

Laws of Dispositions, Chapter 4 (Auto Translated)

English

Auto Translated

Shiur Overview

Summary of the Rambam Shiur: Hilchos De'os Chapter 4

Introduction to the Chapter — Bodily Health is Among the Ways of God

The Rambam's words: "Since maintaining a healthy and whole body is among the ways of God, for it is impossible to understand or know anything of the knowledge of the Creator while one is sick... one must distance oneself from things that destroy the body and accustom oneself to things that strengthen and heal."

The simple meaning: Bodily health is a part of serving God, because a sick person cannot understand and know the Almighty — it requires focus and comprehension. Therefore, one must guard oneself from harmful things and conduct oneself with things that promote health.

Insights and Explanations:

1) What is the source for the mitzvah to be healthy?

Most people cite "venishmartem me'od lenafshoseichem" (and you shall greatly guard your souls) as the source for guarding the body. But the Rambam doesn't bring this verse here at all. According to various opinions, "venishmartem" means guarding the soul, guarding faith, guarding the mind — not literally guarding the body. Even the Rambam who does bring "venishmartem" in Hilchos Rotze'ach U'Shmiras HaNefesh — there it is a branch of murder, meaning when there is actual danger. But being healthy in general is a different mitzvah. **According to the Rambam, the source is "bechol derachecha da'eihu"** (in all your ways, know Him) — that when one maintains bodily health with the intention of being able to serve God, it itself is a part of serving God. This is "among the ways of God," connected to "vehalachta bidrachav" (and you shall walk in His ways).

2) Is bodily health actually a mitzvah?

A difficult question from the Rambam's Shemoneh Perakim, where it sounds like bodily health itself is not really a mitzvah — only health of the soul (good character traits, mental/social health). But here in Hilchos De'os it looks like a mitzvah. The resolution: perhaps it's not an independent mitzvah, but rather a branch of "to emulate His ways" or "in all your ways, know Him." It's also mentioned that someone saw in a sefer that it's a branch of "ve'asisa hayashar vehatov" (and you shall do what is right and good). The conclusion: it's a general concept for which the Rambam didn't assign a specific mitzvah-verse, but it encompasses the entire Torah with many branches from other mitzvos.

3) Actually neglecting the body — "venishmartem" as a branch of murder:

When a person actually neglects his body, it falls into the category of "venishmartem me'od lenafshoseichem" — which

is a branch of suicide, of killing oneself, which is certainly a serious matter according to the Rambam. But the extra precision — the positive obligation to be healthy — is perhaps not really a mitzvah, but rather a good practice.

4) Bodily health vs. health of the soul in the Rambam:

In other places, the Rambam speaks about health of the soul — good character traits, state of mind, balance. But here in Chapter 4, he goes exclusively into physical health — eating, drinking, sleeping, exercise, bathhouse, bloodletting. "Health of the soul" in the Rambam means good character traits; what we call today "mental health" the Rambam would perhaps have called "health of the imagination."

5) Structure of the chapter:

The Rambam first states general principles (when to eat, how to eat), then specific things (which foods), then other aspects of the body (marital relations, sleep, exercise, bathhouse, bloodletting). All the things here are not remedies for sick people, but rather a "healthy lifestyle" — how to live healthy and not become sick. The Rambam himself will say this at the end of the chapter.

6) The Rambam as a doctor:

The Rambam was also a doctor and wrote additional medical works: Pirkei Moshe, Hanhagos HaBri'us, and a work where he translates the great physician Galen. But here in Hilchos De'os he brings only a summary — the things that are relevant for every person. Just as "the Gemara" of Hilchos Yesodei HaTorah is the Moreh Nevuchim, and "the Gemara" of Hilchos De'os (character traits) is the Shemoneh Perakim — so too "the Gemara" of these chapters about bodily health is presumably the medical writings that the Rambam wrote, where he elaborates more extensively on the medical details.

7) The Rambam writes here "as a doctor":

In this chapter, the Rambam writes as a doctor, not as a posek (halachic decisor). Therefore, things like davening Shacharis before eating don't enter into this "daily schedule" — that's a halachic schedule, not a medical schedule. A proof: the Rambam even wrote a medical work for a Muslim, where he told him that he needs to drink wine — even though a Muslim is forbidden to drink wine according to his religion. "From a medical standpoint, one needs to know what is from a medical standpoint" — the Rambam separates medical advice from halachic obligations.

8) Sources in Chazal:

Most of the things the Rambam brings here have sources in Chazal. But even when it appears in the Gemara, Chazal also said it as medical advice (from the doctors of their time), not as halachah leMoshe miSinai. The Rambam didn't bring it because it appears in Chazal, but because it is true medical advice. It's not a mitzvah to fulfill — it's derech eretz, a good practice. The commentators on the Rambam look for halachic points in everything, but they were presumably not doctors —

and it's not wrong to understand that much of this is a medical matter, not only a halachic matter.

9) Relevance for today — general principles vs. specifics:

One shouldn't quickly dismiss the Rambam's advice because "today they say differently." What people believed for thousands of years doesn't become nullified because one doctor today said otherwise — medical opinions constantly change. The general advice (when to eat, how to eat) are basic human things that don't need research — one can see it in oneself. Perhaps specific details (which foods) one can ask today's nutritionists, but the general principles remain.

Halachah 1: A Person Should Never Eat Unless He Is Hungry

The Rambam's words: "A person should never eat unless he is hungry, and should not drink unless he is thirsty."

The simple meaning: A person should not eat unless he is hungry, and not drink unless he is thirsty.

Insights and Explanations:

1) Hunger as a G-dly mechanism:

Hunger is a mechanism that the Almighty placed in a person to remind him to eat. If the mechanism doesn't remind him — the simple meaning is that he doesn't yet need to eat. This is seichel hayashar — plain common sense.

2) The trigger to eat should come from within:

When a person eats because he sees food, or just because he thought about food, while his body hasn't yet asked for it — it's not the same. The Rambam means that the trigger to eat should come from within (hunger), not from outside (seeing food, thinking about food).

3) Practical application — fixed mealtimes:

Even for people who have fixed eating times (ittim), if one day he's not hungry, he should skip it. There's no disagreement about this whatsoever — no doctor today says otherwise.

4) The modern person has forgotten what hunger means:

In today's world, where people eat so much and so often, one completely forgets what it means to feel hungry or thirsty. One never gives hunger a chance to arrive — before one even dreams of becoming hungry, one has already eaten. This is a result of processed food, easy food, and the access that people have today. It's very healthy for a person to sometimes experience hunger and only then eat.

5) The Rambam speaks for ordinary people:

All the rules here are for ordinary people. An exception — for example, someone who suffers from anorexia or other illnesses where the hunger mechanism doesn't work — has different rules. The Rambam will later say himself that he speaks in general terms.

6) Regarding drinking:

With drinking too, the same rule applies — only when one is thirsty. Today there's a lot of talk about drinking a lot of water, and perhaps because we eat so much processed food we actually do need more water (because water helps flush out unhealthy things). But the Rambam speaks of a general diet, where one should only drink when thirsty. A practical note:

many times a person is thirsty and doesn't catch it, because he's accustomed to that state, or he stuffs himself with food instead of drinking. If one gets used to it, one catches the signal.

Halachah 1 (continued): One Should Not Delay One's Bodily Needs Even a Moment

The Rambam's words: "One should not delay one's bodily needs even a single moment, but whenever one needs to urinate or to 'cover one's feet' — one should go immediately."

The simple meaning: A person should not hold himself back from going to the bathroom even a short time. Whether he needs to urinate or needs to "cover his feet" (a euphemism for a bowel movement), he should stop what he's doing and go immediately.

Insights and Explanations:

1) "A single moment" is not literally meant — after all, there's also a mitzvah of "vehayah machanecha kadosh" (your camp shall be holy) regarding cleanliness, that a person shouldn't have excess. But the principle is that one shouldn't be dismissive — when the body says one needs to go, it means one needs to go.

2) The Rambam doesn't bring here the prohibition of "bal teshaktzu" (do not make yourself abominable) or other halachic sources (like "veyatzasa"). Here he speaks from a medical perspective, not a halachic one. There may be many things here that relate to halachic prohibitions, but the Rambam's focus here is on health.

3) "Lehasech es raglav" — the expression means "to cover one's feet." In other places, the Rambam speaks about proper conduct in the bathroom — that even when one needs to go, one should remain dignified. "Lehasech es raglav" means that one covers one's feet in order to go in a dignified manner.

4) "Ya'amod miyad" — doesn't mean to stand up, but to stop what he's in the middle of doing and take care of his body.

5) The connection to eating: Going to the bathroom is the "second step" of eating — what one eats that one doesn't need comes out. This is a part of the laws of eating.

6) The principle of both halachos (eating and going to the bathroom): The Rambam says a very simple thing — **your body tells you what to do.** Don't eat because "now is dinner time," but eat when you're hungry. Don't go to the bathroom on a schedule, but when the body demands it. Both things — listening to the body.

Halachah 1 (continued): One Should Not Eat Until One's Stomach Is Full

The Rambam's words: "A person should not eat until his stomach is full, but should stop about a quarter before he is satiated."

The simple meaning: A person should not eat until his belly becomes filled. He should stop eating a quarter before he is fully satiated.

Insights and Explanations:

1) The source: This is based on a Gemara in Maseches Shabbos.

2) How does one calculate the "quarter"? A person should estimate how much more he could still push in — a quarter less than how much he could push in, he should already stop eating. For example: he knows he could still go through the cholent and then the dessert — he should calculate how much a quarter of the entire meal is, and eat that much less. It's acknowledged that this is a bit hard to figure out in practice.

Halachah 1 (continued): One Should Not Drink Water During the Meal

The Rambam's words: "One should not drink water during the meal, except a little water mixed with wine. And when the food begins to be digested in his intestines — he may drink what he needs to drink."

The simple meaning: One should not drink water in the middle of eating, only a little water with a bit of wine mixed in. Only when the food begins to be digested may one drink as much as one needs.

Insights and Explanations:

1) The physiological reason: In the body there are enzymes (juices, chemicals) that the body puts into the food to help digest it. When one drinks a lot of water in the middle of eating, the enzymes become diluted and can't work well. For example, when one eats meat, it needs to be broken down into small pieces so the body can distribute it — part into the blood, part into other parts of the body. Too much water disrupts the process.

2) "Mazug beyayin" — what does it mean? "Mixed with wine" essentially means water with a little wine mixed in — not the reverse. It's not wine with a little water, but water with a little wine. The main component is the water.

3) Water vs. other beverages: Water has no calories; the body doesn't need to digest it on the same level as food. Other heavy beverages (like soda, grape juice) the body also needs to digest — they are more like a "food." Soda doesn't appear in the Rambam, but presumably it's more of a heavy thing that the body needs to process.

4) A general rule: It's better to drink more water before eating than after eating.

5) "A little" — how much? We don't know what the measure of "a little" is.

Halachah 1 (continued): One Should Not Eat Until Checking Oneself Thoroughly

The Rambam's words: "One should not eat until he checks himself thoroughly, lest he need to relieve himself."

The simple meaning: Before eating, a person should check himself well whether he needs to go to the bathroom.

Insights and Explanations:

Distinction between two levels: Earlier, the Rambam said that when the body **actively says** one needs to go, one shouldn't push it off. Here he says that **before eating** one should check oneself ("yivdok es atzmo yafeh yafeh shema yitztarech lenekavav") — even when the body isn't yet actively saying so. This shows that "needing to" earlier means when one **feels** pressure, but here we're talking about a **physical possibility** — that when one checks, one sees that one can go,

even if one didn't feel a strong urge. There are **two levels**: (1) When one feels it — don't push it off; (2) Before eating — actively check.

Halachah 1 (continued): Exercise Before Eating

The Rambam's words: "One should not eat until he walks before eating until his body becomes warm, or does work, or exerts himself in some other exertion..."

The general rule is: he should exert himself every morning until his body becomes warm."

The simple meaning: A person should not eat before he has moved around a bit — walked, worked, or exerted himself — until his body becomes warm. Every morning he should exert himself a bit until the body becomes warm.

Insights and Explanations:

1) "His body becomes warm" — what does it mean? The body should become **warm**, not necessarily sweat. Sweating (ze'iah) is a different, higher level. The Rambam later uses the word "yaziya" (sweat) when he means actual sweating, which shows that "warm" is not the same thing. The sign is that the body has become active, it has started working. "I'm warming up" — that's the level.

2) This is not the biggest exercise of the day. The Rambam is not talking here about a big, heavy exercise, but about a **small movement before eating in the morning**. The main point is: don't roll out of bed and immediately start eating. No coffee in bed. The body should first start working.

3) [Digression: The Rambam's book "Hanhagos HaBri'us" on exercise:] In "Hanhagos HaBri'us," the Rambam also says one should exercise, any kind of exercise. There he says that **the best exercise is playing with a "small ball"** — running after a little ball. Ball games already existed in the Rambam's times. The reason: playing with a ball works **the entire body** — hands, feet, the whole body.

4) "The general rule" — the Rambam makes a general principle: it doesn't matter what kind of exercise, the main thing is that he should exert his body a bit every morning.

5) The Rambam speaks here only from a health perspective — he doesn't mention here the prohibition of eating before davening. That's a separate halachic discussion that doesn't enter this context.

Halachah 2: The Order of Exercise — Sweating, Calming Down, Warm Water, Eating

The Rambam's words: "And he should rest a bit... until his soul settles and then he should eat. If he washes in hot water after sweating, this is good, and afterward he should wait a bit and eat."

The simple meaning: After exercise, one should calm down until the body becomes settled, and only then eat. If one can wash with warm water after sweating, that's good — and afterward one should wait a bit and eat.

Insights and Explanations:

1) "This is good" — an advantage or an obligation? A question is raised: when the Rambam says "if he washes in hot water... this is good" — does he mean it's **better** (a higher level), or does he mean it's **also good** (a second legitimate path)? The conclusion is that it's an advantage, but not a must.

2) [Digression: Coffee before exercise] It's discussed whether one should drink coffee before exercise or after. A distinction: coffee alone is not "food," but coffee with milk and other additions is already "extras" — the Rambam doesn't speak of such mixed beverages.

Halachah 2 (continued): Not Eating While Standing, Walking, or Riding — and Not Moving Vigorously After Eating

The Rambam's words: "When he eats, he should sit in his place, or lean on his left side. He should not walk, ride, exert his body, or stroll until the food in his intestines begins to digest. Anyone who strolls after eating or exerts himself — brings upon himself bad and severe illnesses."

The simple meaning: When one eats, one should sit or lean over. After eating, one should not walk, ride (on an animal), work, or stroll — until the food begins to digest. Whoever does so brings upon himself bad and severe illnesses.

Insights and Explanations:

1) Eating while standing — the melamed's warning: The melamidim (teachers) used to warn children not to eat while standing, with the reasoning that "the food goes down as far as it can go" (you get fat legs). The literal explanation is dismissed — the food goes into the intestines as it goes, not through gravity to the feet — but there are other legitimate medical reasons why eating while standing or walking is not healthy.

2) "He should not ride" — riding on an animal, not driving a car: "Riding" in the Rambam's time means riding on an animal, not driving in a modern car.

3) "Until the food digests" — how long? The Rambam doesn't say clearly how long. One can presumably feel it — when the body feels more comfortable. It should be at least half an hour or "some significant amount of time."

4) [Digression: Dancing at weddings after eating] According to the Rambam, it's **not recommended** to eat a big meal at a wedding and immediately get up to dance. Two pieces of advice: (1) One should give enough time between eating and dancing, or (2) one should dance in the calm circle, not with those who are jumping around.

5) [Digression: Dancing vs. jumping — what is rikud?] A sharp distinction between real rikudim (dancing) and jumping. Today's bochorim think that dancing means jumping, but real rikudim as in the Gemara are skilled — they have to do with the beat (rhythm) of the niggun, "acting out the musical notes." Jumping is a type of exercise one does in the gym, not rikud. Also criticism of the wild music at weddings that makes it impossible to dance normally — the beat is too fast for a person to dance to it.

Halachah 3: The Order of Sleep — How Long and When to Sleep

The Rambam's words: "A day and night are twenty-four hours. It is sufficient for a person to sleep a third of them, which is eight hours, and they should be at the end of the night, so that from the beginning of his sleep until sunrise is eight hours, and he rises from his bed before sunrise."

The simple meaning: A day and night is 24 hours. A person needs to sleep a third of that — eight hours. The eight hours should be at the end of the night (not the beginning of the night), so that he gets up before sunrise.

Insights and Explanations:

1) Eight hours — minimum or maximum? This is a major disagreement. Many sefarim, especially from ba'alei mussar who practiced self-denial, read into the Rambam that eight hours is the **maximum** — one doesn't need more. The **Kitzur Shulchan Aruch** (R' Shlomo Ganzfried) writes that **six hours** is enough, and he cites the Rambam as a maximum. But the correct reading is that eight hours is the **proper amount**, not the maximum. "R' Shlomo Ganzfried and I are in a disagreement."

2) Strong position on sleep: "I am a very big promoter of sleeping at least eight hours every night." Evidence from medical literature — "a whole book" about this, and many doctors today hold that 7-8 hours is necessary.

3) Sleep deprivation and "it is impossible to understand and know": The Rambam's introduction (that a sick person cannot understand knowledge of the Creator) connects to sleep deprivation. People who are "impossible to understand and know people" — they don't understand when you talk to them, they're tense, they run around, they have bad character traits — "and many times, the answer is that he doesn't sleep enough." **"A large portion of the foolishness of the world comes from this"** — from not sleeping enough.

4) Self-denial through sleep deprivation — a mistake: When people think that sleeping less is a form of siguf (self-denial as divine service), it's a mistake. "He just ends up being scattered." A person who sleeps enough is settled — "he knows when he goes to sleep, he knows when he gets up, he's not scattered." Advice: whoever wants to practice self-denial should **eat less** (because people usually eat too much), but not sleep less.

5) Eating too much leads to sleeping too much: When one eats too much, the body needs more time to digest, which makes a person tired — "the body's slaughterhouse works overtime" when one sleeps. So eating too much leads to sleeping too much **or** to too little energy.

6) The meaning of "dayu" — "enough" or "maximum"? The word "dayu" (sufficient for him) can be read two ways: (1) Eight hours is **enough** — one doesn't need more (maximum reading), or (2) eight hours is **what one needs** — the proper amount. The inclination is toward the second reading, but "it does count from the Rambam that he's going for a maximum regarding the knowledge" — the Rambam thought that a person who wants to be comfortable would sleep ten hours, and the Rambam as a doctor says that eight hours is enough.

7) Why the end of the night? Two reasons: (1) **Practical:** If one goes to sleep at the beginning of the night, one wakes up before dawn when it's still dark, "he's bored, he has nothing to do, he has half his desire in hand." (2) **Halachic:** One needs to wake up before sunrise for Krias Shema — so the sleep schedule needs to align with the halachos of Krias Shema.

8) [Digression: Historical context — sleeping with the sun] In the old days, people lived more naturally with the sun — when it got dark, one couldn't socialize with people, a candle

was an expense, so one went to sleep. In such a world, a person would sleep twelve hours in winter when it's dark for a long time. The Rambam says: eight hours is enough, one doesn't need to sleep the entire dark period.

Halachah 3 (continued): How to Sleep — Sleeping Position

The Rambam's words: "One should not sleep on one's face or on one's back, but on one's side. At the beginning of the night on the left side, and at the end of the night on the right side."

The simple meaning: One should not sleep on one's face (on the stomach) and not on one's back (on the spine), but on the side. Beginning of the night on the left, end of the night on the right.

