

Laws of Repentance, Chapter 9 (Auto Translated)

English

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Shiur Overview

Summary of Shiur – Hilchos Teshuva Chapter 9

General Introduction

The shiur deals with Chapter 9 of Hilchos Teshuva, which is the second-to-last chapter in Sefer HaMada. The Rambam sets out here to answer a fundamental question: If the primary reward for mitzvos is chaye ha'olam haba (as he explained in Chapter 8), how does this align with the entire Torah which speaks of this-worldly reward and punishment?

[Structural Note:] It is pointed out that the Rambam follows the same structure for the third time in Sefer HaMada: first he lays down a foundation, brings proofs from pesukim and Chazal, explains logical difficulties, and then asks: What do we do with all the pesukim that seem to say the opposite?

Halacha 1 – First Part: The Primary Reward is Olam Haba, and the Question from This-Worldly Promises

The Rambam's Words:

"After it has become known that the giving of reward for mitzvos and the good that we will merit if we keep the way of Hashem written in the Torah is chaye ha'olam haba... and the vengeance taken from the wicked who abandoned the paths of righteousness written in the Torah is kares... what is this that is written throughout the entire Torah: if you listen, such-and-such will happen to you, and if you don't listen, such-and-such will befall you, and all those things are in this world, such as satiety and hunger, war and peace, sovereignty and lowliness, dwelling in the Land and exile, success in one's endeavors and loss, and all the other matters of the covenant..."

Explanation:

The Rambam poses a question: If the primary reward for mitzvos is chaye ha'olam haba, how does this align with the entire Torah which speaks of this-worldly reward and punishment — satiety, hunger, war, peace, sovereignty, lowliness, dwelling in the Land, exile, success, loss?

Insights and Explanations:

1. **The Rambam's Double Language — "matan scharan shel mitzvos" = "hatova she'nizkeh lah im shamarnu derech Hashem":** When the Rambam brings a double language, he means that both expressions are the same thing. "Matan scharan shel mitzvos" is the language of the Sages and sounds like a transaction — you do mitzvos, you get reward. But the Rambam defines it better: it is "hatova" — a level of good that a person merits after he has sufficiently worked and guarded the way of Hashem. This is a more precise definition than a simple transaction.

2. **"Derech Hashem hakasuv baTorah" — includes both practical mitzvos and midos/beliefs:** "Mitzvos" refers to all practical mitzvos (positive and negative commandments), while "derech Hashem" refers to "v'halachta

bidrachav" — midos and beliefs, as Avraham Avinu already had. But "hakasuv baTorah" makes clear that both — mitzvos and derech Hashem — are contained in the Torah.

3. **"Hikares tikares hanefesh hahi avonah bah" — two possible interpretations:** (a) It is a punishment — the soul is cut off from chaye ha'olam haba. (b) It is a natural consequence — the soul is "contaminated" with sin, and therefore is not capable of attaining divine comprehension. The Rambam primarily means the double language "hikares tikares" — kares in this world and kares in the next world, as Chazal expound.

4. **The Rambam's list of this-worldly reward/punishment — order and significance:** The Rambam lists: satiety and hunger, war and peace, sovereignty and lowliness, dwelling in the Land and exile, success in one's endeavors and loss. He usually begins with the good and ends with the bad, **except** by war and peace and sovereignty and lowliness where he says the bad first. "War" doesn't mean that you lose, but that there is a state of war, no rest. It is also noted that the categories are not exclusive — one can dwell in Eretz Yisrael but in a state of war, or in Eretz Yisrael but in lowliness (as under the Romans).

5. **[Introduction/Foundation]: The Rambam's Greater Secret in Sefer HaMada:** Besides the body and the life force (which is sometimes called nefesh/neshama — heart, blood, life force), there is something even greater: a person's comprehension, the wisdom, which makes a person similar to an angel, and this lives forever. This is difficult for a person to grasp — both divinity and a pure soul without a body.

Halacha 1 – Second Part: "Kol eleh hadevarim emes hayu v'yihiyu"

The Rambam's Words:

"All these things are true — they were and will be."

Explanation:

The Rambam answers: All these this-worldly promises are true — they were and will continue to be.

Insights and Explanations:

1. Three possible interpretations of "emes":

- (a) "Emes" means not just what will be, but what is abstract — an eternal truth. "Hayu" — it was, "v'yihiyu" — it will continue to be.

