belong to the class of generally accepted opinions and those adopted in virtue of tradition, not to the class of the *intellecta*.

Moreh Nevuchim 2:33

The Rambam understands that these first two commandants (which encapsulate the first 3 Ikarim) are knowable and provable philosophically. The other commandments (and most of the Ikarim) are known to us through revelation.

13. הנה הרמב"ם דייק וכתב לידע שיש שם מצוי ראשון, וידיעת דבר זה מ"ע. ולא אמר להאמין שיש מצוי ראשון. והאמת ד"ז מ"ע. הרי באר שהמצוה הוא לידע זה בידיעת השכל, והוא כמ"ש במורה עמ"ש 'אנכי ולא יהיה לך מפי הגבורה שמענו', שהיינו מפי גבורת המופת. ר"ל שכל המצות קבלו ממש דרך אמונה כשידעו שהוא שליח ה', והאמינו בכל מה שצוה אותם בשם ה'. אולם שתי המצות האלה שהם מציאות ה' ושאיין זולתו, זה ישיג האדם בשכלו. וה' נטע בשכל האדם ידיעות נשתלו בו מלדה ומבטן עד שמי שיביט בעין השכל בבתי נפשו ימצא דעות אלה טבועות בנפש כל אדם, ומשורשות בנפשות כמו השכלות ראשונות, ולא היה צריך לקבלם ממש דרך אמונה. והמצוה הוא שישתדל לדעת זה בידיעה ברורה....

מלבי"ם כ:ב

14. יש דרך החוקרים אשר הביאו מופתים חזקים וראיות צורות לאמת מליאותו יתצרך וזראשם הרמב"ם

רדב"ז מצות דוד

Most commentators understand that the the Rambam requires us to gain knowledge and understanding of God to the point that we can prove His existence philosophically. The Rambam agrees that 'belief' in the existence of God must precede mitzvot. However, he understands that there is a specific mitzvah to build that belief by chakira - rational proof to the point of knowledge.

15. וענין ההאמנה הוא - שיקבע בנפשו שהאמת כן. ושאי אפשר חילוף זה בשום פנים. ואם יושאל עליו - ישיב לכל שואל שזה יאמין לבו. ואם יזכה לעלות במעלות החכמה, ולבבו יבין ובעיניו יראה במופת נחתך שהאמונה הזאת שהאמין אמת וברור אי אפשר להיות דבר בלתי זה, אז יקיים מצות עשה זו מצוה מן המובחר.

ספר החינוך מצוה כה

The Sefer Hachinuch explains that the basic mitzvah of emuna is to strengthen belief that one already has. However, the most enhanced way to fulfil the mitzva is by finding logical, intellectual and rational proofs for the existence and qualities of God. The Chinuch calls this a 'mitzvah min hamuvchar' - the mitzvah in its ideal form.

8. Actually, it's not so simple. The Sefer Hamitzvot was written in Arabic and a number of translations are extant. The translation into Hebrew brought in this source is direct from original manuscripts by Rav Yosef Kapach (1917-2000) and is generally accepted as reliable. The original Arabic word used here is اعتقاد which could also be translated as 'דעת' and not 'אמונה'. Indeed, Rav Saadia Gaon's famous book דעות is actually called in the original Arabic اعتقاد and אל-אמאנת ואל-اعتقاد. If so, little can actually be made of the difference between *emuna* and *da'at* here. The classic commentators are divided as to whether the Rambam really meant two different things in the Mishne Torah and the Sefer Hamitzvot. R. Chisdai Crescas does take this position whilst the Abarbanel understands both sources to be saying the same thing - see *Rosh Amanah* Chap 7. (In modern Arabic *al-aietiqad* means belief).

