

Laws of Repentance, Chapter 8 (Auto Translated)

English

Auto Translated

Shiur Overview

Summary of the Lecture – Laws of Repentance Chapter 8

General Introduction: The Structure of Laws of Repentance

The Rambam has in Laws of Repentance, aside from the mitzvah of repentance itself, two fundamental principles:

1. **The Principle of Free Will (Bechirah)** – Man has free will. The Rambam calls it "reshut netunah lo" (permission is given to him), not "bechirah" (choice). The principle of bechirah is **not** counted in the Rambam's list of the Thirteen Principles in his Commentary on the Mishnah, Sanhedrin, Chapter Chelek, but here in Laws of Repentance he does count it as a fundamental principle. This is a question (which the "Rav HaChaluni" already asked), but such is the fact.

2. **The Principle of Good (Reward and Punishment)** – What is the ultimate purpose, what does one receive from observing Torah? This is dealt with in the last three chapters of Laws of Repentance (chapters 8-10).

Why does reward and punishment belong in Laws of Repentance? The Rambam made a clear "bridge" in chapter 7: he says that a person must do teshuvah **"so that he will die with his teshuvah corrected, so that he will merit life in the World to Come."** The purpose of teshuvah is to reach the World to Come. Therefore, he must explain what the World to Come is. Furthermore, most people are not born as tzaddikim – for most people, the path to the World to Come is through teshuvah, not through good deeds alone.

Halachah 1 – The Good Reserved for the Righteous is Life in the World to Come

A) The Principle: Life Without Death, Good Without Evil

"The good reserved for the righteous is life in the World to Come, and it is the life that has no death with it, and the good that has no evil with it."

Plain meaning: The true good that is prepared for the righteous is life in the World to Come – life without death, goodness without evil.

Insights and Explanations:

1. **"HaTovah" – The concept of "good" as the ultimate purpose.** The Rambam uses the word "tov" in the same sense as in his introduction to Chapter Chelek (Commentary on the Mishnah, Sanhedrin), where he writes that people are very confused about what is the "good" that one receives from observing Torah – one thinks reward in this world, one thinks Mashiach, one thinks resurrection of the dead. The Rambam says clearly: the true good is life in the World to Come.

2. **"Tzefunah" – hidden.** The language "tzefunah" comes from the verse "asher tzafanta lirei'echa" (Psalms 31:20). It is hidden – not visible in this world.

3. **"Chaim she'ein imahem mavet" – not just "doesn't end," but "doesn't have death with it."** The precision in "she'ein imo" is that death is not present at all in that reality. A soul in a body is "devarim kalim venifasadim" (light and perishable things) (as the Rambam says in Laws of Foundations of the Torah) – even while he lives, he doesn't truly live, because he *can* die. But living as a soul/intellect is a life that was never born and can never die – death is simply not relevant.

4. **"Tovah she'ein imah ra'ah" – in this world everything is mixed.** All the goods of this world are "good that has evil with it" – everything is limited, everything must be in moderation, too much of even a good thing becomes bad. Only the World to Come is "entirely good" – good in itself, not mixed with any evil.

5. **"Lema'an yitav lecha vеха'arachta yamim" – the exposition of the Sages in Kiddushin.** The Rambam brings the verse and the exposition of the Sages (Gemara Kiddushin): "lema'an yitav lecha" = "to the world that is entirely good"; "veха'arachta yamim" = "to the world that is entirely long." The Rambam emphasizes that the World to Come is a matter of the Oral Torah – it is not stated explicitly in the Written Torah. He uses the language "shemu'ah" / halachah leMoshe miSinai, the same language he uses everywhere that the Oral Torah gives an interpretation that is different from the simple meaning. "Aruch" doesn't mean simply longer, but "aruch she'ein lo ketz" – eternal.

B) The Reward of the Righteous and the Punishment of the Wicked

"The reward of the righteous is that they will merit this pleasantness and be in this good, and the punishment of the wicked is that they will not merit this life but will be cut off and die... and anyone who does not merit this life is the dead one who does not live forever, but is cut off in his wickedness and perishes like an animal."

Plain meaning: The reward of the righteous is to live in the World to Come; the punishment of the wicked is not to merit this life – they are cut off and die like an animal.

Insights and Explanations:

1. **"Hu hamet" – the true dead.** The greatest "dead" is one who does not live in the World to Come. Why? Because he lived only a few years, but he will be dead forever and ever. But the tzaddik is not a "dead one" – his life continues.

2. **"Oved kabehemah" – like an animal.** Just as with an animal, when it dies it is finished – it doesn't live on – so too a wicked person who doesn't receive the World to Come.

C) **"Hicharet tikaret" – Karet in the Torah And this is the karet stated in the Torah, as it says" 'hicharet tikaret hanefesh hahi avonah vah.' And the**

Sages explained: 'hicharet' – in this world, 'tikaret' – in the World to Come. That is, that soul which separates from the body in this world does not merit life in the World to Come, but is also cut off from the ".World to Come

Plain meaning: The verse "hicharet tikaret" is interpreted as a double karet: "hicharet" = karet in this world (death); "tikaret" = karet in the World to Come (not meriting the World to Come). The tzaddik also dies in this world, but he continues to live in the World to Come. The wicked person has a double karet.

Insights and Explanations:

1. **"Hakaret ha'amurah baTorah" – a broad karet, not just the 36 kareitot.** The Rambam does **not** mean that only the specific 36 kareitot in the Torah (those liable for karet) have this punishment. He is speaking here of the **fundamental punishment** in general – the fundamental punishment for all transgressions is karet, being cut off from the World to Come. Those 36 kareitot have their own laws that must be learned separately.

2. **The Rambam's approach: The primary punishment is karet, not Gehinnom.** The Rambam does **not** bring Gehinnom as the main punishment. He speaks only of karet – being cut off. This is the "ra'ah hamezumanet lareshaim" – not a place of punishment, but the loss of the World to Come.

3. **"HaTovah hatzefunah latzaddikim" vs. "hara'ah hamezumanet lareshaim" – symmetrical structure.** The good for the righteous = the World to Come; the evil for the wicked = karet from the World to Come. Both are the primary reward and primary punishment.

D) The World to Come: There is No Body or Physical Form

"The World to Come has no body or physical form, only the souls of the righteous alone without a body like the ministering angels... and since there is no body – there is no eating or drinking nor any of the things that human bodies need in this world, nor does anything occur there that happens to bodies in this world such as sitting and standing and sleep and death and sadness and laughter and the like."

Plain meaning: In the World to Come there is no body. Only the souls of the righteous exist there, without a body, like angels who are form without matter. Therefore, there is no eating, drinking, sleep, death, sadness, physical joy, or any other matters that pertain to a body.

Insights and Explanations:

1. **Guf vegeviyah – two terms for one thing.** "Geviyah" also means body (as in the verse "vegeviyato ketarshish"), and it is asked why the Rambam writes both terms. It is ruled out that "geviyah" would mean death (that is "veyigva" with an ayin). The question remains open.

2. **"Mikarim" – a philosophical term.** The Rambam uses "mikarim" in the philosophical sense of "accidents," not "substance." He means that the attributes that a body has – like sitting, standing, sleeping, dying, sadness, laughter – are not applicable to a soul without a body. These are all "accidents" of the body, not of the soul.

3. **Man in the World to Come like an angel.** Man is now a composite of matter and form (body with soul). In the World

to Come he is soul alone – like the ministering angels who are form without matter. This is a fundamental transformation of man's existence.

E) The Interpretation of "Tzaddikim yoshvim ve'atroteihem berosheihem venehenin miziv haShechinah"

"And what they said 'tzaddikim yoshvim' – is by way of riddle, meaning the souls of the righteous exist there without toil and without weariness. And likewise 'their crowns on their heads' – meaning the knowledge that they knew through which they merited life in the World to Come exists with them, and it is their crown."

Plain meaning: The statement of the Sages is "by way of riddle" – a parable. "Yoshvim" means rest (existence without toil and weariness). "Their crowns on their heads" means the knowledge/wisdom that remains with them.

Insights and Explanations:

1. **"Yoshvim" – negation of toil, not obligation of rest.** The Rambam interprets "yoshvim" not as positive rest (because rest itself is the opposite of toiling, which is also a physical matter), but as a negation – there are no difficulties there. "Yeshivah" is an image for tranquility, not a literal position of a body.

2. **"Atarah" = knowledge – two proofs from verses:**

- **"Tze'enah ure'enah benot Tziyon bamelech Shlomo ba'atarah she'iterah lo imo"** – Solomon's specialty was wisdom, so "atarah" alludes to wisdom.

- **"Vesimchat olam al rosham"** – joy is not a physical object that can be placed on the head. "Rosham" must mean their knowledge, and joy is a state in knowledge/soul. Also "atroteihem berosheihem" means that their knowledge remains with them.

3. **"Shebiglelah zachu lechayei ha'olam haba" – two approaches:**

- **First reading (rejected):** They have an awareness that their good deeds merited them the World to Come.

- **Correct reading:** The knowledge itself – the wisdom – that is what remains, and that is itself life in the World to Come. The part of knowledge of the person remains, and that is "on their heads." The crown is an allusion to knowledge itself, not to an awareness of reward.

F) "Nehenin miziv haShechinah"

"And what they said 'and enjoy the radiance of the Divine Presence' – that they know and comprehend the truth of the Holy One, Blessed be He, what they do not know while they are in the dark and lowly body."

Plain meaning: "Nehenin miziv haShechinah" doesn't mean physical pleasure, but that they know and comprehend the truth of the Holy One, Blessed be He, which they could not comprehend when they were in the "dark and lowly body."

Insights and Explanations:

1. **"Nehenin" = knowledge, not physical pleasure.** The Rambam reduces "nehenin" to knowledge and comprehension. Pleasure like eating and drinking would be physical pleasure, which contradicts the entire foundation that

the World to Come is without a body. Therefore, "nehenin" must mean that they know and comprehend.

2. **Connection to previous halachot.** When a person is "in the dark and lowly body" he cannot understand the truth of the Holy One, Blessed be He. Only when one is free from the body (in the World to Come) can one comprehend.

3. **The Rambam "leaves out" the word "nehenin."** In his explanation he speaks mainly about knowledge and comprehension, and the "pleasure" is almost omitted. Presumably there is also a simple pleasure, but the essence of "nehenin" is the knowledge itself.

G) What "Nefesh" Means in the World to Come

"Every soul mentioned in this matter – is not the soul that needs the body, but the form of the soul, which is the knowledge that comprehended the Creator according to its capacity, and comprehended the separate intellects and other creations, and it is the form whose matter we explained in the first chapter of Laws of Foundations of the Torah, it is called soul in this matter."

Plain meaning: "The souls of the righteous" in the World to Come doesn't mean the soul that is connected to the body (the life force), but "the form of the soul" – the knowledge that the person comprehended of the Creator, the separate intellects (angels), and other creations (nature – sun, moon, lower world). This is the "form" that he explained in chapter 1 of Laws of Foundations of the Torah.

Insights and Explanations:

1. **Two types of "nefesh."** The Rambam distinguishes between:

- **Neshamah shetzrichah laguf** – the life force that makes the body active, which dies when the body dies.

- **Tzurat hanefesh** – the knowledge, the intellect, that the person comprehended. This is what "betzelem Elokim" means (as he explained in chapter 1). Only this remains alive in the World to Come.

2. **Three categories of comprehension that remain.** Man's knowledge comprehended three things: (a) the Creator, (b) separate intellects (angels/separate intellects), (c) other creations (the rest of creation). All three parts of knowledge remain.

3. **Not the intellect remains – but comprehension of Hashem remains.** The Rambam doesn't say that a person's intellect in general remains (like all human thoughts), but specifically comprehension of Hashem – the knowledge that comprehended the Creator. This is an important distinction.

4. **Knowledge can live without a body – a deep point.** People view their knowledge as being "in their body" (stored in the brain), but the Rambam teaches that knowledge is something that can exist without a body. One cannot say that comprehension of Hashem is stored in the brain – because then it couldn't remain after death. This shows that knowledge of the Creator is a fundamentally different reality than ordinary thoughts.

H) "Chaim" – Because Death is Only an Accident of the Body
"This life, since there is no death with it, for death is only one of the accidents of the body and there is no

body there, is called 'tzror hachaim'... and it is the reward that there is no reward above it and the good that there is no good after it, and it is what all the prophets desired."