- (b) Perhaps the Rambam means that one should not think that the covenant has been nullified — against other religions (Christianity) that claim so. Heaven forbid — it is still all true.

- (c) "V'yihiyu" applies even in yemos hamashiach — even after Mashiach's coming, Jews will not lose free choice, and if they are not well-behaved, a fresh exile or lowliness can come. The covenant is never nullified.

Halacha 1 — Third Part: "U'vizman she'ein anu ovrim... yagi'u / tikra"

The Rambam's Words:

"And when we do not transgress the mitzvos of the Torah, all the good things of this world will come to us, and when we transgress them, the evils that are written will befall us."

Explanation:

When we keep the Torah, good things come; when we sin, the evils written in the Torah befall us.

Insights and Explanations:

1. **The precision of "yagi'u" vs. "tikra":** A very important precision — regarding good things the Rambam writes "yagi'u" (active — Hashem brings), but regarding evils he writes "tikra" (feminine/happenstance language — it will **happen** to us). This aligns with the Rambam's approach in **Hilchos Ta'anis** (end of Sefer Zemanim): good things come through intentional individual providence, but evils are not that Hashem actively does bad — rather **concealment of providence**, Hashem removes His providence. This is the meaning of "**v'halachti imachem b'keri**" — happenstance, nature without providence.

2. **Parallel to olam haba:** The same principle as the Rambam's approach regarding punishment in olam haba — the punishment is not a positive penalty, but **absence of the soul's preservation**. You don't have the reward, therefore you are "lost" — like an animal. "Lost" is not something that must be actively done, it's what would naturally happen without providence.

3. **Alternative interpretation of "tikra" — in the language of reading:** One might think that "tikra" is from the language of **reading**, not happenstance. That is, the world is like a book, and Hashem "reads out" the events in the world. But the Rambam means it in the language of happenstance.

Halacha 1 — Fourth Part: "Ein oson hatovos sof matan sharan" — This World is Not the Ultimate Goal

The Rambam's Words:

"Those good things are not the ultimate giving of reward for mitzvos, nor are those evils the ultimate vengeance taken from one who transgresses all the mitzvos."

Explanation:

The good things in this world are not the final reward, and the evils are not the final punishment.

Insights and Explanations:

1. **The distinction between "sof" (purpose) and "emtza'im" (means):** The Rambam's main point: this-worldly good things are **means**, not the **purpose** (end). As the Rambam says in his introduction — the distinction between "the end" and "the means," or in Yiddish: the "heichi timtza" and the "tachlis." The true reward for Torah and mitzvos is **olam haba**. But in order to reach olam haba, one needs to have a functioning this world.

2. **"Sechar mitzva mitzva" — exactly as the Rambam means it:** The reward for a mitzvah is that you can do **another** mitzvah. The good things in this world are the reward in the sense that they enable more Torah and mitzvos.

Halacha 1 — Fifth Part: "Ela kach hi etzas hadevarim" — The Rambam's Explanation of the System

The Rambam's Words:

"HaKadosh Baruch Hu gave us this Torah, it is an **etz chaim**... whoever does all that is written in it and knows it with complete and correct knowledge — merits through it **chayei ha'olam haba**, according to the greatness of his deeds and the greatness of his wisdom he merits."

Explanation:

Hashem gave us the Torah, which is an "etz chaim" — the tree of life, meaning **chayei ha'olam haba**. Whoever does everything written in the Torah and knows it with "complete and correct knowledge," merits **olam haba** according to his level.

Insights and Explanations:

1. **"De'ah gemura nechona" — not just simple faith:** The Rambam inserts a critical condition — it is not enough to **do** mitzvos; one must also **know** the Torah with "complete and correct knowledge." This means: understand the wisdom of the Torah, the secrets of the Torah, the wisdom of reality. "**L'afukei**" one who knows it only "**in the aspect of simple faith**" — this is not "correct knowledge" and not "complete knowledge." Without this, one does not receive **olam haba**. This is a strong position of the Rambam.

2. **Olam haba is not "one size fits all": "According to the greatness of his deeds and the greatness of his wisdom"** — both factors determine the level of **olam haba**. Not just deeds, not just wisdom — both together.

3. **"Ein sachar bish'ol":** A dead person cannot become a tzaddik or a rasha. One must be a "living being" in order to merit. Therefore one needs to have a functioning this world.