Insights and Explanations:

1) "On one's back" — medical or holiness? The Gemara says one may not sleep "prakdan" (on one's back) for reasons of **holiness** ("veshum kishui"). But the Rambam's chapter here is **entirely about medicine** — he made an introduction that the entire chapter is about bodily health. The Rambam's approach is that if something is both a halachah (of holiness) and a health matter, he includes it in this chapter. He counts it as health, but when he writes "not on one's back" it's **also** because the Gemara says so regarding holiness. Another simple reason: "It doesn't look nice, it's not dignified."

2) What does "beginning of the night" and "end of the night" mean? This doesn't mean one needs to set an alarm clock to turn over in the middle of the night. Two approaches: (a) If one wakes up in the middle of the night, one should turn over to the other side; (b) Perhaps it means that when one goes to sleep at the beginning of the night one should lie on the left, and if one goes to sleep at the end of the night one should lie on the right. The main point is that one should switch in the middle — not an entire night on one side.

3) Why not on the face or back? When a person lies on his face, the entire weight of the internal organs hangs down on the front of the belly — that puts pressure. And when one lies on the back, everything hangs down on the spine. On the side, the weight is more distributed.

4) Does it mean the entire night or even a little? "On one's face and on one's back" means one shouldn't sleep an entire night that way — but for a little while it's presumably not a problem.

5) Is the order of left/right essential? If someone does it in reverse — first right and then left — it's not a problem. The main thing is just that one should switch, not lie an entire night on one side, because the entire weight of the body lies on one hand/side.

Halachah 3 (continued): Not Sleeping Close to Eating, and Not Sleeping During the Day

The Rambam's words: "One should not sleep close to eating, but should wait after eating about three or four hours. And one should not sleep during the day."

The simple meaning: One should not go to sleep right after eating, but wait three to four hours. And one should not sleep during the day.

Insights and Explanations:

1) Connection to earlier: Earlier the Rambam said one should rest after eating (not sleep, not move vigorously) — here he adds that one should wait three to four hours before sleeping.

2) "About three or four hours" — not exactly four hours: "About" means approximately — not right after eating, but not necessarily exactly four hours.

3) Sleeping during the day — "shinta d'nishma": The Rambam says one should not sleep during the day. This aligns with the Gemara that says during the day one should only sleep "shinta d'nishma" — a short nap. The Rambam would presumably not have had a problem with a nap, only a long daytime sleep.

4) [Insight:] Connection to "intermittent fasting": If a person sleeps eight hours, and the last four hours before sleeping he doesn't eat — it comes out that he doesn't eat for twelve hours (four hours + eight hours of sleep). This aligns very well with what many people know today — that one should only eat within a certain window of about eight hours, and the other sixteen hours not eat. The Rambam perhaps already hinted at this principle, even though he hasn't yet said how many times a day one should eat.

Halachah 4: Order of Foods — Laxatives First, Constipating Foods After

The Rambam's words: "Things that loosen the bowels, such as grapes, figs, mulberries, pears, watermelons, types of squash, and types of cucumbers — one eats them first, before the meal, and should not mix them with the food. Rather, one waits a bit until they leave the upper digestive tract, and then eats one's meal."

The simple meaning: Things that loosen the bowels (laxatives) — like grapes, figs, mulberries, pears, watermelons, types of squash and cucumbers — should be eaten before the meal, not together with the food. One should wait until they leave the "beis habeli'ah" (the upper part of the digestive system), and only then eat the main food.

Insights and Explanations:

1) The common denominator of all laxatives: The common denominator of all the listed fruits is that they are wet fruits with a lot of water content. A watermelon has about 90% water; a grape — when you squeeze it out, nothing remains, it's a wet fruit.

2) What are "kishu'im" and "melafefonos"? Kishu'im is a type of squash/vegetable (not the regular zucchini that we call kishu'im today). Melafefonos — there are opinions that it means cucumber, others say it means pepper. They are some vegetables that in the Rambam's times were well-known, but not our everyday fruits.

3) "Eat them first before eating" — what does "before eating" mean? This means before the meal — like an appetizer/entrée. One shouldn't, for example, have chicken with potato with a side of squash — the side vegetable should be eaten earlier, not together.

4) "Wait a bit until it leaves the upper digestive tract": There are two parts of the digestive system — the upper part (beis habeli'ah/upper intestine) and the further part. One should wait until the laxative food leaves the upper part, and only then continue eating.

5) Connection to not drinking while eating: This aligns with the earlier rule that one shouldn't drink right before eating — one should drink a bit earlier. The laxative foods also have a lot of moisture in them. But it's noted that this is perhaps a separate topic — because the Rambam didn't say one should drink before eating, he only said not during eating.

The Rambam's words: "Things that constipate the bowels, such as pomegranates, apples, carobs... one eats them immediately after the meal, but should not eat too much of them."

The simple meaning: Things that tighten/constipate the bowels (constipating foods) — like pomegranates, apples, carobs, quinces — should be eaten right after eating, but not too much.

Insights and Explanations:

1) The order: First one opens up the intestines with laxatives (before eating), and then one closes them with constipating foods (after eating). This is a logical order — first open, then eat, then close.

2) "Immediately after the meal" — before or after? "Immediately" here means right after eating — it closes, it seals off the eating process.

3) Identification of fruits: It's a difficult topic what exactly each fruit means: "chavushim" — not well-known; "kristomilin" — it's said that this means what we call "agasim" (pears), but others say that "agasim" is a "shiz

af" (prune/plum). Prune is specifically known as a laxative, not a constipating food — which makes it more complicated. The common denominator of the constipating foods is that they are acidic/bitter/dry fruits, the opposite of the wet laxatives.

4) "But should not eat too much of them": One shouldn't eat too much of the constipating foods — just enough to close, no more.

Halachah 4 (continued): Order of Meat Foods — Lighter Ones First

The Rambam's words: "When a person wants to eat poultry and animal meat together, he eats the poultry first... And similarly with eggs and poultry, he eats the eggs first. With small animal meat and large animal meat, he eats the small animal meat first. One should always put the lighter food first and the heavier food after."

The simple meaning: When one eats different types of meat, one should always start with the lighter one (easier to digest) and finish with the heavier one. Eggs before chicken, chicken before animal meat, small animal meat before large animal meat.

Insights and Explanations:

The principle: "One should always put the lighter food first and the heavier food after" — the body should start becoming active in digestion with lighter foods, and only then bring in heavier ones. This is a general principle that runs through the entire order of eating.

Halachah 4 (continued): Eating According to the Weather — Summer and Winter

The Rambam's words: "In the summer one eats cooling foods, and should not have too many spices, and eats vinegar. In the winter one eats warming foods, and increases spices, and eats a bit of mustard and asafoetida."

The simple meaning: In summer one should eat cold/cooling foods, few spices, and vinegar (which cools down). In winter one should eat warm foods, more spices, mustard and asafoetida (sharp things) — because sharp things warm up the body from the inside.

Insights and Explanations:

1) Is this relevant today with air conditioning? The Rambam speaks of a situation where the body is truly overheated from a whole day of heat — then one should cool down from the inside through cold foods. But today, when one sits all day in air conditioning, this is perhaps not as relevant — "at least" for someone who doesn't work outdoors. For children who run around outside, it's perhaps still relevant.

2) Perhaps the Rambam wouldn't have wanted people sitting all day in air conditioning: The Rambam speaks of people who sweat a bit during the day — the body was made to be hot in summer and cold in winter. Perhaps the air-conditioned lifestyle itself is not ideal according to the Rambam's approach.

3) Adjusting according to the climate: One should adjust eating according to the climate — in a hot place one should eat cold things, and vice versa. It's not a gezeiras hakasuv (scriptural decree), it depends on the actual reality.

4) Historical context — winter foods: In the old days, in winter, people ate pickled foods with spices — because if one wanted to have apples in winter, one had to pickle them. This naturally aligned with the Rambam's advice. Today, baruch Hashem, one has all foods the entire year — but the Rambam's principle remains: "and in this way one proceeds."

Halachah 10: Foods That Are "Exceedingly Bad" — Never Eat Them

The Rambam's words: "There are foods that are exceedingly bad, and it is fitting for a person never to eat them. Such as large salted aged fish, aged salted cheese, truffles and mushrooms, aged salted meat, unfermented wine, a cooked dish that has sat until its smell has dissipated, and similarly any food that smells bad or is exceedingly bitter — these are like poison to the body."

The simple meaning: The Rambam lists foods that are permanently bad for the body — large salted aged fish, old salted cheese, mushrooms, old salted meat, unfermented wine, spoiled cooked foods, and anything that smells bad or is very bitter — this is like poison for the body.

Insights and Explanations:

1) The key word is "aged" (old): The Rambam doesn't mean a specific type of fish, but rather **the way it's prepared** — fish that one eats by salting them for a long time. All three categories — fish, cheese, meat — have the same problem: they are **old** and **salted**. The main deficiency is the preservation process of old times, where things weren't well preserved like today with modern bacteria control.

2) "Large fish" — why large fish? Small fish everyone could catch in their local pond, but **large fish were brought**

from far away, and they weren't fresh. That's a practical reason why large fish were worse.

3) "Truffles and mushrooms" — mushrooms: Today many mushrooms are counted among healthy foods, but the Rambam speaks of **dangerous/risky mushrooms** — because in the old days a person would grab mushrooms outdoors and it was dangerous (poisonous varieties). Today one buys a specific type in the store, but in those days it was a real danger. The Rambam says one should only take one type of mushroom with "knowledgeable witnesses" (testimony from experts).

4) "Unfermented wine" (grape juice): The Rambam says that wine that hasn't yet fermented is bad. [Digression: a humorous remark — "grape juice is an aspect of Reform Judaism" — because in the old days there was no grape juice, only wine.]

5) "A cooked dish that sat until its smell dissipated" — spoiled things: There were no refrigerators back then, so food that sat around became spoiled.

6) [Digression: Gewines (aged/fermented foods)] — There are people who are lenient about gewines (aged/fermented foods) that have a strong smell — this falls into the Rambam's category of old, bad-smelling foods.

Halachah 10 (continued): Foods That Are "Bad" But Not As Bad — Eat "A Little Bit"

The Rambam's words: "There are foods that are bad, but not like the first ones... It is fitting for a person not to eat from them except a little, and not to accustom himself to eat foods from them, or to eat such foods constantly. Such as large fish, cheese, milk that has sat twenty-four hours after milking, meat of large oxen and large goats, beans, lentils, safflower, barley bread, matzah bread, cabbage, leeks, onions, garlic, mustard, and radish... All these are bad foods. It is not fitting for a person to eat from these except a very little in the winter. And in the summer he should not eat from them at all."

The simple meaning: A second category of foods — bad, but not as bad as the first list. From these one may eat **occasionally, little in quantity and little in frequency**. In winter one may eat, in summer one should not eat at all.

Insights and Explanations:

1) The Rambam's "box" system: The Rambam's categorization is **very halachic and practical** — he creates clear "boxes": (1) never eat, (2) occasionally a little, (3) even less bad. This is **better than today's nutrition** which just says "eat three things every day" without such fine resolution.

2) "A very little" — double limitation: The Rambam means **both little in quantity and little in frequency** — "once in a while one may have a little of it."

3) Specific foods:

- **"Large fish"** — we don't know exactly which fish.

- **"Milk that sat twenty-four hours"** — old milk, presumably because in those days it wasn't well pasteurized.

- **"Meat of large oxen and large goats"** — meat from large oxen and large goats.

- **"Beans, lentils, and safflower"** — types of beans/lentils. The Rambam says that **these one should never eat** — not

in summer and not in winter.

- **"Barley bread"** — bread from barley.

- **"Matzah bread"** — bread that wasn't baked very well. **In general, the Rambam says one should not eat matzos** (except on Pesach, of course).

- **"Cabbage"** — cabbage.

- **"Leeks, onions, and garlic" — onions and garlic:** Question: in **many other sources** it says that garlic is a very healthy food! Answer: The Rambam doesn't mean one should eat **an entire meal** of garlic — garlic as a **spice, a little bit** is good, but the Rambam didn't want that in **every meal** there should be garlic. [Digression: "When the Jews left Egypt... they longed for the onions and the leeks and the garlic of Egypt" — they didn't know the Rambam.]

- **"Mustard"** — mustard. **"Radish"** — radish.

- **"Squash/gourd" (delu'im):** An exception — "one eats from them a little in the summer" — only a little in summer.

4) Difficulty identifying the foods: Many of these foods are hard to identify because (a) it's not lashon hakodesh, (b) the commentators give Latin names that aren't the names used in the store, (c) many of these foods are not commonly found in our kitchen.

Halachah 10 (continued): Foods That Are "Bad" But Even Less Bad — Don't Eat Too Much

The Rambam's words: "There are foods that are bad [but not as bad]... such as waterfowl, small young pigeons, dates, bread fried in oil, or bread kneaded with oil, fine flour that has been sifted thoroughly until no trace of bran remains, fish brine and fish sauce... One should not eat too much of these."

The simple meaning: A third category — foods that are bad but not as bad as the previous ones. One should not eat **too much** of them.

Insights and Explanations:

1) Specific foods:

- **"Waterfowl"** — ducks (duck/waterfowl).

- **"Small young pigeons"** — small birds (young pigeons/squab).

- **"Dates"** — dates — very sweet.

- **"Bread fried in oil" and "bread kneaded with oil":** Two reasons why bread can be bad — (1) because it's **fried** in oil, (2) because one **kneads** it with oil. This sounds like "those cookies, those pastries."

- **"Fine flour sifted thoroughly until no trace of bran remains" — white flour:** An **important point** — white flour from which all the bran has been completely removed is bad, **because the bran helps with elimination** (for digestion).

- **"Fish brine and fish sauce"** — fish sauces/brine.

2) The entire list — "things that are a bit too good": The Rambam's third category is actually **things that are too fine/too rich** — too sweet (dates), too fatty (bread with oil), too refined (white flour). This isn't "bad" in the sense of spoiled, but "bad" because it's **too good**.

Halachah 10 (continued): Tree Fruits — One Should Not Eat Too Much Fruit

The Rambam's words: "A person should always eat tree fruits... but one should not eat too much of them, even when they are dry, and certainly when they are fresh. But before they are fully ripe, they are like swords to the body."

The simple meaning: One should not eat too much fruit from trees. Even dried fruit should only be eaten a little, and fresh wet fruit — even less. Fruit that is not yet fully ripe is like swords for the body.

Insights and Explanations:

1) Carobs are always bad: "And similarly, carobs are always bad" — carobs are almost never good for people, except in an emergency situation.

2) Today's people don't agree with the Rambam: This is one of the halachos where today's people write against the Rambam. The Yad Peshutah brings that the Rambam took it from the physicians of his time. But it's not clear whether this still holds true today.

3) The reality has changed: Our fruits have already gone through many years of chemical manipulation of seeds, and it could be that the fruits are today better or worse.

4) The Rambam speaks of specific types of fruit — what the Sages call "tree fruits" — which have in them a certain bitterness.

Halachah 10 (continued): Figs, Grapes, Almonds — Always Good

The Rambam's words: "Figs, grapes, and almonds are always good, whether fresh or dry, and a person may eat from them as much as he needs."

The simple meaning: Figs, grapes, and almonds are always healthy — whether fresh or dry — and one can eat from them as much as one needs.

Insights and Explanations:

1) These three fruits are not included in the earlier warning against tree fruits. They are better than all other fruits.

2) Even the good fruits should not be the main food — one should not eat "mainly" fruit.

Halachah 10 (continued): Honey and Wine — Good for the Elderly, Bad for Children

The Rambam's words: "Honey and wine are bad for children and good for the elderly, especially in the winter."

The simple meaning: Honey and wine are not good for children, but are good for older people, especially in winter.

Insights and Explanations:

It's connected to the verse about "comfort" — that wine and honey give comfort and warmth to older people.

Halachah 10 (continued): Eat Less in Summer Than in Winter

The Rambam's words: "A person needs to eat in the summer two-thirds of what he eats in the winter."

The simple meaning: In summer a person should eat two-thirds of what he eats in winter.

Insights and Explanations:

1) Why less in summer? In winter the body needs more warmth, therefore one needs to eat more. In summer one becomes satiated more quickly.

2) Question from modern times: Today people are much more physically active in summer — which should presumably mean one needs to eat more in summer. But the Rambam says the opposite. When one is physically active the body processes the food more, but the Rambam's rule remains.

3) How does this fit with the earlier rule? The Rambam earlier said one should stop eating a quarter before becoming satiated. Now he says in summer one should eat two-thirds of winter. These are **two separate rules:** (1) The rule of stopping a quarter before satiation — that's a rule for every meal; (2) The rule of two-thirds in summer — that's a rule about the total quantum of food between the seasons of the year.

Halachah 11: "This One Is a Gibor" — One Who Conquers His Desire

The Rambam's words: "A person who is wise and conquers his desire, does not follow after his appetite, and does not eat from any of the mentioned [bad foods] at all unless he needs them for medicinal purposes — this one is a gibor (mighty person)."

The simple meaning: A wise person who restrains his yetzer (= appetite for sweet/rich things) and doesn't eat from all the listed bad foods except for medicinal purposes — he is a gibor.

Insights and Explanations:

1) "Wise" and "conquers his desire" — two virtues: The Rambam doesn't just say he's a **tzaddik**, but he's a **chacham** — because he's a **smart Jew** who doesn't fool himself for the bit of pleasure from the craving. He's **wise** because he understands, and he **conquers his desire** because he acts accordingly.

2) "This one is a gibor" — mighty in body and mighty in soul: The person becomes a **gibor in soul** (he hasn't lost his ability to conquer his desire), and then he also becomes a **gibor in body** — he'll be strong, he'll be healthy. The Rambam connects here the mussar concept of "Who is mighty? He who conquers his desire" (Avos 4:1) with the practical result of good health.

3) "Happy with his portion": He rejoices with the food that is healthy for him — he doesn't need more.

4) "Unless he needs them for medicinal purposes": The Rambam leaves open that for **medicinal purposes** one may eat even from the bad things.

5) The Rambam's practical approach: The Rambam is **very practical** — he doesn't say everything is forbidden, but gives clear categories: (1) never, (2) occasionally a little, (3) not too much. "Nobody is going to be harmed [by this]" — it's not unrealistic.

Halachah 12: Loose Bowels — A Great Principle in Medicine

The Rambam's words: "A person should always strive that his bowels be loose all his days... and he should be close to having loose stools. And this is a great principle in medicine: whenever the stool is withheld or comes out with difficulty, bad illnesses come."

The simple meaning: A person should always make sure that his intestines are soft — he should be able to go easily. This is a "great principle in medicine" — when elimination is withheld or comes out with difficulty, bad illnesses come.

Insights and Explanations:

1) Advice for a young person with constipation: "If he is a young man, he should eat salted vegetables that are lightly boiled, seasoned with oil and spices and broth every morning, and drink the water they were boiled in." — He should eat "meluchim" (a specific type of vegetables, not "salty things") that are lightly cooked (shelukim), with oil and spices, every morning, and drink the water from the cooking.

2) Disagreement among commentators on "shelukim": One of the commentators says that "shelukim" doesn't mean cooked with spices, but cooked plain in water. But the meluchim themselves should be eaten with oil or with salt, without bread.

3) "Or he should drink the water of boiled beets or cabbage with oil and salt": An apparent contradiction — the Rambam earlier said that cabbage is not good to eat, and here he brings it as a remedy. This is not a contradiction — the Rambam said it's a remedy, not a regular food.

4) Why does this help? Vegetables have a lot of fiber (sivim), which helps the digestive system.