Plain meaning: "Life" in the World to Come means the life of the soul/knowledge itself, where death is not possible because death is only an accident of the body, and there is no body there. This is the highest reward and the ultimate purpose of all purposes.

Insights and Explanations:

1. **"Tzror hachaim" – the verse and its interpretation.**

The Rambam brings the verse "vehayetah nefesh adoni tzrurah bitzror hachaim et Hashem Elokecha" (I Samuel 25:29). "Tzror" doesn't simply mean a "bundle," but rather a place or state where life is bound with the Almighty. The continuation of the verse "ve'et nefesh oyvecha yekalena betoch kaf hakela" shows the contrast: the righteous are bound in the bundle of life with comprehension of Hashem, and the wicked are cast away.

2. **"Tovah she'ein achareha tovah" – the World to Come is the ultimate purpose of all purposes.**

"Achareha" doesn't mean "after it" temporally, but "higher than it." Every good in the world is a means to a further good – one can ask "why are you doing this?" and answer "in order to achieve something higher." But comprehension of Hashem in the World to Come is the final purpose – one cannot ask "why is this good?" because this is the ultimate goal of everything.

I) Parables of the Prophets and Sages for the World to Come
The prophets called this state by various parables: "har Hashem," "mekom kodsho," "derech hakodesh," "chatzrot Hashem," "ohel Hashem," "lachazot beno'am Hashem," "heichal Hashem," "beit Hashem," "sha'ar Hashem." Also the Sages called it a "se'udah," and in other places "olam haba."

Plain meaning: All verses that speak of reward in the World to Come are parables for the state of comprehension of Hashem.

Insights and Explanations:

1. **All "places" in the prophets are parables for comprehension of Hashem.** Apparently one thinks that all these words speak of the Temple, but the Rambam brings that already the Sifrei said that these are parables for levels of the World to Come. The Rambam goes extensively with this Sifrei.

2. **Perhaps each name is a different level.** The Rambam in another place (Laws of Foundations of the Torah) speaks of seven heavens with different names, where each name represents a different level. Perhaps here too, the ten names allude to different levels of comprehension. But the Rambam here makes them all the same thing – all are parables for the World to Come.

3. **"Se'udah" by the Sages – a parable for the best state.** When the Sages speak of a "se'udah" for the righteous (like the feast of Leviathan), the Rambam means that this is not a physical feast, but a parable: just as in this world the finest state for a person is when he has pleasure at a feast, so the Sages call the World to Come a "se'udah" as a parable for the highest pleasure.

J) The Punishment: Cutting Off of the Soul

Conversely, the punishment is "cutting off of the soul so it will not merit life in the World to Come," and this is called "be'er shachat," "avadon," "tofteh," "all language of destruction and annihilation," "because it is a destruction that has no recovery forever."

Plain meaning: The worst punishment is "cutting off of the soul so it will not merit life in the World to Come" – the person loses his life forever.

Insights and Explanations:

1. **"Nekamah" means punishment, not revenge.** The Rambam calls the punishment of karet "nekamah." "Nekamah" for the Rambam simply means punishment (measure for measure), not revenge in the usual sense.

2. **Can there be "nekamah" only when one has something to lose?** An inquiry: if a person never acquired any comprehension, he has nothing to lose – is that not "nekamah." The concept "nekamah" fits only when a person did have something from the world of souls but because he sinned he loses it. This remains a "yesh le'ayyen."

3. **"Kilyah she'ein achareha tekumah le'olam" – the ultimate loss.** All other punishments are temporary, but the loss of karet is final. The person loses his life forever.

Transition: "Shema tomar" – The Rambam's Method of Anticipating Questions

The Rambam uses here the same method as in Laws of Repentance chapter 5 (knowledge and free will) and in Laws of Foundations of the Torah (He is not a body): first he establishes the foundation, and then he asks "shema tomar" – anticipates a question. Here, after he stated that the only ultimate reward is the World to Come (comprehension of Hashem without a body), he comes to ask: "shema tiksheh be'einecha tovah zo" – perhaps this good which is purely spiritual will be difficult for you to grasp.

In all three places (He is not a body, knowledge and free will, reward and punishment) the Ra'avad comes and argues with the Rambam on the same point: that people cannot grasp the Rambam's truth. The Ra'avad claims that with "He is not a body" this is only a question from verses, but here it is a deeper difficulty – a person has difficulty grasping a reward that is purely spiritual, because he can only grasp physical goods.

Halachah 2 (According to the Rambam's Continuation) – Reward of the World to Come and the Difficulty of Human Comprehension

A) Man's False Conception of Reward

"Perhaps you will say in your heart... and you will imagine the reward of the mitzvot and man being complete in the ways of truth – to be eating and drinking good foods, and having relations with beautiful forms, and wearing garments of linen and embroidery, and dwelling in ivory tents..."

Plain meaning: The Rambam warns that a person should not think that the reward of mitzvot and perfection is physical pleasures – good food, beautiful women, expensive clothes, fancy dwellings.

Insights and Explanations:

1. **The precision in "reward of the mitzvot and man being complete in the ways of truth."** The Rambam doesn't say that mitzvot themselves bring the reward. He says "reward of the mitzvot" and "man being complete in the ways of truth" – the mitzvot bring the person to perfection in the ways of truth, and that is "connected," but the Rambam doesn't say explicitly that the reward is directly for mitzvot – he must be "complete in the ways of truth."

2. **Comparison to the Arabic-Muslim conception of paradise.** The Rambam alludes to the Muslim conception of paradise (seventy virgins, physical pleasures), and he says that this shows what kind of person one is – "shoteh bezimah" – whoever is immersed in licentiousness, his greatest conception of good is more of the lower pleasures. A Lithuanian's paradise, lehav'dil, is "tea with a Gemara." From a person's dreams one can see what kind of person he is.

B) The Wise and People of Knowledge Already Understand in This World

"But the wise and people of knowledge know that all these things are matters of vanity and emptiness, and there is no hope in them... and there is no great good in them in this world except because we are physical beings... the soul does not desire them except because of the body's need, so that it will find its desire and stand in its health. And whenever there is no body, all these things are nullified."

Plain meaning: The wise and people of knowledge already know in this world that all physical things are "matters of vanity and emptiness." The soul itself doesn't desire to eat – only because it is combined with a body, and it wants the body to be able to exist, must it eat. Without a body, one doesn't need food at all.

Insights and Explanations:

1. **Two reasons why physicality is vanity:** (a) "There is no hope in them" – there is no long-term good, only good for a moment; (b) "There is no great good in them in this world except because we are physical beings" – the only reason it seems good is because we have a body that needs it.

2. **The soul doesn't desire physicality – only for the sake of the body.** Even a wise person in this world – he understands that he must eat, but he would prefer not to need to. He doesn't eat because it tastes good (that is the body's desire), but because he must eat in order to be able to learn and think. "If only I didn't have to" – and that is the World to Come, where one indeed doesn't have to.

C) Three Things That Are "Not a Body" – Connection to Foundations of the Torah

[Digression: Connection to Foundations of the Torah]

The Rambam has three things that most people think are physical but are actually not: (a) the Almighty, (b) angels, (c) the human soul. With the Almighty and angels – it's not directly relevant to us. But **the human soul** – that is **you**, and that is the hardest thing to explain.

Once a person understands that he himself (his soul) is not a body, he can much more easily understand that the Almighty is not a body. The Rambam said in Foundations of the Torah that a person cannot understand the

Almighty because he doesn't know himself – he doesn't know his part of the soul which is not a body.

The difference between Foundations of the Torah and here: in Foundations of the Torah the Rambam is not lengthy in the details of the difficulty. Here, when speaking of the person to himself – that **your** good is also not physical goods – here the Rambam gives more space for the difficulty, brings verses that show how good it is, and statements of the Sages that show how hard it is to understand.

[Digression: The Rambam's parable in Commentary on the Mishnah – that one cannot explain to a blind person what light looks like, or to a eunuch what sexual desire is, because they have not comprehended it.]

D) "The Great Good That the Soul Will Have in the World to Come – There is No Way in This World to Comprehend It"

"The great good that the soul will have in the World to Come, there is no way in this world to comprehend it or know it, for we do not know in this world except the good of the body, and for it we desire."

Plain meaning: The great good of the World to Come cannot be comprehended in any way in this world, because we only know physical good.

Insights and Explanations:

1. **"Lehasi'gah" – two interpretations.** "There is no way in this world to comprehend it" – one can interpret it (a) one cannot **understand** (hasagah = understanding) the good, or (b) one cannot **reach** the good (hasagah = obtaining). Both are true: as long as one is in a body, one cannot understand and cannot obtain the good of a soul without a body.

2. **"Velah anu mita'avim" – even the wise.** The Rambam says "anu" – even **we**, the wise, desire physical good. This is a novelty, because he said earlier that the wise and people of knowledge know that physicality is vanity. The answer: perhaps "mita'avim" means the great level of truly casting everything away and only desiring spirituality – that is very difficult even for the wise. In this world physicality "feels more real" – the evil inclination says go to the restaurant instead of to the lecture, and it "makes sense" – not that it's right, but it's not absurd. In the World to Come it won't make any sense.

E) "It Has No Comparison to the Goods of This World Except by Way of Parable"

"But that good is exceedingly great, and it has no comparison to the goods of this world, except by way of parable... in the way of truth, there is no comparison of the good of the soul in the World to Come to the good of the body in this world... but that good is exceedingly great beyond investigation and comparison and likeness."

Plain meaning: One cannot in any way compare the good of the soul in the World to Come with the good of the body in this world.

Insights and Explanations:

1. **What "erech" means – a novelty in the definition.** "Erech" means that two things are in the same category and can be compared – for example, ten dollars and a million dollars have a comparison to each other – both are dollars, only one is more. But the good of the World to Come and the

good of this world are **not in the same category** – "pleasure of the body has no connection at all with pleasure of the intellect." Therefore one cannot say that one is "more" than the other, because "more" requires a connection. Only "by way of parable" – through a parable one can hint a bit, but it's not a real comparison.

2. **The difference between "by way of parable" and "by way of truth."** When one says that the World to Come is a "great feast" or "light of Leviathan" – that is only a parable. Even when one says "it's more than that" is also only a parable – because "more" implies the same category. By way of truth there is nothing to compare. The Rambam said earlier "chamur **be'einav** kese'udah" – not "chamur be'einav se'udah" – the "k" shows that it's a parable, not a real comparison.

3. **The difference between "cheker," "erech," and "dimyon":**

- **Cheker** – one cannot investigate it, cannot assess it

- **Erech** – one cannot evaluate it, cannot say it is a certain percentage of something else

- **Dimyon** – one cannot say "I am similar to him, I am great and he is even greater" – it's not even a state that is similar

4. **Even "simchah" is only a parable for the World to Come.** One cannot say that the World to Come makes one "happy" in the same sense as physical joy, because "happy" is an emotion that we have now, and its opposite is sadness. The World to Come is "understanding of wisdom itself" – one can only call it joy by way of parable. One can perhaps say that both are things where "you feel complete, you feel where you belong" – but that is also only a conceptual analogy.

F) King David's Allusions

King David alluded: "Mah rav tuvcha asher tzafanta lirei'echa, pa'alta lachosin bach" (Psalms 31:20). "Lulei he'emanti lir'ot betuv Hashem be'erech chaim" (Psalms 27:13).

Insights and Explanations:

1. **"Tzafanta" – hidden.** Not because one cannot in principle understand it, but because people in this world don't understand it. A precious thing is hidden – it's hidden because it's so valuable.

[Digression: The afikoman at the Seder – the afikoman is an allusion to this concept – one hides it, because the meal is only a parable for the true meal that one will eat. It's a small piece of matzah, but it alludes to something much greater.]

2. **"Lulei he'emanti lir'ot betuv Hashem be'erech chaim."** David desired life in the World to Come. "Eretz hachaim" means the place where one lives eternally, where it is not "transient and perishable" – a truly living world. Our world is a "dying world." The word "he'emanti" is significant – because one cannot truly understand it, but one can believe in it, one can know that there is such a thing without fully understanding it. The faith in the good of Hashem in the land of the living gave David strength.