16. ... כל מי שיוכל לחקר על הענין הזה והדומה לו מן הענינים המושכלים בדרך הסברה השכלית, חייב לחקר עליו כפי השגתו וכח הכרתו. ... והמתעלם מחקר, הרי זה מגונה ונחשב מן המקצרים בחכמה ובמעשה. והוא דומה לחולה, שהוא בקי בחליו ובדרך רפואתו, סמך על רופא שמרפא אותו בכמה מיני רפואות, והוא מתעצל לעיין בחכמתו וסברתו. ... וכבר חייבתנו התורה בזה, כמו שכתוב וידעת היום והשבות אל לבבך וגו'

ספר חובות הלבבות שער א - שער היחוד פרק ג

Rabbeinu Bachya, in Chovat Halevavot (Spain, 11C) is highly critical of the laziness of those who are capable of rationalizing God's existence but who fail to do so.

E] WHAT IS 'UNDERSTANDING OF GOD'

17. וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹקִים נַעֲשֶׂה אָדָם בְּצַלְמֵנוּ כְּדְמוּתֵנוּ.....

בראשית א:כו

Man is created in the 'tzelem' and 'demut' of God

18. Some have been of opinion that by the Hebrew *tzelem*, the shape and figure of a thing is to be understood, and this explanation led men to believe in the corporeality [of God]. For they thought that the words "Let us make man in our tzelem" (Gen. 1:26) implied that God had the form of a human being ...

I hold that the Hebrew equivalent of "form" in the ordinary acceptation of the word, ie. the figure and shape of a thing, is *to'ar*. This term is not at all applicable to God.

The term *tzelem*, on the other hand, signifies the specific form, ie. that which constitutes the essence of a thing, whereby the thing is what it is - the reality of a thing in so far as it is that particular being. In the phrase "Let us make man in our *tzelem*", the term signifies the specific form of man, ie. his intellectual perception, and does not refer to his figure or shape. ...

As man's distinction consists in a property which no other creature on earth possesses, ie. intellectual perception on account of the Divine intellect with which Man has been endowed, he is said to have been made in the form and likeness of the Almighty, but far from it be the notion that the Supreme Being is corporeal, having a material form!

Moreh Nevuchim I:1

The first section of the Moreh, the Rambam explains that the creation of Man 'in the image of God' means the ability of Man to reach conscious intellectual perception in the way (apparently) that only God does.

19. God is an active intellect and that there is absolutely no potentiality in Him so that He is not sometimes perceiving and sometimes not perceiving, but is always an intellect *in actu*, it follows necessarily that He and the thing perceived are one thing, which is His essence.

.... It is accordingly also clear that [this] is not true of the Creator only, but also of every intellect. Thus, in us too, the intellectually cognizing subject, the intellect, and the intellectually cognized object, are one and the same thing wherever we have an intellect *in actu*. We, however, pass intellectually from potentiality to actuality only from time to time.

Moreh Nevuchim I:68

When we exercise our 'active intellect', in so doing we become a tzelem Elokim. Unfortunately, we rarely get to think 'actively' in the way that God does. Nevertheless, such thinking constitutes a 'Godly' act.

• The 13 Ikarim, especially the first four which are philosophical, and most especially the mitzva of 'Anochi' constitute 'active faith'. The process of thinking and analysis (perhaps irrespective of the immediate result or conclusion) represents an expression of Tzelem Elokim AND the mitzvot of 'Anochi'/'Lo Yihyeh Lecha'/'Ahavat Hashem'.⁹

F] 'ANOCHI' AS THE FIRST OF THE 6 CONSTANT MITZVOT

20. וז"ל החינוך [בהקדמתו וצסימן כ"ה כ"ו תי"ז תי"ח תל"ב תפ"ז]: שש מצות חיוזן תמיד, לא יפסקו מעל האדם אפילו רגע אחד כל ימיו. וכל זמן וכל רגע שיחשוב בהן קיים מ"ע ואין קץ למתן שכר המצות, ואלו הם: (א) להאמין שיש אלוה אחד בעולם שהמציא כל הנמצאות. ומחפלו ורצונו הוא כל מה שהוא עכשיו ושהיה ושיהיה לעדי עד. ושהוא הוליאנו ממלרים ונתן לנו התורה. וזהו מ"ע דכתיב אנכי ה' אלהיך אשר הולאתיך וגו'. ופירושו תדעו ותאמינו שיש לעולם אלוה המשגיח שהרי הולאתיך מארץ מלרים.

