

Laws of Repentance, Chapter 4 (Auto Translated)

English

Auto Translated

Shiur Overview

Summary of Hilchos Teshuva Chapter 4

General Overview and Introduction to the Chapter

The Structure of Hilchos Teshuva – Ten Chapters

The Rambam states in his introduction: "**Hilchos Teshuva, and additional fundamental principles of faith are included with them.**" The ten chapters are divided:

- **Chapters 1-4:** Hilchos Teshuva proper – laws of regret, confession, weighing sins, impediments to teshuva.
- **Chapters 5-10:** Fundamental principles of faith connected to teshuva – free will, reward and punishment, principles of religion.

Chapter 4 is the "last" of the teshuva section – it is the final, lowest level of teshuva-laws, dealing with things that make one "stuck" in one's sins.

Review of Previous Chapters – Relevant to Chapter 4

In **Chapter 3**, the Rambam dealt with people about whom Chazal say "they have no portion in the World to Come," with two categories:

1. People who literally have no portion in the World to Come (heretics, those who oppress the Jewish people, those who sin brazenly) – for them teshuva is nearly impossible.
2. People about whom Chazal use the language "they have no portion in the World to Come" to emphasize the severity of the matter (one who publicly shames another, lashon hara), but it is to arouse awareness of how hard one must work on teshuva.

Chapter 4 continues to an even lower level – **things that impede teshuva** – things that a person thinks are not so dangerous, but in truth they are very serious.

The Concept of "Hargil Bahem" – The Rambam's Innovation (Chapter 3, Relevant to Chapter 4)

The Rambam added to the things that result in "no portion in the World to Come" the condition: "**hargil bahem**" – not someone who does it once, but someone who is habituated in it. This is a condition that the Rambam adds, which is not explicit in the Gemara. The explanation is: through habituation a person becomes a "bad person" – he acquires a bad character trait (as the Rambam teaches in Hilchos Deos regarding habituation).

Distinction between "habituation" and "yad ramah":

- **Yad ramah** is chutzpah, rebellion against the Kingdom – this can be even once, when someone does it with chutzpah.
- **Habituation** is a different problem: the person "cuts out" the sin from his consciousness, he doesn't reckon with it at all – "**it becomes permitted to him.**" He becomes stuck, it becomes difficult for him to separate (like "avar v'shana bah"). "It becomes permitted to him" can mean a bit of heresy (he holds it's permitted), or just that he's stuck and can't tear himself away.

Example: Regarding lashon hara, the Rambam says "ba'al lashon hara" – not someone who speaks lashon hara

sometimes, but a "lashon hara person." In Hilchos Deos, the Rambam also makes this distinction between "speaking lashon hara" and "**establishing oneself to speak lashon hara.**"

General Structure of Chapter 4

The impediments to teshuva are things where the person becomes "such a type of person" – he becomes stuck in his sins. This fits with the general structure of Hilchos Teshuva: the Rambam gradually moves from "one must do teshuva for sins" to "**one must become a better person.**" This is confirmed by the fact that at the end of Chapter 4, the Rambam lists eight character traits (shemonah deos) that one should conduct oneself with – teshuva is not just stopping an action, but becoming a different person.

Halacha 1 – "Twenty-Four Things Impede Teshuva"

Rambam: "Twenty-four things impede teshuva."

Explanation

Twenty-four things hold back / make teshuva difficult.

Innovations and Explanations

1) What does "impede" mean?

Two approaches are discussed:

- **Impede = delay:** It takes longer, it's harder, but one can still do teshuva. This is not "prevent" (completely blocking).
- **Impede = condition** (like with a sacrifice, where an impediment means without it it's not valid): perhaps it means that even if he does teshuva with all the laws, if he did the sin, it doesn't help.

Conclusion: The Rambam understands "impede" as **delay** – it makes teshuva take longer and be harder, not that it's impossible. This is confirmed at the end of Halacha 4 where the Rambam says explicitly: "**Even though they impede teshuva, they do not prevent teshuva.**"

2) Which teshuva are we talking about?

Here we're talking about **general teshuva** – becoming a better person, not just stopping one specific thing. But even for this person one can distinguish: (a) stopping a certain sin, (b) broader teshuva – becoming a servant of Hashem.

3) Source of the list – Rif in Maseches Yoma

The Kesef Mishneh and others search for the source of the 24 things. **The Rif in Maseches Yoma brings the list**, but one hasn't found a clear Baraisa or Gemara that is the source. It was thought to be a Baraisa, but the Rambam himself in a responsum writes that he doesn't know whether the Rif compiled it himself or not. The Rambam says: **part of these things stand explicitly in Mishnah and Talmud, and others can be learned "with clear explanation" – kal vachomer from what is stated.**

4) The Rambam's own work – categorization

The Rambam didn't simply reprint the Rif's list. He:

- Explained what is wrong with each thing

- Explained why it is "as if it impedes teshuva"

- **Made his own categories** (four such, five such, etc.) – this doesn't appear in the Rif, this is the Rambam's innovation.

This is compared to Hilchos Talmud Torah, where the Rambam also took a list of 24 things (24 things for which one is liable to excommunication) from Chazal, but there the number 24 itself is from Chazal. **Here the number 24 is from the Rif, but the internal categories are the Rambam's own.**

First Category: "Four of Them Are Great Sins" (Halachos 2-3)

Rambam: "Four of them are great sins, and one who does one of them – the Holy One Blessed Be He does not enable him to do teshuva because of the magnitude of his sin."

Explanation

Four of the 24 are great sins, and the Almighty doesn't help the person do teshuva, because of the magnitude of his sin.

Innovations and Explanations

1) What does "Hashem doesn't enable him" mean?

Usually, when someone wants to do teshuva, he receives Divine assistance – **"One who comes to purify himself is helped."** The Almighty gives good thoughts, people are aroused to teshuva. **For these four sins the person doesn't receive this help** – he must work harder on teshuva himself. "Enable him" doesn't mean it's impossible – the Almighty doesn't prevent him from doing teshuva – he just doesn't receive any help. He can still do teshuva, but he must work harder.

Divine assistance for teshuva is "conducive to teshuva" – the Almighty gives people good thoughts, people are aroused during the Days of Awe. For these sins this doesn't come.

a) One Who Causes the Masses to Sin

Rambam: "One who causes the masses to sin, and included in this sin is one who prevents the masses from performing a mitzvah."

Explanation: Someone who makes the masses sin, or someone who holds back the masses from doing a mitzvah.

Innovations:

- **Distinction between "causes the masses to sin" in Chapter 3 and here:** In Chapter 3 (regarding "no portion in the World to Come") it's presumably a more severe case – someone who stands "brazenly" against the Jewish people and the Torah. **Here** it can be on a much lighter level – for example, someone who talks loudly during davening and the whole shul therefore doesn't daven well. This is also "causing the masses to sin" but on a lower level.

- **"Prevents the masses from performing a mitzvah" – what does this mean practically?** It can also mean: a group of Jews want to daven with concentration and he disturbs their concentration; or people want to make a minyan in town and he doesn't join the project. He doesn't make anyone do a sin, but he doesn't join the mitzvah-project.

- **Measure for measure:** The one who causes the masses to sin is the opposite of one who returns people in teshuva – he is a "returner in error." Therefore it's measure for measure that "they don't enable him to do teshuva."

b) One Who Turns His Friend from the Good Path to the Bad Path

Rambam: "One who turns his friend from the good path to the bad path, such as an enticer and misleader."

Explanation: Even for one individual – he makes him from a good person to a bad person.

Innovations:

- **Distinction between masses and individual:** For masses even a smaller sin is enough (preventing a mitzvah, disturbing davening). For an individual it must be a **much harsher** thing – he literally ruins him, from the good path to the bad path. Not just one sin, but he corrupts the whole person.

- **"Such as an enticer and misleader" – not necessarily idolatry:** Here he means someone who is "similar" to an enticer – he is a bad friend who makes a good boy become a bad boy. An enticer to idolatry (which was already dealt with as even more severe – no teshuva or atonement) is a higher level.

- **Source from Tosefta Nedarim:** The Rambam brings a kal vachomer from the property of an apostate city that is burned – which is specifically connected to an enticer and misleader.

c) One Who Sees His Son Going in a Bad Direction and Doesn't Protest

Rambam: "One who sees his son going in a bad direction and doesn't protest... since his son is in his authority, if he had protested he would have separated, and it turns out as if he caused him to sin."

Explanation: A father who sees his child going in a bad direction and doesn't hold him back – because the child is in his authority, it's as if he caused him to sin.

Innovations:

- **"Bad direction" – explanation:** "Tarbut" is like "increase" – he grows up in bad things, he seeks to immerse himself in bad things tomorrow. Not that the father actively makes him bad, but he doesn't hold him back from making himself bad.

- **"His son is in his authority" – the key:** Specifically because the child is in your authority, you have the responsibility. For another person one doesn't have the same responsibility. **But** – if the son is already "out of his authority" (he's already grown enough), then it doesn't count. The Rambam brings the Gemara that "one who strikes his adult son violates 'before the blind.'"

- **Practical mussar:** Often people don't grasp that their children are still "in their authority" – that the father can say one word to him and he will stop going with bad friends. One says "it's not my fault, he has bad friends" – but if you can protest, you're obligated.

d) In This Category – Anyone Who Can Protest

Rambam: "In this category, anyone who can protest others, whether masses or individuals, and doesn't protest but leaves them in their stumbling."

Explanation: Anyone who has power over other people and can protest them, and he doesn't do it – falls into the same category.

Innovation: Through this one better understands the principle of "impedes teshuva" — it doesn't only apply to your own child, but to every person who is in your sphere of influence.

General Explanation — Why Do These First Three Things "Impede Teshuva"?

- **Simple reason:** Even if you do teshuva, that other person hasn't yet done teshuva. Your teshuva is not complete as long as that person is still in sin. The path to teshuva is: go and return the masses, the individual, your son in teshuva. But as long as you don't do that — a major condition is missing in your teshuva.

- **Distinction between "difficult" and "impossible":** Later the Rambam will have a category of things that are difficult because it's many people (but one can accomplish it). **Here** it's a deeper impediment — with "from good path to bad path" or "bad direction" it's literally a miracle to be able to turn a person around. It's not just difficult to find many people, but the very process of returning a corrupted person in teshuva is almost impossible.

- **"They don't allow him to do teshuva" — what does this mean?** Not just that it's difficult to fix the specific sin. **The Almighty doesn't let him do teshuva in general** — he comes to Yom Kippur, he wants to become better, but he doesn't receive any arousal. All Jews receive arousal on Yom Kippur, and the one who causes the masses to sin doesn't receive it.

d) One Who Says "I Will Sin and Repent, I Will Sin and Yom Kippur Will Atone"

Rambam: "One who says 'I will sin and repent'... in this category is one who says 'I will sin and Yom Kippur will atone.'"

Explanation: Someone who uses teshuva or Yom Kippur as a motivation to sin — he thinks "let me sin, I can do teshuva afterwards" — for him teshuva is not serious.

Innovations:

- **Why it impedes:** For this person teshuva is a "joke" — he sins **with** the teshuva. His teshuva is not serious because he's already planning to sin again. The Almighty doesn't take such teshuva seriously.

- **Rambam's language:** The Rambam says: **"Hashem will not help to accomplish on Yom Kippur what he fears will be atoned for."** This means: the Almighty doesn't simply forgive on Yom Kippur — the Almighty **helps** so that on Yom Kippur one should have presence of mind and be able to do teshuva. For this person the Almighty won't help — precisely on Yom Kippur he'll have a crisis, he won't have presence of mind, he won't receive any arousal.

