

Laws of Dispositions, Chapter 3 (Auto Translated)

English

Auto Translated

Shiur Overview

Summary of the Shiur: Rambam, Hilchos De'os, Chapter 3

Halacha 1 – First Part: "Shema yomar adam... efrosh meihen b'yoser"

The Rambam's words: "Lest a person say, since desire, honor, and jealousy and the like are bad paths... I will separate from them exceedingly and distance myself to the other extreme – to the point that he will not eat meat, not drink wine, not marry a woman, not live in a nice dwelling, not wear nice clothing, but only sackcloth and coarse wool like the priests of Edom – this too is a bad path and it is forbidden to follow it."

Plain meaning:

A person might think: since desire, honor, and jealousy are bad character traits, I will go to the other extreme – not eat meat, not drink wine, not marry, not live nicely, not wear nice clothing, only sackcloth and rough garments like Christian priests (kumrei Edom). The Rambam rules: **this too is a bad path and it is forbidden to follow it.**

Novel insights and explanations:

1) The continuation of Chapter 2 – desire as the subject of Chapter 3:

Chapter 3 is a continuation of Chapter 2, where the Rambam said that one should guard oneself from jealousy, desire, and honor (in accordance with the Mishna "jealousy, desire, and honor remove a person from the world"). In Chapter 1, the Rambam had already enumerated several character traits – anger, expansive appetite (for money), frivolity – and in Chapter 2 he had already dealt with anger, expansive appetite, stinginess, and so on. **The one important trait that has not yet been addressed is desire – specifically desire for bodily pleasures** (not desire for money, which was already discussed). The entire Chapter 3 therefore comes to elaborate on the matter of desire.

2) "Bad path" – both extremes are bad, but desire is different from pride:

Too much desire is a "bad path," but too little desire (completely abandoning pleasures) is also a "bad path." This is a distinction from pride and anger, where the Rambam said in Chapter 2 that one should indeed go to the extreme of extremes (almost no pride at all, almost no anger at all). **With desire, however, one cannot go to the absolute extreme** – one must remain on a middle path.

3) Jealousy – what does it mean in the Mishna?

The Rambam mentions jealousy in the Mishna, but he did not specifically address jealousy in the previous chapters. **Perhaps "jealousy" (kin'a) in the Mishna means the same as anger** (as Rashi commonly says that kin'a in the Torah means anger). If so, that is the reason why the Rambam

does not bring jealousy as a separate trait – because he already discussed anger. **Also:** if kin'a means jealousy (envy), then it is clear that "the jealousy of scholars increases wisdom" – there is a middle measure in jealousy (jealousy regarding good things), and that doesn't fit with the Mishna's position that jealousy is entirely bad.

4) Honor – what does it mean?

Is honor the same as pride (which was already addressed)? Perhaps honor means something different – like "mana mechab'dusa" – going around nicely dressed, a kind of external honor that is not exactly pride and not exactly desire, but rather a matter of how one presents oneself.

5) Kumrei Edom – Christian priests as an example:

The Rambam brings "kumrei Edom" (Christian priests) as an example of the extreme of abstinence – they don't live with wives, they wear rough garments, and so on. **In Shemoneh Perakim (Chapter 3), the Rambam discusses this same topic at length**, and there he says that there are Jews who also hold this way, that one must be ascetic from all desires, **and he says that these Jews learned this from the gentiles.** Being a great ascetic is a gentile thing.

Halacha 1 – Second Part: "Hamehaleich b'derech zo... nikra chotei"

The Rambam's words: "One who follows this path is called a sinner, for it says regarding the Nazirite 'and he shall atone for him for having sinned against the soul' – the Sages said: if a Nazirite who only abstained from wine requires atonement, one who afflicts himself from everything – how much more so."

Plain meaning:

Regarding a Nazirite it says "and he shall atone for him for having sinned against the soul" – the Sages expound: what did the Nazirite sin? He denied himself wine. If a Nazirite who only gave up wine needs atonement, all the more so one who denies himself all pleasures.

Novel insights and explanations:

1) "Sinned against the soul" – nefesh here means the body/the person:

The simple meaning of "sinned against the soul" regarding a Nazirite is that he committed a sin by becoming impure (he became impure through contact with a dead body and must restart his Nazirite period). But **the Sages expound that "nefesh" here means his own body** – he sinned against his own body by denying himself pleasure.

[Digression: "Nefesh" in the Torah generally doesn't mean specifically the body alone – it can mean a person (as in "a Jewish nefesh" means a Jew), or life, or "the soul of pleasures." The Rambam discusses this in Shemoneh Perakim, Chapter 4.]

2) The kal va'chomer – from a Nazirite to one who fasts:

The full statement in the Gemara (Ta'anis 11a) is: "**Rabbi Elazar HaKappar said: since he only abstained from wine he is called a sinner**" – a Nazirite only gave up wine, and he already needs atonement. **Kal va'chomer: one who sits in a fast, who doesn't eat or drink at all, is certainly a sinner.** The Rambam uses this kal va'chomer to prove that every form of extreme abstinence is forbidden.

3) The Rambam's understanding of the Gemara – the middle path:

The Rambam learns this Gemara in the context of his approach of the middle path: **the Nazirite is called a sinner because he does not follow the middle path.** The entire foundation of the middle path is that **too little is no better than too much** – both extremes are bad. "Bad path" means it is not the "good and straight path," which is the middle path. The Rambam does not use the Nazirite as a law applying only to Nazirite vows themselves – he derives from the Torah portion about the Nazirite a general principle: **denying oneself pleasures is also a sin.**

4) Nazirite vows as a path of repentance (teshuva) – and "teshuva for the teshuva":

A strong question: **an ordinary Nazirite is very often a path of teshuva** – the Gemara views it as one taking on a Nazirite vow as a rectification. If so, how can the Rambam say it is a sin?

Answer: The Rambam himself said (in Chapter 2) that **for a period of time, one may go to an extreme as a form of healing/teshuva.** But that doesn't mean it is entirely good – **he ultimately needs atonement for that as well.** The concept is: **"one needs teshuva for the teshuva"** – even one who does teshuva by going to an extreme ultimately needs to do teshuva for the teshuva itself, because the extreme is also not the ideal. The rectification is only complete when he arrives at the middle path. **This is compared to "one who fasts on Shabbos – he needs a fast for his fast"** – he did a good thing (fasting), but because he did it on Shabbos, he needs another fast for that.

5) Dispute in the Gemara – "called a sinner" vs. "called holy":

In **Tractate Ta'anis**, the Gemara brings a dispute: one side says **"one who sits in a fast is called a sinner,"** and the other side says **"he is called holy."** The Rambam ruled according to the view that he is called a sinner. It could be that according to the view the Rambam rules by, one holds that one should never make vows (except what the Torah allows, like the Nazirite vow itself, which is a mitzvah).

The **story of the Nazirite who came from the South**, where the Gemara says that being a Nazirite is a good thing – is seemingly a contradiction to the Rambam. The Rambam would explain that when one does it with awareness that this is not the proper path, but only for a period of time as teshuva, it is different – but afterward he must return to the middle path.

Halacha 1 – Third Part: "It is not enough for you what the Torah forbade" and the prohibition against fasting

The Rambam's words: "Therefore the Sages commanded that a person should only deny himself things that the Torah denied, and he should not prohibit upon himself through vows and oaths things

that are permitted... and the Sages forbade a person to afflict himself with fasts."

Plain meaning:

The Sages said: **"Is it not enough for you what the Torah has forbidden, that you seek to forbid upon yourself additional things?"** – it's not enough for you what the Torah already forbade, you're forbidding yourself even more things? A person should only restrain himself from things the Torah made forbidden. One should not use the tool of vows and oaths to forbid things that the Torah left permitted.

Novel insights and explanations:

1) Yerushalmi – "Is it not enough for you" as an opening for annulment of vows:

In the **Yerushalmi** (Nedarim), the statement "Is it not enough for you what the Torah forbade" is used as a **pesach charata** (opening for regret) to annul a vow. The Yerushalmi discusses how one can annul vows and brings a list of things one says to the person who vowed: "Had you known that a vow is so severe..." – and one of those things is precisely the statement "Is it not enough for you what the Torah forbade" – that itself is an opening for regret.

2) Two interpretations of "Is it not enough for you" – honor of the Torah vs. the middle path:

- **Interpretation 1:** It is a matter of **the honor of the Torah** – the Torah didn't forbid enough? You think you're smarter?

- **Interpretation 2 (the Rambam's approach):** The Torah **is** already the middle path. It has already forbidden everything that needs to be forbidden. When you add more, you depart from the middle path. Both interpretations can coexist – because the Torah already knew well enough, and when you go further, you depart from its path.

3) Shemoneh Perakim – the Rambam's broader explanation:

In **Shemoneh Perakim**, the Rambam elaborates much more on this point. There he raises a question: a person might say, "I have a loophole – by way of healing! I need to practice great abstinence as a form of healing!" The Rambam answers: when the Torah was given, it already knew that most people are inclined toward desire. Therefore there are already many **fences and safeguards** in the Torah that already go beyond the middle path, in order to educate the person. If you go even further, "you'll become completely crazy." This is somewhat different from the plain meaning in Hilchos De'os alone, where it sounds like the Torah **is** the middle path, not that it already goes beyond the middle path.

4) The Rambam establishes a rabbinic prohibition against fasting:

The Rambam writes: **"And it is forbidden for a person to burden himself with fasting, and if he transgressed and burdened himself with fasting, he is called a sinner."** The Rambam uses here the expressions **"the Sages forbade"** and **"the Sages commanded"** – these are **the same expressions** that the Rambam uses for every rabbinic prohibition in the world. This is not a homiletical expression – the Rambam literally means that there is a **rabbinic prohibition** against excessive fasting. What constitutes "excessive" – one can debate, but the main point is that it is a prohibition. **Here in Chapter 3, he is not speaking from the perspective of bodily health, but rather from the**

perspective of self-affliction – from the standpoint that one is practicing too much abstinence. (In Chapter 4, he will discuss bodily health.)