ביאור הלכה סימן א

The Sefer Hachinuch makes multiple mention of the 6 Mitzvot that apply to every Jew at every waking moment of every day. The first is the mitzva of 'Anochi'. Here, this is ruled at the very start of the Biur Halacha on Shulchan Aruch.

9. It will also be a fulfillment of the mitzva of Vehalachta Biderachav - to copy Hashem and imitate His middot. Just as God thinks actively, so do we.

G] CAN WE INTELLECTUALLY 'PROVE' THE EXISTENCE AND REALITY OF GOD?

- What level of 'proof' would we require to 'know' the existence of an Infinite Being? Can it be expressed as a percentage? 100%? 80%? 51%?
- Where should we look for this 'proof'? There are a number of traditional arguments for the existence of God, including :-

(i) The **Teleological Argument** - "argument from design" - what is the probability that the universe with all its fine-tuning evolved randomly - the Goldilocks Principle

21. ויאמר ה' אל אברהם לך מארצך וגו'; אמר רבי יצחק משל לאחד שהיה עובר ממקום למקום, וראה בירה אחת דולקת. אמר תאמר שהבירה זו בלא מנהיג? הציץ עליו בעל הבירה - אמר לו 'אני הוא בעל הבירה' כך לפי שהיה אבינו אברהם אומר תאמר שהעולם הזה בלא מנהיג, הציץ עליו הקב"ה ואמר לו אני הוא בעל העולם

בראשית רבה פרשת לך לך פרשה לט סימן א

This argument is found in Chazal in the famous Midrash of Avraham discovering the lit tower.

Chovot Halevavot¹⁰ brings the classic argument from design in nature - the metaphor of spilling random ink on a page and producing a work of writing. All the more so the incredible depth of design in nature bespeaks a Designer.

(ii) The **Cosmological Argument** - what could be the logical First Cause for the existence of this finite world.

22. ומעשה שבא מין ואמר לר' עקיבא - העוה"ז מי בראו? א"ל הקב"ה. א"ל הראיני דבר ברור. א"ל למחר תבא אלי. למחר בא אצלו, א"ל מה אתה לובש? א"ל בגד. א"ל מי עשאו? א"ל האורג. א"ל איני מאמינך הראיני דבר ברור. א"ל ומה אראה לך? ואין אתה יודע שהאורג עשאו? א"ל ואתה אינך יודע שהקב"ה ברא את עולמו? נפטר אותו המין. אמרו לו תלמידיו מה הדבר ברור? א"ל בניי, כשם שהבית מודיע על הבנאי והבגד מודיע על האורג והדלת על הנגר, כך העולם מודיע על הקב"ה שהוא בראו.

אוצר המדרשים (אייזנשטיין) תמורה עמוד 385

Rabbi Akiva presents this argument to a heretic.

(iii) The **Ontological Argument** - a pure logic argument developed over the last 1000 years.¹¹

- But how far do philosophical proofs take us? These three proofs have been severely critiqued and refuted over the last 250 years, particularly by Kant in the Critique of Pure Reason (1787) and later with the onset of Darwinian and Neo-Darwinian evolution. Does that detract from the purpose of this philosophical approaches to God's existence?

(iv) The **Argument from Morality** - whether an absolute morality is possible without God.

H] SO WHAT IS 'EMUNA'?

23. שנאמר בתחילת נתינת התורה אנכי ה' אלהיך אשר הוצאתיך מארץ מצרים וגו'. ופירושו כאלו אמר **תדעו ותאמינו** שיש לעולם אלוה

ספר החינוך מצוה כה

The Sefer Hachinuch, who states that the mitzva is to know (yedia) and 'believe' (emuna) that there is a God.

- We saw above that the mitzva of Anochi, according to many of the Rishonim is to develop knowledge of God based on rationality and intellectual proof¹². So what is Emuna?

