

הלכות תשובה • פרק שמיני

Complete Word-for-Word Interlinear • Navy & Gold Edition

CHAPTER PREVIEW

In this chapter, the Rambam opens up a window for us to understand the ultimate reward of the righteous, which is the life of the World to Come (Olam Haba). We will learn about the nature of this spiritual existence, where there is no physical body, no eating or drinking, but rather the souls of the righteous basking in the radiance of the Shechinah.

We will also learn about the ultimate punishment of the wicked, which is Kares—the complete cutting off and destruction of the soul. The Rambam guides us to look past the physical desires of this world and understand that the true, eternal good waiting for us is entirely spiritual, far beyond any physical pleasure we can comprehend.

All introductions, summaries, and contextual notes are the editor's commentary and are not part of the original text.

הליא

הטובה הצפונה לצדיקים ועונש הכרת של הרשעים

Halacha 1 • The Hidden Reward of the Righteous and the Spiritual Excision of the Wicked

הטובה הצפונה לצדיקים היא חיי העולם הבא והיא החיים שאין
that there is no is the life and it to come the world is the life of it for the righteous that is hidden The good
מנות עמה והטובה שאין עמה רעה. הוא שכתוב בתורה דברים
Devarim in the Torah is that which is written it evil with it that there is no and the good with them death
כב ז "למען ייטב לך והארכת ימים". מפי השמועה למדו
they learned the tradition from the mouth of days" and you will prolong to you it will be good "so that 7 22
למען ייטב לך לעולם שכלו טוב והארכת ימים לעולם
for the world days and you will prolong good that is entirely for the world to you it will be good so that
שכלו ארה. וזה הוא העולם הבא. שכר הצדיקים הוא שיזכו
is that they will merit it the righteous The reward of to come is the world it and this long that is entirely
לנעם זה ויהיו בטובה זו. ופרעון הרשעים הוא שלא
is that not it the wicked And the retribution of this in goodness and they will be this to the pleasantness of
יזכו לחיים אלו אלא יכרתו וימותו. וכל מי שאינו זוכה
merit that does not who And all and they will die they will be cut off rather this to life they will merit
לחיים אלו הוא המת שאינו חי לעולם אלא נכרת ברשעו ואבד
and perishes in his wickedness he is cut off rather forever live who does not is the dead he this to life
בבהמה. וזהו פרת הכתובה בתורה שנאמר במדבר טו לא "הכרת
"surely cut off 31 15 Bamidbar as it is said in the Torah the written karet And this is like an animal
תפרת הנפש ההיא". מפי השמועה למדו הכרת בעולם הזה
this in the world surely cut off they learned the tradition from the mouth of that" the soul shall be cut off

תַּכְרֵת לְעוֹלָם הַבָּא. כְּלוּמַר שְׁאוּתָהּ הַנֶּפֶשׁ שֶׁפָּרָשָׁה מִן הַגּוּף בְּעוֹלָם
in the world the body from that separated soul that that meaning to say to come for the world shall be cut off
הַזֶּה אֵינָהּ זוּכָה לְחַיֵּי הָעוֹלָם הַבָּא אֲלָא גַם מִן הָעוֹלָם הַבָּא נִכְרַתֶּת:
it is cut off to come the world from also rather to come the world to the life of merit does not this

This halacha defines the ultimate reward of the World to Come as eternal life free of evil, and explains that the punishment of karet is the total spiritual destruction of the soul.