Halachah 3 – The Sages Said One Cannot Comprehend the World to Come

"The early Sages already informed us that the good of the World to Come, no person has the power to

comprehend it in its essence, and no one knows its greatness and beauty and strength except the Holy One, Blessed be He, alone."

Plain meaning: The Sages taught us that no person can comprehend the good of the World to Come with its full clarity. No one knows its greatness, beauty, and strength – only the Almighty Himself.

Halachah 3 (Continuation) – Great Foundation: All Prophecies Are Only for the Days of Mashiach, Not the World

Halachah 3 (Continuation) – Great Foundation: All Prophecies Are Only for the Days of Mashiach, Not the World to Come

"And all the good things that the prophets prophesied for Israel are only physical matters that Israel will enjoy in the days of King Mashiach, when sovereignty returns to Israel. But the good of life in the World to Come has no comparison or likeness, and the prophets did not liken it so as not to diminish it through comparison."

Plain meaning: All the good things that the prophets prophesied for the Jews – a land of wheat and barley, springs of the depths, etc. – are only physical goods for the days of Mashiach, when sovereignty will return to Israel. But the World to Come, the prophets deliberately did not describe, not even by way of parable, so as not to diminish it.

Insights and Explanations:

1. **Why the prophets didn't speak of the World to Come – a deep reason.** The Rambam's reasoning is that the prophets were afraid that if they would make parables for life in the World to Come, they would only "diminish it" – reduce it, because it is so powerful that any parable will be nothing compared to it. This is a novelty – not that they couldn't, but that they didn't want to, because a parable would "ruin it."

2. **The great foundation: Days of Mashiach ≠ World to Come.** The Rambam establishes that there are two separate periods: (a) **Days of Mashiach** – a time in this world when "sovereignty returns to Israel," Jews do teshuvah, are in Jerusalem, without subjugation to kingdoms – but still all physical goods; (b) **World to Come** – a completely different level, only for the soul. The Rambam speaks about this at length in his introductions to Chapter Chelek. The Ra'avad disputes this and says it doesn't fit with what we know that the world will return to *tohu vavohu*.

3. **The verse "Ayin lo ra'atah Elokim zulatecha ya'aseh lemechakeh lo" (Isaiah 64:3).** The Rambam brings this verse that even a prophet's eye cannot see what the Almighty prepares for those who wait for Him. The novelty: a prophet can indeed see spirituality, can communicate with the Almighty – but unlike Moshe Rabbeinu, a prophet always speaks in parables (as we learned the distinction of Moshe's prophecy – without vision, without parable). Because one doesn't want to make any parable about the World to Come, a prophet cannot see it at all.

4. **Gemara Rabbi Yochanan – "All the prophets only prophesied about the days of Mashiach."** The Rambam rules like Rabbi Yochanan (there is a dispute in the Gemara). This resolves an apparent contradiction in Tanach: Isaiah says

"ayin lo ra'atah" – no one has seen the reward; but other prophets describe reward with simple parables. The answer: all prophets who speak about reward speak of the days of Mashiach (physical goods). "Ayin lo ra'atah" speaks of the World to Come – which no one has seen.

5. **Novelty in the exposition of "ayin lo ra'atah."** In the simple meaning of Scripture, the verse can mean that no one has yet seen it (but one can in principle see it). But Rabbi Yochanan expounds that it means something that cannot be seen – not just that it hasn't been seen. The Rambam accepts this exposition because it is not a physical thing, not a bodily thing.

6. **The question why the World to Come is not stated in the Torah.** The Rambam answered in another place that "lema'an yirbu yemeichem" alludes to the World to Come. But according to this foundation here – that the prophets deliberately didn't speak of the World to Come – one can understand why it is not stated explicitly: because to describe it would only diminish it.

7. **Comparison to "dibbrah Torah kilshon benei adam."** Just as the Rambam says that when the Torah speaks about the Almighty with physical terms ("yad Hashem," "einei Hashem") these are all parables – so too when prophets speak about reward with physical terms, they speak only of the days of Mashiach, not of the World to Come.

Halachah 4 (According to the Rambam's Continuation) – Why Is It Called "Olam Haba"?

"And it is only called the World to Come because that life comes to a person after the life of this world in which we exist in body and soul, and this is what is found for every person first."

Plain meaning: The World to Come is called "haba" (coming) not because a new world comes in the future, but because for each individual person the stage of soul alone comes after he has lived as body and soul together. "And this is what is found for every person first" – the first stage for every person is body and soul, and the second stage is soul alone.

Insights and Explanations:

1. **Great novelty: The World to Come already exists now.** The Rambam says a tremendous novelty against the simple understanding: the World to Come is not a new world that the Almighty will first create in the future. He says explicitly: **"This matter is not destined to be found in the future... but it already exists and stands"** – the World to Come is already here, as it says **"asher tzafanta"** – the Almighty has "hidden" it (tzafanta). When something is hidden, it is not visible, but it exists. This is against the approach that this world will be destroyed and afterward a new world will come.

2. **The question: Why is it called "haba" if it already exists?** If the World to Come is essentially the soul's comprehension of Godliness, and the soul already exists now (as the Rambam says in chapter 4 that the soul is not dependent on the body), why is it called "olam haba"? It's not a new world, and it's also not "coming"! The Rambam's answer: It is called "haba" not because the world comes later, but because for each individual person the stage of soul alone comes **after** he has lived as body and soul together.

3. The Rambam's approach about souls — they don't come from the World to Come. The Rambam teaches that the soul is created when the person is born — it doesn't descend from a previous World to Come (because then it would be called "olam she'avar"). This fits with his approach in chapter 4 that although the soul is not dependent on the body, it is "stuck" in a body during life.

4. The order of times — a complication. For each individual there is a personal judgment after death with a personal World to Come. But there is also a general order of the end of days: days of Mashiach, resurrection of the dead, and the World to Come. How all this fits together are details that must still be learned.

The Great Dispute About the Rambam

[Digression: Historical dispute about the Rambam]

The last three chapters of Laws of Repentance (chapters 8-10) were almost the greatest cause of the great dispute about the Rambam. The world thought that the Rambam teaches differently from most Jews about resurrection of the dead, what is the reward, what is the good. This led to the burning of the Rambam's books.

The Ra'avad in note 3 (=chapter 8) is the clearest dispute with the Rambam on this matter. Other Rishonim (and the Ra'avad) strongly disagree, and also in the Zohar itself there is perhaps a third way. But the Rambam's approach has "certainly a great place" and one now learns the Rambam's way.

Support from the Holy Zohar

The holy Zohar (Parashat Toldot) brings a well-known story: One makes a feast with Leviathan, shor habar, etc. After Rabbi Yehudah describes the scene, Rabbi Yossi says that this was said for the simple people so they would understand reward, but in truth the reward of the World to Come is a spiritual reward — "nehenin miziv haShechinah." This goes with the Rambam's way (although one can discuss what came first — the Zohar or the Rambam).

Halachah 4 (Continuation) — Why Is It Called "Olam Haba"? (Continued)

Additional Insights on the Nature of the World to Come

The Rambam's revolutionary concept: The World to Come is not a future event but a present reality that exists in a different dimension. When a person dies, his soul doesn't travel to a place that will be created; rather, it enters a reality that already exists but was inaccessible while bound to a physical body.

The philosophical implication: This transforms our understanding of death. Death is not the end of existence followed by a new beginning, but rather a transition from one mode of existence (body and soul) to another (soul alone). The soul doesn't "go" anywhere — it simply sheds the limitations of physicality.

Connection to daily life: This understanding should affect how we live. If the World to Come already exists, then our spiritual accomplishments in this world are not merely earning future rewards but are actually building and developing the eternal part of ourselves that will continue in that already-existing reality.

Summary of Key Principles from Chapter 8

- 1. The true reward is spiritual, not physical —** comprehension of Hashem without the limitations of a body.
- 2. The World to Come cannot be fully comprehended in this world —** because we are limited by our physical perspective.
- 3. All prophetic descriptions of reward refer to the days of Mashiach —** the World to Come was deliberately not described to avoid diminishing it.
- 4. The World to Come already exists —** it is called "haba" (coming) only from the perspective of each individual who enters it after physical life.
- 5. The ultimate good is knowledge itself —** specifically, comprehension of the Creator, which is both the reward and the essence of eternal life.
- 6. Physical pleasures have no relevance in the World to Come —** because there is no body, and all bodily needs and experiences cease to exist.

These principles form the foundation of the Rambam's understanding of the ultimate purpose of human existence and the true meaning of reward and punishment in Jewish thought.

Full Transcript

Laws of Repentance Chapter 8 – The Good Reserved for the Righteous is the Life of the World to Come

Introduction: The Structure of the Laws of Repentance

Speaker 1:

We are learning Laws of Repentance Chapter 8. So, we learned that the Laws of Repentance contains the commandment of repentance (teshuva) and fundamental principles from among the fundamental principles and beliefs of the faith. We said that there are two fundamental principles, principles that come with the Laws of Repentance. Yes.

The first principle we understood quite well, I mean, the Rambam made clear the connection of both of them. What is the connection? What is a fundamental principle? There are

many, I forgot to say. There are actually two fundamental principles that are discussed in the Laws of Repentance, besides the commandment of repentance.

The Principle of Free Will (Bechira)

The first principle is the principle called reshut (free will), which people like to call bechira (choice), but the Rambam doesn't have such a word. The reshut netuna lo (free will is given to him). It's interesting, that principle is not from the fundamental principles of the faith in the list of the thirteen principles. Yes, the thirteen principles the Rambam compiled, but in the list of principles in Tractate Sanhedrin, the Rambam did not count bechira. But you see that here in this book he does count it. There is a question, Rabbi Chaluni already asked me this question, but such is the fact.

The Principle of Good (Reward and Punishment)

Afterwards there is another principle, which is certainly indeed a part of the principles, which is the principle of... I called it here the principle of good. That is, what is the point, what is the purpose (tachlit), what are the good things that one receives from keeping the Torah and from being a good person, and this is the other topic of reward and punishment (sechar v'onesh). This principle the Rambam discusses in the last three chapters of the Laws of Repentance.

Why Does Reward and Punishment Belong in the Laws of Repentance?

What does this have to do with the Laws of Repentance? Why did the Rambam also speak about reward and punishment in the Laws of Repentance? Why did he bring in the matter of reward and punishment?

Speaker 2:

Ah, because I said earlier, because repentance itself is when the person himself evaluates his deeds, he does repentance. Repentance is connected with judgment, with judging a person, *din v'cheshbon* (judgment and accounting). The Almighty makes a *din v'cheshbon*, and a person must make for himself a *din v'cheshbon*.

Speaker 1:

That's a bit of a midrash that you're saying. I mean that more than repentance is a good thing, and not a bad thing. That repentance, first of all, must shine somewhere.

The Connection Between Repentance and the World to Come

The Rambam stated a connection explicitly at the beginning of the previous chapter. He says that one must do repentance. Why? **"So that he may die with his repentance corrected, in order that he may merit the life of the World to Come."** The Rambam made clear, Chapter 7 is a very clear bridge between the three topics of the Laws of Repentance. He says, since the wicked person exists, he must do repentance. Why must he do repentance? So that he may die with his repentance corrected. Seemingly the point is... now he's going to explain what is the World to Come that we're talking about. Because the "in order to," it's the purpose. The purpose of life, the purpose of man is to reach the World to Come.

In the Laws of Repentance in a certain sense he goes through the entire order, from when a person is not a righteous person until he becomes a person, and the purpose. Towards what? For what? For which purpose and which goal must one do repentance? The purpose of the World to Come. Therefore he must explain what is the World to Come, what is the goal that one reaches from doing repentance.

Generally this is not only from doing repentance, but in general from being a person, but most people don't have the merit of the righteous, therefore for most people it will anyway be the goal of repentance, not the goal of good deeds, because a person is not born a righteous person.

Law 1: The Good Reserved for the Righteous is the Life of the World to Come

The Words of the Rambam

The Rambam says very well, the Rambam says, **"The good that is reserved,"** the good, the goodness that is prepared, that is stored for the righteous, **"is the life of the World to Come."** That means, besides the fact that in this world there

is good, that when one does good it is good, but "reserved," no, I need to go about this "reserved," perhaps there is a bit... there is something else stored for the righteous.

The Concept of "Good" – From the Commentary on the Mishna, Chapter Chelek

Let us remember, the Rambam in the Commentary on the Mishna in Chapter Chelek began with a long introduction, everyone should learn it, because only when one learns that introduction can one understand the chapters, or vice versa, I don't know.