24. (ה) ויִוצֵא אֶתֹו הַחוּצָה וַיֹּאמֶר הִבֵּט נָא הַשְּׁמַיְמָה וְסִפֵּר הַכּוֹכָבִים אִם תִּיכַל לְסַפֵּר אֶתְּם וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ כֹּה יִהְיֶה זְרַעְךָ: (ו) וְהֵאמֵן בָּהּ וַיִּחְשְׁבֶהָ לוֹ צְדָקָה.

בראשית טו-ה-ו

Avraham had 'emuna' in God. This was not a cognitive act of awareness or even a declaration of faith in God existence. It was a expression of confidence in and commitment to God.

10. By R' Bachya Ibn Pekuda (Spain 11C). Sha'ar Hayichud Chap 6.

11. This was made most famous by Anselm of Canterbury in his 1078 work Proslgium - Discourse on the Existence of God. It has the following basic steps:

Step 1: By definition, you cannot imagine a being greater than God; **Step 2:** A being that necessarily exists is, in reality, greater than a being that does not necessarily exist.

Step 3: Thus, by definition, if God existed as an idea in the mind but did NOT necessarily exist in reality, then we would be able to imagine something that is greater than God.

Step 4: But we cannot imagine something that is greater than God!

Step 5: Thus, if God exists in the mind as an idea, then God must necessarily exist in reality.

Step 6: God DOES exist in the mind as an idea.

Step 7: Therefore, God DOES necessarily exist in reality.

12. We will see in Part 2 that, even for the rationalist, there are severe limitations to how far this rational understanding can take us.

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25. (יב) וידי משה כבדים ויקחו אבן וישלמו תחתיו וישב עליה ואהרן וחור תמכו בגדי מזה אחד ומזה אחד ויהי גידו אמונה עד בא השמש.

שמות יז:יב

Moshe's hands were 'emuna' - ie faithful to the task that they were given.

26. ויאמר ה' אל משה עד אנה ינאצני העם הזה ועד אנה לא יאמינו בי בכל האותות אשר עשיתי בקרבם

במדבר יז:יא

*God complains to Moshe that the Jewish people have no emuna. This is not belief in God's existence but **faithfulness** to 'carry through' God's mission.*

27. א-ל אמונה ואין עול צדיק וישר הוא:

דברים לב:ד

G-d is described as 'emuna' - ie faithful to His promises to the Jewish people.

28. ויִדְרְכוּ אֶת־לְשׁוֹנֵם קְשֵׁתָם שֶׁקֶר וְלֹא לְאִמּוּנָה גִבְרוּ בְאֶרֶץ כִּי מִרְעָה אֶל־רְעָה יֵצְאוּ וְאֵתִי לֹא־ יִדְעוּ נֶאֱמַר־ה': ס

ירמיהו ט:ב

Yirmiyahu uses the term emuna for 'truth'¹³ - the opposite of sheker.

- Emuna normally means 'faithful commitment', not necessarily cognitive or intellectual, but also not anti-intellectual or irrational.
- Our relationship with God must be based (i) on rational understanding - yedia; and (ii) deep commitment and **faithfulness** to live by the knowledge that we have - emuna.
- Yedia is 'belief that', implying the knowledge of facts. This does not however prevent 'cognitive dissonance' - I believe that the chocolate fudge cake is bad for me yet I eat it anyway! Emuna is 'belief in' implying a relationship, as in - 'I believe in my wife'. In this case, there is no room for cognitive dissonance. I cannot make the statement - 'I believe in my wife' whilst at the same time hiring private detectives to check on her movements. That would mean very clearly that I did NOT believe in my wife!¹⁴

I] R' YEHUDA HALEVI AND A 'JEWISH' APPROACH TO EMUNA

- In R' Yehuda HaLevi's book The Kuzari, he sets out two further proofs for God based on Jewish history

(v) The **Historical Argument** - the nature of world/Jewish history.

(vi) The **Revelation Argument** - that God revealed himself to us at Sinai and our unbroken tradition teaching us of this reality.