[Digression: If someone is looking for a dispensation to fast, "he should call the rabbi, the rabbi will find an answer for the prohibition – rabbis very much want to fast."]

Halacha 1 – Fourth Part: "Do not be overly righteous" (Koheles 7:16)

The Rambam's words: "And all these matters and the like, Shlomo commanded, and King Shlomo, peace be upon him, said: 'Do not be overly righteous and do not be excessively wise – why should you be desolate?'"

Plain meaning:

Don't be too great a tzaddik more than the Torah requires. **"And do not be excessively wise"** – don't be an over-wise person, don't be smarter than the Torah. **"Why should you be desolate"** – from the root "shemama," desolation, ruin. Why should you become desolate from going to extremes?

Novel insights and explanations:

1) "Overly righteous" does not mean a true tzaddik:

"Tzaddik" doesn't mean "a lot" – Shlomo is not saying "don't be a tzaddik," but rather "don't be a tzaddik harbeh (excessively)." This means: don't do deeds that you **think** make you a tzaddik but are in truth excessive. According to the Torah's middle path, you are no longer a tzaddik when you go too far.

2) The next verse – "Do not be overly wicked" – both extremes:

The next verse is **"Do not be overly wicked and do not be a fool"** (Koheles 7:17) – regarding the other extreme. And the verse after that is **"Grasp this one and also from that one do not release your hand"** (Koheles 7:18). This is a **very powerful verse for the middle path in general**: the verse is not speaking specifically about Torah, but in general – don't be too holy and too wise, and also don't be too wicked and too foolish, but hold yourself in between.

Halacha 2 – First Part: "A person must direct all his actions... to know God"

The Rambam's words: "A person must direct all his actions solely toward knowing God, blessed be He. His sitting, standing, and speech should all be directed toward this matter. How so? When he conducts business or works for wages – his heart should not be focused solely on accumulating money, but rather he should do these things so that he will have the needs of the body..."

Plain meaning:

A person must focus all his actions – sitting, standing, speaking, business, work – everything toward one purpose: **to know God**. When he conducts business ("carries and gives") or works for wages ("does work to receive payment"), he should not think only about the simple, base purpose of accumulating money, but rather he should do it so that he will have the needs of the body.

Novel insights and explanations:

1) The connection to Halacha 1:

How does Halacha 2 fit after Halacha 1? The Rambam just said that one may not fast excessively. Now he says that one must do everything for the sake of Heaven. The connection is: **"for the sake of Heaven" is when one eats, not when one doesn't eat**. The Rambam shows that the proper path is not self-affliction (not eating), but rather eating with intention – doing everything for the sake of Heaven.

2) "Carries and gives" vs. "does work":

The Rambam brings two types: **"carries and gives"** – business, one's own enterprise; **"does work to receive wages"** – working for someone else for pay. In both cases, the person should not think only about accumulating money, but about the purpose of the body's needs.

Halacha 2 – Second Part: "How so" – Practical guidelines for eating, drinking, and marital relations

The Rambam's words: "He should not eat and drink... merely for pleasure... for one who eats and drinks only what is sweet to his palate... rather he should intend in his heart when he eats and drinks to nourish his body and limbs only... and similarly when he has marital relations, he should do so only to nourish his body and to maintain the seed."

Plain meaning:

When a person eats and drinks, he should not eat merely for pleasure (because then he will only eat what is sweet), but rather to be healthy – even bitter things that are healthy, and not sweet things that harm the body. Also regarding marital relations – not for pleasure, but to be healthy and "to maintain the seed."

Novel insights and explanations:

1) A graduated structure of purposes:

The Rambam builds here a system of levels:

- **First level:** A person makes money not because he loves money (which is like an animal – "a dog and a donkey"), but because he needs it for the body's needs. This alone is already a virtue, but not yet the ultimate purpose.

- **Second level:** He eats and drinks not for pleasure, but as medicine – to be healthy. This is a higher level, but also not yet the end.

- **Third level (which he begins to hint at):** Being healthy itself is also only a means to an even greater purpose – to be able to serve God. This is the true goal.

Each level is already better than the previous one, but not yet the end.

2) The distinction between "for pleasure" and "to nourish his body" – a practical outcome:

The difference in intention brings a practical difference in action: one who eats "for pleasure" will only eat "what is sweet to his palate" – what tastes good. One who eats "to nourish his body" will eat "beneficial things" – what is healthy, even if it's bitter, and will not eat harmful things even if they are sweet. **Intention is not just a thought – it shows itself in the action.** One cannot say "I eat for the sake of Heaven" and eat like a glutton. The good intention must express itself in the action itself – how much one eats, what one eats, when one eats.

3) The verse "Eating too much honey is not good" (Mishlei 25:27) – parable and its meaning:

The Rambam brings this verse from King Shlomo as proof that too much of a good thing is bad. Shlomo means this as a parable – that not everything that is "sweet" (pleasant) is good in large quantities. The next verse "Make your foot rare from your friend's house, lest he become sated with you and hate you" shows that even a good friend – too much is not good. But the Rambam also uses it literally – indeed honey (and similar rich foods) are not good in excess. As Rashi says at the beginning of Mishlei: "The parable of Mishlei" – even when Shlomo means a parable, the parable itself is also true.

4) The example of "one whose constitution is warm" – practical medicine:

The Rambam gives an example: one whose body is warm (hot) should not eat meat, honey, or drink wine – because these are heavy things to digest that make the body even warmer. And one who is "dry of spirit" should drink "mei alshin" – a bitter soup of a certain vegetable (alshin is one of the types of maror/bitter herbs) – even though it's bitter, because it is medicine. This shows that he eats "by way of medicine" – not for pleasure.

5) "And similarly when he has marital relations" – marital relations also by way of medicine:

"To maintain the seed" here does not mean the purpose of having children or the mitzvah of being fruitful and multiplying – the Rambam is still speaking on the level of medicine. "To maintain the seed" means that the person has a physical need – his body becomes "broken" if he never has relations. It is a need for the person's own health, just like eating and drinking.

[Digression: The **Kesef Mishneh** says that the mitzvah of onah (conjugal obligation) does not come in here, because here the Rambam is speaking only from the perspective of medicine. The mitzvah of onah the Rambam writes in a different place. This confirms that the Rambam is not yet speaking here about the spiritual/halachic purpose of marital relations, but about the physical need.]

Halacha 2 – Third Part: "One who conducts himself according to medicine" – health alone is not yet the end

The Rambam's words: "One who conducts himself according to medicine, if he sets his heart that his entire body and limbs should be whole and strong only... this is not a good path. Rather, he should set his heart that his body should be whole and strong so that his soul should be upright to know God, for it is impossible to understand and contemplate wisdoms when one is hungry, sick, or one of his limbs is in pain."

Plain meaning:

If a person conducts himself according to medicine only so that he should be healthy – "being healthy" alone is not yet the ultimate purpose. He must know that being healthy is also only a means – to be able to serve God, which means **"to contemplate wisdoms"** – to be able to attain knowledge of God.

Novel insights and explanations:

1) "A good path" without God's path is not enough:

Even when someone does things with a practical intention – for example, he wants children so they will help him, run errands, do his work – that is still not a "good path" in the true

sense, because it lacks "the path of God." An intention that ends at a practical benefit for oneself, without a higher purpose, is not what the Rambam means by "good path." **"Good path" is a code word for the path of mitzvos / the path of God** – it must be connected to a greater purpose.

2) Two people can eat the same way – and one still can't tell who does it for the sake of Heaven:

Two people can both eat healthily, but one still cannot discern which of them does it for the sake of Heaven. One must look further – what is the purpose of their "being healthy"? Only when one sees the whole picture – that the person balances his time between physical needs and Torah/service – does one know that his purposes are "well-balanced." If someone devotes fifteen hours a day solely to health (exercise and the like) and doesn't learn and doesn't pray – then "being healthy" alone is not service of God.

3) The Rambam's interpretation of "to know God" – serving God = knowing God:

The Rambam says explicitly that the body must be healthy **"so that his soul should be upright to know God"** – and he explains this with **"for it is impossible to understand and contemplate wisdoms."** The Rambam does not write "so that he can pray and put on tefillin" – tefillin one can perhaps put on even when sick. Rather, **"to contemplate wisdoms"** requires settled-mindedness, requires a healthy body. This shows that for the Rambam, **"serving God" = "knowing God,"** and that means contemplating wisdoms. There is no other way of serving God except through knowledge/wisdom. Therefore health is a necessity – not because one cannot fulfill mitzvos when sick (one who is compelled is exempt by Heaven), but because one cannot attain knowledge of God without settled-mindedness. The Rambam previously mentioned that a prophet must be physically strong – because the body must cooperate to attain the highest levels of knowledge.

[Digression: The Ruzhiner said that words like "Torah," "mitzvah," "avodah" contain within them the letters vav-hei, which are more revealed. But words like "achilah" (eating), "shtiyah" (drinking), "bi'ah" (relations), "linah" (sleeping) contain within them yud-kuf, which are more concealed. The Ruzhiner's point is that both – Torah/mitzvos as well as physical actions – are parts of serving God and lead to knowing God. The difference is only that in physical matters, the Godliness is more hidden. Just as prayer is also a preparation for knowing God (only a closer preparation), so too eating is a preparation – both serve the same purpose.]

4) Children – "perhaps he will have a wise and great son in Israel" – not just any children:

The Rambam says that when one has marital relations, one should think **"perhaps he will have a son who is wise and great in Israel."** This excludes the simple motive of "children are enjoyable" or "children will help me." The intention must be that another Jew should know of the Almighty – a wise and great person in Israel who will teach others. "Great in Israel" is an interesting expression – it doesn't mean just a fine Jew, but a wise and great person who has an impact on the Jewish people as a whole. Perhaps the Rambam also means that the son will help the father himself attain knowledge of God, but the plain meaning seems to be more that the son will be a wise and great person for all of Israel – a greater purpose.