- **Distinction from the Gemara in Yoma:** The Gemara in Yoma says "I will sin and repent, I will sin and repent" — **twice** — and the reason is "one who transgresses and repeats it, it becomes permitted to him." It seems from the Gemara that the explanation is that he has already sinned twice, then it becomes difficult. **The Rambam doesn't bring this explanation** — he learns that even **once** "I will sin and repent" is enough — the very plan to sin based on teshuva is an impediment.

- **What is "real 'I will sin and repent'"?** "Real 'I will sin and repent'" means: he sins **on the plan** to do teshuva — that is, the teshuva is the reason why he sins. This is **not** the same

as someone who does teshuva and falls back — that's a weakness, but not "I will sin and repent." With "I will sin and repent" the teshuva itself is the instrument for the sin.

- **Distinction between "despising the sin" and "recognizing one's limitations":** Someone who says "I will repent and sin" (teshuva first, then sin) is specifically **recognizing his limitations** — he knows he's a person who falls quickly. This is a different kind of thing than despising the sin. The one who despises the sin — the Almighty says "I won't give you teshuva to do." But the one who recognizes his weaknesses is in a different category.

Second Category: "Five Things That... Block the Paths of Teshuva Before Him" (Halacha 4)

Rambam: "Five things that impede teshuva for those who do them"

Explanation

These are not great sins themselves, but things that **block the door of teshuva** — they make it very difficult to do teshuva. Like a heavy door that one must work very hard to break open.

a) One Who Separates from the Community

Rambam: "One who separates from the community... therefore when they do teshuva he won't be with them."

Explanation: Someone who separates himself from the community. When the community does teshuva — at a teshuva gathering, at words of rebuke, at forgiveness and atonement — he's not there, and he can't merit the merits of the community.

Innovations:

1. **This doesn't mean only an extreme separatist** like an apostate or wicked person (as learned in another section). Even someone who doesn't go to shul when there's an arousal gathering, or when the rabbi gives mussar — this is also included in "separates from the community" in this context.

2. **"When they merit, they will say in the booths of the doers"** — you don't merit the merits that the community does. When sinning with the world you were there (in the restaurant where everyone is gathered), but at teshuva you're not there?

3. **Even "shetibel Jews" or pious groups** who consider themselves individuals — they also lose something from this. Because the world sometimes makes agreements (enactments), and you're not there. Everyone must do certain communal enactments.

4. **Practical conclusion:** One who goes to **every mussar lecture** has very strong teshuva, because he takes advantage of all opportunities for teshuva. One who only goes to shul on Yom Kippur loses most opportunities.

5. **But also the reverse:** It can be someone who is "too much community" — he only goes to be there, but he never does teshuva himself. He's already a "real shame."

b) One Who Disputes the Words of the Sages

Rambam: "And one who disputes the words of the sages... because his dispute causes him to separate from them."

Explanation: Someone who argues with the words of the sages. His dispute causes him to go away from them, and he won't know the paths of teshuva.

Innovations:

1. **"Disputes" doesn't mean he argues or fights.** It means like "disputes his master's authority" — he makes his own yeshiva, his own path. Every time the rabbi gives words of rebuke, the preacher gives words of arousal — he dismisses it, he makes dispute, he goes away.

2. **The distinction between "separates from the community" and "disputes the words of the sages":** Both are similar, but "separates from the community" is separated from the community, and "disputes the words of the sages" is specifically separated **from the sages**. In his own yeshiva one can't teach him the Shulchan Aruch of teshuva as well.

c) One Who Despises the Mitzvos

Rambam: "One who despises the mitzvos... since they are despised in his eyes, behold he pursues them and doesn't leave them. And if he doesn't leave them, what will he merit?"

Explanation: Someone who mocks mitzvos and doesn't take them seriously. He perhaps doesn't even transgress the mitzvos, but they're not important to him. When one despises a mitzvah, one runs after the sin and doesn't leave it, and therefore one can't do teshuva.

Innovations:

1. **The distinction between someone who falls through and someone who despises:** Someone who knows that tefillin is holy, he knows all the virtues, but he sometimes falls through — he will do teshuva and start again. But someone who says "it's not so important to put on tefillin" — he has despised the mitzvah, and he blocks for himself the paths of teshuva.

2. **A person only does teshuva on things he remembers are important.** The things he has already mocked — on that he won't do teshuva.

3. **Special innovation regarding mitzvos whose virtue is teshuva:** Mitzvos like blowing the shofar, which the Rambam learned earlier that its virtue is to arouse teshuva — if someone says "shofar? It's just a custom, not so important" — he won't merit not only the mitzvah itself, but also what the mitzvah does (arouses teshuva).

4. **Even if he will do teshuva, but on all the mitzvos he is contemptuous of** he won't do teshuva. He'll come to shul and remember that faith in Hashem is important, but the mitzvos he's contemptuous of — on those he won't do teshuva. **His teshuva won't be complete.** This fits with the principle that teshuva doesn't just mean stopping doing sins, but "purifying from sins" — becoming a better person.

d) One Who Despises His Teachers

Rambam: "One who despises his teachers... causes them to push him away and abandon him... as happened to Yeshu and Geichazi."

Explanation: Someone who despises his rabbis. This causes the rabbis — who are also people — not to draw him close, not to arouse him, to push him away. As happened with Yehoshua (ben Perachya) and Geichazi, who had great rabbis but because they despised their rabbis, their rabbis couldn't bring them back.

Innovations:

1. **The rabbis are also not angels — "they are human beings."** When a student doesn't come with proper respect, the rabbis will push him away — not because they're bad, but because that's how it works.

2. **The Rambam doesn't only blame the rabbis.** The Gemara (Sotah 47a) says "always let the left hand push away and the right hand draw near, not like Yehoshua ben Perachya who pushed away Yeshu the Nazarene with both hands, and not like Elisha who pushed away Geichazi with both hands" — the Gemara blames the rabbis that they didn't draw near. **But the Rambam says the student is also to blame**, because he started by despising the rabbi.

3. **There can be people who did greater sins than Yehoshua and Geichazi**, but because they didn't despise their rabbis, their rabbis were able to return them in teshuva. **But once one despises the rabbis — even with just a small thing** — one doesn't have anyone to bring him back.

4. **Practical halacha:** It emerges how much one must cleave to one's rabbis, to the sages, to the community.

e) One Who Hates Rebuke

Rambam: "One who hates rebuke... doesn't leave him a path of teshuva... for when one informs a person of his sins and embarrasses him, it causes him teshuva."

Explanation: Someone who hates when he's given mussar. He doesn't let his rabbi give him mussar, he doesn't let people show him his weaknesses. Rebuke causes teshuva — when one informs a person about his sins and embarrasses him, it causes teshuva. But if he doesn't allow it, he can't do teshuva.

Innovations:

1. **The Rambam doesn't say one must love rebuke.** What is rebuke? One embarrasses you, one reminds you of your deficiencies. Why shouldn't one hate it? Because it reminds you of your deficiencies and this causes you to correct yourself.

2. **Proofs from Torah that rebuke causes teshuva:** The Rambam brings verses:

- "Remember, don't forget that you angered Hashem your God in the desert"

- "You were rebellious with Hashem"

- "And Hashem didn't give you a heart to know and eyes to see"

- "A foolish and unwise people" — Moshe Rabbeinu gives mussar to the Jews

- Yeshayahu: "Woe sinful nation, people heavy with iniquity, corrupt children"

- Yeshayahu: "An ox knows its owner... but Israel doesn't know, My people doesn't understand" — an ox recognizes gratitude to its owner, and Jews don't

- "And I knew that you are stubborn and your neck is an iron sinew and your forehead is brass" — stubbornness and brazenness

- "Call out with your throat, don't hold back, raise your voice like a shofar" — the Almighty commands Yeshayahu to cry out to the Jews their sins

3. **A question and answer:** If most people hate rebuke, why does the Torah itself obligate "hammering" at the Jews? **Answer:** The Torah itself — which Jews love — shows through its own rebuke that this is not because the Almighty

hates the Jews, but because He wants them to do teshuva. The Torah's rebuke is a model for how rebuke should work.

Obligation of Rebuke — The Rebuker

Rambam: "Therefore it's necessary to establish in every Jewish community a great sage and elder and God-fearing from his youth and beloved to them, who will rebuke the masses and return them in teshuva."

Explanation: In every community one must establish a great sage, an elder, God-fearing from youth, who is beloved by the people, he should rebuke the community and return them in teshuva.

Innovations:

- The rebuker must be "**beloved to them**" — beloved by the people. This is a condition in rebuke.

- "**And this one who hates rebukes... therefore he will stand in his sins which in his eyes are good**" — the one who hates rebukes, doesn't come to classes, doesn't hear words of Torah, remains with his sins because in his eyes they are good. He convinces himself that no one knows better than him.

- **All five things of the second category are essentially connected to pride** — everyone takes his mitzvot seriously but dismisses what he doesn't want to hear.

- [Digression:] There used to be a special position of a "maggid" or "rebuker" in town. Nowadays this is almost nonexistent. The Gemara is quoted: "**If there is in this generation one who knows how to rebuke**" — one must find someone who is a **lover of the community** and can rebuke. A story is mentioned about the Vilna Gaon and the Tzanzer Rav who sought someone to give them mussar. The point: for someone in a position of power it's very difficult to find a rebuker. Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai said one must also give him mussar.

Third Category: "Five Things... It's Impossible for Him to Do Complete Teshuva" — Sins Between Man and His Fellow (Halacha 5)

Rambam: "And of them five things, one who does them it's impossible for him to do complete teshuva, because they are sins between man and his fellow and he doesn't know his fellow that he sinned against him so that he can return and return to him what he stole or oppressed or forgive him."

Explanation

Another group of five things — here the problem is that they are sins between man and his fellow, but one doesn't know who the fellow is, so one can't ask his forgiveness. One can do teshuva, but not **complete teshuva**.

Innovations (General)

With all sins between man and his fellow it's difficult, because one doesn't know for sure that the other will forgive (one can even go to the grave). But here it's **very difficult** — one can't even do the minimum of asking forgiveness, because one doesn't know who the injured party is. With a regular sin between man and his fellow, even if the other doesn't forgive, one has at least made one's effort. Here even that is missing.

a) One Who Curses the Masses

Rambam: "One who curses the masses, and didn't curse a known person so that he can return to him

and ask him to forgive him."

Innovations:

- When one curses a specific person, one can go ask his forgiveness. But when one curses a whole group (masses), one can't ask forgiveness from each individual.

- **Innovation (humorously):** If one curses, at least curse a specific person, so one can do teshuva! This shows that general curses are in a certain sense worse — and also "cowardly" — because one doesn't take responsibility for a specific person.

b) One Who Partners with a Thief

Rambam: "One who partners with a thief, because he doesn't know whose theft this is, but the thief steals from the masses and brings to him and he takes."

Innovations:

- The partner with the thief is not himself the thief, but the one who buys from him, launders his money, shares with him — he is the "laundry" for the thief.

- **Two reasons why teshuva is difficult:** (a) **Practically** — he doesn't know from whom the theft is, because the thief steals from many people. The thief himself presumably has a list of his victims, but the partner knows nothing. (b) **Causes the masses to sin** — he is **strengthening the hand of the thief**, he helps the thief continue to sin.

- **Innovation:** Here one sees that "**causes to sin**" **doesn't only mean when one makes someone sin, but also when one helps him in his sinning**. The thief is already an existing thief — the partner doesn't make him a thief, but he strengthens his hand.

- There's a **prohibition of "before the blind"** — a principle in the laws of theft that one may not buy a stolen item. In a certain way this is worse than theft itself, because one can't do teshuva.

c) One Who Finds a Lost Object and Doesn't Announce It

Rambam: "One who finds a lost object and doesn't announce it to return it to its owner... after time when he does teshuva he doesn't know to whom to return."