5) Advice for an older person: "If he is elderly, he should drink honey dissolved in warm water in the morning, wait about four hours, and then eat his meal." — He should drink honey with warm water in the morning, wait four hours, and then eat his meal. This aligns with the earlier principle that honey is good for older people.

6) Three to four days: "He should do this day after day for three or four days until his bowels become loose" — one should do this three to four days in a row until the intestines become soft.

Halachah 13: The Great Principle — Exercise, Not Too Much Eating, Loose Bowels

The Rambam's words: "Another principle they stated regarding bodily health: As long as a person exercises and exerts himself greatly, does not eat to satiation, and his bowels are loose — no illness will come upon him and his strength will increase, even if he eats bad foods."

The simple meaning: When a person combines three things — (1) he exercises a lot, (2) he doesn't eat until he's completely satiated, (3) his bowels are loose — no illness comes upon him and his strength increases, even if he ate bad foods.

Insights and Explanations:

The three principles are more important than specific foods: Someone who is very careful not to eat onions because "some tzaddik said so" should know that even more important are the three principles: exercise, not eating too much, and loose bowels. This is the essence of health.

Halachah 13 (continued): The Opposite — Sitting, Holding In, Not Exercising

The Rambam's words: "And anyone who sits securely and does not exercise, or one who withholds his bodily needs, or one whose bowels are hard — even if he eats good foods and guards himself according to medicine, all his days will be painful and his strength will be weak."

The simple meaning: The opposite — someone who sits quietly without exercise, or holds himself back from going to the bathroom, or whose intestines are hard — even if he eats the best foods — will always have suffering and his strength will be weak.

Insights and Explanations:

1) "Sits securely" — not living actively: "Sits securely" means someone who doesn't live actively — he sits quietly, he doesn't move.

2) "Withholds his bodily needs" — a danger: Someone who holds himself back from going to the bathroom is in danger.

Halachah 14: Overeating — Poison

The Rambam's words: "Overeating is like poison to every person's body, and it is the root of all illnesses. Most illnesses that come upon a person are either from bad foods, or because he fills his belly and eats excessively, even from good foods."

The simple meaning: Overeating is like poison for every person, and it is the root of all illnesses. Most illnesses come from two causes: (1) bad foods, or (2) eating too much, even of good foods.

Insights and Explanations:

1) What does "overeating" mean? It can mean eating quickly without chewing, but primarily it means eating too much. It's a lashon chachamim (expression of the Sages). "Today they call it 'eating'" — meaning, what people call normal "eating" is actually already "overeating."

2) Even when one stopped before being satiated: It could be that one stopped a quarter before being satiated (as the Rambam instructed earlier), but the very manner of eating — quickly, without chewing, coarsely — is also overeating.

Halachah 14 (continued): The Verse "He Who Guards His Mouth and Tongue"

The Rambam's words: "This is what Solomon said in his wisdom: 'He who guards his mouth and tongue guards his soul from troubles.' Meaning, guards his mouth — from eating bad food or from eating to satiation, and his tongue — from speaking except what is necessary."

The simple meaning: King Solomon's verse is interpreted: "guards his mouth" — guards his mouth from bad foods or from eating until fully satiated; "and his tongue" — guards his tongue from speaking more than necessary.

Insights and Explanations:

1) The mouth is the source of most problems: A beautiful parallel: the mouth is the source of most problems — both physically (eating too much or bad foods) and socially (talking too much or saying bad things). This connects the

Rambam's laws of bodily health back to the earlier chapters about character traits, where he spoke strongly about not talking too much.

2) "Troubles of his soul" — double meaning: "His soul" here doesn't necessarily mean the neshamah, but also the body. "Troubles of his soul" means both troubles for his body (illnesses from overeating) and social troubles (enemies, being looked at as a fool — from talking too much).

3) Connection between eating and speaking: Just as the Rambam in earlier chapters strongly warned that one should not talk too much (including lashon hara, idle talk), so too with eating — either one eats too much, or one eats bad foods. With speaking — either one speaks too much, or one speaks bad things.

Halachah 15: The Way of Bathing — How to Wash Oneself

The Rambam's words: "The way of bathing: a person should enter the bathhouse once every seven days. He should not enter close to eating or when he is hungry, but when the food begins to digest. He washes his entire body in hot water that doesn't scald the body, and his head alone in hot water that would scald the body. Then he washes his body in lukewarm water, then in water even more lukewarm than the first, until he washes in cold water. He should not pour lukewarm or cold water over his head."

The simple meaning: One should go to the bathhouse once a week. Not right after eating and not when hungry, but when the food begins to be digested. One washes the entire body with hot water (not so hot that it scalds), but the head may be washed with even hotter water. Then one goes down in stages — lukewarm, cooler, until cold. But on the head one should not pour lukewarm or cold water.

Insights and Explanations:

1) Bathhouse vs. shower: A "bathhouse" is not a simple shower. A bathhouse is an entire procedure — one devotes time, one goes through hot and cold water. Essentially it's a mikveh-type experience.

2) Why the head may be hotter: The simple reason is because the head has hair, and one needs hotter water to wash through the hair. "His head" means his hair — perhaps the beard or the hair of the head. This explains why one may use hotter water on the head (because one is washing the hair), but one should not pour cold or lukewarm water on the head (because that would be bad for the head itself).

3) The gradual descent to cold: One should not suddenly jump to cold water — that's a "shock to the body." Only gradually arrive at cold.

4) Against the "cold plunge" trend: The Rambam is presumably not a fan of the modern "ice bucket" / "cold plunge." He says that in winter one should not wash with cold water. But "presumably today the reality is different" — basically the Rambam is talking about not becoming frozen.

5) When to go to the bathhouse: One should only go when the body sweats and one feels weakened from work — "when he sweats and his whole body is fatigued."

Halachah 15 (continued): Checking Oneself — Going to the Bathroom Ten Times a Day

The Rambam's words: "A person checks himself before entering the bathhouse and after leaving... before eating and after eating... before marital relations and after... before exerting himself and exercising and after... before sleeping and when he wakes up. In total, ten times a day."

The simple meaning: A person should check whether he needs to go to the bathroom before and after five things: bathhouse, eating, marital relations, exertion/exercise, and sleep — together ten times a day.

Insights and Explanations:

1) Not necessarily all ten every day: Because not every day does one go to the bathhouse, and not every day are there marital relations — so not all ten times are relevant every day. But the principle is that with each of the five activities, one should check before and after.

2) The reason: When one exercises or goes to the bathhouse, it can impede (hold back) the body from elimination, or it can "push back" and have a reverse effect on the body. Therefore, one should take care of the need beforehand.

Halachah 15 (continued): After Leaving the Bathhouse

The Rambam's words: "When a person leaves the bathhouse, he should put on his clothes and cover his head in the outer room, so that he doesn't suddenly catch cold... Even in the summer one must be careful not to leave quickly. He should wait after leaving until his soul settles and his body rests and the heat dissipates, and then eat. And if he sleeps a little after leaving the bathhouse before eating, this is very good."

The simple meaning: After leaving the bathhouse, one should get dressed and cover one's head while still inside, not go straight outside — even in summer, because the air outside is cooler than in the bathhouse. One should wait until the body calms down, only then eat. And if one sleeps a little after the bathhouse before eating — that is "very good."

Insights and Explanations:

Sleeping after the bathhouse vs. not sleeping during the day: An apparent contradiction — earlier the Rambam said one should not sleep during the day, but here he allows sleeping after the bathhouse. The resolution is that after such a heavy procedure as the bathhouse, it's different — the body needs to rest.

Halachah 15 (continued): Not Drinking Cold Water After the Bathhouse

The Rambam's words: "A person should not drink cold water when he leaves the bathhouse, and it goes without saying not to drink in the bathhouse. If he is thirsty when he leaves and cannot restrain himself, he should mix the water with wine or honey and drink."

The simple meaning: One should not drink cold water when coming out of the bathhouse, and certainly not in the bathhouse itself. If one is very thirsty, one should mix the water with wine or honey.

Insights and Explanations:

The body is "mixed up" — cold on the inside and hot on the outside — and cold water can cause harm.

Halachah 15 (continued): Anointing with Oil

The Rambam's words: "If one anoints and oils oneself in the bathhouse in the winter after rinsing, this is good."

The simple meaning: If one rubs oil on one's body in the bathhouse in winter after rinsing off — that is good.

Halachah 16: Bloodletting

The Rambam's words: "A person should not accustom himself to let blood constantly, and should not let blood unless he needs it very much. He should not let blood in the summer or in the winter, but only in the days of Nissan and a little in the days of Tishrei. After age fifty, he should not let blood at all. A person should not let blood and enter the bathhouse on the same day. Similarly, he should not let blood and go on a journey, nor on the day he returns from a journey. He should eat and drink less than usual on the day of bloodletting. He should rest on the day of bloodletting and not toil or exercise."

The simple meaning: One should not let blood too often — only when one needs it very much. Only twice a year: in Nissan and a little in Tishrei. After age 50 — not at all. On the same day as bloodletting, one should not go to the bathhouse, not set out on a journey, not return from a journey. One should eat and drink less than usual, rest, and not work hard.

Insights and Explanations:

1) The Rambam also wasn't a "huge fan": The Rambam himself was not a big proponent of bloodletting — he writes it with limitations.

2) Nissan and Tishrei — a parallel to today's blood donations: It's humorously noted that today one can be "yotzei" (fulfill) the two seasons by giving blood (blood donation).

3) The reason for not going to the bathhouse or on a journey: Bloodletting takes away strength, and one must be careful that the body doesn't weaken further.

4) Contradiction with the Gemara: In the Gemara there was a custom to eat a big meal after bloodletting — in order to "replenish" the blood. The Rambam, however, says one should eat less. The Rambam doesn't mean one should eat nothing — just not a big meal. One eats something to "recover a bit of strength," but doesn't overdo it. (This is compared to today's blood donation, where one receives something to eat right afterward.)

Halachos 17-18: Marital Relations — Seed

The Rambam's words: "Seed is the strength of the body and its life and the light of its eyes. Whenever it is emitted excessively, the body deteriorates, its strength is depleted, and its life is lost. This is what Solomon said in his wisdom: 'Do not give your strength to women, nor your ways to those who destroy kings' (Mishlei 31:3)."

The simple meaning: Seed is the strength of the body, its life, and the light of its eyes. The more it is emitted excessively, the body becomes exhausted, its strength is depleted, and its life is lost.

Insights and Explanations:

1) Connection to an earlier halachah: In an earlier chapter, the Rambam already said "one should not emit seed unless one needs to emit seed" — there is a certain measure that needs to come out, but not too much.

****2) "That which destroys**

kings":** The verse is interpreted that "your ways" (derachecha) should not be "lemachos melachin" — things that destroy kings. The Rambam brings this verse specifically because a king has more opportunity to overindulge — he can have a thousand wives like Solomon. For a normal person with one wife, this is less relevant.

3) Historical context: The Rambam lived in Arab lands where there was a custom of multiple wives. He even wrote a letter (a medical instruction) for one of the sultans who had a thousand wives.

Halachah 18 (continued): The Terrible Consequences of "Anyone Who Is Foolish in Relations"

The Rambam's words: "Anyone who is foolish in relations — old age leaps upon him, his strength weakens, his eyes grow dim, a bad smell emanates from his mouth and armpits, the hair of his head, eyebrows, and eyelashes falls out, while the hair of his beard, armpits, and legs grows excessively, his teeth fall out, and many other pains besides these come upon him."

The simple meaning: Someone who wastes himself with relations — old age leaps upon him, his strength becomes weak, his eyes grow dim, a bad smell comes from his mouth and underarms, the hair of his head, eyebrows, and eyelashes falls out, but conversely — the beard, armpit, and leg hair grows excessively, teeth fall out, and many other pains.

Insights and Explanations:

1) "Shoteh" doesn't mean a fool: "Kol hashoteh bevi'ah" doesn't mean he's a fool — it's an expression of wastefulness (he does it too often, he wastes his strength).

2) "One in a thousand": "The wise physicians said: one in a thousand dies from other illnesses, and a thousand from excessive relations." This is presumably a guzma (exaggeration), because the Rambam himself said earlier that most illnesses have to do with eating. Presumably, the people who die from "excessive relations" are also not "terribly abstemious regarding eating" — so it goes together.

3) Not a young married man: The Rambam is not talking about a normal young married man who conducts himself as he should "because he has no choice" — he's talking about something in exaggeration, about a situation like a king with a thousand wives.

Halachah 19: When and How — Marital Relations

The Rambam's words: "A person must be careful in this matter if he wants to live well. He should not engage in relations unless he finds his body healthy and very strong, and he has frequent involuntary

arousal, and he distracts himself to another matter and is still aroused... and he feels heaviness from his loins downward, as if the cords of the testicles are being pulled and his flesh is warm."

The simple meaning: The Rambam establishes clear signs for when the body truly requires relations: he should be healthy and strong, he should have involuntary arousal — even when he occupies himself with other things, he should feel a heaviness from his loins downward.

Insights and Explanations:

1) All of this is "from a medical perspective": The Rambam is not speaking here about hilchos onah (the mitzvah of marital harmony), but about what is healthy for the body. In hilchos onah there are other rules about when one must engage in relations, according to the mitzvah of onah. Here everything is only medicine.

2) A parable to matzah: Just as one may not eat matzah on Erev Pesach, but on Pesach itself one must eat — so too with relations, when one speaks only of medicine one says less, but when it's a mitzvah it's different.

Halachah 19 (continued): When One Should Not Engage in Relations

The Rambam's words: "One should not engage in relations standing or sitting, nor in the bathhouse, nor on the day one enters the bathhouse, nor on the day of bloodletting, nor on the day of setting out on a journey, nor on the day of returning from a journey, nor before them nor after them."

The simple meaning: One should not engage in relations standing or sitting, not in the bath, not on the day one goes to the bath, not on the day of bloodletting, not on the day one sets out on a journey, not on the day one returns from a journey.

Insights and Explanations:

Major question: The day of setting out on a journey vs. hilchos onah:

- **Question:** The Rambam in hilchos onah says there is a mitzvah of onah of "pokdah" on the day of setting out on a journey — one must "visit" one's wife before leaving. How does this fit with the Rambam here who says one should not engage in relations on the day of setting out on a journey?

- **Answer:** The Rambam indeed does not bring the halachah of relations on the day of setting out on a journey. Because according to the Rambam, "pokdah" **doesn't necessarily mean relations** — it means he should be close with her, talk to her, spend time with her. It's not necessarily the act of relations itself. **Rabbeinu Tam** also said this.

- **Another answer:** The Rambam speaks here **as a rule of medicine**, not as halachah. And "journey" can be many levels — here he speaks of such a journey where one walks on foot and exhausts oneself. One can't really ask such questions from medicine on halachah.

Halachah 20: "I Guarantee Him" — The Rambam's Guarantee

The Rambam's words: "Anyone who conducts himself in these ways that we have taught, I guarantee him that he will not become ill all his days until he grows

very old and dies, and he will not need a doctor, and his body will remain whole and intact all his days."

The simple meaning: Everyone who conducts himself according to all these ways that I have taught, I — the Rambam — take responsibility that he will not become sick his entire life, until he grows very old and dies. He will not need a doctor, and his body will remain whole.

Insights and Explanations:

1) "I guarantee him" — This is an **incredibly powerful expression**. The Rambam takes personal responsibility.

2) Question: How can the Rambam guarantee? What about cancer? — The Rambam gave himself **three escape clauses:**

1. **"Unless his body was bad from the beginning of its creation" —** if someone has a bad body from birth.

2. **"Or one who practiced bad habits from the beginning" —** if he conducted himself with bad habits before he started following the Rambam.

3. The Rambam is **not talking about cancer** — he's presumably talking about **the majority of illnesses that people bring upon themselves:** cholesterol, blood pressure, heart problems — illnesses that come from bad eating, little movement, etc.

Halachah 21: The Rules Are Only for Healthy People

The Rambam's words: "But all these ways that we have stated are only fitting for one who is healthy. But one who is ill, or one whose limb is ill, or one who has practiced bad habits for many years, each of them has other ways and practices according to his illness, as will be explained in the book of remedies."

The simple meaning: All the practices of this chapter are only for a healthy person. A sick person, or one who has a sick limb, or one who has conducted himself badly for years — for him there are other ways, according to his illness.

Insights and Explanations:

1) Parallel to the middle path from earlier chapters: Just as with character traits — the rule is the middle path, but as a remedy one sometimes needs to go to the extreme — so too here with the body: the rule is for healthy people, but a sick person needs different practices.

2) Interesting distinction: In earlier chapters (character traits), the Rambam **incorporated** the remedial path as part of the halachah (Chapters 1 and 2). **Here**, however, he says: I'm telling you **only** the halachah for healthy people — as if only Chapter 1 existed without Chapter 2. The remedy for the sick is not brought here.

"A Change in Routine Is the Beginning of Illness"

The Rambam's words: "And a change in routine is the beginning of illness."

The simple meaning: Changing one's lifestyle is the beginning of illness.

Insights and Explanations:

The Rambam explains why a sick person or one with bad habits can't simply start following the rules: **the change itself can be bad for him**. Someone who has conducted himself badly for years, and suddenly changes everything —

that itself can bring illness. One needs to find **another way** to solve the problem gradually.

Halachah 22: If One Doesn't Have a Doctor

The Rambam's words: "Any place that doesn't have a doctor, whether healthy or sick, it is not fitting for him to deviate from any of the ways we mentioned in this chapter, for each of them leads to a good outcome."

The simple meaning: If one has a doctor — one should go to the doctor and follow his advice. But if one doesn't have a doctor, whether healthy or sick, one should not deviate from the principles of this chapter, because ultimately they bring good.

Insights and Explanations:

1) A principle in working on character traits: This is also a principle in serving God in general — there are things that are good for everyone. Someone who has a rebbe, the rebbe would tell him more precisely what to do. But if one doesn't have a rebbe, doesn't have a doctor — then following the general things, **it usually works**.

2) A major inquiry among the Rishonim: There was a major inquiry among the Rishonim with the Rambam — **how much one can go with individual practices, how much it needs to be general rules**. The Rambam holds that it's very important to have a doctor who can tell you individually according to your situation. But the rules here are relevant for everyone — for most people always relevant, and for everyone relevant if he doesn't have something better. **It's better than knowing nothing**.

Halachah 23: Ten Things — A Torah Scholar Must Live in a City with a Doctor

The Rambam's words (source: Gemara Sanhedrin): "Any city that doesn't have these ten things, a Torah scholar is not permitted to live there."

The simple meaning: A city that doesn't have ten specific things, a Torah scholar may not live there.

Insights and Explanations:

1) The ten things:

1. **A doctor** — a physician. This is the main reason the Rambam brings this here — it fits the topic of medicine.

2. **An uman** — Rashi says: a bloodletter. Other commentators say: a mohel — a mohel and a bloodletter do "basically the

same job" — it's a cut. Not an artist. Perhaps rofeh = one who says how to be healthy, uman = a skilled healer who can cure illnesses — two separate functions.

3. A bathhouse

4. **A bathroom** — because one may not hold oneself back (connection to earlier halachos).

5. **Fresh water** — running water.

6. A synagogue

7. A children's teacher

8. **A scribe / sofer** — a writer who can make a contract, or write sacred texts, mezuzos, etc.

9. **A charity collector** — "gabbai" is from the word "goveh" — he collects the charity. Not just someone who goes after money, but **someone who makes sure to take money from those who need to give** — with power.

10. **A court that can administer lashes and imprisonment** — a beis din that has the power to give malkos and put people in prison.

2) Why does the Rambam bring this here?