5) Practical implications for having children in different eras:

In earlier times, when people lived off fields, more children helped economically (working in the field). When the gentile world shifted to city life, they began having fewer children because the economic motive disappeared. But for Jews it makes no difference – because the true intention of children is "perhaps he will be wise and great in Israel," and the more children, the more chances for a great person. Consequently, nothing changed for Jews, whether in the city or on a farm.

Halacha 2 – Fourth Part: "It turns out that one who follows this path serves God constantly all his days"

The Rambam's words: "It turns out that one who follows this path serves God constantly all his days, even at the time of his sleep... because his thought in everything is so that he will have his needs so that his body will be whole to serve God. If he sleeps with awareness so that his mind should rest and his body should rest so that he will not become ill, since he cannot serve God when he is ill, it turns out that his sleep is service of the Omnipresent, blessed be He."

Plain meaning:

One who follows this approach – that all physical matters (eating, sleeping, livelihood, marital relations) are preparations for knowing God – serves God constantly, even at the time of his sleep, even at the time of his business dealings, even at the time of his marital relations. Because everything is viewed in light of the ultimate purpose.

Novel insights and explanations:

1) "His thought" means intention, not active thinking:

"His thought in everything" does not mean that he must actively think at every action "I am doing this for the sake of Heaven." It means that his general intention, his life-direction, is toward serving God. Just as someone building a house – when he goes to the plumber or hauls wood, he doesn't need to think every minute "I'm building a house." Everyone knows that everything he does is for that purpose. Or like someone who works to feed his children – he doesn't need to think about the children the whole time, but everything he works for is for them. Similarly, one who knows that his ultimate goal is serving God – automatically everything he does is a preparation for that.

The "intention" that the Rambam speaks of is not that one must actually think at the time of the action "I am doing this for the sake of Heaven." It is more of a **fact** – that the entire system of your life is set up for the great purpose. The Rambam does not say "one must intend" or "one must think" – he simply says that through the person living properly, **he adds to his service of God**. Reminding oneself from time to time that what one does is service of God has advantages – it makes the work easier, it helps focus, it gives pleasure – but that is not the essence of the Rambam's requirement.

This touches on the dispute between the Mussar movement and the Chassidim – the Chassidim speak of higher levels of intention during the action – but the Rambam is apparently speaking of a **simple thing**: the entire life-framework is directed toward the right goal.

2) Explanation of "sleeps with awareness" – not intention while sleeping, but sleeping for the

purpose:

What does "sleeps **with awareness** (l'da'as)" mean? It surely doesn't mean that he sleeps **with da'as** (with intentions while sleeping) – he's not a Baal Shem who murmurs "l'shem yichud" while sleeping. The meaning is: "**I'da'as**" means for **the purpose** – he goes to sleep knowing that this is part of his greater goal. Alternatively: "**I'da'as**" **excludes "sleeping by compulsion"** – he doesn't sleep just because he collapses, but he goes to sleep with awareness.

3) Sleep serves two functions – mind and body:

The Rambam's language "so that **his mind should rest** and **his body should rest**" means that sleep serves **two** things:

- **For the intellectual soul (da'as)** – the brain becomes exhausted and needs rest.

- **For the vital soul (body)** – the digestive system, the intestines, all physical functions.

"So that he will not become ill" also means **both**: he should not become mentally ill **and** he should not become physically ill. Because a person cannot serve the Almighty when he is sick – **consequently his sleep is service of the Omnipresent, blessed be He.**

[Digression: A joke in honor of the month of Adar – regarding sleep, "da'as" is mentioned twice ("sleeps with awareness... that his mind should rest"), and therefore when the Rambam said "ad d'lo yada" (until he doesn't know) on Purim, he meant sleeping – because sleep is the matter of "da'as."]

Halacha 2 – Fifth Part: "And all your deeds should be for the sake of Heaven" – the conclusion

The Rambam's words: "And this is the command of the Sages, who said 'And all your deeds should be for the sake of Heaven.' And this is what Shlomo said in his wisdom: 'In all your ways know Him, and He will straighten your paths.'"

Plain meaning:

"All your deeds should be for the sake of Heaven" means – all your actions should be done with the greater goal in mind. "In all your ways know Him" means: in all your ways – even matters of the body – you should know the Almighty.

Novel insights and explanations:

1) "For the sake of Heaven" means more than "a good path":

Not just on the right path (a good path), because the right path alone can still be for a lesser goal – but rather **for the greatest goal**: that a person should attain **knowledge of God. The ultimate purpose is knowledge of God**, and everything one does should lead there.

2) Shemoneh Perakim, Chapter 5 – the Rambam's elaboration on this topic:

In **Shemoneh Perakim, Chapter 5**, the Rambam **elaborates extraordinarily extensively** on this same topic. There the Rambam brings the Gemara "In all your ways know Him" and even the novel idea "**even regarding a matter of transgression**" – that even when one does something that is somewhat of a transgression, but it leads to a greater purpose, it is also included in "In all your ways know Him."

The Rambam's language in Shemoneh Perakim is quoted: **"The Sages, peace be upon them, have already encompassed this entire matter in the shortest language possible... and it encompasses the subject with a very, very complete encompassing, to the point that when one contemplates the brevity of the words... about which entire compositions have been written and they did not encompass it all, you will know that it was said with Divine power without any doubt whatsoever."** – The Rambam says that the Sages packed into **one short line** what other people write **entire books** about and cannot fully encompass – and this is truly **Divine inspiration (ruach hakodesh)**. This is not merely a "concise way" – it is a sign of Divine power.

Chapter 4 (first half) of Shemoneh Perakim elaborates extensively on the topic of

bodily pleasures and abstinence, and the entire matter of **middle character traits**, but **especially Chapter 5** is the topic of "all your deeds should be for the sake of Heaven."

[Digression: It is mentioned that without the Rambam, one would never have understood Bava Kamma folio 18 in the same way – and when one finally understands the entire sugya, one opens Berachos and sees that it stands in one line what one struggled for four years to grasp. This is the same concept as the Rambam's admiration for the Sages' concise language that encompasses everything.]

The shiur concluded with this the end of Halacha 2 of Chapter 3, and is ready to move on to Halacha 4.

Full Transcript

Rambam, Hilkhot De'ot Chapter 3 – The Parameters of Bodily Pleasures and the Prohibition of Extreme Asceticism

Introduction

Okay, so it's recording. Yes, we're a bit short on attendance because there's a problem with the snow. Anyway, we're learning chapter 3 of Hilkhot De'ot. Yes. The snow is a bit more than the "desert beneath the snow." It's a bit exaggerated, it's close to an extreme (katzeh).

Overview: The Continuation from Chapter 2 – Desire as the Subject of Chapter 3

So we're learning the third chapter of Hilkhot De'ot. In the midst of what the Rambam has discussed until now – that the way of God is the middle path (derekh ha-memutza) – one should look at what the proper path is, how much of a given character trait to adopt, how much desire (ta'avah) for example, or how much pride (ga'avah), and so on. And the last thing the Rambam said was that there is a therapeutic approach to reach the proper path – that one should go closer to one extreme.

And there the Rambam said that there are certain matters, certain character traits of course, like pride and anger – those one should always go to the extreme, and have very little anger, and even if one needs to show anger, one should only pretend to be angry, and so on.

The Chapter as a Continuation – Which Character Trait Has Not Yet Been Addressed?

And the Rambam continues from there – this is a continuation. It appears to be a continuation, or it also seems to be a continuation of what he mentions in the last section. He goes on the same Mishnah: **"Ha-kin'ah ve-ha-ta'avah ve-ha-kavod motzi'in et ha-adam min ha-olam"** – "Jealousy, desire, and honor remove a person from the world." And it appears that the Rambam previously said one should follow the middle path, and now he wants to exclude something from jealousy, desire, and honor that people tend to pursue.

So, another approach – let's say, one can say another approach, I don't mean a different approach, but to add to this. What I wrote in my note is: because the Rambam has already in the previous chapters listed several character traits. We said that there is apparently a long list of character traits, and chapter 1 had a somewhat long list. By traits I mean that he mentioned – not all of them. Or perhaps, I don't know, someone needs to make a good chart to see which of them the Rambam addresses and treats in the continuation of the chapters.

> **Key point (chiddush):** But there is certainly one important character trait that he has not yet discussed, and he wants to discuss it. That is, he spoke about pride and desire. In chapter 1, he began with, let's say, four or five traits that he primarily discussed – anger, desire, expansive appetite (nefesh rechavah), and frivolity (hollelut). So basically, he has already spoken about all of them. He spoke about anger, he spoke about expansive appetite – meaning how much money to make, stinginess – all these things he already discussed together with the Gemara passages in chapter 2. **The one thing he has not yet truly discussed was about desires – about being a person of desire (ba'al ta'avah).** One of his main points, as we see in the Gemara, is that one of the important character traits is the subject of desire. **And desire here means specifically desires of bodily pleasures (ta'anugei ha-guf),** because desires for money have already been discussed, for example. So the entire chapter is to elaborate on this – to state what the law (halakhah) is, what the parameters of this are.

Halakhah 1 – "Lest a Person Say... I Will Separate from Them Exceedingly"

The Rambam's Words

So the Rambam begins: Just as he specifically said that one should be careful with jealousy, desire, and honor, and one should for example have little jealousy and little desire and little honor, the Rambam says:

"Shema yomar adam" – a person might come and say – **"ho'il ve-ha-ta'avah ve-ha-kavod ve-ha-kin'ah ve-kayotzei ba-hen derekh ra'ah hen"** – it's interesting that he says that desire and honor are an evil path, as if all desire

and honor is an evil path, and he added jealousy here, interesting.

Speaker 2: But he didn't mention jealousy [before].

Speaker 1: We do find it stated this way in the world.