Innovations:

- Overall it's a positive commandment (and negative commandment) of returning a lost object, but practically teshuva is difficult because after time one no longer knows to whom to return.

- **Practical advice:** Therefore one must **immediately announce**, because then perhaps the owner of the lost object will come. Ten years later one will no longer know who it was.

d) One Who Robs the Poor, Orphans, and Widows

Rambam: "One who robs the poor and the orphans and the widows... these people are solitary, and wander from city to city and have no acquaintance, so that the robber knows whose this is and returns it to him."

Innovations:

- The Rambam describes the poor, orphans, and widows as "**solitary**" — lonely, unfortunate people without an address, without publicity, without stability. They wander from city to city, no one knows them. Therefore the robber can't know from whom he stole.

- **Innovation:** With a regular householder in shul with an address one knows to whom to return. But poor orphans and

widows — besides that there's extra severity because they're special mitzvos (you shall not oppress any widow or orphan), it's also **practically** impossible to find them.

- [Digression:] This shows how pitiful the old times were — poor orphans and widows were wandering people without stability. But also today this can be — a widow who clings to various people, an orphan who ends up on the street.

e) One Who Accepts a Bribe to Pervert Justice

Rambam: "One who accepts a bribe to pervert justice."

Innovations:

- **The main innovation:** Not only is bribery a prohibition, but teshuva is almost impossible. Why? Because **"a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise"** — once he took a bribe, he has **lost clear thinking**. He no longer knows at all what the true ruling should have been. He convinces himself that he knows the truth, but he can no longer think objectively.

- **Innovation (depth):** It can actually be that the one who gave the bribe was **partially right**. But after bribery one can no longer calculate what percentage of the ruling was truth and how much was distorted by the bribe. He is *****over**

turns in his favor*** — he turns everything to that person's benefit, but doesn't know how much is legitimate. This makes teshuva practically impossible — he can't reverse the ruling because he doesn't know what the correct ruling would have been.

- [Digression:] This problem of bribery also exists in broader contexts — a rosh yeshiva who takes in money from wealthy donors and isn't fair between students, this is also a form of bribery/bias. He will no longer even remember that he wasn't fair.

- **General innovation regarding bribery:** With bribery there's a double problem — the one who takes a bribe has a great sin, but the one who **gives** a bribe also transgresses: (a) prohibition to give a bribe, (b) "strengthens his hand" — he helps the bribe-taker sin, (c) "causes to sin" — he makes the other sin. The Rambam's principle: every sin that requires two people to do, the second is a "causer to sin" — this is a sin in itself. But it seems that the "causer to sin" aspect the Rambam only adds as a **branch** (addition).

Fourth Category: "Five Things... One Who Does Them Imagines in His Soul That This Is Not a Sin" (Halacha 4, Continuation)

Rambam: "Things that one who does them... imagines in his soul that this is not a sin."

Explanation

These are sins that people consider trivial and therefore don't do teshuva. The problem with all five things is that people don't grasp that it's a sin, so one doesn't do teshuva.

a) One Who Eats from a Meal That Is Insufficient for Its Owner

Innovations:

- Someone who eats at a poor person's home who invited him but really doesn't have enough. This is essentially a matter of theft — because the host didn't really transfer ownership of the food, but said it "without choice" (out of necessity), and the person "imagines he didn't sin."

- [Digression:] Tzaddikim found a way out of this — when a poor person invited them, they said "the doctor doesn't let me eat," and it was said that "the Rambam (as a doctor) doesn't let one eat from a voluntary meal."

b) One Who Uses the Collateral of a Poor Person

Innovations:

- "Avot" means collateral, like the verse "you shall surely return to him the collateral." When a rich person gives a golden item as collateral, one won't use it or one will pay for the depreciation. But with a poor person's collateral — an axe, a plow, cheap utensils — the person thinks "what will happen?" But with each use it becomes a bit less valuable, and he is stealing a small theft from the poor person.

c) "And You Shall Not Follow After Your Heart and After Your Eyes" — Looking at Forbidden Relations

Innovations:

- The person thinks he didn't sin because he wasn't intimate, didn't touch, didn't do any closeness to forbidden relations. But he doesn't know that "seeing with the eyes is a great sin" — the looking itself is a sin, "because it causes the actual forbidden act."

- **Important innovation:** The Rambam says "great sin" — but "great" here means "relatively" — great because it leads to the actual deed. It's like the dust of theft, the dust of lashon hara — the severity is specifically because it's a small thing, and because it's a small thing the person thinks it's nothing, and this leads to the severity regarding teshuva. Even if he didn't actually stumble, he must do teshuva on the looking itself, **before it comes to the deed**.

d) One Who Takes Honor Through His Friend's Disgrace

Innovations:

- The Rambam already brought this regarding "no portion in the World to Come." The innovation here: he's not a wicked person who loves to cause pain to others. He simply seeks honor. His method is — he's not as smart as the rabbi or Torah scholar, but he's smarter than the ignoramus, so he always makes a contrast — he asks the ignoramus, he's stronger than the weaker one. He thinks it's not a sin because he doesn't actively do bad — **"in his heart there is no sin, and he won't be proud of it and won't be ashamed"** — he feels nothing. He just compares "his good deeds and wisdom opposite his friend's deeds and wisdom."

- [Digression:] This is connected to the habit of criticizing others — when one criticizes another, it's often because "this way he likes himself much better." It's a sin of humility — instead of being proud and saying "I'm better," he criticizes the other.

e) One Who Suspects the Innocent

Innovations:

- This doesn't mean he explicitly accuses them — **"in his mind"** — he thinks in his heart badly about the other. "He will think in his thought perhaps they sinned, perhaps he was contemptuous." He says "it could be." The sin is: **"he establishes an innocent person in his mind as a sinner"** — he places a good person in his head as a sinner. This is a "sin in character" — he looks down on people.

- **Innovation in judging favorably:** Here it seems that "judging unfavorably" doesn't only mean in action (how one deals with the other), but even in thought — a person may not

think badly about another without evidence. This has to do with revenge and bearing a grudge — how one speaks about people has everything to do with how one judges them.

- **Comparison between taking honor through friend's disgrace and suspecting the innocent:** It's almost the same thing — taking honor through friend's disgrace he does it for other people (external), suspecting the innocent is for himself (internal). Both come from the fact that he considers himself better than others.

Fifth Category: "Five Things... A Person Is Drawn After Them" — Bad Character Traits (Halacha 4, End)

Rambam: "And five things, one who does them it's impossible for him to do complete teshuva, because they are sins that a person is drawn after them and they are light in his eyes, and he thinks it's not a sin... therefore a person must be careful of them lest he cling to them, and these are very bad character traits."

Explanation

These are bad character traits that are "addictive" — one is drawn into them, they become "sticky" — sticky, contagious. A person must very carefully watch whether he's already caught in this.

Innovations and Explanations

The Rambam lists:

1. **Talebearing** — carrying and bringing negative information from one to another.
2. **Lashon hara** — the Rambam already said that a ba'al lashon hara has no portion in the World to Come. The innovation here: from "plain" lashon hara one becomes a ba'al lashon hara — this is the "drawn" aspect. From simple lashon hara one becomes a "ba'al" lashon hara — one begins to enjoy it, it becomes a reality, a part of the person's identity, and this makes teshuva harder.
3. **Ba'al chemah** — a person who is always angry.
4. **Ba'al machshavos ra'os** — this doesn't mean sinful thoughts in the classic sense (between man and God), but bad thoughts of **between man and his fellow** — jealousy, desire, honor, pride. All things in the fifth category are between man and his fellow matters, character traits that relate to how one treats other people.
5. **One who befriends a wicked person — so he will learn from his deeds and they will be inscribed in his heart, as Shlomo says "and one who shepherds fools**

will be broken." — someone who spends time with fools becomes bad himself.

General innovation: All five things in the last category stem from **Hilchos Deos**. The Rambam himself says: **"We have already explained in Hilchos Deos things that every person must conduct himself with always"** — I already spoke of all these things in Hilchos Deos. Ba'al chemah is in Chapter 2 (against anger), one who befriends a wicked person is there at length, ba'al bad thought is also there. The Rambam makes a connection: the bad character traits that he already described in Hilchos Deos as things one must avoid in general, are also specifically impediments to teshuva.

End of Halacha 4 — The Rambam's Conclusion

Rambam: "All these things and similar to them, even though they impede teshuva, they don't prevent teshuva, rather if a person does teshuva from them behold he is a ba'al teshuva, and he has a portion in the World to Come."

Explanation

All 24 things, although they make teshuva harder and longer, they don't prevent teshuva entirely. If a person does do teshuva from them, he becomes a ba'al teshuva and has a portion in the World to Come.

Innovations and Explanations

- **The distinction between "impede" and "prevent":** "Impede" means it makes it harder, it slows down, it takes longer. "Prevent" means it blocks entirely. The Rambam makes clear that nothing prevents teshuva — the Almighty always accepts teshuva.
- **The word "ba'al":** The person goes from being a "ba'al chemah" or "ba'al lashon hara" to becoming a **"ba'al teshuva"** — the same word "ba'al" (ownership, identity) is turned from bad to good.
- **Why does the Rambam list all 24 things?** The purpose is not to say that one can't do teshuva — on the contrary, the goal is that one should know what one must work on, one should focus on doing teshuva even when it's difficult. This is "the work" — to know where the difficulties lie so one can combat them.
- **Back to the beginning of the chapter:** "Prevent" doesn't mean that the Almighty doesn't accept teshuva from such people. "Impede" only means it's harder, but the entire purpose of listing them is to **encourage** teshuva, not to frighten from it.

Full Transcript

Laws of Repentance Chapter 4: The 24 Things That Prevent Repentance

Introduction: Review of the Previous Chapters

Speaker 1:

We are learning chapter... which chapter? Chapter 4. So in the Laws of Repentance we have learned so far the mitzvah of repentance, that one must do repentance, and further details about repentance. And in the last chapter we learned the matters of when one weighs the sins and merits of a person.

First of all, repentance, the matter of cheshbon hanefesh (spiritual accounting), of examining one's situation regarding mitzvot and sins, there is the individual aspect when a person does repentance, he is obligated to consider how he stands with his mitzvot and sins. And then it was explained that the Almighty weighs, the Almighty looks at the world and the Almighty looks at people, whether they are "rabbu chata'av" (their sins are many), "rabbu zechuyotav" (their merits are many), and so forth.

And from there we went to other similar matters, to the matters of people for whom it is very, very difficult to do

repentance, people about whom Chazal (our Sages) say "**ein lahem chelek l'olam haba**" (they have no share in the World to Come), they cannot do repentance.

And in this there were also two categories. There was one where "**ein lahem chelek l'olam haba**" means literally that one, that it is very difficult for them to do repentance, they need to put in great effort to do repentance. And secondly, that if they don't do repentance, they truly have no share in the World to Come, death alone will not help them.

And then we explained other things about which Chazal say "**ein lahem chelek l'olam haba**", and the Rambam said that Chazal said it to bring out the severity of the matter, but it doesn't literally apply "**ein lahem chelek l'olam haba**", rather it is to arouse how strongly one must work on repentance, and to bring out how severe it is, although it is not truly on the same level of "**ein lahem chelek l'olam haba**" as those that were explained at the beginning.

That is, at the beginning we explained wicked people, meaning heretics, or people who cause suffering to the Jewish people, or people who act with a high hand (deliberately). The second category of things were lighter matters, one who causes suffering to other Jews, embarrasses his fellow publicly, etc., but they are also severe enough that Chazal place them, make them truly similar to the "**ein lahem chelek l'olam haba**" of the first ones.

Here the Rambam goes to, we go from now on, to other things that a person must very strongly take to heart that he must do repentance, because he might think it's not so dangerous, but in truth it is very strongly dangerous. And about this they are placed in a category of things that prevent repentance.