- The main reason is about the **doctor** — it fits the topic of the entire chapter. A Torah scholar may not live in a city without a doctor.

- The word "rofeh" is the reason the Rambam **found** a place for this topic as an **actual halachah**. Although the content — that one needs access to a doctor — is not directly from this chapter's theme (health practices), because the word "rofeh" appears, it has a halachic place here.

- This is also an **introduction** to the next chapter, which deals with the Torah scholar and his practices.

General Conclusion of the Entire Chapter

The bottom line of the entire chapter is quite simple:

- Eat less

- More exercise

- More sleep

- Less marital relations if one becomes weak from it

- Be a "man" who is kove'a seudah — don't eat every food one comes across

It's hard to pasken from the Rambam in specifics, but the general rule is: **a person should keep the body in mind a bit, not wait until he gets sick. Listen to the body, don't overeat**. Today people eat a lot, much more than people used to eat, and **it's a very big problem**.

| Full Transcript

Rambam Hilchos De'os Chapter 4 — Bodily Health as Part of the Ways of God

Introduction: Bodily Health is Part of Serving God

Chavrusa A: We're learning today the Rambam, Hilchos De'os Chapter 4. We're going from learning the Torah of Rabbeinu Moshe ben Maimon to having a bit of an audience with Doctor Maimonides — chas v'shalom, it's the same person.

And the Rambam begins this chapter by saying that bodily health is a part of the Torah. We have separated it as if a

servant of God is busy with serving God, and the body is somewhat of a mundane thing that if one gets sick, one sometimes has to deal with. But the Rambam says that one must pay very strong attention to bodily health, because one cannot be a servant of God if the body is not whole. These things are very strongly connected.

That's why there was the introduction to connect that **"b'chol derachecha da'eihu"** (in all your ways, know Him) — that when one takes care of bodily health, it is also serving God.

Chavrusa B: Right, I mean this is literally the first line that he says here, right? That since this is a part of serving God, therefore one needs to know the halachos (laws) of it. I mean, in other places the Rambam says that all the mitzvos (commandments) in the Torah are made to ensure that the body should be healthy and the soul (nefesh) should be healthy.

Chavrusa A: Right, but there when he says body, he also means body, but also the nefesh.

Chavrusa B: What do you mean to say?

Chavrusa A: Mental, social.

Chavrusa B: Social, mental. With the interpersonal mitzvos (bein adam l'chaveiro) as they're called. Not necessarily literally bodily health, but bodily health too.

Discussion: Is Bodily Health Actually a Mitzvah?

Chavrusa A: It appears that it is a mitzvah. I always have a question, because in the Shemonah Perakim it sounds from the Rambam that it's not a mitzvah to be healthy, actual bodily health. Rather, what he calls health of the soul, the part that one could call "body."

Chavrusa B: But bodily health itself is not a mitzvah?

Chavrusa A: You're saying today that it is a mitzvah, or at least it's part of the ways of God (midarchei Hashem).

Chavrusa B: Perhaps it is indeed part of the mitzvah of "**v'halachta bidrachav**" (and you shall walk in His ways), which is "**b'chol derachecha da'eihu.**" But actually neglecting the body falls under the category of "**v'nishmartem me'od l'nafshoseichem**" (and you shall greatly guard your souls), which is a branch of suicide, of killing oneself, which is certainly a serious matter (davar chamur) according to the Rambam. But he means to say perhaps the extra precision — perhaps it's not exactly a mitzvah.

Discussion: What is the Source for the Mitzvah to Be Healthy?

Chavrusa A: Very good. It's interesting, because most people who make such signs that one should guard the body use the verse "**v'nishmartem me'od l'nafshoseichem,**" which the Rambam, I believe, doesn't bring that halachah at all.

There are those who hold that "**v'nishmartem**" — and one should not make idolatry (avodah zarah). It means guarding the soul, not guarding the body — guarding the neshamah, guarding the faith, the mind. Right? And even the Rambam who does have Hilchos Rotze'ach (Laws of Murder) about guarding life, they learned that it's a branch of murder, etc. — that is not the source for this.

Perhaps that is only when I know that it's actually like a danger. To be healthy is a different mitzvah. According to the Rambam, it's part of the ways of God (midarchei Hashem), it's a part of "**b'chol derachecha da'eihu.**" That's the source. If someone asks you, what is the source for being healthy? The source is "**b'chol derachecha da'eihu.**"

Structure of the Chapter

Chavrusa B: So let's learn what the first introduction is.

Chavrusa A: It's under the beginning of Hilchos De'os, but he has listed which mitzvos these are. It's not any of the mitzvos.

Chavrusa B: If anything, perhaps it's a branch of "**I'hidamos bidrachav**" (to emulate His ways)?

Chavrusa A: No, it doesn't appear that it's a continuation of what he said a minute earlier, "**b'chol derachecha da'eihu.**"

Chavrusa B: I saw in a sefer that it's a branch of "**v'asisa hayashar v'hatov**" (and you shall do what is right and good).

Chavrusa A: I saw that it's a branch. It's a general concept for which the Rambam didn't bring a specific verse of a mitzvah, but it's a concept that encompasses the entire Torah, and there are many branches from other mitzvos.

Bodily Health vs. Mental Health in This Chapter

Chavrusa B: So in the Rambam here, he's also not going to talk about — I mean, in other places the Rambam talks about what we call being in a good state of mind, being balanced, which means that a person should be able to be healthy psychologically. But here we're going to talk literally only about the body, the system of eating and drinking. I mentioned a bit there also sleeping, etc., which does have more to do with the mind being rested. But the Rambam speaks here very physically.

Chavrusa A: Mental health (bri'us hanefesh) in the Rambam would mean good character traits (middos tovos), right? What we call — he would perhaps call it health of the imagination (bri'us hadimyon), or I don't know exactly.

Halachah 1: Since Having a Healthy and Whole Body is Among the Ways of God

Chavrusa B: The Rambam says as follows: "**Ho'il v'heyos haguf bari v'shalem midarchei Hashem hu**" — since, the concept that a person's body should be healthy and whole and in completeness is among the ways of God, is among the ways of serving God. It's from the ways of, as he said, "**b'chol derachecha da'eihu**" — that if one does it with the intention to be healthy in order to be able to serve God, it is a part of serving God.

"**She'harei iy efshar she'yavin o yeida v'hu choleh**" — a person cannot understand God and know God when he is sick. It is a great and enormous wisdom, and it requires tremendous focus and tremendous understanding, and therefore the body needs to be healthy and the body should cooperate.

Therefore, "**tzarich adam l'harchik atzmo midvarim ha'ma'abdin es haguf**" — a person must distance himself from things that damage and ruin the body, "**ul'hanhig atzmo bidvarim hamavri'in v'hamachli'mim**" — that make healthy and make strong. Move away from things that are harmful to the body, and do things that are healthy for the body.

"**V'eilu hen**" — the Rambam is going to begin with various things, and here he goes into more detail.

Structure of the Chapter: General Principles and Specifics

Chavrusa A: The Rambam says as follows — "**I'olam lo yochal adam**" — the heading that R' Yitzchak made is "eating," first on the topic of eating — "**I'olam lo yochal adam ela k'she'hu ra'ev.**" A person should not eat before

he is hungry. Hunger is like what arouses the person that now is the time to eat. When a person eats because he sees food, or just because he thought about food, while his body hasn't yet asked for it, it's not right. I believe this is based on a Gemara, that one should only eat when one is hungry.

Chavrusa B: So let's try to... one can make an introduction, or one doesn't have to. There is, as in the Rambam, as you say, he says general principles — meaning how one eats, when one eats, and things that have to do with matters. Afterwards he goes into specific things — what to eat, how to eat, certain foods that the Rambam holds. Then he says things about other parts of the body — marital relations and sleep and... what else? Exercise, such things, bathhouse, bloodletting.

Discussion: Healthy Lifestyle, Not Remedies

Chavrusa A: The important thing is that all these things are not the remedies that we call listing out — he's going to say this at the end of the chapter. This is all about how to live healthy, this is part of the ways of serving God, it's part of being a person, not making yourself sick. Even avoiding — today's doctors deal with crises. But here we're talking about what is called a healthy lifestyle, what one goes to a nutritionist for, to a dietitian, how to live a healthy lifestyle. That's what the Rambam is talking about here.

The Rambam himself was also a doctor, and presumably as a doctor he also probably dealt more with illnesses. But besides that, he also taught people how to be healthy.

The Rambam's Medical Books

Chavrusa A: And the Rambam wrote several other books on health. There is a book by the Rambam called Pirkei Moshe, there is a book called Hanhagos HaBri'us, and there is a book, I believe, where the Rambam translates and explains the great physician of his time who was called Galen (Galinus), and the Rambam writes over his medical views.

But here the Rambam brings what is more of a summary and only the things that are relevant for every person.

Discussion: Sources in Chazal

Chavrusa B: And I believe that also here, very many of the things he brings here are things that are also brought in Chazal (the Sages).

Chavrusa A: The simple understanding is, as R' Yitzchak says, that he didn't bring it because it's found in Chazal, but for all these things, most of the things, the vast majority of the things, there are sources.

Chavrusa B: Yes, but let's say clearly — even if the source is found in the Gemara, most of the sources in the Gemara are also from a doctor. It doesn't matter. And therefore I think that most things here — meaning, that's why I made the introduction to divide — there are perhaps specific details that if you ask today's nutritionists, perhaps they won't agree, perhaps yes, I don't know, I'm not an expert. But it's certain that the general principles that the Rambam says, about when to eat and how to eat and so forth, are more or less things that one doesn't need any — they're not things that require a lot of research. One can look around in the world, and one can also see for oneself, that for most of the things the Rambam is

entirely correct, or perhaps all of them. It's basic human nature — not human nature, I mean bodily health.

Chavrusa A: Some of the things. There are many things that our parents wouldn't have eaten.

Chavrusa B: For example, what?

Chavrusa A: We'll see later in the course of the four chapters.

Discussion: General Advice vs. Specific Details — Relevance for Today

Chavrusa B: Okay, no, I'm talking about the general things, not the details. The general things are mostly very simple things.

Chavrusa A: It could indeed be that it's found in the Gemara too, because it is indeed simple. The Gemara doesn't say that it's obvious; the Gemara says that it's not obvious that one does it to fulfill a mitzvah. It's not a mitzvah.

Chavrusa B: It's not a mitzvah.

Chavrusa A: There is the concept of derech erez (proper conduct).

Chavrusa B: Exactly.

Chavrusa A: Derech erez. Or health. Health is a mitzvah. So it's a matter regardless of how much precise halachah there is to do this.

Chavrusa B: It's a good practice (hanhagah tova) that one should follow.

Halachah 2: A Person Should Only Eat When He Is Hungry

Chavrusa A: Okay, yes. So the first halachah is that one should not eat when one is not hungry.

Or another small thing I wanted to add, that today every so often different opinions come out, and it's very easy for a person to say, "Oh, this thing isn't relevant today." But that's not necessarily so, because something that people have believed — this is something R' Yitzchak holds strongly — what people have believed for very many years doesn't become nullified one day because one doctor said otherwise. And very many of the medical things change one day this way, one day that way.

And also, I mean this is certainly true that very many things are not relevant for every person. There are very many specific people who...

Chavrusa B: The Rambam is speaking for every person specifically. It could be that there is a person, an exception (yotzei dofen), for whom things are a bit different, or he's already a bit sick, so his solution is different. But the Rambam — the general things are certainly very important to remember forever. He's going to say this at the end of the chapter when we get there.

Halachah 2: Only Eat When You're Hungry

Chavrusa A: Right, so for example, what I can reinforce what you're saying further from myself, is that things that are basic things — for example, not eating unless you're hungry — there is no doctor today who says otherwise. Again, sometimes someone is sick, his system is broken, his hunger doesn't work, and the like. But this, for example, among us it's established with set times. Even one who has established set times, certain

fixed hours in the day — a day when he's not hungry, he should skip it. Or according to this, I mean there is no disagreement about this whatsoever, no doctor disagrees about this.

Chavrusa B: The truth is that today's doctors are mostly not involved in this. And so on — if someone has an illness, he should take an antibiotic — that's already not related to the Rambam. But the basic practices of health are certainly something where the experience of thousands of years is more or less the same.

Hunger as a G-dly Mechanism

Chavrusa B: Hunger is a mechanism that the Almighty placed in us to remind a person to eat, and if He doesn't remind him, the simple meaning is that he doesn't yet need to eat. This is very simple, common sense (seichel hayashar).

Chavrusa A: And as you said, this is for ordinary people. Let's say there is a certain small percentage of people who are very strongly otherwise, or a person who suffers from, I don't know, anorexia, one of the illnesses of eating too little — then all the rules are different, as the Rambam will later say that he's speaking in general terms.

So the Rambam says: "**L'olam lo yochal adam ela k'she'hu ra'ev, v'lo yishteh ela k'she'hu tzamei.**" One should only eat when he is hungry, and he should not drink except when he is thirsty.

The Modern Person Has Forgotten What Hunger Means

Chavrusa B: There's also the matter that today, when we've become accustomed to eating so much, one completely forgets what it means to feel hungry or thirsty. One has never given a chance for it to get there. Before one even dreamed of becoming hungry, one has already eaten.

Chavrusa A: That's true. Most — here it means truly most. In the old days, the few people didn't have excess, there wasn't so much processed food, there wasn't such easy food.

Hilchos De'os Chapter 4 (Continued) — Principles of Eating, Drinking, and Exertion

Halachah 2: "A Person Should Only Eat When He Is Hungry"

The Hunger Mechanism

Speaker 1: But the basic practices of health are certainly something where the experience of thousands of years is more or less the same. Hunger is a mechanism that the Almighty placed in us to remind a person to eat, and if He doesn't remind him, the simple meaning is that he doesn't yet need to eat. This is very simple common sense (seichel hayashar).

And as you said, this is for ordinary people. Let's say there is a certain small percentage of people who are very strongly otherwise, or a person who suffers from anorexia, one of the illnesses of eating too little — then all the rules are different, as the Rambam will later say that he's speaking in general terms.

The Rambam's Principle: Eat When Hungry, Drink When Thirsty

So the Rambam says: "**Lo yochal adam ela k'she'hu ra'ev, v'lo yishteh ela k'she'hu tzamei.**" A person should only eat when he is hungry, and he should not drink except when he is thirsty.

There's also the matter that today, when we've become accustomed to eating so much, one completely forgets what it means to feel hungry or thirsty. One has never given a chance for it to get there. Before one even began to become hungry, one has already eaten. That's true.

"Ra'ev" (hungry) here means truly hungry. In the old days when people didn't have excess, there wasn't so much processed food, there wasn't so much easy food, it was literally that one felt hungry. I mean, when a person is hungry, then certain changes occur in his body — the body uses from the stored fat. It's very healthy for a person to sometimes experience hunger and only then eat.

Regarding Drinking

"**V'lo yishteh ela k'she'hu tzamei.**" I mean also, the Rambam will later say that even water one should not drink more than what is needed. Today, for example, there is a lot of talk about drinking a lot of water. There are those who say that because we eat so many heavy foods, foods that are processed and so forth, perhaps today one does indeed need a bit more water, because water helps the body flush out unhealthy things.

But the Rambam is speaking about a general diet — one should only drink when one is thirsty. And regarding thirst, you know, we often don't catch it. Many times a person is thirsty and he doesn't catch it, because he's so accustomed to being thirsty, he stuffs himself for example, or certain things. If one gets accustomed to it, one catches it.

Halachah 2 (Continued): "One Should Not Delay Relieving Oneself Even a Single Moment"

The Principle of Not Holding Back

Okay, another thing: "**V'al yasheh nekavav afilu rega echad.**" One should not hold back from relieving oneself even a short time. I don't believe that "rega echad" (a single moment) means literally, because there is also a mitzvah of "v'hayah machanecha kadosh" (and your camp shall be holy), that there should always be cleanliness, that a person should not have excess. But one should not be dismissive about it, because when the body says one needs to go, the simple meaning is that one needs to go.

The Rambam does not bring that there should be a prohibition of *bal teshaktzu* (do not make yourself repulsive), or as it states in other places.

Speaker 2: It's not there?

Speaker 1: Perhaps in another place. There is a place where he discusses *bal teshaktzu*, I recall, or about the mitzvah of *v'yatzasa* (and you shall go out), which mentions this. Here we're speaking from the perspective of health. There can be many things here that relate to halachos, to prohibitions. But here we're speaking from the perspective of health, and this also has to do with eating, I believe. Because what one eats that one doesn't need to eat, comes out. That is indeed a part of the laws of eating. Yes.

Explanation of "L'hasech es Raglav"

The Rambam says: "**Ela kol z'man she'tzarich l'hashtin o l'hasech es raglav**" — *l'hasech es raglav* I believe is a euphemism (lashon nekiyah) for number two. Because, and what is this? *L'hasech* means to cover. It states in other places, the Rambam discusses how to conduct oneself with

proper manners (*derech erez*) in the bathroom — not here, perhaps later, not in this chapter.

So the halachah there says that when one goes out, one should cover one's feet. Even when one needs to go out, one should remain refined. *L'hasech es raglav* means to cover the feet. Indeed, even when one needs to sit down, naturally the body is more or less covered. *L'hasech es raglav* means when one covers the feet in order to go out in a dignified manner.

Explanation of "Ya'amod Miyad"

So whether when one needs to go out, what should one do? **"Ya'amod miyad"** — one should stop what one is doing. "Ya'amod miyad" means because of — "ya'amod miyad" means stop. Yes, "ya'amod miyad" means he should stop what he's in the middle of doing and he should attend to his body.

The Connection: Eating and Going Out — Listening to the Body

Okay, this is about when one should eat and when one should do the second step of eating, which is going out. Both things — basically the Rambam is saying a very simple thing: your body tells you what to do. Don't go out when, I don't know, before davening you have to squeeze yourself. No, let... I don't mean to dismiss preparations before davening, but I mean to say, and don't eat when — because now it's dinner time. Eat when you're hungry, and go out when the body demands it. Both things — listening to the body, listening to the body.

Halachah 3: "A Person Should Not Eat Until His Stomach Is Full"

How Much to Eat — A Quarter Less Than Full

Okay, now we come to how much to eat. One more thing — how much should one eat? The Rambam says: **"Lo yochal adam ad she'tismalei kreiso"** — until his belly becomes filled, when he feels that nothing more can go in, then one should stop eating. **"Ela yifchos k'mo reviv'a mi'svi'aso."** This is also, I believe, based on a Gemara — I believe it's in Tractate Shabbos. One should eat less, stop eating a quarter of how much one is fully satiated. A person should calculate that he could still push in this much and that much — a quarter less than how much he could push in, he should already stop eating.

Discussion: How Does One Calculate the "Quarter"?

Speaker 2: Yes. Do you know how one calculates this, the quarter? What does he mean?

Speaker 1: Ah, as it would be, as if when he... he knows how much he can still push in, how much he has once managed to push in. When he's at the point where he's already eaten challah, fish, with dips, with this, he knows he can still go until after the cholent and after the dessert.

Speaker 2: What — does he want to calculate how much a quarter of the meal is?

Speaker 1: I mean simply, I mean... simply it means simply, yes, a quarter of how much he is fully satiated.

Speaker 2: I hear, it's a bit hard to figure out.

Speaker 1: Okay. Yes. Okay, we'll leave that.