Anyway, the person says: "**Efrosh me-hen be-yoter**" – I will go very far away from them – "**ve-etrachek la-tzad ha-acher**" – I will go to the other extreme. To the point that he should have no desire at all – all eating, all physical pleasures come from desire after all – he will go to the extreme:

"**Ad she-lo yokhal basar**" – he won't eat any meat, "**ve-lo yishteh yayin**" – he won't drink any wine, "**ve-lo yisa ishah**" – he won't marry a wife, "**ve-lo yeshev be-dirah na'ah**" – he won't live in a nice dwelling, "**ve-lo yilbash malbush na'eh**" – and won't wear nice clothing, wearing something – he went and dressed in "**ha-sak ve-tzemer ha-kasheh**" – rough garments from which he derives no pleasure – "**ke-gon kumrei Edom**" – just like the priests [of Christianity] who indeed follow the approach that one must completely suppress the body.

Discussion: Kumrei Edom – Christian Priests

Speaker 2: "Kumrei Edom" doesn't just refer to the sackcloth and rough wool – "kumrei Edom" refers to much more than that, right?

Speaker 1: I don't know, "kumrei Edom" simply means Christian priests.

Speaker 2: Is "Edom" a term the Rambam uses for Europe or for...

Speaker 1: Yes, the Christians (Notzrim). Who indeed have this practice of not marrying wives and so on.

The Ruling: This Too Is an Evil Path

The Rambam says: "**Gam zu derekh ra'ah hi ve-asur leilekh bah.**" – "This too is an evil path and it is forbidden to follow it."

> **Key point:** Do you hear? I said that he didn't want to say that all desire is an evil path, because the extreme of having zero desire is still an evil path. Very good. **This is not like pride, where the Rambam said that for pride one should indeed go to the absolute extreme – for desire, one cannot go to the absolute extreme.**

Discussion: Jealousy – What Does It Mean in the Mishnah?

Speaker 2: Perhaps jealousy (kin'ah) in that Mishnah actually means anger?

Speaker 1: I don't know, where does it say that jealousy means anger? I don't know, jealousy isn't there.

Speaker 2: Rashi usually says that jealousy in the Torah – I don't know if in the Mishnah it also means anger. Perhaps that's why the Rambam doesn't bring jealousy.

Speaker 1: Yes, and it seems that a person would have gone to have it, and if that's what it means – that's an answer.

> **Key point:** You're right, because regarding jealousy the Rambam – if jealousy means jealousy – there the clear thing is that "**kin'at sofrim tarbeh chokhmah**" – "the jealousy of scholars increases wisdom" – so there is a middle path in jealousy – jealousy for good things.

Okay, that's indeed the point. He doesn't discuss that here.

Discussion: Honor – Is It the Same as Pride?

> **Key point:** By the way, regarding desire and honor – also with honor I'm not clear what this comes to. Perhaps we've already discussed honor; is honor the same thing as pride (ga'avah)? I don't know what honor (kavod) means precisely. **Perhaps he means honor in the sense of "mana mechabbeduta" – to go nicely dressed.** It's not exactly a desire, it's more of a matter of honor, that sort of thing.

Kumrei Edom in Shemonah Perakim

> **Key point:** The "kumrei Edom" also appears in Shemonah Perakim, where he discusses this topic at length in chapter 3 on the same subject. He says that there are Jews who hold this way, that one must be ascetic from all desires, **and he says that these Jews learned this from the gentiles.** So he doesn't view this... the Christian...

Speaker 2: As if it's still...

Speaker 1: He says that this is a gentile thing. To be a great ascetic – it's a gentile thing, one should know, so says the Rambam.

Discussion: What Does "Evil Path" Mean Regarding Desire and Honor?

Speaker 2: So, like, what then is the meaning of the Mishnah – desire, honor?

Speaker 1: Desire, honor in the Mishnah – it means the extreme, the extreme. When there's too much desire, too much honor.

Speaker 2: Good.

Halakhah 2 – "One Who Walks in This Path Is Called a Sinner"

The Rambam's Words

The Rambam continues further: "**Ha-mehalekh be-derekh zu**" – one who walks in this path, going to the extreme of zero desire, seeing himself as abstaining from all desire – "**nikra chotei**" – "is called a sinner." It doesn't just mean I'll say it's an evil path, rather the Sages (Chazal) already say so. The Sages call this person a sinner, as the Gemara itself calls him a sinner.

The Verse Regarding the Nazirite

So it states regarding the nazirite (nazir): "**Ve-khiper alav me-asher chata al ha-nefesh**" – that it says there regarding the nazirite that he needs atonement (kapparah) "**me-asher chata al ha-nefesh**" – "for having sinned against the soul" – the Sages ask: What sin did the nazirite commit against the soul?

"**Amru chakhamim: u-mah im nazir she-lo pirash ela min ha-yayin tzarikh kapparah**" – What does this mean? The simple meaning – "nefesh" presumably means that he deprived his body of pleasure. That is the Sages' interpretation (drash).

The Plain Meaning of the Verse Versus the Homiletical Interpretation

What does it plainly mean? It speaks of a nazirite who became ritually impure (nitma). And he violated part of his nazirite

vow. For that he brings a sacrifice, "and he shall atone for having sinned." But the Sages understood that this refers to the nazirite vow itself – that it is such a sin, the nazirite is called a sinner. And then consequently they said that "nefesh" presumably refers to his body, that he sinned against his own body.

Discussion: What Does "Nefesh" Mean in the Torah?

> **Key point:** "Nefesh" in the Torah doesn't necessarily – we should almost discuss this in chapter 4 of Shemonah Perakim. "Nefesh" in the Torah usually means a person, or not necessarily the body itself. "Nefesh ha-ta'anugot" is what we call – the soul that follows the body, the life force. Not even that necessarily – "nefesh" can mean something like one says... the person.

Speaker 2: "A Jewish nefesh" means a Jew. When one says "a Jewish nefesh" one means a person.

Speaker 1: Yes. An individual. Yes.

The Kal Va-Chomer – From the Nazirite to One Who Fasts

He says there, the Gemara says: "**Amar Rabbi Elazar Ha-Kappar: she-lo pirash ela min ha-yayin nikra chotei.**" A nazirite only separated from wine – he doesn't go away from all bodily pleasures! He only goes away from the pleasure of wine. And he needs atonement – he needs atonement for depriving himself of the pleasure that the Torah permitted him.

"**Ve-tzarikh kapparah al she-innah atzmo min hayayin. Ha-me'aneh atzmo mi-kol davar ve-davar**" – one who deprives himself of even more pleasures, of all pleasures – "**al achat kamah ve-khamah**" – how much more so is he a sinner.

That is, the full statement there is essentially that one who sits in fasting (yoshev be-ta'anit) is called a sinner, because it's a kal va-chomer (a fortiori argument) from the nazirite. If a nazirite needs atonement because he merely didn't drink wine, imagine someone who doesn't drink anything at all, who doesn't even drink water – he certainly is called a sinner.

The Rambam's Understanding: A Sinner Because He Doesn't Follow the Middle Path

> **Key point:** How did the Rambam learn this Gemara? That he is a sinner because he doesn't follow the middle path (derekh ha-memutza). Just like everything – the far extremes are all bad according to him. **The entire point of the middle path is that too little is no better than too much.** Both are bad. So he is called a sinner because it is an evil path. An evil path means it's not the good and upright path (derekh tovah vi-yesharah), which is the middle path.

Discussion: How Does This Fit with Nazirite Vows as a Path of Repentance?

> **Question (kushya):** One needs to understand, because an ordinary nazirite – and the Gemara sees it this way – many times such a nazirite vow is a path of repentance (teshuvah). If so, it's difficult to reconcile with what the Rambam says.

> **Answer (terutz):** That one may for a limited time go to an extreme – okay, perhaps one may, but the point is that he needs atonement. It could be that even one who does engage in

repentance for a period of time ultimately needs to do repentance for his repentance.

Speaker 2: Repentance for the repentance?

Speaker 1: Okay. He needs repentance for his repentance – what does that mean? Until the end. Just like one who fasts on Shabbat – he needs a fast for his fast (ta'anit le-ta'anito).

The Nazirite Is Called a Sinner – How the Rambam Learns the Gemara

Speaker 1: How did the Rambam learn this Gemara? That he is a sinner because he doesn't follow the middle path?

Speaker 2: Yes. Just like everything. The furthest extremes are not so bad. The entire point of the middle path is that too little is no better than too much. Both are not good. Both are not bad. So he is called a sinner because it's an evil path. An evil path means it's not the good and upright path, which is the middle path.

Nazirite Vows as a Path of Repentance – and "Repentance for the Repentance"

Speaker 1: Very good. One needs to understand, because usually in the Gemara we see that many times a nazirite vow is a path of repentance.

Speaker 2: If so, then it's still consistent with what the Rambam said – that one may for a limited time go to an extreme.

Speaker 1: Okay, perhaps one may, but the point is that he needs atonement. It could be that even one who does engage in repentance for a period of time, afterward he needs to do repentance for the repentance. Okay – he needs repentance for his repentance. That is the principle. Just like one who fasts on Shabbat, yes? He needs a fast for his fast. Yes, one must be in repentance all his days. If the repentance itself is a bit of a sin, then yes, just like someone who fasts on Shabbat – he may perhaps fast a ta'anit chalom (a fast due to a bad dream), but he needs a fast for his fast.

Clarifying the Meaning of "Teshuvah" in This Context

Speaker 2: First of all, the repentance we're discussing here doesn't necessarily mean beating one's chest over a sin. The repentance means that he needs more rectification (tikun), he needs to better rectify himself. He began his rectification by going to one extreme. Now he needs to... he hasn't yet finished his rectification. His rectification continues until he arrives at the middle path.

The Rambam Derives a Broader Principle from the Nazirite – Depriving Oneself of Pleasures Is Also a Sin

Speaker 1: Yes. The truth is, however, that the nazirite here is not about the nazirite itself. The nazirite is that we learn from the passage about the nazirite – the Rambam derives from this that depriving oneself of pleasures is also a sin. That's more the point. How does one actually understand a nazirite? It's a problem, but that appears to be the point.

"Is It Not Enough for You What the Torah Has Forbidden?"

Speaker 2: Yes, the Gemara says, "**Lo dayyekha mah she-asrah lekha Torah**" – "Is it not enough for you what the Torah has forbidden you?" Enough, meaning what? That a person may not go too far, too much. "**Lo dayyekha mah she-asrah lekha Torah**", the Sages said, "**she-lo yimna adam atzmo ela mi-devarim she-man'ah ha-Torah**

bilvad – the Sages said that a person who deprives himself of pleasures – most of what the Torah has already restricted.