Structure of the Laws of Repentance: Ten Chapters

I want to add or make my way of how I would frame it.

First of all, let's understand, there are Laws of Repentance ten chapters, yes? Ten chapters in the Laws of Repentance. The Rambam said in the introduction that it is Laws of Repentance, "**v'od ikarim min ha'emunah klulim imahem**" (and also principles of faith are included with them). So certainly the first, seemingly one can divide it... afterwards, the seventh chapter one needs to see, it doesn't fit so well with my division. But more or less one can divide it, the first four chapters are Laws of Repentance, also somewhat broad, as we say. But let's say, Laws of Repentance and the laws of regret and confession, etc. And the second six chapters are truly, beginning with free will, and it goes to reward and punishment, fundamental principles of faith, certain principles that are connected to repentance.

So this is the last chapter of repentance, so as you say, the last, it's like the final, the smallest thing of repentance.

What I wanted to be precise about, this reminded me that the Rambam brought yesterday in the previous chapter the things that have no share in the World to Come, which are said about them. The Rambam added to them an interesting novelty, he said that it states regarding them in the words of the Sages "**she'hargil bahem ein lo chelek l'olam haba**" (one who is accustomed to them has no share in the World to Come).

Discussion: The Concept of "Hargil Bahem" – The Rambam's Innovation

Yes, he doesn't simply say that one who once embarrasses a Torah scholar publicly has already committed such a great sin that he has no share in the World to Come. It may be the plain

meaning of the Gemara, but the Rambam adds a condition, that it means "**hargil bahem**" (accustomed to them). As we learned yesterday, that it means he is such a bad person who is not worthy to go to the World to Come. Yes, so the habituation, seemingly is a kind of... we learned in the Laws of Character Traits, yes, habituation means that he becomes a bad person, he becomes, he acquires a bad character trait, he is a bad person.

And now, the sixth, last chapter is...

Speaker 2:

I just want a small point, the habituation is also very similar to what we learned, that one who does even just a small sin, but he does it constantly, and he has become accustomed to it. But there it already states that every kind of habituation is already a kind of high hand, as if he... when one habitually does a mitzvah, he has much advocacy in his favor, he doesn't take it into his hands. It's a different category, but the habituation is a matter of a high hand.

Speaker 1:

Yes, right? The habituation is a matter of a kind of rebellion, and... I wouldn't exactly say that. Because on the contrary, that is, that habituation is not about him being accustomed, but because he is acting with a high hand. But it can be a high hand without habituation, perhaps like a vengeful person, a person is once with audacity. So audacity is a thing in itself. Accustomed is the opposite, he doesn't grasp, he is rebelling against the kingdom.

Speaker 2:

Yes, but he says, one who does it always, the plain meaning is that he doesn't reckon with the sin at all. When one usually follows, many times he forgets, the plain meaning is that he reckons with the sin. But the habitual one, he has cut out the sin. It's similar to that kind.

Speaker 1:

Yes, but I would say that that is a problem of like heresy in general. Here we're talking about a problem that he becomes a person, as if he has established "**na'aseh lo k'heter**" (it becomes permitted to him), that is more as you say. But there is like "**avar v'shanah bah**" (he transgressed and repeated it), it becomes difficult for him to separate. A second thing, not that he becomes "**na'aseh lo k'heter**" that he becomes a bit of a heretic in principle, but he becomes, it becomes difficult for him to separate, he becomes stuck. And especially in certain things that the person is inclined to. One can say that these are the things where it is the pattern that one becomes stuck in that area.

Speaker 2:

But for example, regarding lashon hara (evil speech) he clearly said the term "**ba'al lashon hara**" (master of evil speech). Ba'al lashon hara doesn't mean that he speaks lashon hara sometimes. He is a lashon hara person, he is the person whom everyone calls to ask the lashon hara.

Speaker 1:

I mean that the Rambam in the Laws of Character Traits also made the distinction between saying lashon hara and "**kovei'a atzmo l'saper lashon hara**" (establishes himself to speak lashon hara), which is people who do this regularly.

Chapter 4 – Things That Prevent Repentance: General Approach

And the same thing, if we understand this way that the things that prevent repentance that we are going to learn here, are also things where he becomes such a kind of person that it becomes difficult for him, he becomes stuck in his sin. We will see various other reasons, but he becomes stuck in his things. It's very important in the Laws of Repentance which is connected to what kind of people. Not just that the Rambam began the Laws of Repentance and one must do repentance for sins, but gradually he moves to one must become a better person. And the preventers of repentance are things where one becomes such a kind of person. Indeed we will see that at the end of this chapter the Rambam specifically marks out eight character traits, that one should conduct oneself with eight character traits. So this is a great source for this way.

Law 1: Twenty-Four Things Prevent Repentance

Very good. The Rambam says inside: "**Esrím v'arba'ah devarim me'akvin et hateshuvah**" (Twenty-four things prevent repentance). Twenty-four things prevent repentance. It's interesting, prevent doesn't mean... prevent usually means like to hold back. One who prevents someone means he holds him back. Not prevent, but it's not impossible. It's that one can do repentance, but they want to know that the repentance comes with difficulty. Usually repentance is not so difficult, or sometimes repentance is something that one can do. Here the person must work harder on repentance.

Discussion: What Does "Me'akev" Mean?

So what is the meaning? I mean, one can interpret prevent is for repentance, simply, even if Yom Kippur comes, it prevents like blood prevents in the sacrifice, something a defect, even if he does repentance with all the laws, if he did the sin it doesn't help. Because one can interpret, the word prevent is used many times for holding back, holds that one back, it's that it lasts longer. Many times here prevent means that it's a condition, like with a sacrifice, the thing prevents the sacrifice, it is like one of, there is no atonement without it. But here the prevent that the Rambam speaks of here, seemingly he understood that the language of Chazal here prevent means it holds back the repentance, it makes the repentance last longer.

Discussion: About Which Repentance Are We Speaking?

So which repentance? But let's also interpret, perhaps for example, every time repentance is enough that there is confession with regret, here one needs to work something more, one needs a greater effort. But let's understand, about which repentance are we speaking here? That is, if one has one of these things, is it harder for him to stop not putting on tefillin, or such a thing?

Speaker 2:

I mean that here repentance we're speaking of the broader repentance, which we spoke of more like he becomes a better person. And this is not repentance for a specific thing, this is more general repentance, as it were.

Speaker 1:

I mean what you mean to say is, there is how repentance is accepted in Heaven, and there is how the person actually changes. Seemingly, some may mean this and some may mean that, but it may be that preventing repentance means that for the person it comes very difficult to do repentance, because he is very stuck with the sin. But even for this person one can say that there is that he should stop doing a certain thing, and there is a broader repentance that he should become a better

person, he should be a servant of God, he should be a regular servant of God who does better things.

Source of the List – Rif in Tractate Yoma

Right, so it's very interesting that the list, first, the word that you said comes from the Rif in Tractate Yoma brings the list, and there is no source. I looked in the Kesef Mishneh, and others say they haven't found the source of the Rif. They thought it was a Baraita, but the fact is that it was found by the Rambam himself in repentance, here this repentance. How does the statement of Rabbeinu Yitzchak, Yitzchak Alfasi, come? Didn't the Rambam find a source? Doesn't he know whether the Rif perhaps made it himself or not?

But the Rambam says, come here, part of it is that most things stand in the Mishnah in the Talmud, that is it states that these are things that prevent repentance, and it was put into the list, and others are from clear derivation, that is one can learn it by kal vachomer (a fortiori reasoning) from something that is stated.

And the Rambam says, here he has already explained the whole thing, and also he has explained why, the reason for being as if they prevent repentance, "**v'hilchot teshuvah b'chibureinu zeh hakolel kol dinei haTorah**" (and the laws of repentance in this composition of ours that includes all the laws of the Torah). So the Rambam did here a very beautiful thing, it is truly an example of the times when the Rambam took a Gemara or a Rif, I know, an earlier source, and he truly laid it out. He didn't just reprint the list, he also explained what is wrong with each thing, and he made his own categories.

He did this earlier in the Laws of Torah Study, there were ten things one eats, twenty-four things for which one is liable for excommunication. That one he did take from Chazal, right? That one he took from Chazal, he changed it a bit, he interpreted a bit, he organized a bit, but he took the number twenty-four that stands in Chazal. The twenty-four he arrived at himself.

Speaker 2:

No, no, no, the language of 24 is the number from the Rif.

Speaker 1:

What isn't stated is the internal categories. The Rambam makes from this, four such things, five such things, this he made himself.

Speaker 2:

Interesting, he thinks, these are another twenty-four things of excommunication, like excommunication for Heaven's sake, one doesn't accept their repentance something like that. So here there are twenty-four things for which one is excommunicated, and here there are twenty-four people who are... ah, in the World to Come, twenty-four. Twenty-four is a good number, and twenty-four is a bad number. Interesting.

First Category: Four of Them Are Great Sins

Anyway, the Rambam says thus, yes. "**Arba'ah mehem**" (Four of them), four of the twenty-four, "**avon gadol**" (a great sin), is a great sin, and the reason why repentance comes with difficulty is because it's a great sin, and the Almighty doesn't want to help them do repentance. "**V'ha'oseh echad mehem**" (And one who does one of them), and one who does one of the four, "**ein HaKadosh Baruch Hu maspik b'yado la'asot teshuvah, l'fi godel chet'o**" (the Holy One

Blessed Be He does not provide him the means to do repentance, according to the greatness of his sin). It is indeed so, there is in Chazal a thing that when one tries to do repentance, he receives help from Heaven, "**haba l'taher m'sayin oto**" (one who comes to purify himself is helped), he receives perhaps a certain divine assistance.

Or perhaps for example, we learned earlier that divine assistance for repentance is conducive to repentance. That means perhaps that the Almighty gives people good thoughts, people are aroused to repentance in these days. But for these sins the Almighty doesn't help to do repentance. This is what he wants to say that "**maspik b'yado**" (provides him the means), this doesn't mean that the Almighty doesn't let him do repentance, but he doesn't receive any help, he must work harder to do repentance.

Law 1 (Continued) — Four Great Sins

a) One Who Causes the Masses to Sin

And the Rambam doesn't give a giant. He says that because it's a very great sin is... no, he does give. "**V'elu hen, a) Hamachti et harabim**" (And these are they: a) One who causes the masses to sin). One who causes the masses to sin. We had this yesterday essentially in the "they have no share in the World to Come," yes. "**Uvichlal avon zeh hame'akev et harabim mila'asot mitzvah**" (And included in this sin is one who prevents the masses from doing a mitzvah). One who holds back a multitude from doing a mitzvah. Not only does he make them do a sin, but he holds them back from doing a positive commandment.

Yes, but I mean that then we learned explicitly, in the previous chapter, one who causes the masses to sin, the Rambam said "even in a light matter," even regarding a positive commandment. But it's very possible that causing the masses to sin there means truly one who stands up with a sword and doesn't let Jews go serve the Almighty. Here it can be about a much lighter matter, I know, one who talks loudly during prayer, and the whole synagogue in his honor doesn't pray well. It's a much lighter case. That causing the masses to sin is also like a part as if of "with a high hand," one who goes against the Jewish people, goes against the Torah.

Discussion: What Does "Prevents the Masses from Doing a Mitzvah" Mean?

The causing the masses to sin here can be even in a smaller matter, one who makes other Jews with desires or with... you can't hold back. But preventing the masses from doing a mitzvah, more as you say, the example sounds terrible. But perhaps there is such a thing, he doesn't let a class be made. Perhaps there is such a thing, not he doesn't let mitzvot be discussed, but he doesn't let a positive commandment be done. Perhaps one can say so.