ה'י"ב

הַקִּיּוּם הָרוּחָנִי בְּעוֹלָם הַבָּא בְּלֹא גּוּף וְגוֹיָה

Halacha 2 • The Spiritual Existence in the World to Come Without a Physical Body

הָעוֹלָם הַבָּא אֵין בּוֹ גּוּף וְגוֹיָה אֲלָא נַפְשוֹת הַצְּדִיקִים בְּלִבְד בְּלֹא
without alone the righteous souls of but and physical form body in it there is not the coming The world
גּוּף כְּמַלְאכֵי הַשָּׁרֵת. הוּאִיל וְאֵין בּוֹ גּוֹיּוֹת אֵין בּוֹ לֹא אֲכִילָה
eating not in it there is not physical forms in it and there is not since the service like angels of body
וְלֹא שְׂתִיָּה וְלֹא דָבָר מִכָּל הַדְּבָרִים שֶׁגּוּפּוֹת בְּנֵי אָדָם צְרִיכִין לָהֶן
them need man sons of that bodies of the things from all anything and not drinking and not
בְּעוֹלָם הַזֶּה. וְלֹא יֵאָרֶע דָּבָר בּוֹ מִן הַדְּבָרִים שֶׁמֵּאֲרָעִין לַגּוּפּוֹת בְּעוֹלָם
in the world to the bodies that occur the things from in it anything will occur and not this in the world
הַזֶּה. כְּגוֹן יְשִׁיבָה וְעִמּוּדָה וְשֵׁנָה וּמִיתָה וְעֶצֶב וּשְׂחֹק וְכִיּוּצָא בְּהֵן. כֹּה
so of them and the like and laughter and sadness and death and sleeping and standing sitting such as this
אָמְרוּ חֲכָמִים הָרִאשׁוֹנִים גִּמְרָא בְּרֻכּוֹת יז א "הָעוֹלָם הַבָּא אֵין בּוֹ לֹא
not in it there is not the coming The world a 17 Berachos Gemara the first Sages said
אֲכִילָה וְלֹא שְׂתִיָּה וְלֹא תַשְׁמִישׁ אֲלָא צְדִיקִים יוֹשְׁבִים וְעֹטְרוֹתֵיהֶם
and their crowns sit righteous but cohabitation and not drinking and not eating
בְּרִאשֵׁיהֶן וְנִהְנִין מִזֵּיו הַשְּׂכִינָה". הֲרִי נִתְבָּרַר לָךְ שֶׁאֵין שָׁם
there that there is not to you it is clarified behold the Divine Presence from the radiance of and delight on their heads
גּוּף לְפִי שֶׁאֵין שָׁם אֲכִילָה וְשְׂתִיָּה. וְזֶה שֶׁאָמְרוּ צְדִיקִים יוֹשְׁבִין
sit righteous that they said and this and drinking eating there that there is not because body
דֶּרֶךְ חֵידָה אָמְרוּ. כְּלוּמַר הַצְּדִיקִים מְצוּיִין שָׁם בְּלֹא עֲמָל וּבְלֹא
and without labor without there exist the righteous meaning to say they said riddle by way of
יְגִיעָה. וְכֵן זֶה שֶׁאָמְרוּ עֹטְרוֹתֵיהֶן בְּרִאשֵׁיהֶן כְּלוּמַר דַּעַת שֶׁיָּדְעוּ
that they knew knowledge meaning to say on their heads their crowns that they said this and likewise toil
שֶׁבִּגְלָלָהּ זָכוּ לְחַיֵּי הָעוֹלָם הַבָּא מְצוּיָה עִמָּהֶן וְהִיא הָעֲטָרָה שֶׁלָּהֶן
of theirs the crown and it with them is present the coming the world to the life of they merited that because of it
כְּעֶנְיָן שֶׁאָמַר שְׁלֹמֹה שִׁיר הַשִּׁירִים ג יא "בְּעֲטָרָה שֶׁעֲטָרָה לוֹ אָמוּ".
his mother him that crowned With the crown 11 3 Songs Song of Shlomo that said like the matter
וְהֲרִי הוּא אוֹמֵר יִשְׁעִיהָ לֵה י "וְשִׂמְחַת עוֹלָם עַל רֹאשָׁם" וְאֵין
and there is not their head upon eternity And joy of 10 35 Yeshayah says he and behold

הַשְׂמֵחָה גּוּף כְּדִי שֶׁתְּנוּחַ עַל הָרֹאשׁ. כִּף עֲטָרָה שֶׁאָמְרוּ חֲכָמִים כָּאן

here Sages that said crown so the head upon that it should rest in order a body the joy