In that case, there he explains that there is a great dispute, that people are very confused about what is the good that one receives from keeping the Torah. This is his language, about this I said the word "good." What is the goodness? Why does one keep the Torah? What will one receive from it? What is the purpose? What is the end? One says it's reward in this world, one says the Messiah, one says the resurrection of the dead, people say all kinds of things. And the Rambam says, "But I say, and the Mishna says, and the Torah says, that the good that one receives from being righteous is the life of the World to Come." And this is what he says here as well. "Good" means to say the goal.

Now, the Rambam does say that many commandments are *tikkun olam* (repair of the world), are repair so that the world should be a good world. I questioned myself on the word "reserved," but that's not the point. It's true, and he will see in the laws... okay, okay, I'll learn as you say.

"Asher Tzafanta Lire'echa" – The Source of "Reserved"

The good that is prepared for the righteous is the life of the World to Come. It's a verse, he's going to bring the language **"that You have reserved for those who fear You,"** that's where the language comes from. But he's going to speak about what is with the reward of this world, he's also going to speak in the next chapters. But the Rambam wants to say clearly, the only, the true good thing that one receives from being righteous is called the life of the World to Come.

"Life That Has No Death With It" – Not Just Eternal, But Without Death At All

What is that?

Life that has no death with it.

Life that doesn't end with death.

No, **goodness that has no evil with it.**

One means that it doesn't have with it.

It's not that it doesn't end.

It's that it doesn't have with it.

Because he wants to explain why he's going to bring the verse "for life" or something like that, I don't know.

And his life.

You understand, the different expressions of life, which the Gemara says means the World to Come.

It means like this, living in a body, you learned in the Laws of the Foundations of the Torah, is transient and perishable things.

A body is a thing that dies.

A soul in a body is a thing that dies.

But even when it lives, it doesn't truly live, because it can die.

It's not like living in a soul, living in intellect, which is a life that has no death with it, and it's a goodness that has no evil

with it.

Why?

Because it cannot die, because it was never born.

It's not a thing that is at all mixed with death.

Therefore, it is a life that has no death with it, and it's a goodness that has no evil with it.

Good in This World is Always Mixed With Evil

The same thing, all goods in this world are good that has evil with it.

That means, how does one say?

It's limited, or it's mixed.

Yes, there is nothing that is completely good.

Everything must be in measure.

Do I have a mitzva?

A bit too much of this is already not good.

A bit too much of that is already not good.

This is easy to understand.

It's always mixed with evil.

"Shekulo Tov" – Good in Itself

And the goodness of the World to Come, which is called **"so that it may be good for you,"** is specifically **"shekulo"** – he's going to bring the language "shekulo" – **"shekulo tov" (entirely good).**

That means, it's good in itself.

It's not good in the manner of how it's good and so forth.

It's the essence of good, it's not mixed with it any not-good, any evil.

"So That It May Be Good For You and You Shall Lengthen Days" – The Exposition of the Sages

He says, "a wise-hearted person in Torah," this is what the Torah says when the Torah speaks about reward, that the Torah says **"so that it may be good for you,"** it shall be good for you, **"and you shall lengthen days."**

It shall be good for you, only good, and "and you shall lengthen days" you shall live eternally, you shall not have the matter of death.

We're speaking of the reward of the World to Come.

Meaning, says the Gemara in Kiddushin, the Sages learned from this "so that it may be good for you."

The Gemara means that this is a halacha l'Moshe miSinai (law given to Moses at Sinai).

That means, this can mean the simple meaning "so that it may be good for you" in this world.

But the midrash learned, the tradition, the Oral Torah says, yes, the World to Come is a thing of the Oral Torah, it's not written in the Written Torah.

The Oral Torah Adds to the Written Torah

Or the Oral Torah, the Rambam uses here the same language that he uses in all places where the Oral Torah adds a bit differently than the simple meaning.

The simple meaning wouldn't mean that way, but the tradition, halacha l'Moshe miSinai, he says that what does "so that it may be good for you" mean? "So that it may be good for you" means "for the world that is entirely good," the world that is entirely good. "And you shall lengthen days" is "for the

world that is entirely long," the world that is eternally long, it never ends. Long means longer, but the World to Come is long that has no end, it's entirely long. And eternity is very long, as someone said that infinity, eternity, is very long, especially at the end. So it's entirely long, it doesn't end.

Law 1 (Continued): The Reward of the Righteous and the Punishment of the Wicked

The Reward of the Righteous – To Merit This Pleasantness

The Rambam continues, **"And this is the World to Come,"** this is the World to Come, **"the reward of the righteous is that they merit this pleasantness and are in this goodness, and the punishment of the wicked is that they do not merit this life but are cut off and die, and do not merit length of days."**

The Punishment of the Wicked – Karet and Death

The Rambam says, **"And whoever does not merit this life, he is the dead one who does not live forever, but is cut off in his wickedness and perishes like an animal."** That means, just as an animal when it dies the matter of the animal is finished, it never goes, it doesn't live further, a person who is in that sort of situation is also finished. That is "cut off," he is cut off, literally he has died. This is the aspect of why it says in the Torah... he says, **"he is the dead one,"** the greatest dead person is the one who doesn't live in the World to Come, because he's going to be dead for very long. He lived perhaps for a few years, and dead he's going to be forever and ever, for very many years. He is dead already now, not from the departure of the soul. Right, right, right, right. He is a person who dies. The other is not a dead person, because his life still lives.

Law 1 (Continued): "Hikaret Tikaret" – Karet in the Torah

"Hikaret Tikaret" – Double Karet

The Rambam says, **"And this is the karet stated in the Torah."** When the Torah says that karet is the punishment for many transgressions, karet is... it shouldn't mean for long not to bring in many transgressions, and the Rambam doesn't say that. What is written in the Torah, karet, **"that soul shall surely be cut off, its iniquity is upon it,"** what happens? The soul shall be cut off because "its iniquity is upon it."

The Oral Torah Explains: "Hikaret" in This World, "Tikaret" for the World to Come

And further on number 12, on the Oral Torah, **"And the Sages explained about this punishment,"** the Sages, **"karet in this world."** "And they explained" means the Oral Torah, yes. The halacha l'Moshe miSinai says, "karet in this world" – it is cut off in this world, it means dying young seemingly. **"Hikaret tikaret" – "tikaret for the World to Come."** The... it's a double language, a doubled language. "Karet" means in this world, and "tikaret" for the World to Come. **"That is to say, that soul which departed from the body in this world does not merit the life of the World to Come, but also from the World to Come is cut off."**

So the righteous person doesn't die in this world, because it looks like he dies, but he's going to live in the life of the World to Come. The wicked person dies in this world, and he's not going to come back to life in the life of the World to Come, therefore it was a real death. He has a double karet. He is "also from the World to Come cut off."

Innovation: "The Karet Stated in the Torah" Means the Essential Punishment, Not Only the 36 Karetot

One must remember, I mean there are many who disagree, there are many problems that one can make. But the Rambam when he says "the karet stated in the Torah" doesn't mean to say simply that everyone who is an idolater who dies is karet. He doesn't mean to say simply that one receives this particular karet specifically for the 36 karetot in the Torah. Because the Rambam says, he's not speaking of that. The Rambam is speaking here of the essential reward. The essential reward is to live, and non-reward is karet. So the Rambam learns that in that verse he's speaking of all transgressions, simply.

So the Rambam says that karet... it's not... the essential punishment isn't Gehinnom, it's not such things. The Rambam won't bring such a thing at all. And the Rambam has only karet here, which means being cut off. Eh, not every transgression has karet? One must say that that is speaking of something else. That is not the same thing. What the Rambam says, karet is the essential punishment. The only punishment that truly exists is karet. And he understands in his own language karet, because karet means cut off from this world and from the World to Come. It doesn't connect with what we learn that here there are those liable for karet. Not the same thing. This is a burden that I can say about this. How they have strong understanding of the recitation of Shema etc., one must learn separately. But the drama hasn't come here now to say. Here I must present his reward, here I must present the good reserved for the righteous, or the evil prepared for the wicked, as the Rambam calls it.

Law 3: The Nature of the World to Come – There is No Body or Corporeality in It

The World to Come is Not a Place With Physicality

Everyone must know what the World to Come is. It's not like you might think that the World to Come is some place where one sits and lives and drinks and dances

The World to Come: There is No Body or Corporeality – Explanation of the Words of the Sages "The Righteous Sit With Their Crowns on Their Heads"

Law 1 (Continued) – The World to Come: There is No Body or Corporeality

Speaker 1:

The Rambam says, no. The Rambam says, **the World to Come, what is the World to Come, where one lives eternally? There is no body or corporeality in it.** There is no body or corporeality there.

I mean that gufiya (corporeality) also often means body. I don't know why it says gufiya again. Yes?

Speaker 2:

Do you know what gufiya means?

Speaker 1:

No.

Speaker 2:

Body. It's another language. "And his gufiya like tarshish," a verse says, yes. It means body. Okay.

Speaker 1:

So, gufiya isn't, is also often a language of death?

Speaker 2:

No, "vayigva," that's with an ayin. No. I don't know.

Speaker 1:

Rather, only the souls of the righteous without a body. In the World to Come live only the souls, **like the ministering angels.** Meaning, there the person is a soul without a body. Now the person is a composite of matter and form, a body with a soul. In the World to Come one is a soul only, like the ministering angels who are form only without matter.

The Rambam says, there are various things that come with, that are side effects of being a body. A body is a machine that needs to have food and drink to be able to exist. So with a body comes eating. But once a person is a soul without a body, **and is not a body, there is also no eating and drinking, nor any of the things that the bodies of people need in this world.** There are also not all these other things that the bodies of people need to have. Sleep, spending, doesn't matter.

So he continues, **and nothing happens to it,** nothing happens to a person any of the things, **any of the occurrences to bodies in this world.** Do you hear what the Rambam calls the language that one calls philosophically "occurrences"? It has no substance, accidents. He doesn't mean to say that nothing happens, he means that it doesn't have the... the properties that a body has. Like sitting is a sort of situation with a body. A body has a certain kind of position, how it can be sitting or standing, or sleeping or awake, or that a person dies sometimes. This doesn't exist for the soul, because the soul doesn't die. Sadness and laughter, feelings, being sad or laughing, doesn't exist for the soul, only for the body, therefore it doesn't exist in the World to Come.

Law 1 (Continued) – Explanation of the Statement of the Sages "The Righteous Sit With Their Crowns on Their Heads"

Speaker 1:

He says, this is what the Sages say, the early Sages, this is what the early Sages say in the Gemara. The Rambam always calls the early Sages in the Gemara. He says, the World to Come, about this they say, **"In the World to Come there is no eating, no drinking, and no marital relations,"** there is no eating, drinking, or the other things, **"rather the righteous sit with their crowns on their heads and enjoy the radiance of the Divine Presence."** The righteous sit, and they have their crowns on their heads, and they enjoy the radiance of the Divine Presence.

The Rambam Explains This: "Behold, It Is Clarified for You That There Is No Body"

The Rambam goes on to explain: **"Behold, it is clarified for you that there is no body,"** because he says that there is no eating and drinking and marital relations, so there is no body, **"because there is no eating and drinking."** And however, ah, you understand, there is no sitting. What they said, **"the righteous sit" is by way of riddle,** it's a parable. Sitting is always an image for a person who sits calmly. He sits in a calm state. **"That is to say, the souls of the righteous exist there,"** that means, they exist there, but he wants to say that they exist in a restful way, **"without toil and without weariness."** There isn't even rest, because rest is the opposite of toiling. True, but he means to say that there are no difficulties whatsoever. The negation can say the same thing.

"Their Crowns on Their Heads" – The Crown Is the Daat

Speaker 1:

We are concerned, **"their crowns on their heads,"** they have crowns on their heads. What does crowns on their heads mean? They also don't have a body, they can't have clothing, they can't have a crown. **"That is to say,"** what is the crown? **"The knowledge that they will know,"** they will have a knowledge that they will know, **"through which they merited the life of the World to Come, their existence,"** they will constantly have the awareness that what they merited regarding the life of the World to Come is because of their good deeds that they did.

Speaker 2:

No, no, no, that's not the translation.