There is one who says he doesn't let tefillin be put on, that is nullifying a positive commandment. There is a second thing, tomorrow there will be a class and he disrupts it. It's not nullifying a positive commandment. But it can be as I said, for example, a group of Jews want to pray with concentration, and he disrupts the concentration of a multitude from praying. I even say, they want to make a minyan in town, and he doesn't join. He doesn't make anyone do a sin, he doesn't join the project of doing a mitzvah.

b) One Who Turns His Fellow from the Good Path to the Bad Path

The second is, he doesn't just cause a whole multitude to sin, but even one person. "**He turns his fellow from the good path to the bad path.**" He turns one fellow, but he does a much more severe thing. He does it indeed not for a multitude but for an individual, but not that he causes him to sin one sin, but he makes him ruined, he makes him a weaker person, "**k'gon mesit u'madi'ach**" (like an enticer and inciter). Similar to an enticer and inciter.

We're not speaking here of an enticer and inciter to idol worship literally, because that is certainly very severe, as idol worship we already learned, for that there is no repentance or atonement, because that is very severe. We're speaking here of one who is an enticer and inciter to a certain person, he makes him a weaker Jew.

The Source from the Tosefta

English Translation

The Mishnah, he brings that the source, one of the sources he takes is the Tosefta in Nedarim brings this a kal vachomer (logical inference) from the property of an ir hanidachas (condemned city) which is burned. It's exact. That is, we're talking here about a meisis umediach (inciter and enticer), and it's not correct what I said that we're not talking about avodah zarah (idolatry), because this is... I mean it's very interesting, because this is truly middah keneged middah (measure for measure).

Yes, you make someone, you're the opposite of a machzir b'teshuvah (one who brings back in repentance), you're a machzir b'she'eilah, a machti es harabim (one who causes the masses to sin). Therefore you're not sufficient to have it in your hands to do teshuvah, it's a middah keneged middah. But this is interesting, when one does it to the masses it's even a smaller sin. For one person it is when you make him completely ruined, you make him from a good path to an evil path.

Yes, when we mean to say, yes, he had a good friend, that one was a good boy, and he makes him a bad boy. From a good path, he was a bad friend. So there is machti es harabim, there is one person, and now there is a certain person just so, and here it's much greater suffering for a person.

c) One Who Sees His Son in Bad Culture and Doesn't Protest One who sees his son in bad culture, he sees that his

child is going on a bad path, he's in the middle... tarbut (culture) means like he's seeking to immerse himself in bad things, yes? Yes, he means tarbut ra'ah (bad culture). Like gadel (grows) like... yes, ribuy (increase). He's growing up a bad child.

Yes, a child is going in a bad direction, because one **is educating him specifically, and doesn't protest against him**, and he doesn't hold him back. It's not that he makes him slide, but he doesn't hold him back from sliding on his own.

Rambam's Explanation: His Son is in His Domain

This is what the Rambam explains, **he led his son in his wickedness**. For another person one doesn't have the responsibility, but for your own child, your child is in your domain. **Had he protested against him**, because you would have protested, because you would have stopped your son from going on an evil path, **he would have separated**, he would have gone away from the evil path. **And it turns out, as if he caused him to sin**. It comes out, as if he

caused him to sin. It's similar to the previous case of one who causes another to sin, because your son, with the very act of letting him do bad things, it's as if you're giving him permission, it's as if you're empowering him to do bad.

I know that all the commentators don't hold of this, but I mean it's still true. Okay, the commentators will want to interpret the words "educating him specifically" differently. Yes. The Rambam, we haven't God forbid seen such a thing. One may say it, because people don't grasp.

Innovation: "His Son in His Domain" — The Boundaries of Responsibility

The Rambam adds "his son in his wickedness." One must know, if someone is not his son, if he's in his wickedness, he's out of his domain, he's out of his domain, then it doesn't count anymore, one doesn't need to. There is the Gemara that one who strikes his adult son transgresses "before a blind person."

Ah good. Many times, at certain ages, people don't grasp that their children are in their domain, and they don't grasp that the father can say one word to him and he'll stop going with the bad friends. And one must know that there is a concept of "it's not my fault, he has bad friends." But you can protest against him, and you must say all these things. It's not... ah good.

d) In This Category — Anyone Who Can Protest

Says the Rambam, **in this category we say**, once you understand better the reason why this thing prevents teshuvah, because your son is in your domain, it comes out that every person who is in your domain, **anyone who has the ability to protest against others**, someone who has power over other people and he can protest against them to become better, **whether among the masses or individually, and didn't protest**, he didn't stop them from continuing to become ruined, **but left them in their stumbling**, he lets them continue in the way they're stumbling, it is **in this category**, it enters into this category.

Why Do These Things Prevent Teshuvah?

I mean the first three are very simple why it's difficult to do teshuvah, because even if you do teshuvah, but that other person hasn't yet done teshuvah. It could be the way how one does teshuvah will help, when you go and you bring back in teshuvah the masses or the individual or your son, but as long as you don't do that, you yourself do teshuvah, what does it help? But you made that one ruined, therefore it prevents teshuvah. Seemingly simple.

Discussion: How Hashem Prevents Teshuvah

Yes, but it's interesting that on this the Rambam doesn't say... I could have thought different ways how it prevents. For example, someone caused the masses to sin, afterwards he'll do teshuvah, the masses come and say, "Aha, you made us do all the sins, and we're not going to let you do teshuvah." But the Rambam doesn't bring out that this is a reason. He says that Hashem won't help you.

Here, these things can be even simpler how Hashem doesn't help. Rather your teshuvah is still not complete, your teshuvah is still missing a great condition in the teshuvah. It's already not in your hands, the teshuvah is not in your hands, it's in the hands of other people. So how will you do a complete teshuvah? You now need to run around finding all these people and bring them back in teshuvah. It's a great difficult ordeal.

The problem the Rambam will say later. I mean he has later a category of things where it's difficult to do teshuvah because there are many people. Here where the Rambam says "they don't allow him to do teshuvah" he doesn't mean about the sin. I mean he says here that Hashem doesn't let him do teshuvah in a general way. He comes Yom Kippur, he wants to become better, Hashem doesn't want to, He won't help you. You won't receive any awakening of Yom Kippur. All Jews receive an awakening of Yom Kippur, and the one who is machti es harabim doesn't receive.

Distinction Between "Prevents" and "Difficult"

Could be, but I'm saying, it's a bit different than later. Because later it's difficult, but you can accomplish it. It's not gone in with the masses, you now need to go seek out a bunch of people. But from a good path to an evil path, going back is a case, it's not certain that you'll be able to succeed.

When you caused someone to sin that because of you he didn't put on tefillin, you can go ask him that he should start putting on tefillin. But he became a bad person, becoming again a good person is a tremendous task. This is a prevention, it's very difficult. Or his son went in bad culture, it's seemingly the same thing, that the person became accustomed to bad.

So seemingly the prevention of teshuvah here is because as long as he can't do this great... it's truly a miracle to be able to go and turn a person from an evil path back to a good path. Therefore it prevents. As long as one doesn't do this, it prevents. Perhaps he means this way.

Why Does the Rambam Say the Entire List?

Why does he tell us the entire list? What does the list do here? The list means to say that one should be very careful in these things, because usually a person thinks, I can always do teshuvah. It's not that on everything one can do teshuvah. So, as you say, because it's difficult, for whatever reasons, but could be for these people, it brings out the severity of the matter, what this is.

There are different ways to bring out severity. One can say, "Someone who transgresses this receives a great punishment." It's indeed a way of saying, "Listen, on this one won't be able to do teshuvah." That's how it is. You forgot to put on tefillin one day, you can do teshuvah in one second. But if you said "Shabbos is over," if you said "our lips don't cease from saying to You," you didn't forgive your son when you could, you can't be able to do teshuvah. You can't be able to, okay, we'll see later, but it's very... very bad for you, that as you say, there's no way back, going back in such a manner.

d) One Who Says "I Will Sin and Repent"

The fourth thing from him is, **"One who says 'I will sin and repent,'"** someone who uses teshuvah as a motivation to sin. He thinks to himself, "Should I sin, should I not sin? Yes, let me sin, I can afterwards do teshuvah." You can't, because your intention was that it's a negation. Your teshuvah made you sin. Therefore, now you think you'll now do teshuvah, and afterwards you'll sin again. I don't take your teshuvah seriously. His teshuvah isn't serious, because we say, your teshuvah is to be able to sin again, yes? Because by you teshuvah is such an easy thing, one sins with the teshuvah, it's a joke.

"I Will Sin and Yom Kippur Will Atone"

In this category I see, one who says, not necessarily teshuvah, rather he says, **"I will sin and Yom Kippur will**

atone." He doesn't take seriously the matter, what is the power of teshuvah of Yom Kippur, the power of atonement of Yom Kippur he doesn't take seriously. Very good.

Discussion: Explanation of "I Will Sin and Repent, I Will Sin and Repent"

It's very interesting, because the Gemara in Yoma says, in our version in the Mishnah it says, "One who says 'I will sin and repent, I will sin and repent.'" Says the Gemara, this is twice because "one who transgressed and repeated it, it becomes to him like something permitted." It's implied in the Gemara it's not your explanation, rather the explanation is that he already sinned twice, then it becomes difficult for him to do teshuvah. But the Rambam doesn't bring this. The Rambam had this explanation said as you say, that "I will sin and repent" is itself a thing that doesn't cause.

Rambam's Language: "Hashem Won't Help"

Ah, you see very well, the Rambam says exactly the language that you said, I'm speaking, namely, **"Hashem won't help to accomplish on Yom Kippur what he comes fearing will be atoned for him."** It's not that Hashem forgives on Yom Kippur. Hashem helps. There's a simple thing, Hashem helps that on Yom Kippur one goes to shul and has clarity of mind, one can do teshuvah. The person, exactly on Yom Kippur he has some trouble, he doesn't have clarity of mind.

Innovation: What is True "I Will Sin and Repent"?

But this is true "I will repent and sin." This doesn't mean that the person says "I will repent and sin," yes? What people say that one won't do teshuvah when he falls back, that's not true "I will repent and sin." True "I will repent and sin" means he sins on the plan to do teshuvah. This is no way. One cannot sin on the plan to do teshuvah. This must be said, he won't be able to do teshuvah. The plan won't work.

There was a sermon that was said that true "I will repent and sin" doesn't exist in recent years, one can no longer do true "I will repent and sin."

Continuation: "I Will Repent and Sin" - Distinction Between Shame and Recognition of Limitation

The person, exactly on Yom Kippur he committed a sin, he doesn't speak a single word. But this is true shame. This doesn't mean that the person says "I will repent and sin," yes? What people say that one will do teshuvah and falls back, that's not true shame.

True shame means that he sins on the plan to do teshuvah. This is no shame. He sins on the plan to do teshuvah, and Hashem says, "I won't give you any teshuvah to do." There I won't help you at all.

No, when a person says "true shame," he says that sin is a small thing, one will quickly do teshuvah. He doesn't take any sin seriously. Someone who says "I will repent and sin" is simply that he recognizes his limitations, he says that I'm a person who falls very quickly there. It's a different kind of thing.

Five Things That Prevent Teshuvah - Introduction

Already, let's go further. Now, there are the first four things. The next five things are a different kind of category. They are "preventing teshuvah." It's not a great sin, yes? It just makes it very difficult to do teshuvah. It makes it like there will be a heavy door that becomes locked before teshuvah, and one must work very hard to break open that door.

Says the Rambam, **"There are five things that prevent teshuvah from their doers"**. They lock the door of teshuvah, the ways of teshuvah, for those who do these sins. And these are:

a) One Who Separates from the Community

One who separates from the community. Someone who is a separatist from the community. But also not necessarily in such a manner as we learned last night in one of the sections, that these were truly, I know, people who are truly great apostates and wicked people.