The Torah did not hold back from certain pleasures, from things one shouldn't eat, sexual relations one shouldn't engage in, and so on. But one should not hold back from things that are permitted. **"Aval lo ya'asor atzmo bi-nedarim u-vi-shevu'ot al devarim ha-mutarim"** – one should not use vows (nedarim) and oaths (shevu'ot) – in the openings [for annulment] this means prohibiting upon oneself something that the Torah did not prohibit. One should not use the tool of vows and oaths to prohibit permitted things.

"Kakh amru chakhamim, lo dayyekha mah she-asrah Torah" – so the Sages said, "Is it not enough for you what the Torah has forbidden?" Just as it states regarding other vows, not regarding nazirite vows. It states in the words of the Sages that it is a deficiency when a person makes a vow. Why? Because **"lo dayyekha mah she-asrah Torah"** – is it not enough for you what the Torah has forbidden, **"ela she-atah oser alekha devarim acherim"**? You prohibit upon yourself additional things?

Yerushalmi – "Is It Not Enough for You" as an Opening for Annulment of Vows

Speaker 1: Yes, I looked up the Yerushalmi earlier, I wanted to note where it appears. The Yerushalmi actually discusses how one can annul a vow. It has various quotes like **"mesi'in lo bi-khvod chamiv, bi-khvod rabbo"** – we say to him, "Had you known this, you wouldn't have made the vow" – that's an opening (petach). And the Yerushalmi has a list of things one says to the person, "Had you known" (illu hayita yode'a) that a vow is so severe and the like, would you have made the vow – and that alone can be used to annul a vow.

And I believe that one of those things is this: **"Lo dayyekha mah she-asrah Torah, she-atah mevakesh le-esor alekha devarim acherim"** – "Is it not enough for you what the Torah has forbidden, that you seek to prohibit upon yourself additional things?" That is, this itself serves as an opening for regret (petach charatah).

Discussion: Honor of the Torah or the Middle Path?

Speaker 2: It's like a matter of honoring the Torah (kevod ha-Torah). Didn't the Torah forbid enough things? This is a matter of honoring the Torah.

Speaker 1: But the Rambam doesn't say it's because of honoring the Torah. The Rambam says here because... okay, it could be that it's also included, because the Torah has already stated, the Torah is already at the extreme, the Torah has already forbidden, the Torah is the middle path, the Torah has already given everything. You add to it – you're departing from the middle path.

Shemonah Perakim – The Rambam's Broader Explanation

Speaker 2: Right, exactly. The Rambam in Shemonah Perakim elaborates much more on this point, and he is tremendously struck there by the language of **"mah she-asrah Torah"** – "what the Torah has forbidden."

Because he says that if someone says – he asks there almost like a question – this just now reminded me again. I said a few shiurim on this, it didn't come out entirely clear, but he remembered that there is seemingly a path of healing (derekh refuah). Someone could say, well, I need to make a big separation regarding the path of healing, not regarding the stringencies of witnesses. One could have a claim from the

earlier chapters: I have a big loophole in the entire path of the commandment (derekh ha-mitzvah) – there is a path of healing, a path of repentance (teshuvah).

The Rambam says that regarding this, the Torah says **"ve-eikh esa mishli asara Torah"** – "and how shall I bear my parable, ten Torah." That means, when the Torah was given, the Torah already knew that most people are inclined toward desire (ta'avah) and the like. There are already many fences and safeguards (gedarim ve-seyagim) in the Torah that go beyond the path of the commandment in order to educate the person, and if you go even further, you'll become completely crazy. That's what it says there. It's a bit different from what we learned yesterday – that the Torah must be the path of the commandment.

Dispute in the Gemara – "Called a Sinner" vs. "Called Holy"

Speaker 1: If I remember correctly, vows (nedarim) and also the Nazirite vow (nezirut), when it comes from repentance – there's the story of the Nazirite who came from the south. The Gemara says being a Nazirite is a good thing. Which vows involve causing oneself suffering.

Speaker 2: That's actually a contradiction to the Rambam. The Rambam would learn that when one does it truly as part of repentance, when a person knows what he's doing, he does it with awareness that this is not the proper path, but he goes for a period of time. It could be that this is a dispute (machloket). It could be that the Rambam goes here more with the position that one may never make vows at all – not one that the Torah permits. It's itself a mitzvah, and so too.

But it sounds like more – the truth is that there is a dispute in the Gemara. In the same Gemara in Tractate Ta'anit, the Gemara brings that there are those who say **"ha-yoshev be-ta'anit nikra kadosh"** – "one who sits in a fast is called holy." It's not a universally agreed-upon matter. The Rambam ruled according to one version (ke-lishna), and it could indeed be that this position holds that one may never make vows.

The Rambam Establishes a Rabbinic Prohibition Against Fasting

Speaker 1: Okay. The Rambam further says, in general, regarding the principle that one adds upon oneself more Nazirite vows and regular vows and being a Nazirite makes one a sinner – one who is not good in general, one by nature, and one who is not on a good path.

"Ve-asru chakhamim kol mah she-asru" – "And the Sages prohibited all that they prohibited." Or it means always, as we held yesterday, that one may not make vows. Yes, **"ve-asur la-adam she-yatri'ach et atzmo be-ta'anit, ve-im avar ve-hitri'ach et atzmo be-ta'anit, harei zeh chotet. Ve-khol ha-devarim ha-elu ve-kayotzei ba-hen"** – "It is forbidden for a person to burden himself with fasting, and if he transgressed and burdened himself with fasting, he is a sinner. And all these matters and similar ones."

The Rambam actually establishes a prohibition. There is a rabbinic prohibition (issur mi-derabanan) against fasting. **"Asru chakhamim"** – "the Sages prohibited," **"tzivu chakhamim"** – "the Sages commanded" – these are the same expressions that the Rambam uses for every rabbinic prohibition in the world, and not some pilpulistic expression that only appears here. So the Rambam says there is actually a

rabbinic prohibition against making too many fasts. What the definition of "too many" is, one can perhaps debate, but...

Speaker 2: I believe we'll see it in the next chapter where the Rambam discusses health, physical well-being (bri'ut ha-guf). How long the fasting... The Rambam himself says one shouldn't eat too much, but also too little is not healthy for a person. It could be that this is also included in this prohibition.

Speaker 1: Yes, but here he's not speaking from the perspective of physical health; here he's speaking from the perspective of...

Speaker 2: Here he's not speaking from the perspective of health; here he's speaking from the perspective of self-affliction (siguf), from the perspective of doing too much.

Speaker 1: Right.

The Verse "Do Not Be Overly Righteous" (Ecclesiastes 7:16)

Speaker 1: "Ve-khol ha-devarim ha-elu ve-kayotzei bahen tzivah Shlomo, ve-amar Shlomo ha-Melekh alav ha-shalom al inyan zeh ve-amar: 'Al tehi tzaddik harbeh ve-al titchakam yoter, lamah tishomem'" — "And all these matters and similar ones, Solomon commanded, and King Solomon, peace be upon him, said regarding this matter: 'Do not be overly righteous and do not be excessively wise — why should you be desolate?'" Don't be too great a righteous person more than the Torah requires. "**Ve-al titchakam yoter**" — don't be a know-it-all, don't be smarter than the Torah. "**Lamah tishomem**" — why should you become...

Speaker 2: Destroyed (charuv), as it says here.

Speaker 1: Yes, there's an expression "shemamah" — yes, desolate. Why should you become desolate from going to extremes?

Discussion: The Meaning of "Overly Righteous" and "Do Not Be Overly Wicked"

Speaker 2: Yes. The intention is not... It's more that because there is a good, proper path, and you go further, you're destroyed — you destroy the world. "Overly righteous" — he says it humorously, because "righteous" doesn't mean "excessively." It only means to say: don't be an overly righteous person — you're not a righteous person anymore according to the Torah's middle path (derekh ha-emitza'i), right? Solomon says "**al tehi tzaddik harbeh**" — don't do the deeds that you think make you into too much of a righteous person, because... yes.

Speaker 1: By the way, the next verse is "**al tirsha harbeh ve-al tehi sakhal**" — "do not be overly wicked and do not be a fool," yes.

Speaker 2: Yes, yes. It doesn't mean that...

Speaker 1: On the other extreme.

Speaker 2: Yes, in the verse there is an answer to this. The Torah is the middle path. If you're overly righteous, you go to one extreme, and if you're overly wicked, you go to the other extreme. The verse isn't speaking about the Torah; the verse speaks in a general manner. Don't be too wise and too holy, and also don't be too foolish and too wicked. So what should you be? In between. "**Echoz ba-zeh ve-gam mi-zeh al tanach yadekha**" — "Grasp this one and also don't let go of

that one" — is the next verse. So this is seemingly a very strong verse for the middle path in a general sense.

Speaker 1: Anyway, the Rambam only brings the point: don't be too great a righteous person. You think being a righteous person means what — fasting all the time? Okay, you're already the greatest righteous person. Don't do it; it's a prohibition. Okay, if someone is looking for a leniency (heter), he should call the rabbi — the rabbi will find an answer for the prohibition. Rabbis very much want to fast.

Halakhah 2 (Beginning) – "All His Deeds for the Sake of Heaven"

Speaker 1: Let's see, the next section he's going to discuss doing things for the sake of Heaven (le-shem shamayim). Perhaps you truly have le-shem shamayim. Le-shem shamayim is even when one eats, not when one doesn't eat. I don't know, okay. But eating for the sake of Heaven — fasting can't be for the sake of Heaven? I don't know; we need to better understand the next section.

The Intent of All One's Deeds to Know God

Speaker 1: Okay, how does this fit in here? In learning the texts, tell me.