הִיא הִידִיעָה. וּמָהוּ זֶה שֶׁאָמְרוּ נִהְיִין מִזִּי הַשְׂכִּינָה. שִׂידָעִים

that they know the Divine Presence from the radiance of delight that they said this and what is the knowledge it

וּמִשִּׁיגִין מֵאֲמַתַּת הַקְּדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא מַה שֶׁאֵינָם יוֹדְעִים וְהֵם

while they know that they do not what is He Blessed the Holy One from the truth of and comprehend

בַּגּוּף הָאֵפֶל הַשָּׁפֵל:

the lowly the dark in the body

The Rambam explains that the World to Come is entirely spiritual, and that the Sages' descriptions of sitting and wearing crowns are metaphors for intellectual and spiritual comprehension.

ה'ל"ג

מַהוּת הַנֶּפֶשׁ בְּעוֹלָם הַכֹּף וְצִרּוּר הַחַיִּים

Halacha 3 · The Nature of the Soul in the World to Come and the Bond of Life

כָּל נֶפֶשׁ הָאֲמוּרָה בְּעֵנִין זֶה אֵינָה הַנֶּשְׁמָה הַצְּרִיכָה לַגּוּף אֶלָּא צוּרַת

the form of but rather the body that needs the soul is not this in the matter referred to soul Every

הַנֶּפֶשׁ שֶׁהִיא הַדַּעַה שֶׁהִשִּׁיגָה מִהַבּוֹרָא כִּפִּי כֹחָה וְהַשְׂגָּה

and its comprehension its power according to of the Creator that it comprehended the knowledge which is the soul of

הַדַּעוֹת הַנִּפְרָדוֹת וְשֶׁאֵר הַמַּעֲשִׂים וְהִיא הַצּוּרָה שֶׁבְּאֲרָנוּ עֲנִינָה בְּפֶרֶק

in chapter nature whose we explained is the form and it works and other the abstract the intellects

רְבִיעִי מֵהַלְכוֹת יְסוּדֵי הַתּוֹרָה הִיא הַנִּקְרָאת נֶפֶשׁ בְּעֵנִין זֶה. חַיִּים

Life this in the matter soul is that which is called it the Torah Foundations of of the Laws of fourth

אֵלּוּ לְפִי שֶׁאֵין עִמָּהֶם מוֹת שֶׁאֵין הַמוֹת אֶלָּא מִמֵּאֲרָעוֹת הַגּוּף

the body from the occurrences of is only death since death with them there is not because this

וְאֵין שֵׁם גּוּף נִקְרָאוּ צִרּוּר הַחַיִּים שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר שְׁמוּאֵל א כה כט

29 25 Aleph Shmuel as it is said life the bond of it is called a body there and there is not

"וְהִיְתָה נֶפֶשׁ אֲדָנִי צְרוּרָה בְּצִרּוּר הַחַיִּים". וְזֶהוּ הַשָּׂכָר שֶׁאֵין שָׂכָר

reward that there is no the reward and this is life in the bond of bound my master the soul of and shall be

לְמַעַל מִמֶּנּוּ וְהַטּוֹבָה שֶׁאֵין אַחֲרֶיהָ טוֹבָה וְהִיא שֶׁהִתְאָוּוּ לָהּ כָּל

all for it is that which desired and it good after it that there is no and the good it above

הַנְּבִיאִים:

the prophets

This halacha clarifies that the soul in the World to Come is the intellectual form of the soul, which exists eternally without a physical body.

ה'ל"ד

שֵׁמוֹת הַשּׁוֹנִים שֶׁל הָעוֹלָם הַכֹּף

Halacha 4 · The Various Metaphorical Names for the World to Come

וְכַמָּה שְׁמוֹת נִקְרָאוּ לָהּ דֶּרֶךְ מִשָּׁל. הַר ה'. וּמִקּוֹם קָדְשׁוֹ.

His holiness and the place of Hashem the mountain of metaphor by way of to it were called names And how many

וְדֶרֶךְ הַקֹּדֶשׁ. וְחִצְרוֹת ה'. וְנֵעִם ה'. וְאַהֲל ה'.