Speaker 1:

The translation is that the knowledge, the wisdom that this is the life of the World to Come remains. The wisdom remains, because the knowledge remains. The daat remains, not the daat that they merited the life of the World to Come. The daat that they know, that the portion of daat of the person remains, that is "on their heads." The crown is a hint to daat. The Rambam will soon begin to speak about this.

Two Proofs That Crown Is a Hint to Daat

Speaker 1:

The Rambam brings two sources from verses that a crown is a hint to daat, to knowledge. **"Go forth and see, O daughters of Zion, King Solomon with the crown with which his mother crowned him."** We're speaking there... what does that mean there? What was Solomon's specialty? That he was a wise man. The crown with which his mother crowned him means the crown of wisdom.

But he brings another proof, another verse. And a clear proof, it says in the verse, **"and everlasting joy upon their heads."** There is great joy on the head. How can there be joy on the head? **"And joy is not a body that it should rest on the head."** Joy is not an object that can be placed on a head. Joy is a state in daat, a state in spirit, in the soul. Rather what, what does "everlasting joy upon their heads" mean? It means, their heads means their daat, that their daat will have joy. Also the crown that it says, "their crowns on their heads," **"it is the daat,"** it is the daat.

So what it says "the righteous sit," the righteous are at rest, they are in ultimate rest, it means that nothing else but rest is relevant. Not rest is an attribute of the body. And they will have daat. Very good.

Halacha 1 (Continued) — Explanation of "Enjoying the Radiance of the Divine Presence"

Speaker 1:

And what is the meaning of the enjoyment? Interestingly, he threw in a word here, "through which they merit the life of the World to Come." He hasn't said it until now, but here he hinted that the life of the World to Come that we're speaking about is the knowledge that they will know. One receives it with daat, or the daat is the eternal portion. He's going to say it in a minute. By the way, he's going to say it explicitly in the next piece.

"And what they said further, 'the righteous sit with their crowns on their heads and enjoy the radiance of the Divine Presence,' what they said 'and enjoy the radiance of the Divine Presence,'" what does that mean? Do you think it means that he has enjoyment like a person has

enjoyment from eating and drinking and thoughts? That would be a physical enjoyment. **"Rather, what is it that they said, that they know and comprehend the truth of the Holy One, Blessed be He."** They know and they comprehend the truth of the Holy One, Blessed be He, the essence of the Holy One, Blessed be He, what the Almighty is, **"which they do not know while they are in the dark and lowly body."** Which we learned earlier that when a person is in the dark and lowly body, he cannot understand the truth of the Holy One, Blessed be He, or the knowledge of the Holy One, Blessed be He. **"But after they merit the life of the World to Come,"** which is when one has free daat, then one can indeed comprehend the truth of the Holy One, Blessed be He.

That is, he's explaining the "enjoying." Presumably there is also the simple meaning, but he wants to bring out that the "enjoying" means the knowledge.

Very good. Until now one struggled with certain difficulties, we say that we will understand the knowledge of the Holy One, Blessed be He, and the ultimate goal is that we will be satisfied.

Halacha 1 (Continued) — What "Soul" Means in the World to Come

Speaker 1:

Ah, says the Rambam, when the Sages say "soul," what do they mean to say here? Souls alone? Says the Rambam, what it says... I just said, the Rambam himself said, it was written, he said, **"the soul, the souls of the righteous alone and not the body."** Ah, says the Rambam, what I said that the soul of the righteous lives in the World to Come, **"every soul that we mentioned in this matter,"** there is more than one way to understand the word "soul."

Two Types of "Soul" — The Soul That Needs the Body and the Form of the Soul

Speaker 1:

Says the Rambam, here it is not the portion of the soul, the breath perhaps, the physical soul **"that needs the body,"** which exists only together with a body. That is, the force, the body is a machine, there is some portion, a soul, that makes the machine be active. We're not speaking of that soul. The Rambam once heard of...

Speaker 2:

Yes, but the body is not a machine, the body is a living thing.

Speaker 1:

Yes, but the body has a life force, which can also be called a soul. He says that the soul we're speaking of here is not the soul that must have a body, it's not the soul that lives only together with a body, because that soul indeed dies. Rather what, yes, has the form of the soul. The matter itself also has some force of the soul, has some life force, which is called a soul.

The true definition of soul he said there, **"the form of man and the perfection of his knowledge is it,"** upon which stands "in the image of God" etc. **"Which is,"** what is the form of the soul? **"Which is the knowledge that comprehended the Creator according to its ability."** The Almighty gave to man, that man comprehended the Creator, and this is the knowledge that man comprehended the Creator. **"And comprehended the separate**

intellects," he can comprehend the matter of separate intellects. He comprehended, it's a force, it can be. This is what one comprehended the Creator, and one comprehended separate intellects.

Three Categories of Comprehension

Speaker 1:

Instead of comprehending knowledge of a body, separate intellects are angels, **"and other deeds,"** and the knowledge that are other deeds. There are three things: there is the Creator, there are the angels, and there is the rest of the world, the sun, the moon, I don't know what, and the lower world. **"And it is the form whose matter we explained in Chapter 1 of the Laws of the Foundations of the Torah,"** and in the previous chapter of the Laws of the Foundations of the Torah we explained that form is the portion that understands, the knowledge, which is what differentiates a person from an animal. **"And it is called soul in this matter, and in the World to Come, know, the portion that remains alive is the knowledge."** The only thing that lives in the World to Come is how much one understood, one understood the Almighty or other things, the separate intellects etc.

Discussion: Daat Can Live Without a Body

Speaker 2:

Yes, it's a very deep thing, because people look at how their daat is in their body, but we're learning here that daat is something that can live without a body.

Speaker 1:

Those people don't have knowledge of the Creator, of the power of the soul, that knowledge is indeed different. Knowledge of the Creator. The Rambam doesn't say that the intellect of a person remains, the Rambam says that the comprehension of Hashem remains. Yes?

Speaker 2:

There are people who think that their comprehension of Hashem is stored in their brain. Ah, I don't know any comprehension of Hashem, then out. Can't be.

Speaker 1:

No, no, I mean to bring this out, because people think that stories...

Chapter 8: The Parables of the Prophets and Sages About the World to Come, and the Difficulty of Perceiving Purely Spiritual Reward

Continuation of Halacha 7: "Life" Means the Life of Knowledge and Soul — Because Death Is Only an Accident of the Body

Speaker 1: Stories are not comprehension of Hashem, stories are comprehension of I don't know what. He's only speaking of this, the one who knows the Almighty, the one who knows the Almighty remains forever. This he explained in both introductions that were noted there. And this is, until here is what is the good hidden for the righteous.

Now he's going to say that all the verses that speak about reward and punishment for the World to Come, the proof that there is such a thing, there are many verses, there are other types of images, other types of expressions. One must know what is the nimshal of all those parables.

For example, life, he means, **the life of knowledge and the soul, because there is no death with it, because there is no death. And as we discussed, why is there no death? Because death is only from the accidents of the body, death is only something that happens to the body, and there is no body there, there is only the soul itself, the knowledge itself.**

"Bundle of Life" — The Verse and Its Meaning

"Therefore it is called the bundle of life," a bundle of life, because it's something that is only life. This is stated in a verse, the bound place where life is bound. It's not a bundle of life, that a bunch of life is bound together. Apparently it means something like the thing where life is a true... I don't know, I don't know what "bundle of life" means. He's going to bring the verse. But it doesn't mean a bundle, right? It must mean some... well, what would it mean?

Speaker 2: He doesn't bring a translation.

Speaker 1: Bundle of life, some place, some thing of life. I slipped, the Rambam just brings the word life. He says about the Almighty is the form. I don't know, the form? How is the form life? I don't know. Okay.

As it says, he brings the verse. But how does "bundle of life" appear?

Speaker 2: I thought it says **"and the soul of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of life with Hashem your God."**

Speaker 1: Ah, very good. So, with the Almighty, with the comprehension of Hashem. **"And the soul of your enemies He shall sling out in the hollow of the sling."** Ah, they won't have the life of the World to Come.

So we see that what? That the soul goes in or is connected, or whatever it is, is called the bundle of life. And here he says that the righteous, they are, they live. They live with the Almighty. The wicked, they die, they are in the hollow of the sling, they are dead, they don't exist.

"Good That Has No Good After It" — The World to Come Is the Ultimate Goal of All Goals

Says the Rambam, **"and this is the reward that there is no reward higher than it, and good that has no good after it."** This is the reward that there is nothing higher than it, and this is the good that there is no good after it.

"After it" means higher than it. No, but literally, good is "end." A good means, why are you doing this? In order to be the final good. "For the sake of" means "good." So when you have a good, you can translate it as a purpose. But the comprehension of Hashem, this is the purpose of purposes. That is, all things are for this. Can you ask why is this? No, you can't ask why is this, because this is the final thing.

All "Places" in the Prophets Are Parables for Comprehension of Hashem

Says the Rambam, **"and this is the reward that there is no reward higher than it and good that has no good after it, and it is what all the prophets desired."** This is what the prophets had a desire to merit.

"And how many names they called it by way of parable." The prophets pray for this in their songs and in prayers and in other places, they yearn for the things that the Rambam is going to enumerate. What do they yearn for? For that life, the life of the World to Come.

And so a parable for the comprehension of the heart by way of parable, because repentance is the highest thing one can desire, all other desires are only a highest desire, not the final one. And he says, "and so a parable for the comprehension of the heart by way of parable." Our prophets spoke about this state, and they called it in various parables.

They said "**the mountain of Hashem,**" they didn't mean, simply it means that the mountain of Hashem means the place of the Temple, but the Rambam learns that they meant the life of the World to Come, "**His holy place and the holy way.**" "**And the courtyards of Hashem,**" as David says, yes, to be able to live forever in the courtyards of the house of Hashem. "**And the tent of Hashem,**" or "**to behold the pleasantness of Hashem,**" to see the pleasantness of Hashem. "**And the sanctuary of Hashem,**" interestingly. "**And the house of Hashem,**" "**and the gate of Hashem.**"

All these things are places where one lives eternally and where one can comprehend the knowledge of Hashem. As we said earlier that a person cannot comprehend His truth and His knowledge of the Holy One, Blessed be He, in this world as long as one has a body. So all these things that they say, I want to be at the mountain of Hashem, the place of Hashem, what do all these things mean? Not to have a certain place, that it should be a physical place. One wants to be in a comprehension place to be able to comprehend His truth, may He be blessed.

So all these things are parables for this state, for this state where a person can be in the life of the World to Come, to be able to comprehend His truth, may He be blessed, which can only happen when one is a naked soul.

Discussion: Do the Names Mean the Temple or the World to Come?

Speaker 2: I thought that all these things mean the Temple, but he brings that the Sifrei indeed says, has already spoken that all these things are parables for levels of the World to Come.

Speaker 1: And the Rambam goes very much with the Sifrei, yes, with the heads of the sages.

Speaker 2: Yes.

Comparison to Seven Heavens — Perhaps Each Name Is a Different Level

Speaker 1: Says the Rambam further... you remember, you still know, I remember that there is in the firmament, yes, he said that there are seven heavens, and there are seven many names, he said there that each one is a different heaven.

Speaker 2: Ah, level.

Speaker 1: The Rambam, you can say that each one of the names is some palace that is powerful. What, are there ten?

Speaker 2: He enumerated ten. Are there ten? One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine. And the tenth is the feast.

Speaker 1: Perhaps the Rambam says that there are eight levels, perhaps each one hints at a different type of comprehension. The Rambam makes it all for the same thing.

Speaker 2: Okay.

"Feast" by the Sages — A Parable for the Best State

Speaker 1: So the Rambam says thus, "**and so the Sages called it by way of parable for this good that is**

prepared for the righteous." When the Sages say that there is a feast where the righteous are invited, he says, the good that is prepared for the righteous, the Sages call it a feast. It doesn't mean a physical feast, but it means like in this world the best state that a person is in, is when he has the best pleasures, there is a feast.

"And in general and in every place, the World to Come." And this is called in other places, he says, yes, more clearly, the World to Come. Because at the end of the chapter the Rambam is going to explain the meaning of the words "World to Come."

But feast, where does feast appear?

Speaker 2: Don't know, the feast that we speak of in the Akdamot, yes, the feast that we're going to call together.

Speaker 1: Okay.