But someone who doesn't go to shul when there is a gathering of awakening, or when the rabbi says words of mussar. Why? Says the Rambam, **"Therefore when they do teshuvah they won't be with them"**. When the community does teshuvah, for example a gathering of teshuvah, when the world says, as the Rambam says in the Laws of Teshuvah, at a gathering of teshuvah one says more words of conquest, words of forgiveness and atonement, it only helps for the people who are there in shul. There's a condition, he should be there when it happens, but on the contrary, you're not there, how will you do teshuvah?

"They won't say." By someone who merits they'll say in the sukkos of those who do, you won't merit in the merits that they do. Indeed when sinning with the world were you there? In the restaurant where the entire world is gathered, were you there?

The Meaning of "Separates from the Community" - Not Only Extreme Separation

I mean, he says, a separatist from the community doesn't mean to say that he doesn't belong to the Jews, rather he's not there when the world does teshuvah. This can be so extreme, but it can also be, I mean, such people like us who consider ourselves individuals, are also somewhat in this category.

One must perhaps find, perhaps I can say, I have my own path of teshuvah that doesn't go through the community, but it's a true deficiency. Every individual, even if it's a small group of Jews, some group, but they consider themselves that they're religious, they also lose something from this, because the world sometimes makes a movement, and you're not part. There are communal enactments, every individual must do certain enactments, and you're not part.

Seemingly, the one who goes to every mussar sermon is a very strong teshuvah, because he takes all the chances of teshuvah. There is the one who only goes truly on Yom Kippur to shul, he loses most opportunities of teshuvah. It can also be someone who is only too much community, he never does teshuvah, he only goes to be. He's already a true shame, yes.

b) One Who Argues with the Words of the Sages

Further, he says, **"And one who argues with the words of the sages,"** someone who fights against the words of the sages, and why is it difficult for him to do teshuvah? **"Because his argument causes him to separate from them"**. Every time the rabbi says words of conquest, every time the preacher says words of awakening, he dismisses it, and he makes controversy, he fights with the rabbi, and "causes him to separate from them," to go away. Therefore, when someone needs a path of teshuvah, he won't know the path of teshuvah, he won't know how to do teshuvah.

Ah, so "argues" doesn't mean here that he debates, he fights. No, he goes away. Controversy means, as we learned, "argues with his teacher's authority," he makes his own yeshiva, he

makes his own... It's similar to "separates from the community," but this is "separates from the community" only from the sages. There is someone who is "separates from the community" and "separates from the sages." He makes himself his own yeshiva, but in his yeshiva one can't teach him the Shulchan Aruch of teshuvah as well. He won't know the ways of teshuvah.

c) One Who Scorns the Mitzvos

The third thing is **one who scorns the mitzvos**, someone who mocks mitzvos and doesn't take mitzvos seriously. Perhaps he doesn't even transgress the mitzvos, but it's not important to him. Very similar to what we learned last night, one who scorns the mitzvos.

Why? **"Since they became scorned in his eyes, behold he pursues them and doesn't abandon them"**. Someone who falls through once, but he still knows the importance of the mitzvah, he says tefillin is very holy, he knows all the virtues that tefillin does for a Jew, and he knows the importance, but he falls through once and doesn't put on tefillin, he knows that he'll do teshuvah and he'll start again putting on tefillin.

The Distinction Between One Who Falls Through and One Who Scorns

But if it's a very frequent thing that people do, because he didn't do it for a period of time, he says, "Ah, it's not so important to put on tefillin." He begins to scorn it. So the first person didn't put on tefillin for a period of time, but he doesn't scorn, he'll start again and everything will be good, he'll do teshuvah, because on positive commandments one can do teshuvah.

But once you scorned the thing, **behold he pursues them and doesn't abandon them**, you block for yourself with the scorning the ways of teshuvah. **And if he doesn't abandon them, what will he merit?** How will you do teshuvah? You'll only do teshuvah on things that you remember yes that it's important, but the things that you already mocked, you won't do teshuvah on them. If so, how will you do teshuvah on this?

Innovation: Mitzvos Whose Virtue is Teshuvah

English Translation

I would say even more, regarding mitzvos whose special quality is to awaken teshuva (repentance), for example tekias shofar (blowing the shofar), we have learned about tekias shofar that it causes teshuva. If there is someone who says, "Shofar? No, it's a custom, I know, it's not so important," he will not merit. Meriting doesn't mean only in the mitzva itself, because mitzvos do much more than the mitzva of tekias shofar that we learned earlier, it's a mitzva whose special quality is to awaken teshuva.

But I would say perhaps somewhat the opposite, that even if he will do teshuva, but for all those mitzvos that he disgraces, he will not do teshuva. That is, he will come to shul and he will remember that emuna (faith) in Hashem is very, very important, but all those mitzvos that he treats lightly, for those he will not do teshuva. His teshuva will not be complete. I keep saying that I mean that teshuva doesn't just mean stopping doing sins, rather it means being purified from sins, you become a better person, etc.

d) One Who Disgraces His Teachers

The Rambam says further, **one who disgraces his teachers**, someone who disgraces his rabbis. This causes them, it causes the rabbis, if you want to have a rabbi like Yehoshua and Geichazi, their rabbis also aren't angels, they are human beings, they won't be able to draw you close, they will push you away, they will stop awakening you, they will stop talking to you, just as actually happened to two people, Yehoshua, who was already mentioned yesterday, someone who lost his portion in the World to Come, and Geichazi, who had great rabbis, but once they began going in bad ways, their rabbis would have brought them back, but because they disgraced their rabbis, their rabbis couldn't bring them back.

Until one is not cast away, once you are cast away, the rabbi won't be able to show you a teacher, the one who shows the true path, it's not that the rabbi will show you the true way, therefore you won't do teshuva.

The Gemara's Blame and the Rambam's Answer

It's very important to remember, the Gemara says about these two Jews, yes, **"Always let the left hand push away and the right hand draw near,"** don't push away, **"not like Yehoshua and Geichazi, not like Geichazi whom Elisha pushed away with two hands, and not like Yehoshua ben Perachya who pushed away Yeshu the Nazarene with two hands."** The Gemara blames all these great heretics that are among the Jewish people, all these wicked people, the blame is that their rabbis didn't draw them close. But here the Rambam says that he does have something to blame himself for, because he started up with the rabbi.

No, the Rambam says as I thought, that the rabbis will do this, because that's how it works, what can you do, a person is only a person. Even the rabbis will try, if you don't come to learn with derech erez (proper conduct), you won't be able to learn, and what will happen is, you won't have a rabbi who will give you that.

There Can Be Greater Sins, But One Who Doesn't Disgrace His Teachers Can Be Brought Back

It could be that there were people who committed greater sins than Yehoshua, so it appears here, and Geichazi, but they didn't disgrace their rabbis, and they had their rabbis, and one could manage to bring them back in teshuva, but once one disgraces the rabbis, even if one only does a small thing, and so it actually says in the Gemara, what did Yehoshua do? He didn't commit terrible apostasy, he committed small sins, he committed small sins, but once he disgraced his teachers, he didn't have anyone to bring him back.

Practical Application: The Importance of Attachment to One's Teachers, Sages and Community

Very good, and that's the thing. So it comes out if we want to learn a practical halacha from all these things, it's clear how much one must be attached to one's teachers, to the sages, to the community.

Is that a revelation, yes? On the contrary, we spoke about it yesterday. I gave you the fifth one, let's see.

e) One Who Hates Rebuke

"One who hates rebuke" is someone who hates when he is rebuked. He doesn't let his rabbi show him his faults, he doesn't let his rabbi tell him mussar (ethical rebuke), he doesn't let people tell him mussar. Why does it say **"he will not have a path to teshuva"**? Teshuva happens through listening when someone rebukes him. It says **"rebuke causes teshuva."** When one rebukes someone, showing him

his weaknesses, it causes teshuva. But if he doesn't allow it, he hates when he is told mussar, he won't be able to do teshuva.

Why does rebuke cause teshuva? **"Because when one informs a person of his sins and embarrasses him, it causes him teshuva."** When one informs a person about his sins and embarrasses him, and he is ashamed by it, it causes him teshuva, then he will do teshuva. So one sees clearly in the Torah that reminding a person of his situation makes him do teshuva.

Law 3: Proofs from Torah that Rebuke Causes Teshuva

As Moshe says in the Torah, **"Remember, do not forget."** He will enumerate here various places where we see this in Chazal (our Sages). Because in other words, it's a very difficult thing, because most people hate rebuke and are all haters of rebuke. The Rambam says that one shouldn't love rebuke. What is rebuke? It embarrasses you. Why shouldn't you love this? Because it reminds you of your deficiencies. The Rambam says, yes, but this causes you to correct yourself. And he brings proofs that the Torah itself shamed the Jews. Why? Not because the Almighty hates the Jews, but because He wants them to do teshuva. Yes? Right.

All these things that we see how the Torah shows that reminding that one has sinned all the time makes one do teshuva, yes? Yes. But the Torah itself, the Torah itself, it's a Torah that we learn, the Torah that Jews love, that we love the Torah. But if one is a hater of rebuke, I don't understand why the Torah keeps being obligated to criticize the Jews. No, the Torah wants to make the Jews do teshuva, so?

Verses of Rebuke in the Torah

As Moshe says in the Torah, **"Remember, do not forget that you angered Hashem your God in the wilderness."** Basically, one reminds the Jews that they sinned in the wilderness. And the verse says, **"You have been rebellious with Hashem."** Also one reminded the Jews of their sins. Ah, ah, I need to do it like this, it's all one verse approximately. And what does it say? **"And Hashem did not give you a heart to know and eyes to see."** One tells a person, you know your weaknesses. Or when Moshe Rabbeinu rebukes the Jews, he says, **"A foolish people and not wise,"** a foolish nation, a nation that is ungrateful.

And so Yeshayahu rebuked Israel and said, "Woe, sinful nation, people laden with iniquity," "children who deal corruptly," those verses there. And further in Yeshayahu, **"An ox knows its owner... but Israel does not know, My people does not consider."** Jews have forgotten the Almighty. An ox is grateful to its owner, and you? Oxen are better than you. It's not a nice thing, but the prophet does it.

And further, "And I knew that you are obstinate, and your neck is an iron sinew and your forehead brass." You are brazen-faced, you are stubborn, and so on. "And I knew," I already know it.

And so Hashem commanded Yeshayahu to rebuke them for their sins, also the Almighty tells Yeshayahu the prophet he should rebuke the sins, as it says **"Call out with a full throat, do not hold back, raise your voice like a shofar,"** cry out to the Jews their sins. And so all the prophets rebuked Israel until they returned in teshuva, all the prophets were to give rebukes and fearful mussar to the Jews until they do teshuva.

Law 3 (continued) — Obligation to Appoint a Reprover in Every Community

Yeshayahu says very beautiful mussar, yes. It's brought in the Rambam, **"Therefore it is necessary to appoint in every community of Israel a great and elderly sage."** First of all, the first obligation is that in every community there should be a great and elderly sage who is God-fearing. I don't know what the community is otherwise. In every community there must be a great and elderly sage who is God-fearing from his youth, and beloved to them, he should be beloved by the people, who will rebuke the masses and bring them back in teshuva, he should rebuke the public and bring them back in teshuva.

And this one who hates rebukes, the one who hates rebukes, is the one who doesn't want to rebuke. He doesn't come to the Pirkei Avos shiur, he doesn't come to the shalosh seudos drasha (third Sabbath meal discourse), he doesn't listen to all these divrei Torah (words of Torah). Therefore he will stand in his sins, he will remain with his sins, which in his eyes are good, which in his eyes are very good. He is by himself, he has learned some errors, if there's someone who knows better, someone who says he's doing wrong, and he is simply, it's impossible.