Halachah 3 (continued): "And One Should Not Drink Water During the Meal"

Not Drinking Water in the Middle of Eating

He continues: **"V'lo yishteh mayim b'soch ha'mazon"** — one should not drink water in the middle of eating — **"ela me'at mayim u'mazug b'yayin."**

I believe there are people who think that constantly drinking is always a good thing. But I've seen it explained that in the body there are certain enzymes, juices that is, certain chemicals that the body puts into the food to help the body digest the food. When one drinks a lot of water, the things that the body puts in — the juice, the juice, whatever it is — certain things that the body sends into the food to help the food get broken down, don't work properly.

For example, one eats something heavy, one eats meat — it needs to be broken down into small pieces so the body can then distribute it — a part of it should go into the blood and into all parts of the body. So when one drinks a lot of water, the things that the body puts in become so diluted, and the things don't get properly digested.

When May One Drink?

The Rambam says next: **"U'ch'she'yaschil ha'mazon l'his'akeil b'mei'av"** — when the food begins to be broken down in the body, when the body has already digested the food, then one may drink more — **"shoseh mah she'hu tzarich lishtos."**

It appears that this is a strong interpretation in the Rambam — that as long as the body needs to digest the food, one should not drink a lot of water. A little water one may, and the little water is such a "mazug b'yayin" (mixed with wine). We don't know what the measure of "a little" is.

Discussion: Water, Wine, and Other Beverages

Speaker 2: Wine is not water, that's why.

Speaker 1: If one drinks soda — soda is not mentioned in the Rambam that one should drink — soda we don't know. Soda would seemingly be considered a food, or grape juice — those things that are still heavy. Water — the simple meaning is that it has no calories, the body doesn't need to digest it. That means, a different kind of system of digesting. The body also needs to process it, it doesn't come out "as it came in so it goes out," but the intent is it doesn't need the same level of digesting. Okay. Other heavy beverages the body also needs to digest.

Speaker 2: That's why it's the wine, then you're saying not the wine.

Speaker 1: A little *mazug b'yayin* — that means, *mazug b'yayin* means that it should be water, not that it should be wine. Every wine has *mazug b'... *mazug b'yayin* where one puts in a little water. Here it's water where one puts in a little wine — it should essentially be primarily water.

Not Too Much Water Even After Digesting

The Rambam says: **"V'lo yarbeh lishtos mayim afilu k'she'yis'akeil ha'mazon."** Even when the food is already well digested, one should not drink too much water. But I mean, I'll say later, that otherwise one should drink more water before eating than after eating.

Halachah 3 (continued): "And One Should Not Eat Until He Checks Himself Thoroughly"

Checking One's Needs Before Eating

"V'lo yochal ad she'yivdok atzmo yafeh yafeh shema yitztarech l'nekavav." One should not eat before one checks

oneself whether one needs to go out.

Discussion: Two Levels of Attentiveness to the Body

It's interesting — earlier he said that one should go out when the body says so. Here he says yes, that one sometimes needs to check whether one needs to go out.

Speaker 2: He didn't say earlier what you said. He said that when one needs to, then one shouldn't push it off.

Speaker 1: Now you see that the "needing" doesn't mean physically. Physically it could be sometimes that he should go out more than he would have thought. In other words, when he checks himself, he sees that he can go out. Then, it's not about that that he said one should *ya'amod miyad*. *Ya'amod miyad* means when he feels that he needs to. It's two levels.

Halachah 4: Exertion Before Eating — Exercise Before Eating

The Rambam's Principle: Don't Eat Before Moving

The Rambam continues — here he's going to discuss sports and exercise.

Yes, so the Rambam says: a person should not eat "**ad she'yehalech kodem achilah ad she'yaschil gufo lachum.**" A person should not eat before he has walked before eating, he went here and there until his body became sweaty, until his body became warm. Or walking — "**o ya'aseh melachah o yis'yagei'a b'yegi'ah acheres**" — or he should do work, he should exert himself with something, or toil with some other thing, something that makes your body work hard.

The Rambam in "Hanhagos HaBri'us" on Exercise

I've seen in another place, in a sefer "Hanhagos HaBri'us" (Regimen of Health), the Rambam also says one should exercise, any kind of exercise. There the Rambam says, and the best exercise is playing with a "kadur katan" — a small ball — running after a small ball. The ball game already existed in the Rambam's times. Because later the Rambam speaks more about exercise, and he says that playing with a ball works the entire body — the hands, the feet, the whole body works.

"Klalo Shel Davar" — The General Rule of Morning Exertion

But in any case, here the Rambam says only very general things. Before eating one should sweat a little.

Speaker 2: Later, later. Now we're not talking about which rules of exercise. Now we're talking about when to eat, that the body should start working.

Speaker 1: What he's saying, he means to say — when you get up in the morning, you shouldn't immediately start eating. First you should do something. Not a big exercise. You can play ball before breakfast. He means to say, do some small exercise.

Discussion: What Does "Yaschil Gufo Lachum" Mean?

A huge exercise... I know that the "yaschil gufo lachum" — when your body is warm...

Speaker 2: "Yasech" is the word.

Speaker 1: He doesn't say that one should... This is not the biggest exercise of the day. This is more a — to ease into it — that you shouldn't roll out of bed and start eating. That's the main thing. The Rambam simply didn't like eating in bed, a coffee brought to the bed. He's clearly talking about the

morning. A coffee is perhaps not eating, but... He's clearly talking about the morning.

"Klalo shel davar" — he's speaking here solely as laws of health, he doesn't mention here the prohibition of not eating before davening and so forth. That's a discussion on its own. How should... it doesn't come in here.

"He Should Exert Himself Every Day in the Morning Until His Body Begins to Warm"

Further: "**Yigah kodem achilah.**" The Rambam says, after having begun — "**Klalo shel davar**" — whatever kind of exercise makes no difference, the main thing is that he should toil his body a bit. "**Yigah kol yom ba'boker**" — he should exert himself a bit in the morning — "**ad she'yaschil gufo lachum**" — until his body begins to sweat.

Discussion: "Lachum" — Getting Warm, Not Sweating

This is not a calm sweat.

Speaker 2: *Lachum* means he sweats. *Lachum* means getting warm.

Speaker 1: Yes. The body should become warm. Just go — I'm warming up. It doesn't have to be sweating. Sweating is another level. This is the sign that he has already worked, that his body has become active.

Speaker 2: Like "v'yishkot me'at." Okay, like "v'yishkot me'at" is good — the eating.

Speaker 1: Sweating has a specific word.

Speaker 2: "Yizah" — yes. Very good.

Speaker 1: Okay, it's an extra thing.

Rambam, Hilchos De'os Chapter 4 (continued) — Order of Eating, Exercise, and Sleep

Halachah 4 (continued): Sweating, Calming Down, and Warm Water After Exercise

This is not a calm stroll. "Lacham" doesn't mean sweating. "Lacham" means getting warm. Yes, the body should become warm. Warm is *cham*, *cham*. Sweating is another level. Sweating is the sign that he has already worked and his body is activated.

V'yishkot me'at. The Rambam wants him to sweat. Sweating — he has a specific word for it, "yiziah," later we'll see. Okay, it's an extra thing.

Okay, further. The Rambam says, after one has done a bit of exercise, one should calm down a bit. **Ad she'tisyasheiv nafsho** — one should not eat right away when the body is still strongly activated, rather one should then calm the body down a bit. **Ad she'tisyasheiv nafsho**, until the body becomes calm, **v'az yochal** — and then eat.

Warm Water After Exercise — A Virtue or an Obligation?

The Rambam says, an even better thing is: **Im yirchatz b'chamin achar she'yigah** — after one has done a bit of exercise, if one can then wash oneself with warm water — **harei zeh tov**, this is good. **V'achar kach yisheh me'at v'yochal** — after that he should wait a bit and eat.

He says that one should not eat right after... He says that there's another way. He doesn't say that it's specifically better. It's another... or does "harei zeh tov" mean better, or it's also good? A virtue. Okay, but it's not a must. It's also a way.

Digression: Coffee Before Exercise

Now we're going to learn, let's say, the end portion. I'll drink my coffee in the middle. And after that we'll see... One needs to know whether one may drink coffee right away. It could be that coffee also... There are those I've seen say that one shouldn't drink coffee right away or right away... I've seen people say that before the break one should drink coffee.

No, you've been up for a long time already after... I didn't just wake up now. No, I'm still... I'm saying, I've seen people say that it's healthier to... or there are people who practice that one takes a walk or goes for a run in the morning even before coffee. Coffee is not really eating, but it's a normal thing. The Rambam does say that one should go already before... so water is water, but coffee has milk in it, it has... or the other things. When the Rambam says coffee — he doesn't say coffee — he doesn't say coffee with milk with all kinds of things, that's already additions.

Halachah 5: Posture While Eating — Not Eating Standing, Walking, or Riding

Now, when one wants to eat, one should no longer be running. Before eating one needs to run. **Aval k'she'yochal** — when one is already eating — **yeishev binkomo**, in his place. This is what we learn on Pesach, yes, one reclines. One doesn't mean just sitting but...

The teachers (*melamdin*) used to strongly warn that one should not eat standing. They said that one would get thick legs, meaning because the food went as far as it could go. I don't believe that's the mechanism — the food goes into the intestines however it goes. But there are other reasons why it's not healthy to eat standing or walking.

Not Moving After Eating

Yes, **v'lo yehalech v'lo yirkav** — riding also. "Riding" doesn't mean in a car, it means on an animal. **V'lo yigah** — not that he runs around — **v'lo yigah es gufo v'lo yetayeil**. Not after eating, rather **ad she'yis'akeil ha'mazon she'b'mei'av** — until he finishes, begins to digest a bit, he should not run around. One should not do it.

And if someone does do so: **V'chol ha'metayeil achar achilaso o she'yigah** — he exerts himself, he exercises, he works — **harei zeh meivi al atzmo chala'im ra'im v'kashim** — he brings upon himself bad and severe illnesses.

Discussion: Dancing at Weddings After Eating

Yes. So I said here earlier, R' Yitzchak, perhaps from here it appears that it's not recommended according to the Rambam to eat a large meal and then get up to dance, as is done at celebrations, at weddings. So either one should allow enough time from finishing eating until dancing, or one should dance in the calm circle, not among those who jump around.

But seemingly, this I'm thinking up, God forbid, it would need to be about half an hour, or some large amount of time. One needs to know, the Rambam doesn't tell us here clearly how long it takes for **she'nis'akeil ha'mazon she'b'mei'av** — the food to be digested. It could be, one can probably feel it.

But in any case, throughout, there is a piece of advice that one perhaps shouldn't forget at the wedding. If someone wants to

dance vigorously... I don't know if dancing counts as exertion.

Digression: Dancing vs. Jumping — What Is Rikud?

As you say, but with dancing with the young men, even individually. Today's young men think that dancing and jumping are the same thing. Jumping is a type of exercise that one does in the gym. Dancing — there are the *rikudim* (dances) that exist in the Gemara, yes, it's professional, not just jumping. The *rikudim* seemingly have to do with the beat of the melody, like acting out the musical notes.

Okay, let's not get into that. Very good. Today's customs also hold that dancing means jumping, from that he makes the beats... Okay, different topic.

He makes the wild music match the dancing. Yes, specifically the beat — he puts in the beat for a minute, one can't dance to that, it's not possible for a person to dance into my minute. So in general, okay, what does this have to do with here? Perhaps that too brings upon oneself bad and severe illnesses. One can go to a wedding, now one gets into the music.

Summary: Order of Eating

Okay, up to here we've learned the order of eating, meaning in a general manner when he eats, and regarding how much — not how much to eat, a bit of how much to eat, in a general manner.

Halachah 6: Order of Sleep — How Long and When to Sleep

Now we're going to learn the order of sleep, when to sleep, a very important halachah.

Okay, let's see. The Rambam says as follows — interesting how he lays it out. Do I need to read all the words or may I just say what it says? I don't know what the halachah is in our shiur.

The Rambam says as follows: **A day and night is twenty-four hours**. In total there are twenty-four hours in a day. Don't think that one needs to sleep half of that — twelve hours or thirteen hours — as is the custom of the young men and children. No. It's enough to sleep a third of that. **It is sufficient for a person to sleep a third** — a third of twenty-four, and whoever knows mathematics remembers that a third of twenty-four is eight.

Why the End of the Night?

Now, those eight hours one should not sleep at the beginning of the night. Why not? Rather at the end of the night, **so that from the beginning of his sleep until sunrise should be eight hours**. That means, he goes to sleep — let's say the sun comes up at seven o'clock — he goes to sleep at eleven o'clock. Thus, **he is found rising from his bed before sunrise** — a little before the sun comes up.

The point is apparently that he shouldn't sleep into the day. When he says eight hours, he doesn't mean he should sleep a quarter of the day. Therefore, if he sleeps at the beginning of the night, he'll wake up before dawn, he'll be bored, he has nothing to do, "half his desire is in his hand."

If that's the idea, it could be that he's saying that if one sleeps at the end of the night, one also shouldn't go too late, because you need to wake up before dawn, you need to wake up before sunrise, because that's the halacha — let's say in the Gemara in

Berachos, one needs to wake up earlier. The Rambam says, if you go to sleep at night, don't go to sleep too late, because you need to both have eight hours, and you also need to be up in time for the recitation of Shema (krias Shema).

I don't know if the Rambam would be upset if someone goes to sleep even earlier and wakes up a bit earlier. I don't know if that's the issue. I think it's not. I think it needs to align with the laws of krias Shema, which he's going to discuss.

Discussion: Is "Before Sunrise" a Health Matter?

The matter of waking up before sunrise — the Rambam doesn't say this for health reasons. The Rambam says because this is how a person should conduct himself.

No, maybe yes. Maybe it's healthy to see the sun. There are people who say that. I don't know. I'm just saying, he wakes up before sunrise — the sun isn't running away.

Okay, maybe the point is that... I don't know. I think the point is that he wakes up before dawn and he has nothing to do.

Maybe you're right that it's plain normal, I don't know. It's very important.

Discussion: Eight Hours — Minimum or Maximum?

The Rambam says however — it's interesting that the Rambam says that one might need to sleep more than eight hours, right? But less — nobody thought of that. Yes? Yes. It's very important.

In my opinion, I am a very big promoter of sleeping at least eight hours every night, and I hold that you can see on people that they have spoken from the path of serving Hashem — it is **impossible to understand and know**. Sometimes I meet a person who is such an "impossible to understand and know" person. You talk to him, he doesn't understand, or he's terribly tense all the time, he's always running, he doesn't have any... the character traits are very difficult. And many times, the answer is that he doesn't sleep enough.

Today the custom is to stay up late, and so on. Very few people sleep eight hours every night, and in my opinion a large portion of the foolishness of the world comes from this.

The Kitzur Shulchan Aruch vs. the Rambam on Sleep

Okay, but I see that very many sefarim did practice self-denial, and they want to read into the Rambam that eight hours is the maximum. So it says for example in the Kitzur Shulchan Aruch — which the Kitzur Shulchan Aruch writes a lot about. The Kitzur Shulchan Aruch is one sefer in halacha that focuses a lot on bodily health, and he says that six hours is enough, and the Rambam says eight hours as the maximum.

Yes, but Chazal say that... Rabbi Yitzchak holds that one should send the public to sleep eight hours. But various sefarim say that...

Okay, so me and Rabbi Shlomo Ganzfried are in a disagreement. Which I'm allowed to — if you say that we're both Acharonim, and I'm a Hebrew servant, I can defer, but...

I think that the doctors today, generally — there is a disagreement about this too, like everything — but I've read a whole book about this. There are many who argue that for me it's seven, eight hours. And all those sefarim that say as if it's

not a matter to practice self-denial in sleep — when one wants to practice self-denial, one should eat less. That's always good advice, because simply we usually tend to eat too much. But sleeping less is not...

Novel Insight: Eating Too Much Leads to Sleeping Too Much

It's not that in the Rambam it's implied that we all eat too much and sleep too little. Simply.

What comes out? Also, I thought — when one sleeps... simply if it's relevant that when one eats too much one also sleeps too much, or one is too tired. Not only does one sleep too much, one doesn't have any energy.

The body needs more time to digest the extra food. When one sleeps is when the body works hard — the slaughterhouse of the body kicks in.

Self-Denial in Sleep — A Mistake

Also, many times a person thinks that sleeping less is a form of self-denial (siguf). It's not — he just ends up being scattered.

A person is settled, he knows when he goes to sleep, he knows when he wakes up. He's not scattered, and then he doesn't end up falling asleep. It's more a matter of settled-mindedness (yishuv hadaas).

Discussion: The Meaning of "Dayu" — "Enough" or "Maximum"?

Okay, but what you said is correct, that it does count from the Rambam that he's going for a maximum regarding the knowledge. It counts that he thought about it. In other words, but what do I want with this distinction? That a normal person thinks — a person who wants to be comfortable thinks — he needs to sleep ten hours. The Rambam, you want, I'm a doctor? Eight hours is enough.

Digression: Historical Context — Sleeping with the Sun

I would perhaps say that in the old days a person lived much more with the natural, with the sun. When it gets dark, you can't socialize with people anymore, and a candle is already an expense, so when it was dark they went to sleep. The Rambam says, why is eight hours enough? Why does one need to sleep a whole twelve hours when it's dark, or at least generally?

In the winter — sorry — is the darkness also eight hours? I mean in the summer is the darkness also eight hours? It depends how. Okay.

Halacha 7: Sleeping Position — How to Sleep

Now, how should one sleep? This is apparently also about medicine? One needs to know. I don't know if it's enough about medicine.

Discussion: "On His Back" — Medicine or Holiness?

The Gemara says for example that one may not sleep face-up, and the Gemara says for other reasons, for holiness (kedusha). That's fine, but here we're talking about medicine.

Apparently, the Rambam made an introduction... The Rambam here was specifically entirely only about medicine. It could be like for example he says so that one should be up early — it's a general matter, because that's how people are

naturally able to do krias Shema. So here too, he counts it also as health, but when he includes **not on his back**, it's because the Gemara says so about "on his back" regarding "and placing a beam" — it's a matter of holiness.

I understand that the Rambam here only put in what was relevant. I said that it's simple but because so — it doesn't look nice, it's not human-like, a person, exactly.

Okay, so I know, and Shmucha it seems that maybe this is a health matter? I think that the general principle needs to be accepted. Because it could even be that there are things here that don't fit very well.

Novel Insight: The Rambam Writes Here "As a Doctor"

Whichever way, as they said — the Rav doesn't say one should daven Shacharis before eating. It's an extra schedule, if they are after the prayer. One needs to first daven. It doesn't come in here to the daily schedule. Here is the daily schedule — the Rambam writes as a doctor.

I think that the Rambam even wrote a medical book for a non-Jew, for a Muslim. And he told him that one explicitly needs to drink wine. Ah, specifically a Muslim may not drink wine — a new question begins. From the medical side one needs to know what is from the medical side.

Rambam, Hilchos De'os Chapter 4 (continued) — The Order of Sleep, the Order of Foods, and Eating According to the Weather

Sources for the Rambam's Medical-Halachos — "The Gemara" of Hilchos De'os Chapter 4

Speaker 1: You can disagree with me. I mean, the commentators were probably not doctors, so they look for everything as halachos. But I did think, what's wrong with it being a medical matter?

Okay. We can investigate it, that one can check in other books of the Rambam whether he elaborates more on the matter of sleeping on one's face or on one's back.

[Novel insight:] Indeed, I forgot to say — they learned that it's like this: the Gemara of Hilchos Yesodei HaTorah is the Guide for the Perplexed (Moreh Nevuchim), the Gemara of Hilchos De'os from the earlier chapters is the Eight Chapters (Shemoneh Perakim), and for these chapters apparently the Gemara is the medical writings that the Rambam wrote — more the medical elaborations. Very good.