Speaker 2: The feast of Leviathan?

Speaker 1: Let's finish the second side. This is the Rambam.

Halacha 8: "Vengeance" — The Punishment of Karet

"And conversely, vengeance," the opposite is vengeance, "**that there is no vengeance greater than it.**" It's interesting that he calls it vengeance. Would I have said that not meriting the World to Come, does he mean vengeance?

He means vengeance is a word that the Rambam calls this several times, it simply means punishment. It doesn't mean vengeance... a punishment is vengeance, what does that mean? Like measure for measure.

But what is the worst punishment? "**It is the cutting off of the soul that it should not merit the life of the World to Come, as it says, 'that soul shall surely be cut off, its iniquity is upon it.'**" This is the verse that he brought earlier.

Discussion: Can "Vengeance" Only Be When One Has Something to Lose?

That is, indeed so. Someone who never comprehended anything of the world of souls, never had it. But it seems that it can be a thing that a person should indeed have had it, but because he had transgressions, then it can be vengeance. Because if a person never acquired it to lose, there is no vengeance. This requires investigation.

All Terms of Destruction Are Parables for This Loss

But the main thing he wants to bring out here is that about this there are also many parables, many words. Many places it looks like there are some interesting types, several types of punishments. He says, all these punishments mean by way of parable the loss of the soul.

"And this is the destruction that the prophets called it by way of parable." The loss of the soul, that one doesn't merit the life of the World to Come, the sages also have parables for this. It's called "**the pit of destruction,**" a pit, a well where one is destroyed; "**destruction,**" one is lost; "**Tophet,**" Tophet is a verse. Prepared from yesterday is Tophet, Tophet, and its fire. How does it appear? Tophet, Tophet, and its fire, or a type of worm, yes, such a thing that drags in a person. A verse in...

Every Expression of Destruction and Annihilation is Called "Avadon"

Every expression of destruction and annihilation is called avadon. When one says that he will be destroyed, he

will experience kilaya (annihilation), or hashchata (destruction), why is it called this? **Because it is a destruction from which there is no recovery forever.** All other things are only temporary, this is the loss from which there is no recovery forever, this is the ultimate loss that never comes back, this is when a person loses his life.

Transition to "Shema Tomar" – The Rambam's Method of Anticipating Difficulties

This last section has much connected, that is, first he states the fact, what is life and what is death, and he brings many parables from the prophets about these two things.

Speaker 2: Okay, wonderful. Where is this?

Speaker 1: Ah, in the same middle of the chapter.

Comparison to Other Places Where the Rambam Uses "Shema Tomar"

So, just as we saw in the previous chapter about knowledge and free will, which is free will, where the Rambam first stated the principle, and afterwards he entered into such a difficulty that can be hard for a person, "shema tomar" (lest you say) he will ask thus. The same thing here, after the Rambam has told us the secret that the essential, or the only ultimate good reward that one receives from doing, from being a good person, from being a tzaddik as the Rambam calls it, is Olam Haba, eternal life, there is a person for whom this is difficult.

Shema tiksheh be'einecha tovah zo (lest this good be difficult in your eyes), yes, what kind of life is this.

The Ra'avad's Dispute and the Difference Between the Difficulties

I will just add another place that is similar, when the Rambam says that the Almighty is eino guf (not a body), he himself asks about all the places where it seems otherwise. And the interesting thing is that in all three places the Ra'avad comes and he argues with the same thing, that people cannot grasp the truth of the Rambam. And from this he argues that that is only a difficulty from verses.

Here is the difficulty that he has already spoken about, I mean not actually spoken, he has already said, this is essentially the previous section, he said that all these parables that are written are all parables. He says here even more.

The Ra'avad disagrees, we are already learning in this lesson the shita of the Ra'avad, we will speak about this. But it is more a difficulty that is hard for people with a... why I compared it is because in both there is also the same thing, that a person can only grasp certain things, a person cannot grasp pure spirituality without being embedded in a body, and here he also has such a thing, that a person can have difficulty grasping reward that doesn't include everything he knows is good.

But let's be very clear, the Rambam, regarding the topic of knowledge of Hashem, that difficulty wasn't difficult.

Halacha 9-11: The Difficulty of Understanding the Reward of Olam Haba

Halacha 9: "Shema Tomar Belibekha" – The Rambam's Warning Against Physical Conceptions of Reward

Speaker 1:

And why he compared it is because in both there is the same thing, that a person can only grasp certain things, a person cannot grasp 'pure' spirituality without being embedded in a body, and here he also has such a thing that a person can have

difficulty grasping reward that doesn't include all the good things he knows are good, all the good things he knows are good.

Let's be very clear, the Rambam regarding the topic of knowledge of Hashem, that difficulty wasn't difficult, it wasn't difficult except for the verses that seem to indicate otherwise there, here we don't find that he says 'shema tomar' that the body is better than not having a body, it's true what he says, it's true, but I'm saying about the Rambam why do we see yes that there it wasn't difficult, this we understand.

The Rambam says further, it is the... yes, Teshuva HaGedola, ah, **"shema tomar belibekha"** (lest you say in your heart), a person will hear all these things that I'm saying, that reward means reward in Olam Haba, and it has to do only with souls, there is no eating and drinking there, there is no there, 'shema tomar belibekha' good and sweet, these things become easy for you.

"Ve'tidmech" (and you will imagine) he thinks **"sekhar hamitzvot veheyot ha'adam shalem bedarkhei ha'emet"** (the reward of the commandments and man being complete in the ways of truth), rather he thinks 'the reward of the commandments' and the completeness of a person 'in the ways of truth', one must be complete in the ways of truth, the mitzva brought him to this, it is 'connected', but the Rambam is very precise, he doesn't say any word that it's connected to the mitzvot, he must be complete in the ways of truth.

And people think that the reward of mitzvot and achieving the level of being an 'adam shalem bedarkhei ha'emet' is only yes for physical things, **"liheyot okhel veshote ma'akhalot tovot"** (to be eating and drinking good foods), that if he does mitzvot and he will be an 'adam hashalem' he will be able to merit a reward of receiving good foods, **"uvo'el tzurot na'ot"** (and having relations with beautiful forms), being able to have relations with beautiful forms, **"velovesh bigdei shesh verikma"** (and wearing garments of linen and embroidery), wearing beautiful clothes.

Not forms of embedded forms, yes, here it means forms literally, it was a nice expression because this is what a person loves, beautiful forms, **"veshokhein be'ahalei shen"** (and dwelling in tents of ivory), and living in buildings built from elephant tusks.

Speaker 2:

I know, expensive beautiful palaces.

Speaker 1:

The heikhal li shen (palace of ivory) is somewhat fitting. But not from the verse, a heikhal li shen. Heikhal li shen makes sense, because it's a hard thing, an ohel (tent) usually is from merchandise.

Speaker 2:

Okay. Okay.

Speaker 1:

Meaning, fancy... Look further, look what else to see. **"Umishta'mesh bikhli kesef vezahav udvarim hadomim le'elu"** (and using vessels of silver and gold and things similar to these), all the luxuries that one should be able to have. And using, figure out like Shir HaShirim and so on, **"kemo shemedamim elu ha'aravim hatipshim ha'evilim hashetufim bezimah"** (as these Arabs imagine, the fools, the simpletons, who are steeped in lewdness), like

the Arabs, the fools, the simpletons, who are steeped in lewdness, who love lewdness very much.

By them it is said that if one will be a good Arab, a good Muslim who does everything, killing Jews etc., one receives reward, as they say, as is known, I don't know exactly and I don't know the inside of the religion, perhaps some pious Muslim would say that this itself is only a... as one learns when one studies the book one knows differently, but simply, it is said that one receives seventy virgins in paradise, or such sorts of things that are written, it seems this is what the Rambam is hinting at.

Or there is a modern discourse that says it must be understood differently, but simply it is written, there is such a discourse, the Rambam must have known what he was talking about, and the evidence is they have said that the Rambam said about non-Jews and other things, and sometimes he is very sharp, he has no fear at all of saying.

When the Rambam says something sharp, he says, the Rambam, he will carry out foolishness, but he already says regarding the Arabs he says, the Arabs say, like Arabs say, what is the reward of being a complete and perfect person, being a big fool.

Hello? It could be that this itself demonstrates the absurdity of the thing, because one says to a person, if you don't have everything in this world, you'll have it in Olam Haba, if you don't eat everything in this world, you'll eat, I want to eat now.

What does the Rambam say. One can also see, from what pleasures a person has, one can see what kind of person he is. The Arab steeped in lewdness, when he imagines, what will be the best thing that can be, ah, he sits in paradise with seventy virgins.

Hello, what does a Rambam say? What does a Lithuanian say? He says paradise, and sits with a tea with a Gemara. He grasps that he gets a Rambam, this is his pleasure. He says very well, he says that one who is foolish in lewdness and a fool, this is his greatest good that he can attain is more of the lower pleasures.

Halacha 10: The Wise Know That Physicality is "Divrei Hevel VeHavai"

Speaker 1:

"Aval hachakhamim uva'alei hada'at" (But the wise and those with understanding), people who in this world already know that there is something better than the body, who are wise and have understanding, **"yad'u"** (they know), **"shekhol hadevarim ha'elu divrei hevel vehavai vehevel hem"** (that all these things are words of vanity and emptiness and are vanity), all these things are false and foolish, **"ve'ein bahem tokhelet"** (and there is no long-term benefit in them), first of all there is no long-term benefit in them, **"ve'ein bahem tovah gedolah etzlam"** (and there is no great good in them for them), it is only good for a minute.

And further, why is it only good in this world? Why does it seem so good? **"Ve'ein bahem tovah gedolah etzlam ba'olam hazeh ela mipnei she'anu ba'alei guf av"** (and there is no great good in them for them in this world except because we have a thick body), because we have a body, and the body has needs, **"vekhoh hadevarim ha'elu tzorekh haguf hen"** (and all these things are needs of the body), the body needs to have this. **"Aval ein hanefesh mit'avah lahem"** (But the soul does not desire them), the part of the

soul of the person does not lust for this, **"ela mipnei tzorekh haguf"** (except because of the need of the body), why does the soul lust yes for this is because the soul is combined with a body, **"kedei sheyimtza cheftzo vey'a'omod al buryo"** (so that it may find its desire and stand in its health), because he wants the machine called adam, which is the body and soul together, to be able to exist, therefore he wants to eat. But it's the body that wants the good food. **"Vekhol zman she'ein sham guf, nitbatlu khol hadevarim ha'elu"** (And as long as there is no body, all these things are nullified), if one doesn't have a body one doesn't need any food at all.

Discussion: The Soul's Desire to Eat in Olam Hazeh

Speaker 1:

What he's saying is like he says after the Tanya, certainly today when you are in a body your soul also wants, let's say, he also understands that he needs to eat, certainly he understands. He said differently, because the body wants to eat simply what tastes good, and the soul wants to eat what is healthy, but he still needs to eat. Why? In order to think about the world one doesn't need to eat for that, in order to be able to learn in this world, simply to survive. But if only I didn't have to, if only I could think without this, and that is Olam Haba. Very good. But, a great good...

Stop, stop, stop. Shlomo just said another thing. He will explain and bring proofs for this.

Connection to Yesodei HaTorah: Three Things That Are "Eino Guf"

Speaker 1:

The Rambam, as you said, is a very good comparison to the topic of comprehension of the Almighty and the angels. There the Rambam doesn't say all these details. It seems when one speaks of a person to himself... There are three things that the Rambam says are not a body, and most people think that they are yes a body, or once thought so. One, the Almighty, yes? Angels, okay, angels he doesn't elaborate on, the Rambam said a little. And the soul, the soul of man is also eino guf.

Now, the first two, okay, are not relevant to us. But you are also not a body, yes? This is the hardest thing to explain. And therefore your pleasure, your good, is also not the pleasures of the body. This is truly difficult. And the Rambam here gives more space for the difficulty of people to agree. He said indeed, a person cannot agree about the Almighty and His knowledge etc. Here he explains, and he even brings verses that say...

This is another important thing, because once a person understands about himself eino guf, he can much more easily understand that the Almighty is eino guf. Just as the Rambam said that he cannot understand the Almighty because he doesn't know about himself, he doesn't know his part of the soul that is not a body.

Speaker 2:

Right. Very good.