29. ^{25]} The Rabbi: ... In the same way Moses spoke to Pharaoh, when he told him: 'The God of the Hebrews sent me to you,' meaning, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. For Abraham was well known to the nations, who also knew that the divine spirit was connected to the patriarchs, cared for them, and performed miracles for them. He did not say: 'The God of heaven and earth,' nor 'my Creator and yours sent me.' In the same way God commenced His speech to the assembled people of Israel: 'I am the God whom you worship, who has led you out of the land of Egypt.' But He did not say: 'I am the Creator of the world and your Creator.' Now in the same style I spoke to you, Prince of the Khazars, when thou asked me about my creed. I answered you as was fitting, and is fitting for the whole of Israel who knew these things, first from personal experience, and afterwards through uninterrupted tradition, which is equal to the former.

Kuzari 1:25

The Kuzari brings the classic argument for our commitment to God from the mass Revelation at Sinai and the accurate transmission of that message through the generations.

13. Emuna is derived from the word emet, through a now-lost intermediate form 'emenet'. Emet --- Emenet --- Emuna. Note a similar formation in the formation of daughter in Hebrew from son. Ben --- Benet --- Bat. The 'nun' in the intermediate form still survives in the plural 'banot'.

14. For a more detailed analysis of the 'belief that'/'belief in' issue see Prof. Menachem Kellner - Must a Jew Believe Anything pp12-13 and notes there.

30. 11] The Rabbi replied: I believe in the God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, who led the children of Israel out of Egypt with signs and miracles. Who fed them in the desert and gave them the Land, after having made them cross the sea and the Jordan in a miraculous way. Who sent Moses with His law, and subsequently thousands of prophets, who confirmed His law by promises to the observant, and threats to the disobedient. Our belief is comprised in the Torah - a very large domain.
- 12] Al Khazari: I had not intended to ask any Jew, because I am aware of their reduced condition and narrow-minded views, as their misery left them nothing worth-while. Now shouldn't you, Jew, have said that you believe in the Creator of the world, its Governor and Guide, and in Him who created and keeps you. And such attributes which serve as evidence for every believer, and for the sake of which He pursues justice in order to resemble the Creator in His wisdom and justice?
- 13] The Rabbi: What you are describing is a religion based on speculation and system, the research of thought, but open to many doubts. Now ask the philosophers, and you will find that they do not agree on one action or one principle, since some doctrines can be established by arguments, which are only partially satisfactory, and still much less capable of being proved!

Kuzari 1:11-13

R. Yehuda HaLevi argues that philosophical proofs take one only so far, but ultimately leave one with doubts¹⁵. At this point of doubt, we draw on the source of Emuna rooted in Klal Yisrael - being part of the Jewish people with its special story, most particularly, the giving of the Torah at Sinai.

31. 2] Al Khazari: How can I individualise a being, if I am not able to point to it, and can only prove its existence by its actions?
- 3] The Rabbi: It can be designated by prophetic or visionary means. Demonstration can lead astray. Demonstration was the mother of heresy and destructive ideas. What was it, if not the wish to demonstrate, that led the dualists to assume two eternal causes? And what led materialists to teach that the sphere was not only eternal, but its own primary cause, as well as that of other matter? The worshippers of fire and sun are but the result of the desire to demonstrate. There are differences in the ways of demonstration, of which some are more extended than others. Those who go to the utmost length are the philosophers, and the ways of their arguments led them to teach of a Supreme Being which neither benefits nor injures, and knows nothing of our prayers, offerings, obedience, or disobedience, and that the world is as eternal as He himself. The first man would never have known Him if He had not addressed, rewarded and punished him Kayin and Hevel were made aware of the nature of His being by the communications of their father as well as by prophetic intuition. Then Noach, Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov, Moshe and the prophets called Him intuitively 'Lord,' as also did the people, having been taught by tradition that His influence and guidance were with men

Kuzari 4:2-3

R. Yehuda HaLevi argues for a proof of God's existence not from philosophy but from our national (and personal¹⁶) experience of God's reality and the clear Mesora of that experience.