Halacha 7 (continued): Sleeping Position — On Which Side Should One Sleep

Speaker 1: One should not sleep **on his face** — not on the face, **and not on his back** — not on the back, **but rather on his side** — on the side. **At the beginning of the night** one should sleep **on the left side, and at the end of the night on the right side.**

Discussion: What Does "Beginning of the Night" and "End of the Night" Mean?

Speaker 1: I thought about it — it doesn't mean that one needs to set an alarm clock to turn over. One needs to think precisely about what it does mean. If one wakes up, one should sleep on the other side. Perhaps it means that when he goes to sleep at night — perhaps if he goes to sleep at the beginning of

the night it's like this, and if he goes to sleep at the end of the night it's like that.

I mean, the point is that it's hard on the body, because you're putting pressure. The entire weight of your body lies on one hand, on one side.

Speaker 2: One turns around, simply to...

Speaker 1: It means that the difference is — one should switch in the middle.

It could be that regarding on the face and on the back one needs to know from other Gemaras. It could also be that one shouldn't sleep a whole night on the face or on the back — for a little while it's not a problem.

The point is, I mean, it means one shouldn't put the weight. Because when a person lies, the entire weight on his face — imagine that everything hangs down on the front of his belly. Or everything hangs down on his spine. Perhaps the point is that one should switch.

Discussion: Is the Order of Left/Right Indispensable?

Speaker 2: If someone does the opposite — first right and then left — is it not a problem according to you?

Speaker 1: Just the simple meaning. Just the simple meaning, yes.

Halacha 7 (continued): Not Sleeping Close to Eating, and Not Sleeping During the Day

Speaker 1: The Rambam says: **"One should not sleep close to eating"** — one should not go to sleep right after eating. Earlier he said that one should calm down after eating, but one should not go to sleep. **"Rather, one should wait after eating approximately three or four hours"** — after eating one should wait three or four hours.

"And one should not sleep during the day" — and one should not sleep during the day. Just as the Gemara says that during the day one should only sleep "the sleep of a horse" — just a short nap. I think the Rambam wouldn't have had a problem with a nap, not sleeping.

Novel Insight: Connection to "Intermittent Fasting"

Speaker 1: But one sees here another thing. If one doesn't eat for the last four hours of the day, it's simply that this fits very well with what many people know today about this. Many people who recommend medicine say that one should only eat during a certain — for example, one should only eat approximately eight hours of the day, and the other sixteen hours of the day one should not eat. But this also works out the same way — if a person sleeps eight hours, and the last four hours one doesn't eat, it simply means that one only eats during the first hours of the day, whatever, most of the daytime hours. The Rambam hasn't yet said how many times a day one should eat or such things.

Speaker 2: Yes, yes, I'm saying — but it works out that twelve hours you already have where one doesn't eat: eight hours and the four hours before that.

Speaker 1: Okay, because one sleeps. That's not the novel insight.

Speaker 2: No, the four hours before sleeping one already doesn't eat.

Speaker 1: **"Approximately three or four hours"** — it doesn't mean four hours. Four hours is a lot. Not right after

eating.

Halacha 8: The Order of Foods — Laxatives First, Constipating Foods After

Speaker 1: Okay, now we're going to talk about which types of foods.

Speaker 2: Okay, this we're going to go through a bit quickly, because I myself don't know precisely what all these things are and how it works. Or do you want to explain all of them?

Laxatives — Moist Fruits Before the Meal

Speaker 1: I mean, the first thing is what the Rambam says that one should differently eat things that are soft and moist, and make things come out easily. One shouldn't be constipated with them.

Speaker 2: But there's a whole order here — what one eats first and what one eats after.

Speaker 1: Yes. The Rambam says: "**Things that loosen the intestines**" — things that make the intestines loose and things come out easily — "**such as grapes, figs, mulberries, and pears**" — today that means pears, I'm not sure what the Rambam means by "agasim" — **melons**.

But you can see, the common denominator among them is that they're moist fruit, very moist fruit. A melon, watermelon has something like 90% water. All these fruits are moist, moist fruit. Just like you squeeze out a grape — nothing remains, it's a moist fruit.

Speaker 2: What is "the inside of kishu'im"?

Speaker 1: The inside of kishu'im.

Speaker 2: What is kishu'im?

Speaker 1: Squash, some kind of vegetable.

Speaker 2: What is melafefonos?

Speaker 1: Melafefonos is a gourd. And there are those who say that melafefonos means pepper. I don't know, it's some kind of vegetable. It's not a potato.

Speaker 2: Generally when one says kishu'im one means potato, no?

Speaker 1: It's not a potato. It's some kind of unfamiliar fruit, some kind of rare fruit that in his times existed. Not a fruit that lies in everyone's fridge.

The Order of Eating — Appetizer of Laxative Foods

Speaker 1: Okay, these things — **one eats them first, before the meal** — one should eat them before eating.

Speaker 2: How does one eat something before eating?

Speaker 1: It means before the meal — the appetizer, the entrée should be from these types of things. **And one should not mix them with the food** — you shouldn't eat them while eating. That means, one shouldn't for example have a meal — one eats what, chicken with a side, yes? Chicken, potato, with a vegetable. The vegetable shouldn't be kishu'im and melafefonos — those should be eaten before the meal.

Rather — and how long before eating? **One waits a bit until they leave the upper stomach** — until it leaves from the upper part. There are two parts in the digestive system how the food goes — the upper intestine and further. And then, after it has left from the top of his system, so that one can continue eating one's food.

Discussion: Connection to Not Drinking While Eating

Speaker 2: The main point fits with this — it said earlier that one shouldn't drink right before eating, one should drink a bit earlier. All these things also have a lot in their nature.

Speaker 1: He said that one shouldn't drink while eating, no? He didn't say there at all when one should drink — he said not while eating.

Speaker 2: It sounds like it's similar, but here we're talking about yet another thing apparently.

Speaker 1: It's perhaps more complicated, I don't know.

Speaker 2: Okay, after that there are things that are the opposite. These things are also quite simple, because these things are very strongly laxative on the food — it has the same problem as drinking water while eating, because the food needs time to be digested.

Speaker 1: It could be, but it's a different topic, because he doesn't say one should drink before eating either. Until now I haven't seen — maybe he says it, I don't know.

Constipating Foods — Fruits That Bind, Right After Eating

Speaker 1: The Rambam continues: "**Things that strengthen the intestines**" — these things tighten the intestines, the opposite of laxatives, they can cause constipation — "**such as pomegranates, apples**" — I mean pomegranates are pomegranates — "**carobs**". These things that are called acidic things.

Apples — apples. Kristomiln — don't know what that is. It has a taste like a bitterness, a type of bitterness.

Speaker 2: What is kristomiln? Has no idea about these fruits.

Speaker 1: He also says "chavushim." I don't know what chavushim is called in earlier times.

Speaker 2: No idea. Kristomiln he says means what we call pears — pears.

Speaker 1: Pears? For us, a shizaf is a...

Speaker 2: Shizaf is a plum.

Speaker 1: A plum? We know it as something that is a laxative for the intestines (meshalshel bnei me'ayim).

The Order: First Open, Then Close

Speaker 1: Okay, these things are eaten right after the meal. That is, this closes up the food.

Speaker 2: These things are eaten **immediately after the meal** (tikhef la-mazon). Does tikhef mean before or after?

Speaker 1: After. Right next to the meal. I think that's what he means by "after." It closes things up. You need to open first. The order goes like this — first you open up the intestines a bit, and then you close them up.

"But one should not eat too much of them" — one shouldn't eat a lot of them.

Halacha 9: The Order of Meat Foods — Lighter Ones First

Speaker 1: Okay. How to eat meats: "**When a person wants to eat poultry and beef together**" — if he wants to eat chicken and beef, he should eat first the one that is lighter, the one that is easier on the body. "**He eats poultry first**" — because first the body should start becoming active on the heavy foods coming in, and then on the even heavier ones.

And so he continues. For example, **eggs and poultry** — eggs are lighter than poultry for the body. **Small animal meat, large animal meat** — first the small animal meat.

Now he states the principle: "**A person should always put the lighter thing first**" — what is easier on the body should be eaten first, "**and delay**" — and he should postpone, and put afterward — **the heavy**, what is heavy for the body.

Halacha 10: Eating According to the Weather — Summer and Winter

Summer — Cold Foods

Speaker 1: Okay, and he continues: "**In the summer days**" — in the summer — "**one eats cold foods**" — one should cool down with cold foods. I don't know, one should eat watermelons. "**And not use too many spices**" — one shouldn't add a lot of spices, because spices make you hot, sharp things heat up the body. "**And one eats vinegar**" — and in the summer one can eat vinegar, which cools you down.

Novel Thought: Is This Relevant Today with Air Conditioning?

Speaker 1: I'm thinking to myself — I don't know if this applies in today's times, when all day long one sits in the air conditioning, it's not really... Here we're talking about when the body is truly overheated from a whole day of heat, so the foods you eat, at least from the inside you should cool the body down a bit. It could be that in today's times it's not so relevant — at least for someone who doesn't work outside. Or children who run around — maybe for them it's relevant.

Speaker 2: Or maybe the Rambam indeed wouldn't have wanted people to sit all day in the air conditioning, because he's talking about people who sweat a bit during the day.

Speaker 1: Instead — the body is made so that it should be hot in the summer and cold in the winter, and they are smarter than us.

Speaker 2: That's not practical advice. You can't just go throw out everyone's air conditioning now.

Speaker 1: I didn't say that, I'm just saying that... be well.

Winter — Warm Foods

Speaker 1: "**And in the rainy season**" — in the winter, when the body is cold all the time, one needs to warm up the body from the inside by eating warm foods. "**And use more spices**" — and add more spices, because spices make you warm. "**And eat some mustard and asafoetida**" — when one eats, mustard (chardal) is what you make mustard from, and asafoetida (chilitit) are also sharp things. Sharp things warm a person up.

Historical Context — Winter Foods in the Past

Speaker 1: We also have winter foods and summer foods, even if maybe it's not so relevant anymore. The winter foods are — at least that's how it was until recently. Today, thank God, there's always good... always available. It's not like the days of Rabbeinu HaKadosh where in winter they had summer foods and vice versa, and so on.

But in the old days, in winter people ate all foods pickled, all foods had spices. Because if you wanted to have apples in the winter, you had to pickle them, or if you wanted to have a cookie in the winter.

Speaker 2: Yes, but we don't say this three times. The Rambam wasn't a big fan of pickled things, since he saw the

next town...

Speaker 1: Yes, yes. Because "**and in this manner one should conduct oneself in cold places and in hot places.**"

Rambam, Hilchos De'os Chapter 4 (Continued) — Foods According to Climate, and Categories of Bad Foods

Halacha 10 (Continued): Adjusting Eating According to Climate

Speaker 1: But in the old days, in winter people ate all foods pickled, all foods had spices, because if you wanted to have apples in the winter you had to pickle them, or if you wanted to have chicken you had to salt it. One moment, he's going to say that he wasn't a big fan of pickled things, because we'll see that in the next section.

"**And in this manner one should conduct oneself in cold places and in hot places**" — not only if you're in a hot place, but if a person is in a hot place he should eat cold things and vice versa — "**hot in a hot place and cold in a cold place.**"

Perhaps he also means, if you're in a place where in winter it's cold and in summer it's hot, you should do as he said, without the air conditioning, and perhaps you should do the opposite. It's not a decree of Scripture (gezeiras ha-kasuv), like those Chassidic Jews who all winter long walk around in darkness, and when Pesach comes they go with an umbrella, because it says in Mussaf "rain," so they want to have an umbrella. No, it depends on the reality, it's not a dogma.

Halacha 11: Foods That Are "Extremely Bad" — Never Eat Them

Speaker 1: So the Rambam continues: "**There are foods that are extremely bad, and it is proper for a person never to eat them.**" It would be better not to eat them at all.

Large, Old, Salted Fish

"**Such as**" — for example, herring — "**large salted old fish.**" He probably doesn't mean a specific type of fish here, rather he's describing the way it's prepared — fish that one eats by salting them for a long time. "**The large ones**" — specifically the big ones.

Old Salted Cheese

"**And old salted cheese**" — herring isn't really a large fish, seemingly. Okay, he has another example: "**And old salted cheese**" — old cheese that is salted and eaten old.

Mushrooms — Keme'hin and Pitriyos

"**And keme'hin and pitriyos**" — types of mushrooms. Today many mushrooms are among the healthy foods, but it could be... perhaps he's talking about the salted ones. It could be dangerous, I mean he's talking here about dangerous mushrooms.

Speaker 2: The person on the side says that indeed, because there are many that are dangerous.

Speaker 1: The locust is also the same thing, it makes the brain go crazy, yes, indeed. And the Rambam says one should only take one type of mushroom and one should have knowledgeable witnesses.

That's also a question the rabbis ask. But he says it could be that in the old days there wasn't — today you go to the store, you buy, you buy the one type that's the thing. But a person goes outside and grabs, one day he grabbed, suddenly he felt he was in heaven, hello, you can't do that. Or perhaps there are dangerous ones, what are they... or they made a decree that one shouldn't destroy people like that.

Old Salted Meat

"And old salted meat" — basically fish, all three things he mentioned, old. Old meat, old fish, old...

Speaker 2: Yes.

Speaker 1: Seemingly the point of the matter is that in the old days things really weren't preserved so well. Today all the bacteria are controlled. For example, there are people who eat, who are lenient about cheeses, and eating cheese has a strong smell, it's very old. Okay, it's hard to understand.

Unfermented Wine — Yayin Mi-gitto

"Yayin mi-gitto" — wine that hasn't yet become fermented. But one could say you shouldn't drink grape juice, only wine. Wine, wine you should drink, but grape juice... I actually hold that grape juice is an aspect of Reform Judaism. It can be called wine according to halacha, but there was no grape juice in the old days. Everyone should ask their competent authority, one doesn't need to be strict on every stringency that has come out in the last few years.

Spoiled Foods — A Cooked Dish That Sat

"And a cooked dish that sat until its smell dissipated, and similarly any food that has a bad smell or is very bitter" — something has a very bad smell or it's very sharp. And he says no, even if someone is a connoisseur and he does like it, the Rambam says this means spoiled things — there were no refrigerators back then.

"These are to the body like poison" — simply.

The Rambam says these are things that are always bad, one should never eat them. But there are things that are bad, that are not so bad, but there is a place for them.

Halacha 12: Foods That Are "Bad" But Not So Bad — Eat "A Little Bit"

Speaker 1: Once in a while. What one eats once in a while — **"and eat from it only a little."** What does this mean, one should eat a little of it and not often — both small in quantity and infrequent in time. Once in a while one may have a little of it. **"And one should not make a habit of having them as one's regular food"** — one shouldn't eat a lot of it — **"or eat them with one's food constantly, such as large fish"** — large fish. I don't know which fish he means.

Discussion: Which Fish Does the Rambam Mean?

Speaker 1: I don't know which fish he means. I don't know what exactly he's talking about. I don't know. Because this also seemingly has a lot to do with the reality of... It could be that small fish anyone can catch in their lake. A large fish is brought from I don't know how far away, and it's not fresh. It could be that some things are true today as well. I'm talking about natural things. When the Rambam speaks, he's not talking about some funny thing that once was. He's talking about the fish. But he doesn't tell you which fish, it's hard to know. Okay, it's missing information.

The Rambam's "Boxes" System

Speaker 1: Also even if you switch things around, you put different things into the boxes — the Rambam's boxes are very nice. There are things you almost never eat. There are things you eat once in a while, not a big deal. I mean, this is... today's nutrition doesn't have such good resolution. It says eat three things every day. The Rambam has it so very halachic-like. There are things that are once in a while, there are things that are better not, but it's not a Torah prohibition (issur d'Oraysa). It's very interesting to see.

The List of Foods — Cheese, Milk, Meat, Beans, Bread

Speaker 1: Yes, good. Further — **cheese** (gevinah). Okay. Also seemingly, because in the old days there wasn't... we're talking about not being well pasteurized, all kinds of things get in...

Speaker 2: Yes, yes.

Speaker 1: "And milk that has sat after being milked for twenty-four hours" — old milk that has been sitting for twenty-four hours. **"And the meat of large oxen and large goats"** — meat from large buffaloes, I don't know, large oxen. Shorim means oxen, and te'yashim means...

"And the beans and the lentils" — pul is beans, and adashim is another type of bean. **"And the sfir"** — I don't know what sfir is. Some kind of bean, he says as well.

"And barley bread" — bread made from barley, from se'orim.

Matza Bread — Bread That Isn't Well Baked

"And matza bread" — matza bread is bread that hasn't been baked very well. Only on Pesach it's permitted. Okay, it doesn't say only on Pesach. Let them go talk about a quarter. But in general, the Rambam says one shouldn't eat matzos.

Cabbage, Onions, Garlic

Speaker 1: Yes. **"And cabbage" (kruv).** What is kruv?

Speaker 2: I think today they say cabbage.

Speaker 1: What is kruv?

Speaker 2: Cabbage. That's what he says, the person.

Speaker 1: "And leeks and onions." When the Jews left Egypt, besides complaining against God, they were rebellious, they didn't know the Rambam. And they longed for the onions and the leeks and the garlic of Egypt.

Discussion: Garlic — Healthy or Bad?

Speaker 1: Okay. So the Rambam says here, onions and garlic. There's an issue, because in many other sources it says that garlic is supposed to be a very, very healthy food.

Speaker 2: But a little bit. He doesn't mean one should eat a whole meal of it.

Speaker 1: Have you ever seen someone eat a plate of garlic? You put in a little as a spice. But garlic is something you eat a small amount of anyway. But the Rambam didn't want at all that in every meal there should be a bit of garlic, or every time you make meat you should make it with garlic and with onions. I don't know, I'm not convinced. It could be he's talking about eating. Also with everything, a lot of salt, meaning everywhere salt is a lot. What is a lot? I don't know, I'm not convinced that the Rambam is talking about a person who eats a plate of garlic. I don't know. Could be.

Mustard and Radish

Speaker 1: Mustard (chardal), **radish** (tzanon). Tzanon is a radish.

Speaker 2: That's what they say in Berdichev, I don't know, that's what the city's appointed person says.

Speaker 1: Okay. So it could be that Reb Yudel didn't leave the table because he hadn't finished eating.

Halacha 13: In Winter It's Permitted, In Summer Not — And Exceptions

Speaker 1: Okay. So the thing is, all these and all of Israel. And today, and the Rambam says, it's bad when you eat a lot. But the Rambam says, **in the rainy season** one may eat from them **a little bit**. Only in winter should one not eat. Very, very little. **In the rainy season** one may eat them. Just as he said that what makes you warm, what has spices, what you see is more acidic, more sharp. **But not in the rainy season** — and when it's not winter — **one should not eat from them at all**, one shouldn't eat from this at all.

Beans and Lentils — Never

Speaker 1: As the Rambam continues — **beans and lentils** (pul and adashim), that type of bean — what is this? This wasn't on the list we read earlier. This is an exception, this is never. **"It is not proper to eat them neither in summer nor in the rainy season."** This one should only pour into ice for snails.

Gourds — A Little in Summer

Speaker 1: Okay. **"And gourds (delu'im), one eats a little of them in the summer."** Were gourds also on the list?

Speaker 2: They weren't on the list.

Speaker 1: No. What are delu'im? Dela'as. What is dela'as?

Speaker 2: I've seen it's some kind of squash or something like that.

Difficulty Identifying the Foods

Speaker 1: In short, he's not listing good things here. There was no way to know this.

Speaker 2: I don't know, I see that he does list them. Maybe because it's not part of our kitchen.