Speaker 2: The Rambam says, "**Tzarikh adam she-yekhaven kol ma'asav**" — "A person must direct all his deeds" — meaning one should be intentional, one should focus all one's deeds — "**kedei leida et Hashem barukh Hu bilvad**" — "solely in order to know God, blessed be He." That all deeds should have only the purpose of being able to know God — to know God. You understand, the greatest, the most important thing — all deeds should lead there.

"Ve-yihyu yeshivato u-kimato ve-diburo ha-kol le-umat zeh ha-davar" — "And his sitting, his standing, and his speech — everything should be aimed toward this matter." His sitting, his standing, his speaking — everything should be aimed toward this thing.

How So? – Business and Work

How so? The Rambam explains: "**Ke-she-yisa ve-yiten**" — when he does business, "**o ya'aseh melakhah**" — or he does work — two types: one is his own enterprise, or one is working for someone else — or he does work for wages to be able to have money, to simply have his livelihood; he can have the intention that he wants to have money. "**Lo yihyeh be-libo kibbutz mamon bilvad**" — he should not think only of the simple, lowly purpose of accumulating wealth. "**Ela ya'aseh devarim ha-lalu**" — rather, he should do these things — "**kedei she-yimtza**" —

Halakhah 5 – "How So" – Business and Work for a Purpose

The Rambam explains: "**Ke-she-yisa ve-yiten**" — when a person does business, "**o ya'asok bi-melakhah**" — he does work — two types: one is an independent business owner, one is a worker for someone else — but he does work in order to earn money. He can simply, he can have money in mind.

"**Lo yihyeh be-libo**" — he should not think only of the simple, lower purpose — "**le-kabetz mamon bilvad, ela ya'aseh devarim ha-elu**" — rather, he should do these things — "**kedei she-yimtza devarim she-ha-guf tzarikh la-hem**" — so that he can take care of his body, so that he can have everything his body needs.

What does the body need? The body needs to have enough — **"akhilah, shetiyah, yeshivat bayit, nesi'at ishah"** — eating, drinking, dwelling in a home, marrying a wife — and presumably he'll add more later. He must remember that I'm doing this now so that I can have everything I need for the body, only for the body, and everything I need for the body is in order to be able to serve God.

Novel Point: Two Steps in the Purpose of Work

But let's see — there are seemingly two steps, because seemingly the first step also has some merit. That is, there is a distinction between people who make money and engage in work simply because they love money — that's not a good thing at all. He needs to do it because it's a bodily need (tzorekh ha-guf). That's one reason — it's not yet the ultimate purpose (takhlit), but it's a reason.

Halakhah 6 – Eating and Drinking: Not for Pleasure, but for Health

And also those things, as the Rambam enumerated — eating, drinking — those things themselves: **"Lo yokhal ve-yishteh"** — when he eats and drinks — **"yitkaven be-libo la'asot devarim elu kedei lehanot bilvad"** — he should not think that he's doing it just for pleasure. Because then, what he'll end up doing — if he only has in mind the immediate pleasure, he won't eat and drink in the proper way. What he takes — it will turn out **"she-eino okhel ve-shoteh ela ha-matok le-chiko"** — then he'll only eat what is sweet to his palate, since the desire for pleasure will only highlight having enjoyment.

"Ela yasim al libo ke-she-yokhal ve-yishteh" — when he eats and drinks, he should have in mind — **"kedei lehavri'ot gufo ve-evarav bilvad"** — only so that his body and limbs should be healthy.

The Practical Difference

And what is the outcome of this? Where does the difference become apparent? He says: he should not eat and drink like the wise, but when the tongue craves — **"kemo ha-kelev ve-ha-chamor"** — like a dog and a donkey — like other kings, when a craving seizes them, they eat. **"Ela yokhal devarim ha-mo'ilim lo"** — when his entire approach is that he wants to eat in order to be healthy, he'll eat things that bring him health, and it won't matter to him whether the thing is sweet or bitter. **"Ve-lo yokhal devarim ha-ra'im la-guf"** — and he won't eat things that are harmful to the body — **"af al pi she-hen metukim le-chiko"** — even if they are sweet to his palate.

Novel Point: Is Eating Healthy Alone Already "For the Sake of Heaven"?

The question is: when he eats what is healthy, is that evidence that it's not yet for the sake of Heaven (le-shem shamayim), or have we not yet reached the le-shem shamayim part? Let's see where he arrives. He hasn't yet said le-shem shamayim. Until now he has said — perhaps the section continues until halakhah... I don't remember which one anymore — much later he'll discuss this. But until now he has only said that it's already an intelligent thing. He says that a person must eat in a human manner, yes? He says that one who does otherwise is like a donkey.

Seemingly, the same thing applies regarding accumulating wealth: there is someone who does more business than what's needed for eating, drinking, and bodily needs — that alone is

already not human. So if someone doesn't eat simply for pleasure but for bodily needs, he eats different things and he eats differently. Right. That's already a merit. That's already something of a merit.

So is that the first thing — is it itself the purpose, or is it further — does it show that he's not yet eating for the sake of Heaven? Let's see. Let's continue. He's going to show us — he hasn't shown yet — but I feel it's clear here that part of the first level of the good trait, of the proper manner of eating and drinking, is this. This began from **"to know God" (lada'at et Hashem)** — this will come down all the way to the very end, seemingly. But first, this is also a merit. Because otherwise, one is like a dog and a donkey.

Halakhah 7 – General Rules of Eating as Medicine

The Rambam gives Gemara sources. It's very interesting that soon he'll already say — in the next paragraph it states precisely how to eat and precisely and so forth. Now he's going to say what is healthy for a person and what is not. Later he'll have lengthy discussion, but now he gives it a touch on the surface, to know the definition.

The Example of "One Whose Flesh Is Hot"

"Keitzad? Mi she-hayah besaro cham" — How so? One whose flesh is hot, is warm — he should not make himself warmer by eating things that will make him warmer. **"Lo yokhal basar ve-lo devash ve-lo yishteh yayin"** — "He should not eat meat or honey, and should not drink wine." I think it means things that his body will need to work harder on and are difficult to digest, because that will cause his body to overheat.

The Verse "Eating Too Much Honey Is Not Good"

"Ke-inyan she-amar Shlomo derekh mashal" — as Solomon said by way of parable. What does "by way of parable" mean? Didn't Solomon mean it for health? **"Akhoh devash harbot lo tov"** — "Eating too much honey is not good" — Solomon means to tell us that just because something is good doesn't mean a lot of it is good. **"Akhoh devash harbot lo tov"** — even honey is such a sweet thing, but it's not a good thing to have too much of it.

It could be that it's a parable for other things, as he says — in Proverbs (Mishlei) there is indeed that it's a parable for not chasing after what is sweet, what is good. The next verse says **"Hokar raglekha mi-beit re'ekha pen yisba'akha u-sene'akha"** — "Make your foot rare from your friend's house, lest he become satiated with you and hate you" — that even a person being a good friend, sometimes it's like honey — it's not good to have too much of it. Everything is still in the way of ethical teaching (derekh ha-musar).

But you see that the Rambam says — you see that the parable is also true — just as Rashi says at the beginning of Proverbs, "the parable of Proverbs" — even when he means a parable, the parable itself is also good. Indeed, too much honey is not good. And perhaps honey is also a parable, because it's not specifically honey — it could also be, I know, meat, as he brings here. Things that are too much for the body of that person.

The Person Who Is "Dry of Spirit"

The person who is dry of spirit should drink differently — **"mei alshin"** — some kind of soup-like water that has some vegetable, he says, some drink that is more medicinal — **"af al pi she-hu mar"** — even though it's bitter in his mouth.

Alshin is one of the types of bitter herbs (maror); one of the species of maror is alshin.

That he should not eat only sweet things, so that he should know that he eats and drinks only **"derekh refuah"** – as medicine – **"kedei she-yavri ve-ya'amod shalem"** – so that he should be healthy and he should stand whole in his body. Why does he eat and drink? Because he knows that **"ho'il ve-i efshar la-adam lichyot ela ba-akhilah u-vi-shetiya"** – "since it is impossible for a person to live except through eating and drinking."

In short: he should remember all day what the goal is and what is merely something that leads to the goal. Making money alone is not the goal; drinking alone is not the goal. He should remember that one works for some greater goal.

Halakhah 8 – "And Similarly When He Has Relations" – Marital Relations as Medicine

"Ve-khen ke-she-yiv'ol, lo yiv'ol ela kedei le-havri'ot gufo u-khedei le-kayem et ha-zera" – "And similarly when he has marital relations, he should only have relations in order to maintain his body's health." **"Le-kayem et ha-zera"** – so that he can have children, so that there should be continuity of generations.

Discussion: What Does "To Maintain the Seed" Mean?

Speaker 1: Okay, I don't know what "le-kayem et ha-zera" means. It sounds like it's also to maintain the seed? I don't know, I don't know what that means. Okay.

Speaker 2: I think in the next chapter the Rambam will discuss this – he didn't say the goal is his seed. He said additional intentions.

Speaker 1: Yes, he says a different one.

Speaker 2: That's what I'm saying – I think here it's on a simpler level. The next chapter is later, also from the perspective of health, and also after that there's the perspective of le-shem shamayim. But now we're speaking on a simple level. It sounds more like he means to say that here – he's not yet speaking about the purpose of having children and so forth, because here he's speaking just like eating and drinking. It appears that a person has a need – his seed will deteriorate if he never has relations, something like that. It's more of a practical matter for the person's health.

Digression: Kesef Mishneh on the Obligation of Marital Relations

Speaker 1: The rabbi will surely make a point – "and all the commandments of marital obligation (onah) we are careful about." That's interesting.

Speaker 2: But the Kesef Mishneh says that it doesn't come in here – here we're discussing halakhah. Obviously the Rambam will write about the mitzvah of onah in a different place; here we're only speaking from the perspective of health.

Back to the Rambam: Relations as Medicine

"U-lefikakh" – therefore – how will we see that when he has relations with his wife, he has intention for the sake of union, for the sake of Heaven, but he knows that it's needed like medicine. When he knows that it's needed as medicine – oh, to fulfill this mitzvah.