Innovation: The Five Things Are Essentially Pride and Love of Wisdom

I thought to myself, the five are essentially not being a baal gaava (prideful person) and a lover of wisdom. Someone who has some small intellect, he stands on the side, I know everything. All five are prideful people and lovers of wisdom, yes. But what doesn't come from this? Each one takes his mitzvos very seriously, he has figured out that it's not exactly so important, he dismisses it, he dismisses it. In short, not being too great a lover of wisdom. A little is pleasant, but yes.

Digression: The Reprover in Earlier Times

It's very important, but nowadays, once there was a person who was called the reprover. I remember, I was a boy, there was a Jew in town, he had a maggid (preacher), a reprover, yes. Nowadays I don't know if there is, but already, one must see. It says in the Gemara, **"If there is in this generation one who knows how to rebuke."** But one must find someone who is a lover of the community, and he should rebuke. It's very important. He should be a lover of the community, he should be a lover of the community, yes.

They tell the story of the Vilna Gaon, the Tzanzer Rav, that they sought someone to say a bit of mussar. One must find someone, it's the opposite, someone who is in a position of power is very hard to find someone to rebuke him sometimes. One must find a... an enemy cannot be for a lover. Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai said, "One must say mussar to me too."

Law 4 — Five Things for Which Complete Teshuva Is Impossible

Okay, the Rambam says further. After this there is another new one, another five things. He divides them into groups of five. Why? Because there are twenty-four. It must be four groups of five and one group of four. Yes.

The Rambam says further, and from them, another group, is **"Five things, one who does them, it is impossible for him to do complete teshuva."** Another five things, that one who stumbles in these things it is very hard for him, or impossible, that he should do complete teshuva. That is, he

can do teshuva, but not complete. Why? Because it's sins between man and his fellow.

What are sins between man and his fellow? And we already learned earlier in the Laws of Teshuva, that a sin between man and his fellow is one must appease until he appeases his fellow. So, when you know the fellow you can go ask his forgiveness, but when **"he doesn't know his fellow whom he sinned against so that he can return and return to him what he stole or extorted or that he forgive him,"** when you don't know who is the fellow that you sinned against so that you could return to him what you wronged him with money matters, or he should forgive you, when you don't know who the fellow is, it's very hard for him.

Actually, all fellows is hard, because you don't know for sure he will forgive. One can go to the grave, but always it's hard. But here it's very hard. But you know that it's hard it is. But usually, a fellow even if he doesn't forgive, but you did your effort. It could be that the teshuva is more or less, it still lacks a certain complete teshuva, but you won't even be able to do the minimum of asking forgiveness.

a) One Who Curses the Masses

The Rambam brings **"One who curses the masses."** Someone curses the masses, he scolds the public. Masses I mean, I mean a certain masses, not that someone criticizes Mizrachists. He can't even do teshuva, because you now need to ask forgiveness from every Mizrachist. True? Don't say, not possible. He doesn't even have the truth, he can't even do that. Because go... he didn't scold a known person, he didn't scold a specific person, so that he can return to him and ask him to forgive him, he should be able to ask his forgiveness.

And you remain on... one must be very careful not to curse. If one scolds, one should scold a certain person, so that one can go ask his forgiveness. Very important. And one sees, this is also such a cowardly thing. In general society. Say whom you hold that you want to criticize, and you can at least do teshuva. Ah, you criticized him? You can at least do teshuva.

b) One Who Partners with a Thief

This is **"One who partners with a thief."** If someone divides up... someone has a business with a thief, he himself is not a thief, but he is the thief's partner. He is the one that the thief comes to divide with him or sell to him. His going also is a big thing. If the thief distributes charity to the institutions, one must know what the halacha is. Okay, partner means a... he helps the thief, he buys from him, he is the laundry, he washes the money for the thief, yes.

The thief himself, I'm sure he has a list of whom he stole from. One day he will be able to do teshuva and go return to the people. But the one who partners with the thief, for him it will be very hard to do teshuva. Why? **Because he doesn't know whose this theft is**, he doesn't know the theft, the thing that he buys from the thief, he doesn't know from whom it is. **Rather the thief steals from the masses and brings to him, the thief steals from many people and brings to him, and he takes**, he buys, he receives.

So two things. First of all, the one who partners with the thief will be very hard to do teshuva practically. And he says another thing, why else is it hard for him to do teshuva, because we learned earlier, one who causes to sin, that someone who causes a person to sin it's hard to do teshuva. And if you help the thief, you are one who causes to sin,

because you strengthen the hand of the thief and make him help in sinning.

Innovation: Causing to Sin Also Means Strengthening the Hand

It's interesting, here one sees that causing to sin doesn't only mean when you make him sin, but that you help him in sinning. The thief comes here already as an existing thief. It's a matter of, yes, it's strengthening the hand of the thief.

One must know, one may not buy a stolen thing, it's a prohibition of "do not place blood." It's a complete foundation in the Laws of Theft that one may not buy. You know that someone is not an honest person, you know that the thing is stolen, you may not buy it. It's in a certain way worse, one cannot do teshuva on this.

c) One Who Finds a Lost Object and Doesn't Return It to the Owners

The Rambam says further, **one who finds a lost object and doesn't return it to the owners**, someone finds a lost object and doesn't do the mitzva of returning a lost object to announce it and return it to the owners, in total it's only a mitzva, a positive commandment, actually there is a positive commandment and a negative commandment, but in any case, in total it's only one specific mitzva, but it's a serious mitzva that it's hard to do teshuva, because **after time when he does teshuva**, when he will want to do teshuva, **he doesn't know to whom to return**, he won't know to whom to return, it will be hard to do teshuva. Therefore one must announce immediately, because then perhaps that one will come. Ten years later he will remember, he won't know anymore who it was.

d) One Who Robs the Poor, Orphans and Widows

The next halacha, **and so one who eats an ox and its offspring on one day**, someone who eats an ox and its offspring on one day. Someone who stole from poor people, someone who extorts money from the poor and orphans and widows and lives on this.

The Rambam says, **these are isolated people**, the poor and orphans and widows are unfortunate people, miserable people. A known and famous person, someone who takes money from ordinary people, one knows from whom he takes. But the poor and orphans and widows, they don't have an address, they don't have a face, no publicity. **And they wander from city to city**, they wander around, **and they have no one who knows them**, they don't have anyone who knows them, **so that this robber knows whose this is and returns it to him**.

So the poor and orphans and widows, besides that it's simply the greater cruelty because there are extra mitzvos on this, it's also practically hard, because from a householder in shul who has a certain address, you know to whom to return. But the poor and orphans and widows, this shows how pitiful the earlier times, the poor and orphans and widows were wandering people.

But it means today that today's poor are wandering people, people who don't have stability. It could be a widow, every bit of time that she grabs onto another man, and she becomes so adopted, and so on... who knows, in the end he will end up on the earth, sleeping in the hospital, not knowing how to return to him.

5) One Who Accepts a Bribe to Pervert Justice

Further, **one who accepts a bribe to pervert justice**, a judge who takes a bribe to pervert his judgment. First of all, one is not allowed to take a bribe, but aside from that there's a problem that one cannot do teshuva. Why? Because "einei de'ah adacha gei tela zi," because once he has taken a bribe, **"shochad ye'aver einei chachamim"** (a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise) has occurred, you don't know at all what happened. After the bribe you became drunk, you don't know what transpired. You convince yourself that you know what the true ruling would have been, and you go to do teshuva and you go to reverse to the true ruling. But once you took a bribe, you lost clear thinking, and you don't know what the true ruling should have been.

Novel Idea: It's Impossible to Know What Percentage Was Distorted

So be it, "einei de'ah adacha gei tela zi, v'kocho k'chamor asher yifra, shedavar yesh lo raglayim." It's not clear what the statement means. Usually, we said, usually there's a way. Usually when a person doesn't render a good judgment, there's a way to go back and think about how it should have been. But once he took a bribe, he won't be able to even go back and think, not go back.

I think he perhaps means even the opposite. In other words, someone takes a bribe. But it could actually be that the one who gave him the bribe was right. But it could be that he was half right. Here he becomes... here perhaps it means there are two sides that the world told him. It's very hard to figure out. When it's a clearly foolish way, and he says I'll definitely win, I can give you now. Or he takes a bribe. Presumably if you take a bribe, I think even if the other one is a bit right. Yes? It's actually "mahapeich bizchuto" (turning it to his merit). It's not even possible to know exactly how much was the favor, what percentage did you answer him. So what can he do? I mean, it's a very big problem to take a bribe.

Digression: Bribery in Broader Contexts

So the point is, how the problem is also for bribery that perhaps isn't bribery in the strict sense. I know, he takes in money from a yeshiva and he takes money from the wealthy people and he's not fair among the students, he won't remember at all. He wasn't fair anymore, he's crazy, he has a problem. Also you can't know, because at a certain point, he shouldn't take it in at all. There's nothing to grasp at all, he doesn't have any negiah (conflict of interest) at all.

And there's another problem, what you take on, that's an even greater sin. There's a prohibition to give a bribe.

Five Things - Things That the One Who Does Them Imagines in His Soul That This Is Not a Sin (Continued)

a. One Who Eats from a Meal That Its Owner Cannot Afford

He won't be able to... how wasn't he fair? He's bribed! He has a personal interest, you can't know, because in a certain way, he needs to take in a bit. It's very difficult to grasp at all one's own negiah (bias) in the sin.

It's also a problem, the one who takes a bribe also has a great sin. There's a prohibition to give a bribe, there's also a prohibition to steal. The person who goes to bribe, you're helping him steal, you're helping him do the sin of bribery, "shemachazik yado" (strengthening his hand), you're helping the bribe-giver, and "mochti oser iz a mochi" (one who causes another to sin is a sinner). And everyone goes to calculate the Rambam. Every sin that requires two people to do, the second

one is a mochi (one who causes sin), it's a sin. Yes, yes, yes, it comes out.

It appears that this type of mochi the Rambam only applies as a branch. Both by the mochi and by the one who divides the custom, when it said such a thing. Okay, there we understand, but it's not. Okay, yes, and further the Rambam will now calculate another category of another five things that are akeiv teshuva (prevent teshuva), but these are easier things, still why it's certainly very hard to do teshuva, the Rambam says so, things that in practice he sins and in practice he has them. Like a Jew mixes in, he thinks it's nothing. So he won't do teshuva, unlike the previous one, he won't do teshuva for other reasons because he can't, or because he won't be on the level of the teachers, these are things that he himself will be mistaken about a small thing. It's such a problem.

But a theft... essentially it's a matter of theft, because the one who offered him the meal didn't really mean to make you acquire it, because he didn't hold. But what then? He said it was without choice, and the person ate, and medameh shelo chata (imagines he didn't sin), he convinces himself that he didn't sin.

How one should not think, small sins, I'll think I won't punish him because it's only a small thing, will I think I'll also give him a bit of reward for the person. But in truth there is something here, a matter that he needs to do teshuva.

The Way of the Righteous

This is one way that the righteous found a way out, because it's a difficult thing when a poor person invites someone for a meal, and he just says "I don't want to." "Ah, why don't you want from a poor person, can't you from him either?" He said, "No, the doctor doesn't let me eat." And the person said to those around him, "The Rambam is a great doctor. The Rambam doesn't let one eat from a seudat hareshut (optional meal), a meal that isn't a mitzvah." Ah, okay. Usually there's a way out, it's not such a big problem. Okay.

b. One Who Uses the Collateral of a Poor Person

How much is the situation? Yes. The Rambam says further, **"and one who uses the collateral of a poor person."** Or someone, similar to the previous one, he borrows things from the poor person, he borrows the vessels, avuto is his... a collateral, right? He took collateral from the poor person, and he doesn't have permission to use the collateral. He borrows from a poor person. An avot means a collateral. **"Lo tavo el beito la'avot avoto"** (You shall not enter his house to take his collateral). Avot means a collateral, what do I mean. **"Hasheiv tashiv lo et ha'avot"** (You shall surely return the collateral to him), it says in the verse.