Speaker 1: No, it's further, it's not Hebrew (lashon hakodesh), why should we know the abbreviations of the language?

Speaker 2: What does he say, the lion? He doesn't say any...

Speaker 1: No, but those who translate, yes, they usually say something, taking from foods that aren't so commonly found among us.

Speaker 2: No, the person simply gives the names in Latin, which aren't the names used in the store.

Speaker 1: I think it's all the same thing, they use fancy names, just like doctors write everything with fancy names, because they think they're smart.

Halacha 14: Foods That Are "Bad" But Even Less Bad — Don't Eat a Lot

Speaker 1: The Rambam says further, okay, these are all bad things, these one should only eat as medicine. The Rambam first listed things that are bad — the worst, then he listed somewhat bad, and now he says even less bad, which is still okay.

"There are foods that are bad," but they're not so dangerous.

Waterfowl, Young Pigeons, Dates

"Waterfowl" (of ha-mayim) — waterfowl is seemingly ducks.

Speaker 2: Ah, pig.

Speaker 1: **"And small young pigeons"** — small birds.

"And dates" (temarim) — dates. That sounds like... okay.

Bread with Oil — Bread Fried in Oil

"And bread fried in oil" (lechem kalui b'shemen) — fried bread. That sounds like those cookies, those pastries.

Speaker 2: Yes, a fried bread.

Speaker 1: **"Or bread kneaded with oil"** — or bread. There are two reasons why bread can be bad: either because it's fried, or because you knead it with kishke.

Speaker 2: Yes, that it's bread with oil.

White Flour — Soles That Was Fully Sifted

Speaker 1: **"And fine flour that was sifted completely until no trace of bran remained"** — here he says an important thing: white flour, from which the bran has been completely removed, because the bran helps with digestion.

Speaker 2: The whole list today is like things that are a bit too good.

Speaker 1: Ah, could be. Things that are a bit too good. Ah, could be.

Fish Juices — Tzir and Muries

"Bread fried and caramel" — yes, it's those candies, those things that are distributed to children. Dates, which are very sweet. **"And tzir and muries"** — these are some kind of fish juices. Okay.

Don't Eat a Lot of Them

"It is not proper to eat a lot of these" — these things one shouldn't eat a lot of.

"This One Is a Hero" — One Who Conquers His Inclination

Speaker 1: But, he says, **"regarding a person who is wise and conquers his inclination"** — a person who is smart and restrains his inclination — the inclination here means the appetite for eating sweet things. **"He should not follow after his desire"** — he should not follow his craving — **"and should not eat any of the aforementioned things at all, unless he needs them for healing"** — only if he needs it as a remedy — **"this one is a hero."**

Because the hero is one who conquers his inclination. Yes. But also, the one who conquers his inclination is wise. He's not just a righteous person, he's a wise person, because he's a smart Jew, he doesn't fool himself for the little bit of pleasure from the craving. He is wise — about this it is said "happy with his portion," he rejoices with the food that is indeed healthy for him. And he conquers his inclination — so he will be here, he becomes a hero in body. He is a hero in soul, he hasn't lost his conquest of his inclination, and he goes on to be a hero, he will be strong, he will be healthy going forward.

The point is, the Rambam is very practical here — he tells you things that aren't bad, nobody is going to object.

Rambam, Laws of Character Traits, Chapter 4 (continued) — Fruits, General Health Rules,

Overeating

Introduction: The Rambam is Practical — A Wise Jew and Conqueror of His Inclination

Speaker 1: The point is, the Rambam is very practical. He tells you, here are things that aren't bad, nobody is going to understand — even if you eat well, there are still things. Why do you eat all these things? Because you know it's good. He says, you're a smart Jew — a smart Jew doesn't eat them at all, unless he truly needs them.

Speaker 2: Yes, I mean it also perhaps has a bit to do with — at the beginning of the chapter he said that one should only eat when hungry. It doesn't mean though that you should follow your body regarding eating only when you're hungry — but it doesn't mean that when you crave something, the simple meaning is that your body is telling you it's good for your body. That's where conquering the inclination comes in.

Halacha 15: Tree Fruits — One Should Not Eat Too Much Fruit

Speaker 1: He continues: "A person should always refrain from tree fruits, and should not eat too many of them, even dried ones, and certainly not fresh ones" — one should not eat too much fruit, fruit from trees, like apples and such things. Even when they are dried one should not eat from them, "and certainly not fresh ones" — certainly not when they're fresh.

This is even when they are fully ripened. "But before they have fully ripened" — fruit that is not ripe — "they are like swords to the body" — they are like swords for the body.

Carobs — Always Bad

"And carobs are always bad" — carobs are an exception, carobs are almost never good for people.

"And if a person is lost in a desert" — if a person is wandering in a wilderness — "and finds nothing to eat except carobs and water" — and he finds nothing to eat except carobs with a spring of water.

Discussion: Modern People vs. the Rambam on Tree Fruits

Speaker 2: This halacha about tree fruits is for some reason the one that all the modern people disagree with the Rambam about — they write on his page even. But in practice, he brings the Yad Peshutah that the Rambam brought it from the physicians, he said that this helps very much. So it's not clear.

But the reality has also changed a lot — our fruits have already gone through many years where chemists have been playing around with the seeds of the fruit, and it could be that it's simply become better, or worse. It's not clear.

Afterwards you'll see that the Rambam doesn't talk about all fruits, he talks about certain ones. I mean he doesn't talk about certain ones — I mean he means what the Sages call something. But to know exactly which fruits have in them such a bitterness — for example, which fruits? A lemon perhaps? I don't know.

Speaker 1: Lemon is bad.

Speaker 2: "And all sour fruits are bad, and one should only eat them in the summer and in warm

places" — only in warm places, and this warms up the body.

Speaker 1: On the contrary, it cools down.

Speaker 2: I mean that somewhere the Rambam has... on the contrary, vinegar cools down. Because in the summer one eats in the summer.

I mean that somewhere the Rambam ate a food that had a lemon flavor.

Speaker 1: Okay. Somewhere it says so.

Speaker 2: The Rambam himself... it could be that it was only in the summer. I remember that the Rambam himself — I don't remember exactly — but this halacha is included when we'll learn it. The Rambam himself had his own nature, and there are things he writes about — I remember that he does differently than what it says here, because it's according to his nature.

Speaker 1: Yes.

Halacha 15 (continued): Figs, Grapes, Almonds — Always Good

Speaker 1: The Rambam continues: "Figs, grapes, and almonds are always good" — they are always healthy. Almonds — that's what he means, not the tree fruits. "Whether fresh or dried" — whether fresh, moist, or dry — "and a person may eat as much of them as he needs."

It's true, even these should be among the remedies, they are better than all other tree fruits, but still this should not be the main thing — the main food. One should not eat mainly this.

Halacha 16: Honey and Wine — Good for the Elderly, Bad for Children

Speaker 1: The Rambam continues: "Honey and wine are bad for children but good for the elderly, especially in the rainy season" — honey and wine are not good for children, but they are good for older people. Yes, that it should give comfort, as the verses say.

Halacha 16 (continued): Eat Less in Summer Than in Winter

Speaker 1: "A person should eat in the summer two-thirds of what he eats in the winter" — the Rambam states an important rule. This is a rule about eating, not specifically about fruits.

Speaker 2: What? Yes, a rule about eating.

Speaker 1: In the summer one needs to eat less than one eats in the winter. In the winter the body needs the warmth, and so on.

It's a bit interesting, especially when I think that today people go out much more in the summer, people are more physically active. When one is physically active it's perhaps a bit easier — the body develops, works out the food more.

But the intent is as follows, says the Rambam, that in the summer one should eat two-thirds of how much one eats in the winter.

Discussion: How Does This Fit with the Earlier Rule of a Quarter?

Speaker 2: But there's the fact that the Rambam said earlier that one should eat only a quarter... one should stop eating a

quarter before becoming full. Another thing. One needs to know whether he's talking about the summer or winter. Because...

Speaker 1: No, two separate laws.

Speaker 2: Ah, he's saying this is a separate law about when to stop eating.

Speaker 1: Because seemingly the point is that in the summer one becomes full faster.

Speaker 2: How does that work?

Speaker 1: Yes, because the heat somehow helps... I don't know exactly.

Speaker 2: Our life isn't proper in the winter and it's still cooled off. Perhaps it's like this — people have more appetite in the summer... many people go far in the winter, but seemingly the simple explanation is because one is awake less, one does less exercise.

Speaker 1: Perhaps the heat is also indeed, perhaps the heat is also indeed.

Halacha 17: Checking One's Needs Before Eating

Speaker 1: The Rambam continues: "**One should not eat until he checks himself very well whether he needs to relieve himself**" — he should not eat things that are very laxative.

Speaker 2: "A person should not eat until he checks his needs first."

Halacha 17-18: Loose Bowels — A Great Principle in Medicine

Speaker 1: The Rambam continues: "**A person should always endeavor that his bowels be loose all his days, and that he be close to slight looseness**" — he should not be constipated, he should not eat things that make his food held in. He should always be able to go out easily.

"**And this is a great principle in medicine: whenever the waste is held back or comes out with difficulty, serious illnesses come**" — he needs to be able to go out easily.

Advice for a Young Person

The Rambam says: "**How should a person loosen his bowels if they have become somewhat tight?**" — what does one do if he indeed feels some constipation?

The Rambam says: "**If he is young, he should eat in the morning salted vegetables that are boiled and seasoned with oil, brine, and salt, without bread**" — he should eat things called meluchim. Meluchim means a certain type of vegetables — it doesn't mean salted things. He should make some kind of salad of meluchim, which should be somewhat cooked — shelukim means somewhat cooked — with spices in oil.

He says, one of the commentators says there that shelukim doesn't mean cooked with spices — cooked plain in water. But the meluchim — the vegetables called meluchim — should be eaten with oil or salt, without any bread should one eat. This will help him go out.

"**Or he should drink the cooking water of beets or cabbage with oil and salt**" —

Speaker 2: I'm going to lose it — didn't he say cabbage was among the foods one shouldn't eat at all?

Speaker 1: The Rambam did say that it's a remedy. These are all things that help.

Discussion: Why Do These Things Help?

Speaker 2: I don't know what these things are. How do these things work? I don't know. What are the stages of all these things? You eat food, opening the...

Speaker 1: It seems to me that it's fiber, he's saying.

Speaker 2: Yes, it's fiber. Vegetables have a lot of fiber, it helps.

Speaker 1: Okay. Something like that.

Advice for an Older Person

Speaker 1: And if he's older — he says, if he's an old Jew, as we learned earlier that for an old person honey is good — "**And if he is elderly, he should drink honey mixed with warm water in the morning**" — he should drink honey with warm water, without the tea. Honey with warm water. Or honey.

"**And he should wait about four hours, and then eat his meal**" — he should wait four hours, and afterwards he should eat his meal.

Three to Four Days

The Rambam says: "**He should do this day after day for three or four days if he needs it, until his bowels become loose**" — if he has constipation, he should for three to four days do the... follow the Rambam's rules, so that his intestines should become soft and be able to go out.

Halacha 19: The Great Rule — Exercise, Not Too Much Eating, Loose Bowels

Speaker 1: Okay. So that's a rule. One rule, and there are various specific halachos, and afterwards there are general halachos. One rule I should always maintain — loose bowels. And now another rule — if a rule about... the Rambam, we're talking about exercise.

The Rambam says: "**And they stated another general rule regarding bodily health: As long as a person exercises and exerts himself greatly, and does not eat to satiation, and his bowels are loose — no illness will come upon him and his strength will increase, even if he eats bad foods.**"

When a person works hard and toils greatly and exerts himself, and he doesn't eat until he's completely full, and he puts together all three things — he exercises a lot, he doesn't eat until he's completely full, and his bowels are loose, he goes out easily, he doesn't eat things that should impede his going out — no illness comes upon him, and his strength becomes stronger, even if he has eaten bad food. But he hasn't eaten too much, and his bowels are loose, and he exercises.

So this is even more important than being meticulous. Someone who is very meticulous not to eat onion because some tzaddik said so, should know that even more important are these three rules.

Halacha 20: The Opposite — Sitting, Holding In, Not Exercising

Speaker 1: And the opposite, says the Rambam: **"And anyone who sits idle and does not exercise"** — and someone who sits quietly.

Speaker 2: Ah, interesting. He sits quietly, so he's someone who doesn't live actively.

Speaker 1: Yes. **"Or one who delays his needs"** — that's someone who holds himself back from going out. **"Or one whose bowels are hard"** — that's someone who doesn't go out, he's in danger.

"Even if he eats good foods and takes care of himself according to medical principles" — he has eaten all the foods according to what the Rambam instructed — **"all his days will be painful and his strength will weaken"** — he will always have suffering, and his strength will become weak.

Halacha 20 (continued): Overeating — Like a Death Potion

Speaker 1: The Rambam says another rule, or a continuation of the rule — overeating (achilah gasah). Achilah gasah means one eats quickly, one eats very much at once. Too much.

Speaker 2: I think — no, it could even be that you stopped before you became completely full, but the very act of achilah gasah — eating very much at once without chewing — and eating, it means that primarily it indeed means eating too much.

Speaker 1: Achilah gasah is indeed a term from the Sages. Achilah gasah means what we call today — what do we call it today?

Speaker 2: Eating, we call it eating.

Speaker 1: Today we call it eating. Okay.

"Overeating is to every person's body like a death potion, and it is the root of all illnesses" — the root of all illnesses is overeating.

Halacha 21: Most Illnesses — From Bad Food or Too Much Food

Speaker 1: **"Most illnesses that come upon a person are only either from bad foods"** — most of all the sicknesses that come are either because he ate bad food — **"or because he fills his belly and eats excessively, even from good foods"** — or because he filled his belly and ate too much, overeating, even if he ate healthy things he ate too much.

The Verse "He Who Guards His Mouth and Tongue"

"This is what Solomon said in his wisdom: 'He who guards his mouth and his tongue guards his soul from troubles'" — this is what King Solomon said with his wisdom. A person who guards his mouth and his tongue, **"guards his soul from troubles"** — he will protect his soul from troubles.

What does this mean? In other words, says the Rambam: **"Guards his mouth — from eating bad food or from eating to satiation"** — guarding his mouth from eating too much, or bad foods or too much — **"and his tongue — from speaking except about his needs"** — eating too much and talking too much brings troubles.

So the "tongue" goes back to the earlier chapters which spoke very strongly about not talking too much.

Insight: The Mouth Is the Source of Most Problems

Speaker 2: That the body is not clogged up. Just as there it is taken — that the mouth is the source of most problems. Either one eats too much, or one eats bad foods. Either one talks too much, or one says bad things.

Speaker 1: But "troubles of his soul" seemingly also means troubles for his body, and troubles socially. When he talks too much, he gets involved with enemies, and so on. He's looked at as a fool. "His soul" doesn't necessarily mean the spiritual soul here — his soul means the entire person.

Rambam, Laws of Character Traits, Chapter 4 (continued) — Bathing, Bloodletting, and Marital Relations

Connection Back: Eating and Speaking

And speaking lashon hara means speaking what one has no need for. Eating too much and talking too much brings a lot. So the question goes back to the earlier chapters which spoke very strongly about not talking too much. Just as it says there — there it is taken — that food is the source of most problems. Either one eats too much, or one eats bad foods. So too — either one talks too much, or one says bad things. But the source is perhaps more the eating, the desires of his body and social desires — when he talks too much he has pleasure from it, and so on. Perhaps it doesn't mean specifically negative, perhaps it means his self, his himself.

Halacha 22: The Way of Bathing

The Rambam continues, up until here were the laws of eating, and now we're going to talk about washing oneself.

The Rambam says: **The way of bathing is that a person should enter the bathhouse once every seven days** — once a week one should go into the bathhouse. **And he should not enter** — when should one go to the bathhouse? One should not go — **close to eating or when he is hungry, but rather when the food begins to digest** — when the body... just as he said earlier regarding exercise.

Bathhouse vs. Shower

The bathhouse is not the shower, right? A shower is not called a bathhouse. A bathhouse is a whole affair. Essentially it means a mikveh. Going for a quick mikveh is not much more than a quick shower. Here is when one gives away time and goes into a hot and a cold one, what goes on.

Washing with Hot Water — The Head May Be Hotter

And he washes his entire body in hot water that doesn't scald the body — one washes in hot water, but not so that one gets scalded. But the head one may indeed put into very hot water — **and his head alone in hot water that would scald the body**. What for the rest of the body is too intensely hot, for the head it's fine.

This is seemingly simply because a person's head has hair — not like the Chassidish Jews who don't have hair — and it's hard to wash, just as was already said earlier, it needs to be hotter.

His head doesn't mean his head, his head means his hair. Just to be clear, when it says one washes the head, it doesn't mean

washing the head, it means washing the hair. Perhaps the beard or the hair of the head.

Gradual Descent to Cold

And afterwards he should wash his body with lukewarm water — afterwards one should wash the body with lukewarm water, not hot and not cold. **And afterwards with water cooler than the first** — even cooler. **Until he washes with cold** — until one reaches cold. But going suddenly to cold is a shock to the body, rather one should arrive at cold gradually.

And one should not pour over his head at all, neither lukewarm nor cold — one should not pour, as you said, it means washing the head, it means washing the body with hot water. But on the head alone one should not pour neither cold nor hot water. Neither lukewarm, neither medium cold, and neither very cold, no cold water at all.

Speaker 2: Clear. It stays with the very hot.

Speaker 1: It seems like the Rambam didn't want the ice bucket, whatever it's called, the cold plunge — that's not the Rambam's thing. Because **one should not wash with cold water in the rainy season** — it says in the winter one should not wash with cold water. But I also think, seemingly today the reality is different. But one sees simply, we're talking here simply that one shouldn't become frozen.

When to Go to the Bathhouse

Because **one should not wash until he sweats and his whole body is fatigued** — one should only wash after the body sweats, after one has worked hard. **And one should not linger in the bathhouse, rather when he sweats and his body is fatigued he should rinse and leave** — when he already feels weakened and he sweats, then he should wash and go out.

Halacha 23: Checking Oneself — Ten Times a Day

The Rambam continues: **And one should check oneself before entering the bathhouse and after leaving, lest he needs to relieve himself** — before going into the bathhouse, and right after leaving, one should check if one needs to go.

And similarly a person should always check himself before eating and after eating — before eating and after eating one should check.

And before marital relations and after marital relations.

And before he exerts himself and exercises and after he exerts himself — before exercising and after exercising one should try to go.

And before he sleeps and when he wakes up — before going to sleep and right when one wakes up.

All together ten — ten times a day a person should go.

Because not every day does he go to the bathhouse. But there are five things, each one twice: bathhouse, eating, marital relations, exertion, and sleep. So, yes, not necessarily every day are all ten applicable.

Discussion: Why Does One Need to Check Before and After?

Speaker 2: I need to know exactly what the concern is about going to the bathroom, what is one afraid of?

Speaker 1: Because it can — when one exercises it prevents the body from relieving itself, or when one goes to the bathhouse it will push it back, it will cause the opposite effect on the body.

Halacha 24: After Leaving the Bathhouse

The Rambam continues: **When a person leaves the bathhouse he should put on his clothes and cover his head in the outer room** — he should cover himself before he goes out to the street. **So that a cold wind should not affect him** — when he goes out from the hot bathhouse to the cold air. **And even in the summer one must be careful** — even if it's hot outside, the air is cooler than inside the bathhouse.

And he should wait after leaving until his soul settles and his body rests and the heat dissipates, and afterwards he should eat — he should wait until he calms down a bit and his body is no longer sweaty, and only afterwards should he eat.