Hashem and the tent of Hashem and the pleasantness of Hashem and the courtyards of the holiness and the path of

וְהֵיכַל ה'. וּבֵית ה'. וְשַׁעַר ה'. וְחֲכָמִים קָרְאוּ לָהּ דֶּרֶךְ

by way of to it called And the Sages Hashem and the gate of Hashem and the house of Hashem and the palace of

מִשָּׁל לְטוֹבָה זוֹ הַמְּזֻמָּנָה לְצַדִּיקִים סְעֵדָה. וְקוֹרִין לָהּ בְּכָל מְקוֹם

place in every to it and they call a feast for the righteous that is prepared this for this goodness metaphor

הָעוֹלָם הַבָּא:

to come the world

The Rambam lists the biblical and rabbinic metaphors used to describe the spiritual reward of the World to Come.

ה'י ה

עוֹנֵשׁ פֶּתַת וְאֲבִדוֹן הַנֶּפֶשׁ

Halacha 5 · The Punishment of Kares and the Destruction of the Soul

הַנִּקְמָה שְׂאִין נִקְמָה גְּדוֹלָה מִמֶּנָּה שֶׁתִּכְרַת הַנֶּפֶשׁ וְלֹא תִזְכָּה

merit and not the soul is that will be cut off than it greater retribution that there is no The retribution

לְאוֹתָן הַחַיִּים שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר בַּמִּדְבָּר טוֹ לֹא "הַפֶּתַת תִּכְרַת הַנֶּפֶשׁ הִיא עוֹנָה

its sin that the soul shall be cut off surely cut off 31 15 Numbers as it is said lives those

כֹּה". וְזֶה הָאֲבִדוֹן הוּא שֶׁקוֹרִין אוֹתוֹ הַנִּבְיָאִים דֶּרֶךְ מִשָּׁל בְּאֵר שַׁחַת

destruction the pit of metaphor by way of the prophets it what call is destruction And this is in it

וְאֲבִדוֹן וְתַפְתָּה וְעֲלוּקָה וְכָל לְשׁוֹן כְּלָיָה וְהַשְׁחָתָה קוֹרְאִין לוֹ לְפִי

because it they call and destruction annihilation term of and every and the leech and Topheth and doom

שֶׁהִיא הַכְּלָיָה שְׂאִין אַחֲרֶיהָ תִּקְוָמָה וְהַהֶפְסֵד שְׂאִינוּ חוֹזֵר לְעוֹלָם:

forever return that does not and the loss arising after it that there is no the annihilation it is

This halacha defines the ultimate spiritual punishment of kares as the complete and irreversible destruction of the soul.

ה'י ו

הַהֶבְדֵּל בֵּין הַטוֹב הַגִּשְׁמִי לְטוֹב הָעוֹלָם הַבָּא

Halacha 6 · The Difference Between Physical Pleasures and the Spiritual Reward of the World to Come

שְׂמָא תִּקַּל בְּעֵינֶיךָ טוֹבָה זוֹ וְתִדְמָה שְׂאִין שְׂכַר הַמִּצְוֹת

the mitzvos reward of that there is not and you will imagine this goodness in your eyes it will be light Lest

וְהָיִיתָ הָאָדָם שָׁלֵם בְּדַרְכֵי הָאֱמֶת אֲלֵא לְהִיּוֹתוֹ אוֹכֵל וְשׁוֹתָה מֵאֲכָלוֹת

foods and drinking eating for his being except the truth in the paths of complete the person and being of

טוֹבוֹת וּבֹעֵל צוּרוֹת נָאוֹת וְלוֹבֵשׁ בְּגָדֵי שֵׁשׁ וְרִקְמָה וְשׁוֹכֵן

and dwelling and embroidery fine linen garments of and wearing beautiful forms and cohabiting with good