Speaker 1:

So here he brings even verses about what on one hand how good it is, and on the other hand he brings from the sayings of the Sages that it is indeed difficult to understand.

Remember that the Rambam in Perush HaMishnayot says the fools and simpletons, one cannot tell a blind person the desires

and such. The taste of wine, he says, or the taste of light, or how light looks.

Speaker 2:

Yes, or a eunuch one cannot tell the taste of sexual desire, because desires, what the Rambam calls the desire of intimacy, because they are not capable of having this.

Speaker 1:

Yes, so he says there, the Rambam.

Halacha 11: "Ein Shum Derekh Ba'olam Hazeh Lehasi'gah" — The Impossibility of Grasping the Good of Olam Haba

Speaker 1:

But the truth is, "**hatovah hagedolah shetiheye bah hanefesh ba'olam hazeh**" (the great good that will be for the soul in this world)... not then, here is a problem. He says that he doesn't know it. The great good that the soul will have in Olam Haba, which he previously explained, "**ein shum derekh ba'olam hazeh lehasi'gah bo**" (there is no way in this world to grasp it), to grasp, to have a comprehension in this world, or in the good.

To grasp, but to grasp the good, because if one is in Olam Hazeh one cannot grasp the good that the soul will enter. One cannot grasp, one cannot arrive at. One cannot have, because as long as you are stuck in a body, perhaps a little, one can understand the Almighty in Olam Hazeh, but not so much.

"Nishto echad yode'a ba'olam hazeh ela tovat haguf" (No one knows in this world except the good of the body), in this world we only know the good of the body, "**velo anu mit'avim**" (and we only desire), we only lust for the body. The Rambam also says clearly, yes? Anu mit'avim, okay, the body.

Discussion: "Anu Mit'avim" — Even the Wise Lust for Physicality

Speaker 2:

It's interesting, because even, I mean, even in Olam Hazeh, not only the Rambam but, I know, even the Rosh Yeshiva should be healthy, he also has, one often wants to eat, one wants to enjoy oneself.

Speaker 1:

The wise, this is the novelty. The wise say the lesson, and not as was said a minute ago, wise people with understanding, yes them. But even us, perhaps the mit'aveh means the great level of truly throwing away everything, only lusting for that, is very difficult.

Speaker 2:

True, true. No, but in a certain sense it feels, I think even we, in a certain sense eating and drinking I see, one convinces oneself that it's more real. It feels more real. It feels, I have a yetzer hara. I say, my yetzer hara told me that instead of coming to the lesson I should go to a restaurant. It makes sense. At least, even he says it to me, it makes sense. Even I can tell you no, it's not so absurd. Whoever is a person of intellect knows that it's more worthwhile to go to the lesson than to the restaurant, true. But it makes sense. You know what I mean that it makes sense? It doesn't make sense. In Olam Haba it won't make any sense. In Olam Hazeh it makes sense.

Speaker 1:

He says, "**aval otah tovah**" (but that good), the good of the soul, "**gedolah ad me'od, ve'ein lah erekh betovat olam hazeh, ela derekh mashal**" (is exceedingly great, and has no comparison to the good of this world, except by way of parable), one cannot compare them at all. There is no way, to the good of Olam Hazeh there cannot even be a comparison. One cannot compare them. Only through a parable. But in the way of truth.

Discussion: What Does "Erekh" and "Mashal" Mean

Speaker 2:

Ah, erekh, ah, no, no, I grasp what you're saying, I didn't grasp. What he means to say is, seemingly that one does yes compare.

Speaker 1:

Ah. When he said, he said "**chamor be'einav keseuda**" (a donkey in his eyes **like** a feast), not "**chamor be'einav seuda**" (a donkey in his eyes a feast). So it's a parable. One must understand precisely what is the definition of a parable.

I think that mashal means a thing that is not the, you know what means a thing that has an erekh? For example, I think this is what the Rambam explains in the Moreh in a certain place, perhaps look, but one thing. In Lubavitch they say this word a lot, one moment, ten dollars has an erekh with a million dollars. Because both are in dollars, and in the group of dollars you say, ten dollars is a little, and a hundred dollars, a thousand dollars, a million dollars, a billion dollars, is a lot. But it has an erekh, one can say more than this. There is a connection between the two. It's a very distant connection. I think this is the meaning of erekh.

Speaker 2:

But I said that intellectual pleasure is more, the pleasure of Torah is more than the pleasure of charity and kindness, yes?

Olam Haba is Completely Outside Our Understanding — The Prophets Could Not Describe It

Continuation of Halacha 2 — There is No Comparison Between the Good of the Soul and the Good of the Body

What Does "Erekh" Mean — A Novel Definition

Speaker 1:

Someone said, ten dollars has an erekh with a million dollars, why? Because both are dollars. In the group of dollars you say, ten dollars is a little, and a hundred dollars, a thousand dollars, a million dollars, a billion dollars is a lot, but it has an erekh. You can say "more than this". There is a connection between the two. You can be very distant. I think this is the meaning of "erekh".

But he did say that "**ta'anug haseikhel hu po'el yoter mishiv'im elef pe'amim etc.**" (intellectual pleasure is more effective than seventy thousand times etc.), he did say a number. It's two separate things, it's not in the same category. But this parable one can yes say. One can say, just as you understand that in the category of sweetness, of physical pleasure, honey is sweet, so in intellectual pleasure, intellect is sweet. This is a parable. It's not in the same category, but there is still some certain parable in a way that we can understand, we can compare, but it's not a true erekh.

Why We Speak of Olam Haba With Parables of Feasts

But in truth, when we say that the World to Come is a great feast, or that we will eat the flesh of the Leviathan and all these things, it doesn't mean that the goodness of the soul is as good

as that, but rather because that's the best thing you understand. We want to say that the other thing is good, it's something that will make you very happy, but it's a completely different kind of thing. Even when we say it's more than that, it's also just a parable, it's not more, it's a different type of thing. It's a different type of thing. **"Pleasure of the body has no connection at all with pleasure of the intellect"**, it's not the same category.

The Rambam's Words: No Comparison and No Likeness

But in truth, **that there is no comparison to the goodness of the soul...** not by way of parable, by way of parable and by way of truth. By way of parable means that one speaks in the manner of parable, but he speaks truth, yes? But in truth, **that there is no comparison between the goodness of the soul in the World to Come and the goodness of the body in this world in food and drink**, there is no connection. It's not a good... in truth one cannot, there is no good comparison. **Rather that goodness is great beyond investigation, without comparison and without likeness.** The goodness of the soul is better beyond investigation, one cannot estimate it, one cannot research it, and without comparison and without likeness.

I think investigation is what you said, investigation. But likeness and comparison I understand what he means. Comparison is as I said, one can make a comparison, ten is ten percent of a hundred, etc. It's not even a certain percentage of a trillion. Likeness means a state. They say, "I am similar to him, I am big and he is even bigger."

Even "Joy" Is Only a Parable for the World to Come

I want to say, one cannot even say – usually a person would indeed say this – that just as eating and drinking makes me happy, that joy will make me happy. But it's also not good, because happiness is also an emotion that we have now when we have joy, and its opposite is sadness. That is also outside the realm of joy, it's the understanding of wisdom itself.

Right, one can call it joy by way of parable. By way of parable, yes. One can say joy is that both are things where you feel good, you feel complete, you feel where you belong, some kind of conceptual thing.

Speaker 2:

True.

King David's Hints — "How Great Is Your Goodness Which You Have Hidden for Those Who Fear You"

Speaker 1:

He says, **"The Lord guards David"**, King David hinted to me when he said, **"How great is Your goodness which You have hidden for those who fear You"**, how great is Your goodness that You have kept hidden, the good hidden for the righteous, which is hidden, which the Almighty has hidden.

Speaker 2:

It seems he means to say the hidden.

Speaker 1:

What does he mean hidden? That it's hidden because people in this world don't understand it. It's hidden... It's very interesting, because a very precious thing is hidden. It's hidden. It's not hidden that one cannot understand it, it's hidden because people cannot understand it. But it's very good, it's very great, **You have prepared for those who**

take refuge in You, that You have prepared and made for those who take refuge in You, for the people who hope in the Almighty, for the people who are...

Digression: The Afikoman at the Seder

This is the secret of the... at the seder. One takes out and keeps an afikoman. What the afikoman is is the hint that the meal is only a parable, but it's the parable for the meal that we will eat.

Speaker 2:

Yes, it's actually a small piece of matzah, but still.

"Had I Not Believed to See the Goodness of the Lord in the Land of the Living"

Speaker 1:

Yes, he says further, **"And how much David..."**

Speaker 2:

How much, yes?

Speaker 1:

"How much my heart" like that.

Speaker 2:

Yes, how much David yearned, thirsted, desired to receive the life of the World to Come.

Speaker 1:

It's the same David who understood the hidden, the hidden good, who yearned in another verse, **as it says, "Had I not believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living"**.

Speaker 2:

If only.

Speaker 1:

Had I not... or had I not actually if only, or had I not means to say, if I hadn't believed this, I would have lost my soul, something like that.

Speaker 2:

Which interpretation do we say in the...

Speaker 1:

The faith to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living, to see the true goodness that is only there in the land of the living. Yes, the place where one lives eternally, the place where it's not transient and perishable. A truly living world, a living land. That land is life and this is unfortunately a dying world.

He says, this made him, this gave him strength, this made him go on. The faith in the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. It could also be that the word here is a bit 'I believed', because one cannot truly understand it, but one can believe in it, one can know that there is such a thing, without understanding it completely. For him one would never translate 'I believed' - Leib, because he doesn't mean not understanding, okay.

Discussion: What Does "Had I Not Believed" Mean

Speaker 2:

But I think the translation of I believed - I turned? I don't know, where does it say I turned here? How much how much, perhaps just I believed, it's how much. Something is missing here. What is the translation of had I not believed? Alternatively... no, it's not clear. A minute ago it actually says

Your mercies Lord Your ways, which we saw the simple meaning in last night.

Speaker 1:

Okay. The Rambam says further. Perhaps what he says "hope in the Lord" is also the next verse.

Speaker 2:

Yes.

Law 3 — The Sages Said One Cannot Grasp the World to Come

Speaker 1:

The Rambam says: **The early sages have already informed us**, the Sages have already taught, **that the goodness of the World to Come, no person has the power to grasp it in its clarity**. One cannot grasp it completely... clarity means with its clarity. **And no one knows its greatness and beauty and essence**. No one knows its greatness, its beauty and its strength, **except the Holy One, blessed be He, alone**. I ask, our greatness and our beauty only the Almighty Himself knows, so it says here.

Speaker 2:

Yes, and no one knows the greatness and beauty and essence of the World to Come except the Holy One, blessed be He, alone.

Great Principle: All Prophecies Are Only for the Days of Messiah, Not the World to Come

The Prophets Spoke of the Days of Messiah

Speaker 1:

And all the good things that the prophets prophesied about for Israel... ah, there you have it just there. The books of the prophets are full of such beautiful words about the reward of the World to Come. Isn't it simple that this was the reward of this world, physical things. On the contrary, reward in general. In the prophets it says much about good things that will happen to Jews. You will be satisfied and eat, the land will rejoice, all kinds of such things, all these things, **they are only physical matters, which Israel will enjoy in the days of King Messiah, at the time when sovereignty will return to Israel**.

The Rambam says that in the prophets there are many times when things are said that will be very good for Jews one day. Is the meaning that this one day refers to the World to Come? He says no. Not only that. It appears from the prophets that this is the reward. That if you will be a good Jew, you will receive good to drink, "the springs of the depths flow in the valley and on the mountain", "a land of wheat and barley", everything is written in the Chumash, in the Torah. The Rambam says, he brings a Gemara, all these prophets are only for the days of Messiah.

The Difference Between the Days of Messiah and the World to Come

And what are the days of Messiah? The Rambam says, wait, that there is still a... The Rambam says a great novelty, he throws in a concept, and in other places he says it more clearly, that besides the World to Come there is still a time called the days of Messiah, a time that is indeed in this world, when Jews will...

Speaker 2:

No, he doesn't say more clearly. The days of Messiah is such a small thing?

Speaker 1:

Yes, but this will be a time when things will be better for Jews, when **"sovereignty will return to Israel"**. Yes, Jews will do a bit better repentance, and we will merit the redemption, and we will be in Jerusalem, or in the Land of Israel, without subjugation to kingdoms. But this doesn't yet speak of the great reward of the World to Come which is only for the soul.