But what are we talking about here? "Mashkono shel ani." I'm not clear. Yes, I mean he borrows things from a... instead... avuto shel ani means that he borrowed it for a collateral, but he uses it. And he brings that the halacha is, when one uses it, one may perhaps use it, but one must deduct from the debt.

But he doesn't do it. Why? Why doesn't he do it? The Rambam says so, that when a wealthy person borrows and he gives him some golden object, he won't use it because it's gold. Or he thinks, he uses just some object, how much it costs, the depreciation, he pays him. But avuto shel ani, what is that usually? An axe, a plow, cheap things. We'll remain one a seirim, what will happen if I use it? Appearance-wise he should pay. But in practice it becomes yes, with every use it

becomes a drop less worth. He's stealing from the poor person a small theft. Ah, good.

c. "And You Shall Not Follow After Your Heart and After Your Eyes" - One Who Looks at Forbidden Relations

Further, "**v'lo taturu acharei levavchem v'acharei eineichem**" (and you shall not follow after your heart and after your eyes). Someone who looks at arayot (forbidden relations). Why is this difficult? Because presumably he's not someone who looks in a manner of I wasn't intimate with her, and I didn't touch her, and I didn't do any kirvah la'arayot (closeness to forbidden relations). Yes? But there's someone, he doesn't know that looking itself is a great sin, that the looking itself is a sin. Why? Because it can cause the actual forbidden relation, as it says "**v'lo taturu acharei levavchem v'acharei eineichem.**"

Novel Idea: The Sin Itself Is a Sin Because It Can Cause

It's interesting, we see here that even if he wasn't actually stumbled, the sin itself is a sin that it can cause. The person didn't know, because that's the reason at all why he thinks it's not a sin. Yes, he says "ati beloi ikevei atar," right? He means... he has... this means that the great sin is because it causes, it goes to the actual forbidden relation.

So, what's the problem? That eventually he will stumble? Basically, yes. He'll need to do teshuva then when he stumbles. But one must do teshuva on the fact that all this looking itself is itself a type of sin. One must do teshuva for this before it comes to that.

Explanation of "Great Sin"

When one connects with frivolity, this is usually "achizat kos hadorshan" (grasping the cup of interpretation). The Rambam indeed says "achizat kos hadorshan" because people think it's a small sin. One must understand, the truth is that all these things are small sins. The Rambam says "great sin." It's true, it's a great sin, but it's a great sin proportionally. Great in that it brings to forbidden relations. But it's still a serious thing. But it's like someone who eats forbidden foods sufficiently etc., dust of theft, dust of etc. That is, the severity is because it's a small thing. Because it's a small thing the person thinks it's not there. And this brings to the severity here regarding teshuva. The Rambam says "great sin," he says "great" because it brings to the actual deed.

d. One Who Honors Himself Through His Friend's Disgrace

But the Rambam says further, "**one who honors himself through his friend's disgrace.**" And this is interesting, this is something he already brought in "they have no portion in the World to Come." Someone who honors himself through his friend's disgrace, he's not wicked. There's a wicked person who loves to cause pain to another. He's not such a wicked person. He simply seeks honor. His way of finding honor is, he's not as smart as the rabbi or as the Torah scholar, but he's smarter than the ignoramus. So, he always makes a contrast, he asks the ignoramus or he's stronger than the boy, than the one chased from school.

When he compares himself to this, the Rambam says, if in his heart there is no sin, and he won't be proud of it and won't be ashamed, it's not even in your head. It's not there at all. But what? Rather, rather, the way of his good deeds and his wisdom opposite his friend's deeds and his wisdom. He compares himself to someone weaker than him. The Daat Zekeinim from the Baalei HaTosafot, love in his friend

contempt. He knows the whole time that he's better than the other, or he compares himself to the other. It's interesting.

Digression: Criticizing Others

Now, what are people like us who are accustomed the whole time to criticize others, what is more or less that? They also don't have... this doesn't make any leniency in the... no, what does teshuva do. But it's usually when one criticizes another, why is that? Because that way he likes himself much better. He says, how good you are, you want to be proud sometimes. This also comes often from people, I don't claim humility, understand? But to go around saying, "I've already learned two tractates, I know them..." Good, that doesn't fit. But to criticize the other... okay, compared to the other I'm quite good. Yes, such types of things. It's a sin of humility. Be proud sometimes, say that you're better. Okay, it's humble. Doesn't fit him. He accepts the leniency of his friend.

I want for the students who don't know, our Rosh Yeshiva is very humble, and many make themselves away.

e. One Who Suspects the Innocent

The Rambam says further, **and one who suspects the innocent**, someone who suspects... You know the opposite of "hevei mekabel et kol ha'adam b'seiver panim yafot" (receive every person with a pleasant countenance)? What's lenient and what's strict? But the teshuva. "Hevei mekabel et kol ha'adam" means that one wants the other to be higher than oneself. One makes the other.

The Rambam says further, and one who suspects the innocent, someone who suspects people who haven't... it's already... suspecting people of sins, is further the same thing, because if in his heart there is no sin, he won't think about this one's deeds, it's already... suspecting the innocent doesn't mean he accuses them. In his heart he thinks badly about the other. He's not now talking with his friends. "Yachshov b'machshavto, shema elu chatu, shema hu zilzel" (he thinks in his thought, perhaps these sinned, perhaps he was contemptuous), he says perhaps.

When he goes around slandering and the other definitely did a sin, people will now go hit or I don't know what to do, he says, "it could be." Like one who knows that this one serves, he doesn't know that... what's the sin? Why? He already knows the sin. Shema'amid adam kasher b'da'ato k'baal aveirot (he establishes a kosher person in his mind as a sinner). The Rambam says yes, in his mind. Because he thinks about a person who is a good person, that he's a sinner. This is a sin in thoughts, this is a sin in thoughts, this is he looks down on people.

Novel Idea: Judge Unfavorably Even in Thought

Here it appears that judging unfavorably doesn't mean... as I think, judging unfavorably means in action, he should treat the other like a normal person. Even in his head, he shouldn't look down on people, he shouldn't have love of Israel for the other, even if he's wise about all these things. He shouldn't think bad things about a person.

It's interesting, here it appears that even if he's a sinner, you shouldn't think about a person... means judge a person badly without evidence. A person may not think badly about someone without evidence. This makes up revenge and bearing a grudge, how one speaks about people, has everything to do with how one judges them.

Comparison Between Honoring Oneself Through Friend's Disgrace and Suspecting the Innocent

It's interesting, honoring oneself through friend's disgrace and suspecting the innocent is almost the same thing. Honoring oneself through friend's disgrace means he does it for other people, suspecting the innocent is for himself. He considers himself better than others, because he suspects other people of bad things.

Honoring oneself through friend's disgrace means even if he's not even a sinner, he's a simple chassid, he still lifts himself above the simple ones.

Summary of This Category

And these are the five things where the problem with them is that people don't grasp that it's a sin, people don't grasp that it's a sin, therefore one doesn't do teshuva, because one doesn't hold that it's a sin.

Five Things - One Who Does Them Cannot Do Complete Teshuva Because They Are Sins That a Person Is Drawn After

Very good. The Rambam says further, "**And five things, one who does them cannot do complete teshuva, because they are sins that a person is drawn after them and they are light in his eyes, and he thinks he's not sinning, and he's found sinning and doesn't know in order to repent from them, and if they inform him about them he doesn't listen, or he says perhaps that's the halacha.**"

"And five things," there are another five things that are also difficult for them to do teshuva, because they're things that are attractive, they're addictive, they make one become drawn into them. "And they are light in his eyes," and it's hard to separate from them. "**Therefore a person must be very careful from them lest he cling to them,**" a person must very strongly watch perhaps he became contaminated, he became caught in this. "**And these are very bad character traits,**" these are very severe traits that catch a person. "And these are," they become afterwards attachments, they become very sticky things, contagious.

The Five Things

"**And these are: tale-bearing,**" the idea of carrying and bringing information from one to another, negative information.

"**And evil speech,**" lashon hara, which we learned that a baal lashon hara has no portion in the World to Come, one shouldn't start, because from plain lashon hara one becomes a baal lashon hara.

And so on. **And a hot-tempered person,** a person who is always angry.

And one with evil thoughts, a person who thinks evil thoughts. What does evil thoughts mean? I don't know what he means. He says jealousy, desire, imagination, these things. It probably doesn't mean sinful thoughts, or it probably means evil thoughts between man and his fellow. But all here are between man and his fellow things.

The Fifth Category: Baal Lashon Hara, Hot-Tempered Person, One with Evil Thoughts, and One Who Associates with the Wicked

So why shouldn't one start? Because from simple lashon hara one becomes a baal lashon hara, one begins to enjoy, and so on. A hot-tempered person, a person who is always angry. One with evil thoughts, a person who thinks evil thoughts. What

does evil thoughts mean? He says jealousy, desire, and such things. He doesn't say just sinful thoughts, but just evil thoughts between man and his fellow. All these are between man and his fellow things. Jealousy, desire, honor, he thinks very much about his pride or about things.

And one who associates with the wicked, someone who associates with the wicked. Why are these things so bad? But, sheyilmad mima'asav (that he will learn from his deeds), he learns from their deeds, v'yeirashmu b'libo (and they will be engraved in his heart), the deeds of the wicked become engraved in his heart. This is what Solomon says, as Solomon says, "**v'ro'eh kesilim yeiroa**" (and one who associates with fools will suffer), one who befriends and spends time with fools, with stupid people, yeiroa, becomes bad himself.

The Connection to Hilchos Deot

The Rambam says further, "**We have already explained in Hilchos Deos (Laws of Character Traits) things that every person needs to conduct themselves with always.**" In Hilchos Deos we have already learned things that a person must always do. Let's think, all these five things that are the last category that the Rambam brings from the Braisa, from the twenty-four things, all of them are matters from Hilchos Deos. Chillul Hashem (desecration of God's name) is not only, it's stated there. Ba'al cheimah (hot-tempered person) is in Chapter 2, the Rambam that stands against anger. Ba'al machshavah ra'ah (one with evil thoughts), whatever it means, it means one of the things that's stated there. Hamischabeir larashah (one who associates with the wicked), the entire lengthy discussion is there about associating with the wicked.

The Rambam says, you see that I have already spoken about all these things, I have already spoken about all these things, and it can in any case be that he wants to do teshuvah (repentance). And now one understands that the me'akbei hateshuvah (impediments to repentance) are things, such bad character traits that are against teshuvah. But it's obvious that one must have good character traits.

End of Law 4: All These Things Do Not Prevent Repentance

The Rambam says further, "**All these things and similar ones,**" all these twenty-four things, "**even though they impede repentance,**" even though it makes the teshuvah difficult or take longer, "**they do not prevent repentance, rather if a person does teshuvah from them, behold he is a ba'al teshuvah (penitent),**" if he does indeed do teshuvah, he becomes a ba'al teshuvah.

We had here only a ba'al cheimah, he becomes from a ba'al cheimah he becomes a ba'al teshuvah. A teshuvah person, yes. "**And he has a portion in the World to Come,**" he does indeed have a portion in the World to Come, and the reason why it was calculated this way here is precisely so that one should know that one should work on it, one should focus on it so that one should indeed do teshuvah even though it is difficult.

Yes, good. Okay. Perhaps monei'in (prevent) means like we learned earlier in the beginning, let's not think that monei'in means that the Almighty does not accept in repentance those who do this. Monei'in means, He makes it clear that it is more difficult, but why should one do teshuvah from it? That is indeed the work.

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