בְּאַהֲלֵי שֵׁן וּמִשְׁתַּמֵּשׁ בְּכֵלֵי כֶסֶף וְזָהָב וּדְבָרִים הַדּוּמִים לָאֵלוּ כִּמוֹ

like to these that are similar and things and gold silver utensils of and using ivory in tents of

שֶׁמִּדְמִין אֵלּוּ הָעֲרַבִּים הַטֹּפְשִׁים הָאֵוִילִים הַשְּׁטוּפִים בְּזָמָה. אֲבָל הַחֲכָמִים

the Sages but with lewdness who are flooded the silly the foolish the Arabs these that imagine

וּבְעֵלִי יָדְעוּ שֶׁכָּל הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֹהִי דְבָרֵי הַבֹּאִי וְהַכֵּל הֵם
they are and vanity nonsense are words of these the things that all know knowledge and possessors of
וְאֵין בָּהֶם תּוֹעֵלָת וְאִינָה טוֹבָה גְּדוֹלָה אֲצִלָּנוּ בְּעוֹלָם הַזֶּה אֵלָּא מִפְּנֵי
because except this in world by us great goodness and it is not benefit in them and there is not
שָׂאֵנוּ בְּעֵלִי גּוּף וּגּוּיָהּ, וְכָל הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֹהִי צָרְכֵי הַגּוּף הֵם
they are the body needs of these the things and all and physical form body possessors of that we are
וְאֵין הַנֶּפֶשׁ מִתְאַוָּה לָהֶם וּמַחְמִדָתָן אֵלָּא מִפְּנֵי צָרָהּ הַגּוּף, כְּדִי
in order the body need of because of except and lusting for them them desiring the soul and there is not
שְׂמִימָצָא חֲפָצוֹ וַיַּעֲמֵד עַל בְּרִיו. וּבְזִמָּן שָׂאֵין שָׁם גּוּף נִמְצָאוּ כָּל
all found are a body there that there is not and in a time its health on and stand its desire that it will find
הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֹהִי בְּטָלִים. הַטּוֹבָה הַגְּדוֹלָה שֶׁתִּהְיֶה בָּהּ הַנֶּפֶשׁ בְּעוֹלָם הַבֹּא
the coming in the world the soul in it that will be the great the goodness nullified these the things
אֵין שׁוּם דָּרָךְ בְּעוֹלָם הַזֶּה לְהַשִּׁיגָהּ וְלִידַע אוֹתָהּ. שָׂאֵין אָנוּ יוֹדְעִים
know we for not it and to know to grasp it this in the world way any there is not
בְּעוֹלָם הַזֶּה אֵלָּא טוֹבַת הַגּוּף וְלֹא אָנוּ מִתְאַוִּין. אֲכַל אוֹתָהּ הַטּוֹבָה
goodness that but desire we and for it the body the goodness of except this in the world
גְּדוֹלָה עַד מְאֹד וְאֵין לָהּ עֲרָךְ בְּטוֹבוֹת הָעוֹלָם הַזֶּה אֵלָּא דָּרָךְ
by way of except this the world with the goods of comparison to it and there is not very much until is great
מִשָּׁל. אֲבָל בְּדָרָךְ הָאֵמֶת שֶׁנַּעֲרָךְ טוֹבַת הַנֶּפֶשׁ בְּעוֹלָם הַבֹּא
the coming in the world the soul the goodness of that we should compare the truth by way of but metaphor
בְּטוֹבוֹת הַגּוּף בְּעוֹלָם הַזֶּה בְּמֵאֲכָל וּבְמִשְׁתֶּה אֵינוּ כֵּן. אֵלָּא אוֹתָהּ הַטּוֹבָה
goodness that rather so it is not and in drink in food this in the world the body with the goods of
גְּדוֹלָה עַד אֵין חֶקֶר וְאֵין לָהּ עֲרָךְ וְדַמְיוֹן. הוּא שֶׁאָמַר דָּוִד
Dovid that said it is and likeness comparison to it and there is not searching there is no until is great
תְּהִילִים לֹא כ "מָה רַב טוֹבָה אֲשֶׁר צִפְנָתָ לִירְאָיִךְ" וְגו':
etc for those who fear You You have hidden which Your goodness abundant is How 20 31 Psalms

The Rambam explains that the ultimate reward of the World to Come is purely spiritual and cannot be compared to physical pleasures like eating, drinking, or material wealth.