And if he sleeps a little when he leaves the bathhouse before eating, this is very good — this he also said, I think, earlier, that one should sleep after working hard, he also mentioned earlier.

Discussion: Sleeping After the Bathhouse — Contradiction to Not Sleeping During the Day?

Speaker 2: Sleeping... right at the beginning of the section...

Speaker 1: No, he said washing with hot water.

Speaker 2: Washing with hot water. Yes. Sleeping, that's a good thing. One goes to the bathhouse, afterwards one sleeps.

Speaker 1: Earlier he said one shouldn't sleep during the day, but here he allows it after being in the intense heat.

Speaker 2: No.

Halacha 25: Not Drinking Cold Water After the Bathhouse

The Rambam continues: **A person should not drink cold water when he leaves the bathhouse** — one should not drink cold water when coming out of the bathhouse. **And it goes without saying that one should not drink in the bathhouse** — and in the bathhouse one certainly should not drink.

I don't know why this is. I don't know, the body is confused, cold inside and hot outside.

And if he is thirsty when he leaves and cannot restrain himself — if he is very thirsty — **he should mix the water with wine or honey and drink** — he should not drink cold water alone, rather he should mix it with wine or with honey.

Anointing with Oil

The Rambam says: **And if he anoints himself with oil in the bathhouse in the rainy season after rinsing, this is good** — if he smears his body with oil, that is very good. Also a nice thing. I don't know exactly why.

Halacha 26: Bloodletting

Now we come to the laws of bloodletting. There used to be such a custom, and it's not practiced today, I don't understand why.

The Rambam says as follows — he should only do... The Rambam also wasn't a huge fan. **A person should not accustom himself to let blood regularly** — one should not let blood too often, removing blood. **And one should only let blood if he needs it very much** — only if he needs it very importantly. When does one need it importantly, I don't know.

And one should not let blood neither in the summer nor in the winter — neither winter nor summer — **but only in the days of Nisan and a little in the days of Tishrei** — only twice a year should one do it.

I think that today one fulfills these two seasons when one gives a lot of blood. It costs a fortune to get through Pesach and the holidays, and one can fulfill with that the letting of blood.

Limitations of Bloodletting

And after fifty years one should not let blood at all — after fifty one should absolutely not let blood, one should not remove blood at all.

And a person should not let blood and enter the bathhouse on the same day — one should not let blood and go to the bathhouse on the same day.

And similarly one should not let blood and go on a journey, nor on the day one returns from a journey — on the day one begins going on a journey, or when one returns from a journey, one should not do bloodletting. Also seemingly because it takes away strength, so that it shouldn't...

And he should eat and drink on the day of bloodletting less than he is accustomed — on the day of bloodletting one should eat and drink even less than usual.

And he should rest on the day of bloodletting, and not exert himself or walk — one should rest, and on the day of bloodletting one should not work hard, one should not exercise, and anything that is very difficult for the body.

Discussion: Contradiction with the Gemara — Eating After Bloodletting

I remember though in the Gemara that there was a custom to eat a large meal — perhaps afterwards? To replenish the blood? The Rambam says one should eat less.

Today also, when many times I donate blood, one needs to eat afterwards — they require it, they give you something to eat right afterwards, because it's good to help the body produce the blood that's missing. Okay, not that one shouldn't eat anything at all. But not eat a large meal. Yes, one eats something. To recover a bit of strength.

A Principle: Less is More

Now he goes into the matter of marital relations. The general principle is, most things that are bodily one should do less. Aside from sleeping — the Rambam also said less, but among us the practice is to do less.

Halacha 27: Seed — The Strength of the Body

The Rambam says as follows: **Seed is the strength of the body and its life and the light of the eyes** — the seed is the strength of the body, and a part of the strength of the body, and a part of the light of one's eyes.

And whenever it goes out excessively — the more it goes out too much, if it goes out too much — we remember we learned yesterday in the halachos, in the previous chapter, "and one should not emit seed except when the body needs the

emission of seed" or something like that. There is a certain amount that needs to come out. Not too much.

And if it does come out too much, if one takes too much seed, then **the body deteriorates and his strength is consumed and his life is lost** — terrible things.

The Verse of King Solomon

This is what Solomon said in his wisdom: "Do not give your strength to women, and your ways to that which destroys kings" — don't give your strength to women.

What does **"to that which destroys kings"** mean? What is the Hebrew meaning? "To ways that erase kings." What erases kings? That which destroys kings.

Discussion: For Whom is This Relevant?

Speaker 2: And especially for kings, many times a normal person...

Speaker 1: This is a halacha... those who conduct themselves like a king, you shouldn't do things that destroy your kingdom so to speak.

Speaker 2: No, the halacha isn't really relevant for a normal person, because how does it happen that he only has one wife. A king can have a thousand wives like Solomon. So he says for Solomon, this is the thing that destroys kings.

Speaker 1: In the old days, the Rambam lived in the Arab lands, there was the practice, which one also goes that it's a custom of a thousand wives. So that was a very difficult whole situation.

Halacha 28: One Who is Steeped in Relations — The Consequences

The Rambam continues: **One who is steeped in relations** — "steeped" means he wastes, that's an expression. It means he engages in relations too often. It doesn't mean he acts like a fool, it means he is like the king.

The Rambam wrote a letter for one of the sultans there, one of the fellows, he needed to many times indeed because he had so many, he was obligated in pleasure. He had a thousand wives. Yes, so he's talking about such a situation.

List of Symptoms

Old age leaps upon him — old age jumps upon him.

And his strength weakens — his strength becomes weak. Wow, frightening, what a rebuke.

And his eyes grow dim — his eyes become dark.

And a bad smell emanates from his mouth and his armpits — a bad smell comes out from his mouth and from his elbow, from whatever, under his arm.

And the hair of his head and eyebrows and eyelashes falls out — the hair falls out from his face.

And the hair of his beard and armpits and legs increases — on the contrary, but his beard and the hair by his armpits and the hair of his legs becomes too much.

And his teeth fall out — his teeth fall out.

And many pains besides these come upon him.

Halacha 29: One in a Thousand

The wise physicians said: One in a thousand dies from other illnesses, and the thousand from excessive relations.

This is presumably an exaggeration. Seemingly, because earlier he said that most has to do with either you're not healthy, or you don't eat healthy, or you eat with excess. Seemingly, the people who have excessive relations are also not particularly restrained regarding eating — so it goes together.

So he says, "most" doesn't mean here a young married man who conducts himself as he must, he's talking about something in exaggeration. Those who fall in the one in a thousand, one cries with the one in a thousand — his mitzvos and his wife are included in all the mitzvos.

Therefore a person must be very careful in this matter if he wishes to live well — if he wants to live a good life.

Rambam, Laws of Character Traits, Chapter 4 (continued) — Laws of Marital Relations, General Health Principles, and Ten Things

Halacha 29 (continued): Laws of Marital Relations — When and How

This is presumably an exaggeration. Seemingly, because earlier he said that most has to do with either eating unhealthily, or eating in excessive amounts. Seemingly, the people who have excessive relations are also not particularly restrained regarding eating, so it goes together. So he says "most" — he doesn't mean here a young married man who conducts himself as the Mishnah Berurah prescribes, he's talking about something in exaggeration. Those who fall in the one in a thousand, one cries with the one in a thousand — his mitzvos and his wife are included in all the mitzvos.

The Rambam's Signs When the Body Requires Relations

And a person must be careful in this matter if he wishes to live well. If he wants to live a good life, he should be so careful. **And he should only have relations when he finds his body very healthy and strong** — when he finds his body healthy. **And he has frequent involuntary arousal** — and he sees that he has involuntary arousal, meaning his body demands it. **And he distracts himself to another matter** — and he sees that even when he doesn't think about anything that causes arousal, he still has arousal. Then he knows that his body — seemingly the one who says that a bit of forgetfulness, how he needs to go out — then he knows that his body demands it.

Right. You see, he's consistent with his approach. It's like another person who seeks, who takes drugs in order to have arousal — that's not what the Rambam is talking about. It's good, it's good.

And he feels heaviness from his loins downward — and he feels a certain heaviness — **as if the cords of the testicles are being pulled and his flesh is warm** — it's as if how he feels. Yes. These are the signs that he needs to have relations, **and his remedy is to have relations.**

Relations as Medicine — Not the Laws of Conjugal Obligation

But we're talking here still a whole lot about having relations as medicine. In the laws of conjugal obligation (onah) there are other rules about when one must have relations, according to

the mitzvah of marital harmony (shalom bayis). This entire halacha here is in the category of medicine.

You see the Rambam — it's necessarily the case that the Rambam is talking here about medicine alone. Separately, one may not eat matzah — as laws of chametz and matzah, there is when one must eat matzah. Once a year. But the once a year that one must eat is not eating for days. When we're talking only about the body's needs, we're not talking about eating for the occasion. That's the Rambam.

Halacha 30: When One Should Not Have Relations

And a person should not have relations — here we're talking about how one has relations, what state and mood, or long after eating. **And one should not have relations** — not when one is full, **and not when hungry** — not when one is hungry. **Rather** — after the food has already been digested in his intestines. I think that all things that strain the body, one should do after the food has already been an hour or two after eating. As is obvious. Because here it's relevant that before relations and after relations, he already said it once.

The Rambam continues: **One should not have relations** — one should not have relations standing, **nor sitting** — and not sitting. **Nor in the bathhouse, nor on the day one enters the bathhouse, nor on the day of bloodletting** — everything that weakens the body. **Nor on the day of going on a journey, nor on the day of arriving from a journey, not before them and not after them.**

Discussion: Day of Departure — Contradiction to Laws of Conjugal Obligation

So here there's immediately a big question, because the Rambam in the laws of conjugal obligation says that there is a mitzvah of onah on the day of departure for a journey.

Ah, the holy Rav says on the side that the Rambam doesn't bring this halacha. It's a Gemara, everyone remembers the Gemara, but it doesn't say so. The reason is — because the Rambam says that "visiting" her on the day of departure doesn't necessarily mean relations, rather it means he should be close with her, he should be with her, talk with her, spend time with her. It's not necessarily the actual relations. Indeed, this is what he brings — Rabbeinu Tam said this.

But it's not necessarily so. It could be that here too, the Rambam is speaking as a matter of medicine. And also "journey" can be many levels of journey. Here he's talking about such a journey where he goes on foot and exhausts himself. It's not all the same. One can't really ask such questions, even in halacha, but certainly not in medicine. We're talking about a situation that is so.

Halacha 31: "I Guarantee Him" — The Rambam's Guarantee

So the Rambam concludes this halacha, and he says as follows: **Anyone who conducts himself in these ways that we have taught, I guarantee him** — this is a tremendously powerful expression — "I guarantee him," I, the Rambam, I take responsibility — **that he will not come to any illness all his days** — he will not come to any sickness — **until he grows very old and dies** — he will die in old age, he will die old — **and he will not need a doctor** — he won't need to

come to any doctors — **and his body will remain whole and stand in its health all his days** — he will remain healthy his entire life.

Discussion: How Can the Rambam Guarantee?

Someone says the Rambam can be a guarantor. What's the problem? For example cancer, according to the Rambam also...

One minute, the holy Rambam says — rather, he gave himself three ways out:

1. Either there's a person who has — **unless his body was bad from the beginning of his creation** — yes, but he was built with a bad body, I can't be a guarantor.
2. Every person who will come tell him it didn't work, he'll tell him: if you were at the wedding on Friday — **or if he was accustomed to one of the bad habits from the beginning of his birth** — if he practices bad habits, which he had before he started following, it means he already had twenty years of bad habits. If so, indeed you're making progress, but you're creating afflictions, God forbid, and then he is gradually improving. I can't answer for that.
3. **Or if a plague or a famine comes upon the world.**

We're not talking about cancer — he's seemingly talking about the majority. But truly here one must say, this is talking about the illnesses that people bring upon themselves: over time, he gets the cholesterol, and blood pressure, the heart — yes, that's him.

Halacha 32: The Rules Are Only for Healthy People

He continues, another halacha:

But all these ways that we have mentioned are only appropriate for one who is healthy. But the sick person, or one whose limbs are ailing, or one who has practiced bad habits for many years — each one of them has different ways and practices according to their illness, as will be explained in the books of medicine.

Parallel to the Middle Path (Derech HaMemutza)

But Rabbeinu Bachya goes further, and this is a bit interesting, because it rhymes a bit with the Rambam's middle path — that if it's by way of healing, then everything is different. The Rambam speaks to healthy people, and for healthy people he says how to eat, how to conduct oneself in body and soul.

The interesting thing, however, is that here he doesn't bring the healing aspect. There, the path of healing was a part of the whole matter — it was like a fundamental law (ikkar halacha) that the Rambam brought. Here he says: I'm only telling you the law, as if only chapter one stood without chapter two.

Change of Routine is the Beginning of Illness

He continues: **"And a change of routine is the beginning of illness."** Changing one's life pattern — that is the beginning of illness.

Apparently he means to explain that someone who has conducted himself with bad habits for many years, and suddenly began doing things my way — that alone can be bad

for him. It's not so simple, and one needs to find a different way to solve the problem for him.

Halacha 33: If One Has No Doctor

He continues:

"Any place where there is no doctor, whether healthy or sick, one should not deviate from any of the ways we have mentioned in this chapter, for each one of them leads to a good outcome."

Ah, that's clear. If you have a doctor, you need to go to the doctor. You're already sick — go to the doctor and ask him what to do. If you have a doctor, you need to follow his advice.

Someone who doesn't have a doctor — whether a healthy person or a sick person — should not deviate from any of the ways we have mentioned in this chapter, for each one of them leads to a good outcome. In the end it brings good, even if it will be difficult. Very good. Perhaps the change of routine will be a bit hard for you. Right, although there is a drawback, in practice, if you have a doctor, ask the doctor — he has given you personalized guidance.

A General Principle in Character Development

This is also a general principle in serving God. These matters of serving God — you know? — the things that are good for everyone. Even someone who has a rebbe, the rebbe would have told him a bit more precisely to do things a bit differently. But if you don't have a rebbe, you don't have a doctor, then doing the general things — usually it works.

He discusses this topic at length in the Rambam in other places, because there was a great inquiry among the Rishonim regarding the Rambam — how much one can go with individualized practices, how much needs to be general rules. So the Rambam indeed said that it's very important that you should have a doctor, because the doctor can tell you personally according to your difficult situation.

So all these halachos here were relevant for every single person. Indeed, for most people it's always relevant, and for everyone it's only relevant if they don't have something better. It's better than knowing nothing.

General Conclusion of the Entire Chapter

But now the Rambam is going to say that it is indeed good to have a doctor.

What can one learn from this entire Rambam? I mean, it's very hard to derive rulings from this Rambam, but the point is that a person should keep in mind — keep the body a bit in mind, not wait until one gets sick. Keep the body in mind, and listen to the body, don't overeat.

But the general principle was quite simple:

- Eat less
- Exercise more
- Sleep more
- Less marital relations if one will become weak from it
- Be a strong person who conquers his inclination, and not eat every food one encounters

The general principle is — everyone agrees. But it's certainly true in general that we eat nowadays a lot, a lot more than

people used to eat, and it's a very big problem. Enough.

And if one is already past that point, one can go to the doctor to get, what's it called, the new thing. And if he's uncertain, he doesn't know — he can go to the beis din who will give him a good smack.

Halacha 34: Ten Things — A Torah Scholar Must Live in a City with a Doctor

This is interesting. And this last piece really — doesn't belong here, but because the word "doctor" appears here, the Rambam found in this an actual halacha. This is an expansion — I have a few of these — but it's really like a halacha, he found here such a halacha. Until now it was seemingly — you're right — these things also appear in the Gemara, but primarily in chapter four he sees that it's really a halacha: a Torah scholar may not live in a city that doesn't have a doctor. Perhaps this is also the introduction to the next section which will discuss the Torah scholar.

The Gemara in Sanhedrin

The Rambam concludes with a — I mean it's a statement of the Sages — yes, this is a Gemara in Sanhedrin. The Gemara says there:

"Any city that does not have these ten things, a Torah scholar is not permitted to dwell in it."

A city that doesn't have these ten things — a Torah scholar may not live there.

The Ten Things

What are the ten things?

1. **A doctor (rofeh)** — First is a doctor. It's interesting — besides the ten idlers (asara batlanim), there need to be ten non-idlers.

2. **A craftsman (uman)** — Uman means... There are commentators who say rofeh and uman are one thing, like a skilled doctor. Or a rofeh means a doctor who tells you how to be healthy, and uman means a skilled doctor — a doctor who can heal illnesses. Perhaps uman means, as many times today one means uman as an artist. They said there needs to be an artist — every city needs to have someone who plays guitar and paints? But I remember in the Gemara, usually uman means... ah, Rashi says — he brings Rashi — uman: a bloodletter. Like a dentist. It's not a doctor, it's someone who does certain medical procedures, but not exactly a doctor. There are other commentators who investigate the meaning of the Gemara and say that uman means a mohel. That could also be. A mohel and a bloodletter basically do the same job — it's a cut, he moves on. It's not a doctor who knows things more deeply.

3. **A bathhouse (beis hamerhatz)**

4. **A latrine (beis hakisei)** — Because one may not hold oneself back. The entire city needs to have a latrine.

5. **Available water (mayim metzuyin)** — There should be fresh water.

6. **A synagogue (beis haknesses)**

7. **A children's teacher (melamed tinokos)**

8. **A scribe (lavlar)** — A writer who can make a contract, or write in general... I mean a sofer, or it means writing a

mezuzah perhaps. Or a sofer in general. It could be both — writing holy books.

9. **A charity collector (gabbai tzedakah)** — To be able to distribute charity.

Discussion: What Does "Gabbai" Mean?

Perhaps gabbai is from the word goveh — he collects? He collects the charity — he takes. Giving a donation anyone can give, grabbing... but he says that he can take with power. Right. Gabbai tzedakah doesn't mean just someone who goes after money. It means there's someone who makes sure to take money from those from whom money needs to be taken. Those who are truly charity collectors are quite something.

What does he say about the wealthy? In their times they had to hit them. We're nicer, we even give them honor too, but... very good. They shouldn't come through here and hit.

10. **A court that can administer lashes and imprison (beis din makin v'chovshin)** — This is the tenth thing. A court that has the power to give lashes.

Discussion: What Does "Chovshin" Mean?

What is a court? What is hitting? And chovesh — does it mean he puts in prison? What does chovesh mean? He places a restraining order, apparently? He can compel.

Very important that a city should have this. And if not, one cannot live in that city.

Why Does the Rambam Bring This Here?

All in all, the reason the Rambam brings this here is because of the first one — because of the doctor.

Hilchos De'os Chapter 4 (Continued) — Conclusion of the Chapter: The Rambam's Halachic Status of Health Practices

Ozempic and the Belzer — A Humorous Remark

He gave you, what's it called, the new thing? Ozempic. And if it doesn't help, you can go to the Belzer who gives out good smacks.

Halacha 34: "Doctor" — An Actual Halacha

Okay, this is interesting. Because this last piece doesn't belong here. But because the word "doctor" appears, the Rambam found that it's actually a halacha. But it really is like a halacha. He found here such a halacha.

Novel Point: The Distinction Between the Earlier Halachos and Halacha 34

Until now it was seemingly somewhat justified that these things also appear in the Gemara. But primarily with halacha 34 one sees that this is truly a halacha. **"Any city that does not have these ten things, a Torah scholar is not permitted to dwell in it"** — a Torah scholar may not live...

Introduction to the Next Chapter

It's perhaps also the introduction to the next section, "as is known" regarding the Torah scholar.

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