So you see, here it's clear that we're not yet speaking about the intention of begetting children or anything like that. There is a need for a person himself, and he does it in the manner of

medicine, just as eating is medicine. That's something like the idea.

Halakhah 9 – "One Who Conducts Himself According to Medicine" – Health Alone Is Not Yet Enough

Very good. The Rambam says, this is yet another level. Now he's going to say that this is still not enough. It shouldn't just have the, as they call it, "instant gratification" – the immediate pleasure of making money, or the immediate pleasure of eating good things – but rather for a further purpose.

And now he explains a bit more. He says: **"One who conducts himself according to medical principles"** – that's one approach, but one can say it's more... how does he say it there? One shouldn't see that it gives him immediate pleasure, rather he does it because it's healthy. It's not for pleasure at all, it's for a need. A person cannot live without eating and drinking, it's like a need, not a pleasure, it's simply a need.

Novel Insight: Being Healthy Itself Is Also Only a Means

Now he's going to say that this is still not enough. The fact that a person conducts himself to be healthy – being healthy itself is also only a purpose. Being healthy is also only a purpose. These are two levels of purpose:

- **The simple purpose** is that I eat to be healthy.

- **And after that** – I am healthy for a greater purpose.

"One who conducts himself according to medical principles, if he sets his heart that his entire body and limbs should merely be whole and strong" – if he thinks he conducts himself in a healthy way so that he should be healthy, then – is being healthy itself already the final goal, already the ultimate purpose? But when he thinks that he is intimate in order to have children who are healthy children, he does his work for the sake of the children, he does his work consequently for his own needs – that he wants to have children.

Halacha 9 (continued): "A Good Path" Without the Way of God Is Not Enough

Or when he thinks that he is intimate in order to have children who are healthy children – **he does his work and they serve his needs** – he does his work, a word for his needs, that he wants to have children so children should help him, children should do the work for him, and children should... he should have errand boys that he can send on missions. That this "good path" is not a good path, because ultimately he doesn't have a great purpose.

Rather, he should set his heart – he comes back to what he started with. Yes, it's not a good path, because it's missing the "way of God" that he started with. Rather, he should set his heart...

Discussion: What Does "Good Path" Mean – A Code for the Path of Mitzvos?

Chavrusa A: How should he think? What? "Good path" is a code for "the path of mitzvos" that's here within?

Chavrusa B: Yes, he always separates out "good path." And it sounds like the whole thing is also part of the "path of mitzvos." It's also part of... he calls it "the way of God," he says that the Almighty conducts Himself in these ways.

Here it sounds like what you call the intention – he says that the intention is not just what he thinks, the intention is how he

conducts himself. When you see that he does it differently when he does it in the way of medicine, and that means that you go and do more or less according to medical need and not according to the need for bodily pleasure — and that is not the definition of good eating.

Novel Insight: Intention Shows Itself in Action — Not Only in Thought

Chavrusa B: I want to add a bit that it's not just that there's eating and then there's the reason for the eating. No — the good eating depends on how one understands the reason why. That is: the goodness of the act of eating is already, like everything, dependent on how you understand what it's for.

I might have thought that eating can only be measured by whether he wants to be healthy. Then one measures: why does he want to be healthy? If his greatest purpose is to be healthy — for example, he gave away his entire day to being healthy, he exercised the entire day, and he didn't daven or learn at all, he didn't do any other service of God.

Indeed, with eating one can't... it appears that what the Rambam would say is that when someone says "I eat for the sake of Heaven" it's still not enough, because one needs to look at how he eats. If he eats only healthy things, and only when he's hungry, only as much as he needs — one knows that he eats for a good goal of being healthy. And now one needs to check: does he have a higher goal? What is the goal of being healthy? One now needs to check why he is healthy.

Chavrusa A: Yes, seemingly there still needs to be some distinction.

Chavrusa B: I think there is a distinction, more than what he doesn't say here. Yes, he doesn't say it here, but I think that... because thinking is not interesting. What do I care what you think? I don't hold that thinking is interesting. It doesn't speak to me.

For example, with children you can see a simple distinction, right? For example, someone who wants to have children not just for his own needs, but because he wants, as the Rambam says, that the children should be a wise person and great in Israel — he marries a different type of person. It's not just that he does a mitzvah or he has an intention. He eats perhaps a little... perhaps he even eats less because of that thinking.

Chavrusa A: Yes?

Chavrusa B: Ah, you're back?

Chavrusa A: Yes. Okay.

Chavrusa B: I hope that they'll... yes, okay.

Halacha 9 (continued): *****"And He Should Set His Heart That His Body Should Be Whole and Strong"*****

So, let's go further. Rather, say, say, say further.

Chavrusa A: **"And he should set his heart that his body should be whole and strong"** — he should settle his mind, he should focus, he should think about this that his body should be whole and strong, in order to... that the body is still a part of a greater purpose.

"So that his soul should be upright to know God" — that his soul should be upright, that his soul should be in a good place to be able to know God.

Why does knowing God require a good body? The Rambam says: **"For it is impossible to understand and contemplate wisdoms when he is hungry and sick or when one of his limbs is in pain"** — it's not possible for a person to think and understand wisdoms when he is hungry and sick, or when one of his limbs hurts him.

The Rambam earlier mentioned a prophet, that someone who wants to be able to reach prophecy needs to be strong, because the body needs to cooperate, one needs to have the capacities that it takes.

Novel Insight: Serving God = Knowing God — Not Just Doing Mitzvos

One sees very clearly that the word "serving the Almighty" is not enough, what people usually say — to serve the Almighty, to do mitzvos. Because in truth, the reality is that if someone would just say that one needs to serve what we usually call serving the Almighty — well, he's not healthy, so he does what he's forced to and the Merciful One exempts the coerced, he does what he can do at that time, what's the problem?

Because the Rambam understands that what he calls "serving God" is very precisely "knowing God." There is no other way of serving God except knowing. And this one actually cannot do, as he says here — **"for it is impossible to understand and contemplate wisdoms"** — it doesn't say "lest he pray and put on tefillin." It's possible one can put on tefillin when one is sick, but to contemplate wisdoms requires a settled mind, and one needs to be healthy. And since contemplating wisdoms is what will bring one to know God, that is precisely the definition, and for this he must be healthy.

The Ruzhiner: Yud-Kuf-Yud and Vav-Hey in Words of Service

Very good. Aside from the settled mind of the Ruzhiner — and the Ruzhiner said that in Torah and mitzvos and service, all these words have vav-hey. In all words like eating (achilah), drinking (shtiyah), intimacy (bi'ah), sleeping (linah), they have yud-kuf-yud. He says, because he says that yud-kuf-yud is something more hidden. Both are parts of serving God, both are so that a person should know God.

Chavrusa A: No, it's interesting. The way you say it, davening is also a preparation for the... it could be it's a closer preparation to knowing God, but both are preparation for knowing God.

Chavrusa B: Yes. Very good.

Halacha 9 (continued): *****"Perhaps He Will Be a Wise Person and Great in Israel"*****

Regarding the second matter, we learned that he is intimate in order to have children, but not just to have children, rather **"and he should set his heart that he should have a son, perhaps he will be a wise person and great in Israel."** Perhaps the son will be a wise person and great in Israel, consequently the son will help him know God, he perhaps means.

Chavrusa A: The son will help him in knowing God perhaps.

Chavrusa B: The son will help him in knowing God, or together. The son helped him understand the Almighty. He

shouldn't be embarrassed. He should also do service of God, people can say: "Dear son, teach me to be a servant of God."

Chavrusa A: But seemingly here, the son is not at all for his own need, he is a wise person and great in Israel. For the Jewish people, he will teach others, perhaps...

Chavrusa B: Yes, it should be for a greater purpose, in short. An intention that another Jew will know about the Almighty. But here further you see that the good intention of building is not just that the Jew will be a pious Jew — he will be a wise person and great one. "Great in Israel" is an interesting expression. But that's a new intention, these are the reasons.

Novel Insight: "Wise and Great in Israel" — To Exclude "Doing His Work"

Chavrusa B: But what I see here — I catch now that this is to exclude **"doing his work."** There is a simple approach, and he says "I need children." Why? Yes, children are enjoyable. So he told him: "No, perhaps one of my children will be a wise person and will know the Almighty." The Almighty will have another Jew who knows about Him.

Historical Remark: Having Children in Different Eras

Chavrusa A: I saw that in the olden times, the main livelihood of people was that they had a large field. When you have a large field, the more children you have — it doesn't cost much to have more children, and the children help out. Once the way of living changed in the non-Jewish world, they started having fewer children.

But we Jews don't suffer from this, there's no difference whether one needs to have children for... one has children so that a wise person and great in Israel should come out, consequently, yes.

Chavrusa B: And this is — the entire practical difference is only with the weak intention, but the real intention is certainly that the more children, the more chances that there should be a great one, more chances for a wise person and great in Israel.

Chavrusa A: And this is what I'm saying, consequently for us nothing has changed, there's no difference which way one lives, whether one lives in a city, whether one lives on a farm.

A Graduated Structure of Purposes — Every Purpose Needs a Higher Purpose

Chavrusa B: I'll say again: the way one does everything for the sake of Heaven is when one does it for a greater purpose, and that somewhat greater purpose one does for yet a greater purpose. That means, one eats in order to be healthy. But being healthy itself — seemingly one also can't see. Two people can eat healthy, but one still won't see which of them does it for the sake of Heaven. One needs to look more, one needs to see what the purpose of being healthy is.

Chavrusa A: That's right. Seemingly one can see, because I see — I think, for example, if someone's goal is to have a wise son in Israel, he needs kindness toward the other person. Here yes, you don't yet have the action according to my understanding of the second level, so I think.

Chavrusa B: But it can also be with eating. If someone goes and gives away fifteen hours a day just to be able to eat healthy, he is lacking in that it's only a part of this — it's a part of eating for service. So a part of the day goes for Torah, and a

bit he has health in mind, one knows that his purposes are well balanced. It's simply not healthy to take care of health also not an entire day.