הלי 2

הַפְלָגַת טוֹבַת הָעוֹלָם הַבֹּא וְהַהֲבִדָּל מִימּוֹת הַמָּשִׁיחַ

Halacha 7 • The Incomprehensible Good of the World to Come and Its Distinction from the Messianic Era

וְכַמָּה כָּמָה דָּוִד וְהִתְאַוָּה לְחַיֵּי הָעוֹלָם הַבֹּא שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר תְּהִילִים כֹּז יג
13 27 Tehillim as it is said to come the world for the life of and desired Dovid yearned And how much
"לוֹיֵלָא הָאֲמַנְתִּי לְרֵאוֹת בְּטוֹב ה' בְּאֶרֶץ חַיִּים". בְּכֹר הוֹדִיעוּנו
informed us Already the living in the land of Hashem the goodness of to see believed Had I not

הַחֲכָמִים הָרִאשׁוֹנִים שְׁטוּבַת הָעוֹלָם הַבָּא אֵין כַּח בְּאָדָם לְהַשִּׁיגָהּ
 to comprehend it in man strength there is no to come the world that the goodness of the earlier ones the Sages

עַל בְּרִיָּה וְאֵין יוֹדֵעַ גְּדֻלָּהּ וְיִפְיָהּ וְעֲצֻמָּהּ אֵלָּא הַקְדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ
 Blessed the Holy One except and its power and its beauty its greatness who knows and there is no one its clarity upon

הוּא לְבִדּוֹ. וְשָׁכַל הַטּוֹבוֹת שְׁמֵת־נִבְיָאִים בָּהֶם הַנְּבִיאִים לְיִשְׂרָאֵל אֵין
 are not to Yisrael the prophets about them that prophesy the goods and that all alone is He

אֵלָּא לְדִבְרִים שְׁפָגוּף שְׁנֵהֲנִין בָּהֶן יִשְׂרָאֵל לִימֹת הַמָּשִׁיחַ בְּזִמְנָא
 at the time the Mashiach in the days of Yisrael from them that benefit of the body for things except

שֶׁתָּשׁוּב הַמְּשָׁלָה לְיִשְׂרָאֵל. אֲבָל טוֹבַת חַיֵּי הָעוֹלָם הַבָּא אֵין לָהּ
 to it there is no to come the world the life of the goodness of But to Yisrael the sovereignty that will return

עֵרָר וְדַמְיוֹן וְלֹא דְמוּת הַנְּבִיאִים כְּדִי שְׁלֹא יִפְחָתוּ אוֹתָהּ
 it they would diminish that not in order the prophets did describe it and not and likeness comparison

בְּדַמְיוֹן. הוּא שִׁישְׁעֶיהָ אָמַר יִשְׁעִיָּה סֵד ג' "עֵין לֹא רָאָתָה אֱלֹהִים זֹלָתָהּ
 besides You O God has seen not No eye 3 64 Yeshayahu said that Yeshayahu It is in the imagination

יַעֲשֶׂה לְמַחֲכָה לוֹ". כְּלוּמַר הַטּוֹבָה שְׁלֹא רָאָתָה אוֹתָהּ עֵין
 the eye of it saw that not the goodness meaning to say for Him for the one who waits what He will do

נְבִיא וְלֹא רָאָה אוֹתָהּ אֵלָּא אֱלֹהִים, עָשָׂה אוֹתָהּ הָאֱלֹהִים לְאָדָם שְׁמַחֲכָה
 who waits for the person God it He made God except it saw and not a prophet

לוֹ. אָמְרוּ חֲכָמִים כָּל הַנְּבִיאִים כָּלָן לֹא נִבְּאוּ אֵלָּא לִימֹת הַמָּשִׁיחַ
 the Mashiach for the days of except prophesy did not all of them the prophets All the Sages They said for Him

אֲבָל הָעוֹלָם הַבָּא עֵין לֹא רָאָתָה אֱלֹהִים זֹלָתָהּ:
 besides You O God has seen not no eye to come the world but

The Rambam explains that the true reward of the World to Come is entirely spiritual and beyond human comprehension, whereas prophetic promises of physical abundance refer only to the Messianic Era.