Why the Prophets Didn't Speak of the World to Come

"But the goodness of the life of the World to Come has no comparison or likeness", there is no way to estimate it, **"and the prophets did not liken it"**, the prophets didn't even compare it, they didn't even make any likenesses to it, any parables, **"so as not to diminish it through comparison"**. They were afraid that if they would make likenesses, if they would make parables for the life of the World to Come, they would diminish it, because it's so powerful that the parable would be nothing compared to it.

He says, that all these rewards... that's why they spoke about the lesser reward, that's why they spoke about the reward that the community of Israel will have until we reach the ultimate goal, **"until sovereignty returns to Israel"**.

Comparison to the Rambam's Approach in "The Torah Spoke in Human Language"

The Rambam himself says in another place, you can say this just as the Rambam did regarding when it speaks about the Almighty, that the Almighty is "jealous and vengeful", these are all parables, **"the Torah spoke in human language"**.

The Rambam Rules Like Rabbi Yochanan

The Rambam says however, and this is a version in the Gemara that he brings, which he rules... there is a dispute in the Gemara, but the Rambam rules as law there, Rabbi Yochanan said this, that when all these prophets say all their good things, which includes all the consolations that are written in the book of Isaiah and all of them, the Rambam says, not one of them is the true goodness that we seek. All of them are only things that are indeed good things, like the days of Messiah. But the true goodness the prophets didn't even say by way of parable, because a parable only ruins it.

Speaker 2:

Very good.

The Raavad's Objection

Speaker 1:

Here lies a great principle of the Rambam, that there is a time that will be called the days of Messiah, but that is not yet the World to Come. And in this there are other opinions of early authorities, and about this the Rambam speaks at length in the introductions to the chapter Chelek. And right here on the spot the Raavad says that it doesn't fit with what we know that the world will return to chaos and void. And the whole... now this is in the next piece.

Speaker 2:

Far, far.

Speaker 1:

Aha. But let's learn this piece. Because one cannot say the reward of the World to Come with any parables, because it will only take away.

The Verse "Eye Has Not Seen, God Besides You, What He Will Do for Those Who Wait for Him"

Isaiah's Prophecy About the World to Come

Speaker 1:

And about this Isaiah says, "**Eye has not seen, God besides You, what He will do for those who wait for Him**". Isaiah says that a human eye cannot see, only the Almighty can see what He will do for those who wait for Him, which is the reward that a person who waits for the Almighty will receive.

That is to say, the goodness that the eye did not see, the goodness that even a prophet, who can indeed see spirituality, who can become connected, can communicate with the Almighty, he cannot describe it.

A Prophet Speaks Everything in Parable

A prophet, a prophet, unlike Moses, a prophet always speaks in parable. He cannot without a parable. A prophet can only say parables, he sees everything in a parable, just as we saw the difference in Moses's prophecy, which was without vision, without parable. All prophets see parables. And the Rambam says that we don't want to make any parable about the World to Come. So a prophet cannot see it.

But who saw it? The goodness, the good that even a prophet did not see, only the Almighty saw it.

And for whom did the Almighty create the reward of the World to Come that only He can see? He made it, God, for a person who waits for Him, for a person who waits for the Almighty.

Gemara Rabbi Yochanan — "All the Prophets Only Prophesied About the Days of Messiah"

The sages said, this is the statement of the sages that he meant to say his sage. And the sages said, "**All the prophets only prophesied about the days of Messiah**".

So all the other parables, you also have an apparent contradiction from the prophets. Isaiah says that only the Almighty saw the reward. In other places we see in the Tanakh various simple parables of reward. He says, about this the Sages say that all the prophets, all the prophets who speak about reward, spoke about the reward of the days of Messiah.

But the World to Come, that is what Isaiah the prophet says that "**eye has not seen, God besides You**", only the Almighty Himself understands the reward of the World to Come.

Discussion: Simple Meaning of Scripture Versus Interpretation

Understandably, if one wants to say the simple meaning of Scripture, not such a great contradiction, because the verse can mean to say one has not yet seen, not that it's something one cannot see. But the Gemara, Rabbi Yochanan interpreted that he means something one cannot see, not just what one has not seen. In any case, the Rambam accepts that it's the simple meaning in the Gemara that one cannot see it, because it's not a physical thing, it's not a bodily thing.

The Question Why the World to Come Isn't Written in the Torah

But here also stands a tremendous novelty, that is, one asks the question, other questioners ask the question, why isn't the World to Come written in the Torah? The Rambam said that it is written in the Torah, "**so that your days may be lengthened**", etc. But the prophets interpreted that the World to Come isn't written in the Torah?

Laws of Repentance Chapter 8 – The World to Come: Why Is It Called "The World to Come"?

The World to Come Already Exists Now – The Rambam's Novelty

Yes, understandably, if one wants to say the simple meaning of Scripture it's not such a great contradiction, because the verse can mean to say "eye has not seen" – one has not yet seen, not something one cannot see. But the Gemara, Rabbi Yochanan interpreted that it means something one cannot see, or at least the Rambam accepts this as the simple meaning in the Gemara, that one cannot see it because it's not a physical thing, it's not a bodily thing.

Why Isn't the World to Come Explicitly Written in the Torah

But here also stands a tremendous novelty. That is, one asks the question, other early authorities ask the question, why isn't the World to Come written in the Torah? The Rambam said that it is written in the Torah in the language of "life" etc. But in the prophets, at least, one already speaks of the World to Come. The Rambam says, because one already speaks of the World to Come because the World to Come is a greater thing than a prophecy. One cannot, one cannot say, speak about this with the masses, because they will think like the Muslims think that the World to Come is a bunch of girls. No, the World to Come is grasping God, as the Rambam said, "enjoying the radiance of the Divine Presence". One cannot say this. This one must understand. This is another world, this is the Oral Torah.

The Question: Why Is It Called "To Come" If It Already Exists?

Ah, now the Rambam says, the Rambam brings out one thing. What is the simple meaning, if at all – this is a difficult question – if at all, I said that the World to Come means that the soul itself, the soul itself is already here now. And grasping God itself understands that it's immediate. So what does it mean the World to Come, the World to Come sounds as if there is this world, and afterwards there will be a second world.

Let's say stand a bit. The Rambam said that the World to Come means what every person will receive as reward after the person who is composed of body and soul, his soul can have the grasping of divinity, the knowledge that he will merit. So the simple meaning is that it exists now. When a person dies and is separated from his body and soul, he can already now have the World to Come. So why is it called the World to Come at all? The World to Come, one cannot say the World to Come means for each person. Now you are in one world, and afterwards you will be in a second world. But it appears that the World to Come is for the entire world, that there is this world, the world, for a certain period, and afterwards there will be a period of the World to Come.

The Rambam Against the Simple Interpretation

And most other people, and also the simple interpretation of the Sages, was that the World to Come means a new world that the Almighty will create, not that the World to Come doesn't yet exist. Not that... by the way, even now it also exists, even he says for each person, true. But his soul now is also not dependent on the body, as the Rambam said in chapter 4. Yes, it's just that now she is stuck in a body somehow, but she is not dependent on the body. She can already go forward. Okay, I don't know why she doesn't go forward. But it's not a world at all, and it's also not "to come".

The Rambam's Answer: "To Come" Means the Next Level for Each Person

The Rambam says, it doesn't mean that. The Rambam says a brief introduction, he says one brief introduction, but he says that the logic, and one must know that the logic is the logic that most people before the Rambam thought, or even afterwards, because the Raavad disagrees etc., but one thinks that the World to Come is simply that the Almighty will make a new world.

The Rambam says, no, **this is not so, Olam Haba is not a structure that I will find in the future**, because the world doesn't exist yet, and this will replace the current world, **and this world**, the world that we call Olam Hazei **in the future**, will become **hidden**, it will become **destroyed, and afterwards that world will come**. This is not the reality. **Nothing exists, rather it is already present and standing**, the Olam Haba is here, **as it says "asher tzafanta"**, the Almighty has hidden it, put it away somewhere and hidden it. When something is hidden, you don't see it, but it's there.

But perhaps it means made? Tzafanta means that He made it. According to the Rambam, the simple meaning is that this is the translation of that verse, even though it doesn't say Olam Haba in the verse. Okay. **And it is not called Olam Haba**, it's not called Olam Haba, **except because that life comes to a person after the life of this world in which we exist with body and soul**. The reason why we call it Olam Haba is because it's not the world that we grasp in this world, it's the world that comes after a person is no longer body and soul. **And this is what exists for every person first**, this is body and soul. First, every person, Olam Hazei body and soul, because this is what a person has first.

The people that we communicate with in this world, the world as the people who are alive according to the Rambam's book, is composed of body and soul. Not the majority, the majority are in that other world, because all the deceased, all the not yet living.

No, I'm saying the majority of people that I speak with. Ah, you speak with things with the souls that have already been? Yes, but **this is what exists for every person first**. Olam Haba means that which comes in the next stage.

The Soul is Created When One is Born

It could be that here is the point, that the simple meaning is that one doesn't come from Olam Haba. One must learn in chapter 4 what he writes, there is a dispute. The Rambam apparently learns that... does this mean that the soul was already in Olam Haba before it comes down here? It's not. The Rambam learns that the soul is created or... what exactly, it comes down, it is created when one is born, and afterwards it remains. But the simple meaning is not that one already comes from Olam Haba, and then it would already be Olam She'avar (the past world). Because he says that every person... all of the first ones, he is like a body and soul. Afterwards it can be a body and soul, because this is the essential reward of Olam Haba.

The Great Dispute About the Rambam

Now we just need to say for one second that... and here is the Rav, here comes today's entry, he asks his question. And

earlier, and so on. And I just need to tell that this chapter, and also the next chapters but... this chapter, the essence of this chapter, and when there was the great dispute about the Rambam, almost the greatest reason for the dispute was about this chapter, the last three chapters of Hilchos Teshuva. The world said that it appears the Rav learns differently from most other Jews, about Teshuva Hameisim, about what is the reward, what is the good, and when the wicked are burned by the Rambam?

The Holy Zohar – A Support for the Rambam

Well, but the Rambam remains with his approach... specifically the holy Zohar says the famous statement that is always said about the Messianic era, they make a feast and there will be the skin of Livyasan, and Shor Habar, and all things. And after R' Yehuda and R' Yose discuss, after R' Yehuda says the statement, R' Yose says that this was said for the simple people so they should understand reward, but in truth, as the Rambam says, the reward of Olam Haba is more a spiritual reward, pleasures very great and good... Yes, Midrash Tehillim, Parshas Toldos, I think it says after the Rambam or the Rambam says after him, whatever way you want to say it, but says this very clearly, truly, it's not after the Rambam, they go with the Rambam on the way, but other Rishonim are very much in disagreement, they go with the Rambam...

The Order of Times – A Complication

I think the complication is the order of times, what happens for each individual after he dies, does he have his own judgment and his own Olam Haba, and only the matter of the end of days, the Armageddon, is there some period of the Messianic era, a period of Teshuva Hameisim, and a period of Olam Haba, and there is... one must already come to the, this is already details and people who want to explain everything, but the Rambam very strongly, truly had a dispute, the Rambam would have said about those other Jews, what he said here, the Jews who think that the reward is to eat and so on.

Other Approaches

Understandably, they have some answer to this. It's not... one can answer the Rambam's question in certain ways. There is also in the Zohar itself, I think, a third way or a second way. It's... in short, we cannot learn other approaches. What the Rambam said certainly has a great place, and it is certainly the holy Rambam's approach and way of understanding. And well, and you want to learn other paths, we learn the Ra'avad in chapter 3, it's the greatest dispute, the clearest dispute with the Rambam. Well.

Conclusion

What else will we do about the dispute? Nothing, it's a dispute, but we're learning the Rambam. We're not going to dive now into old difficult disputes. Yes, one cannot, but the Rambam is very beautiful this way too. We were drawn in, this is the truth. When it came to the times, one saw how far the halacha was. No, perhaps each one will go to his Gan Eden. The one who learned this way, imagine yourself, because he goes to his Gan Eden. The one who learned this way, imagine yourself, because he goes to his Gan Eden. The one who learned this way, imagine yourself, because he goes to his Gan Eden. Okay, fine. Wonderful.