Halacha 10: *"It Turns Out That One Who Walks in This Path All His Days Serves God Constantly"*****

The Rambam says, he adopts an approach where he says **"all his days he serves God."** Someone who goes with this approach forever, that he has in mind with his physical matters, with his bodily matters he has in mind so that he should be one who knows God — it turns out that he serves God constantly, that he serves the Almighty forever. Not only when he davens, not only when he learns and makes preparations for his knowing God, but also when he does his bodily matters, he makes preparations for knowing God.

Even at the time of his sleep, even when he earns a livelihood, **even at the time of intimacy** — he does service of God. Why? **Because his thought in all** — the thought with all these matters is — **so that he should find his needs**, so that he should have what he needs to have, all needs should be taken care of — **until his body is whole to serve God**, so that his body should be able to be a servant of God.

It turns out that everything he does is for the ultimate purpose. Everything is viewed in terms of the ultimate purpose.

Novel Insight: "His Thought" Means Intention — Not Active Thinking

Chavrusa A: Yes?

Chavrusa B: I just want to be precise — I don't see that it specifically says here the word "his thought." I mean, "thought" here means intention. It doesn't mean that he needs to think. There's no difference if he forgets, there's no difference. Now with the word he should think that I mean this.

Just as I'll give a parable: when someone has an intention to build a house, yes? Meanwhile he needs to go drag benches, he needs to drag wood, he needs to make plans, he makes contacts — many side things. Someone who doesn't know the intention, he sees him doing a side thing. Someone who knows the intention, knows that in all his actions he is doing things to be able to build the house, because that is the purpose of the purpose. Now he goes to the furniture store, he goes to the plumber — so that he should be able to build the house.

Just as someone who works because he has children and it costs him a lot of money — he doesn't need to think about the children the whole time, but the whole time that he works one knows that he works for the children so they should be able to eat.

So, someone who knows that his ultimate goal is service of God — automatically everything he does is a preparation for that thing.

Intention for the Sake of Heaven — A Fact, Not a Thought During the Act

Chavrusa A: It's more a fact, it's not that he thinks during the act about this. It could be during the act — when you're hammering the nail you need to think that the hammer should go onto the nail and not that you should hammer into your finger. But it could be that when one does remember from time to time that what I'm doing is service of God, it gives a

pleasure, it gives something, it makes the work a bit easier, it helps focus – it's certain that it has virtues. But yes.

Chavrusa B: You're now entering the dispute between the Mussar adherents and the Chassidim.

Chavrusa A: But yes. No, I mean, the Chassidim speak of other levels. The Rambam speaks of a simple matter seemingly, because he says he adopts service of God – he doesn't say "one must intend," "one must think," and such things.

Explanation of "Sleeps With Knowledge" – Not Intention While Sleeping, But Sleeping for the Purpose

Chavrusa A: Even when he sleeps – **if he sleeps**, and he sleeps **with knowledge**... I was thinking what he means. Not while sleeping with an intention – he's now a Baal Shem, he can while sleeping mumble a unification prayer. I'm not even talking about that.

But he goes to sleep – when you know that your entire system is set up for the great purpose, you know that he sleeps so that he should be refreshed, so that his mind should calm down, his body should calm down, so that he shouldn't become sick.

What is the meaning of the word "**sleeps with knowledge**"? You mean to say that he sleeps with awareness? "**With knowledge**" means for the purpose – not when he sleeps, but he sleeps for the purpose.

Discussion: What Does "With Knowledge" Mean?

Chavrusa A: I think the word "with knowledge" – it should have said "he sleeps for the sake of knowing God"?

No, perhaps he means to exclude "sleeping by compulsion" – such sleeping accidentally. What is "with knowledge"? He can say sleeping with knowledge – he goes to sleep with the intention **so that his mind should rest and his body should rest and so that he shouldn't become sick**. Why? Because he knows that one cannot serve the Almighty when one is sick.

But it doesn't have to be that "with knowledge" here means literally with intentions. It could be such an important thing that one says one should sleep for the sake of Heaven, but "with knowledge" here means that his sleeping is also within the greater goal of his life – to be a servant of God, to be one who knows God – **so that his mind should rest and his body should rest**.

Sleeping Serves Two Functions – Mind and Body

Chavrusa A: He says, the Rambam says here quite clearly that sleeping has two things:

- **One** – it calms the person, it calms his mind, the brain gets exhausted.

- **And the body** – the digestive power, which later perhaps the Rambam will speak more about, the intestines, all those things.

both things – sleep is important for both things: for the intellectual soul (nefesh hasichlis) and for the vital soul (nefesh hachiyunis), for the mind (da'as) and for the body.

Kedei shelo yecheleh – so that he should not become sick in both things: he should not become sick in the head and he should not become sick in the stomach. Why? Because we know that a person cannot serve the Almighty when he is sick. Therefore, **shinaso avodah laMakom Baruch Hu** – his sleeping is a service to God.

Digression in Honor of the Month of Adar: "Ad delo yada" and Sleeping

Chavrusa A: Like the Rambam, **veharei zeh tzavas chachamim ve'amru**... I'm just saying a joke – I think that regarding sleep it says "lada'as" twice, therefore the Rambam regarding Purim when he said "ad delo yada" (until one doesn't know), he said it means sleeping. That there's such a concept, something like "kedei shetanuach da'ato" – I don't know, sleeping with knowledge, sleeping without knowledge, I'm not sure exactly.

Chavrusa B: Where do you see "lada'as" twice?

Chavrusa A: **Yashan lada'as kedei shetanuach da'ato veyanuach gufo** – he sleeps with intent so that his mind should rest and his body should rest.

Chavrusa B: Ah, I mean, **kedei shetanuach da'ato veyanuach gufo** are the two things that happen when one sleeps, as I explained it at the very least.

Chavrusa A: I think your interpretation is correct, your interpretation is a Torah insight in honor of the month of Adar.

Chavrusa B: Ah, it's within the thirty days, within the days, a few days.

"Vechol Ma'asecha Yihyu Leshem Shamayim" – The Conclusion of the Halacha

Chavrusa A: So it comes out, says the Rambam, that his sleeping is a service to God, Blessed be He – his sleeping is a service to the Almighty. **Veharei zeh tzavas chachamim ve'amru "vechol ma'asecha yihyu leshem shamayim"** – and this is the directive of the Sages who said "all your deeds should be for the sake of Heaven."

That means, all your deeds you should do with the greater goal in mind. That means, you should do it in the right way, but the right way alone can still be from a not-so-great goal – rather it should be from the greatest goal. And the goal is that a person should achieve knowledge of God (yedi'as Hashem).

Vehu she'amar Shlomo bechochmaso "bechol derachecha da'eihu" – and this is what Solomon said in his wisdom: "In all your ways, know Him." That means, the ultimate purpose (tachlis) is to know the Almighty, but all the things that lead there – everything you do in bodily matters – should be so that a person should achieve knowledge of God.

Shemonah Perakim Chapter 5 – The Rambam's Lengthy Discussion on This Topic

Chavrusa B: One needs to look in Shemonah Perakim, he says there that this is perhaps the most beautiful statement of the Sages, or some kind of choice selection of statements?

Chavrusa A: Yes, how does it go? He brings there the language...

Chavrusa B: Ah, not here. Shemonah Perakim chapter 5, right?

Chavrusa A: That is the point, it's found in Shemonah Perakim chapter 5. And the Rambam elaborates there very extensively on this.

Chavrusa B: The Rambam says there that it is a great level. One needs to learn it there, do you know how to learn it in depth? On that chapter, looking specifically...

Chavrusa A: I mean, also the first half of chapter 4 elaborates very extensively on the topic of bodily pleasures and the same...

Chavrusa B: In general the concept of the middle path (midos ha'emtza'iyos), yes?

Chavrusa A: Yes, but I'm saying that specifically that chapter deals with the topic of asceticism (perishus), of the "come, let's talk about it" people – the whole thing he elaborates on extraordinarily extensively there. And also the topic of "all your deeds should be for the sake of Heaven" is in chapter 5.

The Rambam's Language in Shemonah Perakim: "Bekoach Elohi Beli Safek Klal"

Chavrusa B: And as you say, he brings there... look at the language, his language is as follows:

He brings the Gemara "**bechol derachecha da'eihu**" (in all your ways know Him), and he even brings the Gemara – he says even for a matter of transgression. That means to say, even if there are matters of actions where you are doing now perhaps a bit of a transgression, but it will lead to a greater purpose, it is also included in "in all your ways know Him."

He says as follows: "**Uchvar kalelu chachamim aleihem hashalom kol ha'inyan hazeh belashon hakatzar beyoser sheyachol lihyos... vehakifas inyan hekef shalem me'od me'od, ad sheka'asher yisbonen bekotzer orech hamilim, ve'ach ne'emru al inyan hagadol ha'atzum hazeh bichlaluso, shekvar chuberu bo chiburim velo hikifu kulo, teida shene'emru bekoach Elohi beli safek klal.**"

(And the Sages, peace be upon them, already summarized this entire matter in the most concise language possible... and it

encompasses the subject with a very, very complete scope, so that when one contemplates the brevity of the words, and yet they were said about this great and immense matter in its entirety, about which works have been composed and yet did not encompass it all, you will know that they were said with Divine power without any doubt whatsoever.)

Chavrusa A: That is truly an amazing thing. It seems that they can say in one line what other people need an entire book for – that is truly Divine inspiration (ruach hakodesh).

Chavrusa B: That is not just a concise way, that is already almost ruach hakodesh.

Chavrusa A: But the truth is that without the Ramban I would never have understood Bava Kamma folio 18 in the same way.

Chavrusa B: Very good. After you understand that this refers to the entire sugya, then you see, you open up Berachos and you see it's written literally in one line – you say, "Wow, in one line he wrote what I struggled for four years to grasp."

Chavrusa A: Amazing. Yes.

Conclusion of Chapter 3

Chavrusa B: Alright, that is chapter 4.

Chavrusa A: Chapter 4 or chapter 3?

Chavrusa B: Chapter 3. The third chapter. Okay.

Chavrusa A: Very good. Section 4, are you still on? Okay.