ה'ל"ח

מַצִּיאוֹת הָעוֹלָם הַבָּא בַּהוּוֹה וְטַעַם כְּנוּיוֹ

Halacha 8 · The Present Existence of the World to Come and the Reason for Its Name

זֶה שֶׁקִּרְאוּ אוֹתוֹ חֲכָמִים הָעוֹלָם הַבָּא לֹא מִפְּנֵי שְׁאִינוֹ מְצוּי עַתָּה וְזֶה
 and this now present that it is not because not the coming the world the Sages it that called This

הָעוֹלָם אוֹבֵד וְאַחֵר כֵּךְ יָבוֹא אוֹתוֹ הָעוֹלָם. אֵין הַדְּבָר כֵּן. אֵלָּא הִרִי הוּא
 it behold rather so the matter not world that will come so and after perishes world

מְצוּי וְעוֹמֵד שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר תְּהִלִּים לֹא כ' "אֲשֶׁר צִפְנָתָ לִירְאֵיךָ
 for those who fear You You have hidden which 20 31 Tehillim as it is said and standing present

פְּעֻלָּתָ" וְגו'. וְלֹא קִרְאוּהוּ עוֹלָם הַבָּא אֵלָּא מִפְּנֵי שְׁאוֹתָן הַחַיִּים בָּאֵין
 come lives that those because except the coming world did they call it and not etc You have made

לוֹ לְאָדָם אַחֵר חַיֵּי הָעוֹלָם הַזֶּה שְׁאֵנוּ קִיָּמִים בּוֹ בְּגוּף וְנֶפֶשׁ וְזֶהוּ
 and this is and soul in body in it exist that we this the world the life of after to a man to him

הַנִּמְצָא לְכָל אָדָם בְּרֵאשׁוֹנָה:

at first man to every that which is found

The Rambam clarifies that the World to Come already exists in the present and is only called 'the coming' because a person enters it after life in this world.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

The Rambam explains that the ultimate reward for the righteous is Olam Haba, a purely spiritual realm where souls exist without physical bodies, like ministering angels, and delight in the comprehension of Hashem's truth. Conversely, the ultimate retribution for the wicked is Kares, the complete and permanent obliteration of the soul. The Rambam clarifies that all physical pleasures are merely needs of the body in this world, and he cautions us not to foolishly imagine Olam Haba as a place of physical indulgence, as the true spiritual good prepared for the righteous is the greatest possible good, which cannot be fully grasped while we are bound to a physical body.

לְמַעֲשֶׂה WHAT TO TAKE HOME

The Rambam is teaching us a fundamental truth that changes how we look at our entire life: the ultimate reward of the World to Come is not a physical place of eating and drinking, but a state of pure, spiritual connection where we "delight in the radiance of the Divine Presence." The "crowns on their heads" refers to the very Torah knowledge and spiritual awareness we acquire in this world. This means that Olam Haba is not a new world we enter after we die; it is a reality we build right now through the spiritual vessels we shape within our own souls.

Every time you learn a piece of Torah, perform a mitzvah with heart, or choose to overcome a physical temptation for the sake of Hashem, you are not just earning points for a future payoff. You are actually developing your spiritual senses. You are building the "crown" of understanding that will allow your soul to bask in Hashem's light forever. If we only train ourselves to appreciate physical pleasures, we will have no vessels to experience the spiritual beauty of the World to Come.

Today, take five minutes to do one spiritual act, whether learning Torah, saying a brachah with deep intent, or doing a chesed, solely for the purpose of connecting to Hashem, consciously reminding yourself that you are building your eternal vessel to experience His closeness.