J] PRACTICAL EMUNA IN THE 21st CENTURY

- In a seminal 1967 essay¹⁷ - Faith and Doubt - Rabbi Dr Norman Lamm discusses attitudes to Emuna and different types of faith and doubt in the contemporary world.
- Rabbi Lamm outlines three types of faith¹⁸:
 - *cognitive faith* - a 'belief-that' approach to emuna questions which deals with specific intellectual and rational questions about God, Torah and Judaism. Emuna in this sense is understanding of truth over falsehood. It does not necessarily bring closeness to God or 'religious' satisfaction.
 - *affective faith* - a 'belief-in' approach to emuna which involves as sense of trust, reliance, dependance and hope. It demands an attempt to form a relationship with God and a quest for personal peace and meaning in life. It is related to the idea of bitachon.
 - *functional faith* - a 'belief-in' approach to emuna which expresses itself in action and behavior. It bespeaks a commitment to live by halacha and a dedication to Torah and mitzvot. It is related to ne'emanut - being trustworthy in one's relationships with God.¹⁹

15. I call this 'hitting the wall'. However advanced one's philosophical intellect, there will ALWAYS come a point when one runs out of mental energy and 'hit's the wall'. This could be a result of limitations in intelligence, drive, background or energy. At that stage most people arbitrarily cease their quest for truth, even though there is no logical reason to yet reach a conclusion. No matter how convinced one is by proofs that God does exist or does not exist, it is intellectually dishonest to reach a firm conclusion. If one had only been more intelligent, tried harder etc etc, one may have answered a key question or come up with a devastating new one!

16. The Kuzari begins with a king who has a recurring dream that, though his intentions are worthy, his (idolatrous) actions are not. This highly personal, psychological and even emotional route to God is very different to that of the Rambam.

17. Available at <https://traditiononline.org/faith-and-doubt/>. The essay was updated and republished in 2006 in a book of the same name. A 1992 analysis and critique of the essay by Prof Joshua Golding can be found at <https://traditiononline.org/faith-and-doubt-reconsidered/>

18. These different types of faith and doubt are not mutually exclusive, nor do they always have clear boundaries. A person may have different types of faith and doubt which also represent blurred overlaps between the categories.

19. In the terminology of Buber, Rabbi Lamm expresses cognitive faith as an 'I-It' relation, affective faith as 'I-Thou', and functional faith as 'I-He'. See footnote 8 in his essay.

- Rabbi Lamm also outlines three types of doubt:
 - *spurious doubt* - where the doubt is not driven by a quest for truth, but a attempt to avoid dealing with the issues (and possibly also a cynical justification for the rejection of mitzva observance).
 - *methodological doubt* - where the doubt is isolated and detached from the essence of the individual. It is essentially an intellectual question and a lack of understanding of some key issue in Jewish thought or philosophy. It can be compartmentalized in life and switched on and off within a committed life of faith and mitzva observance.
 - *substantive doubt* - where the doubt is an ongoing condition of life and cuts to the core of faith itself. It grasps and engages with us, not we with it, and is inextricably wrapped up with the existential search for meaning.
- A Jew must always have functional faith. Allowing doubts to translate into non-observance is effectively a decision of denial.
- Affective faith must be addressed by a move from belief-that to belief-in, which involves development of connection and relationship with God. Rabbi Lamm proposes that even the mediaeval rationalists who focused so much more on cognitive doubt and methodological faith, also intended this to lead to a relationship-based and emotive affective faith.²⁰
- Rabbi Lamm suggests three approaches to grow in affective faith: (i) Tefilla and developing the 'innate prayerfulness' inside the person; (ii) Torah learning so that the light of Torah will draw us back to God; (iii) Chesed to others and connection to Klal Yisrael. Essentially - Torah, Avoda and Gemilut Chasadim.

32. הארת עיניים בדבר המסופק ישמח לז כי אין בעולם שמחה כהתרת הספקות.

מצודת דוד משלי טו"ל

There is no greater Simcha in life than the ability to resolve doubts!

- In Part 2 we will iy'H take the concept of Emuna and understanding of God to the next stage - Hashem Echad - and the inherent limitations of our understanding.

20. This seems clear from the Rambam's emotive description of Ahavat Hashem in the 10th chapter of Hilchot Teshuva. From cognitive knowledge of God one is meant to come to affective love of God.