Halacha 1 — Sixth Part: "V'hivtichanu baTorah she'im na'aseh osah b'simcha u'vtuvas nefesh"

The Rambam's Words:

"And He promised us in the Torah that if we do it with joy and goodness of spirit and contemplate its wisdom always — He will help us... He will remove from us all the things that prevent us from doing it, such as illness and war and hunger... and He will bestow upon us all the good things that strengthen our hands to do the entire Torah, such as satiety and peace and abundance of silver and gold... so that we will not be occupied all our days with things the body needs, but will be free to learn wisdom and do mitzvos so that we will merit **chayei ha'olam haba**."

Explanation:

If we do Torah with joy and we contemplate wisdom, Hashem will remove all obstacles (illness, war, hunger) and give all good things (satiety, peace, wealth) — not as reward, but so that we will be free to learn wisdom and do mitzvos, in order to merit **olam haba**.

Insights and Explanations:

1. **Two conditions — "b'simcha u'vtuvas nefesh" + "v'nehgeh b'chachmasa tamid":** The Rambam adds two additional elements: (a) not just doing mitzvos, but doing them **with joy and goodness of spirit** — with desire; (b) "**v'nehgeh b'chachmasa tamid**" — constantly thinking in

wisdom. This is a motif that the Rambam will bring out much more later.

2. Two sides of the promise — removing bad + adding good: (a) "**She'yasir... kol hadevarim hamoni'im**" — removing obstacles; (b) "**V'yashpia... kol hatovos hamchazekos**" — adding positive help. Both serve the same purpose: enabling more Torah.

3. "Lilmod b'chochma" — not "lilmod baTorah": A noteworthy precision — the Rambam writes "**lilmod b'chochma**", not "**lilmod baTorah**." This aligns with his approach that "**chochma**" (which includes the wisdom of reality, philosophy, metaphysics) is part of the purpose, not just Torah study in the narrow sense.

4. The "fairness" argument: If a person learns Torah but an illness or war occurs, he cannot continue learning — this is "not fair," because he did his part but cannot merit *olam haba* due to circumstances. Therefore Hashem says: if you go learn, I will make sure you won't need to be busy with bodily needs.

5. "B'simcha u'vtuv levav" — what does service with joy mean? Two interpretations: (a) When things went well for you ("**merov kol**") you did not serve — "**b'simcha**" describes the circumstances (when you had joy). (b) "**B'simcha**" is a way of serving Hashem — one must serve with joy. Most commentators do not learn like the Rambam. **Simcha** = knowledge that **da'as** is the essence: the person understands that his essence is his soul, his **da'as**. He rejoices to serve Hashem because he knows this is the true good. This is parallel to "**oved me'ahava**" which the Rambam will say in Chapter 10. **Simcha** stands opposite to **yirah** — two people, one serves with fear and one with joy. The ultimate purpose is service with joy.

Halacha 1 — Seventh Part: The Verse "V'tzedaka tihyeh lanu"

The Rambam's Words:

"And so He informed us in the Torah, after promising the good things of this world — 'And it will be righteousness for us when we observe to do all this commandment'."

Explanation:

After the Torah promised good things in this world, the Rambam brings the verse that "**tzedaka tihyeh lanu**" — the good things of this world come not **after** the mitzvos (as reward), but **with** the mitzvos — to add, to enable more mitzvos.

Insights and Explanations:

1. "Sechar mitzva mitzva" — exactly as the Rambam understands it: The verse "**v'tzedaka tihyeh lanu**" comes **after** the promise of this-worldly good things, and it means: the good things of this world come to enable more mitzvos. This is the true interpretation of "**sechar mitzva mitzva**."

Halacha 1 — Eighth Part: The Negative Side — Punishment = Removing the Ability to Learn

The Rambam's Words:

"And so He will punish those who transgress the Torah by preventing from them... all these good things... and He will bring upon them evils that prevent them from acquiring *olam haba*."

Explanation:

The punishment for transgressors of the Torah is that Hashem removes the good things and brings evils that prevent them from reaching *olam haba*.

Insights and Explanations:

1. "She'yimna mehem... da'atam" — what does "da'as" mean?: The Rambam doesn't mean that Hashem removes their entire **da'as**, but He removes their **da'as from being occupied with Torah** — their ability to be occupied in Torah is taken away.

2. Parallel to Hilchos Teshuva Chapter 6: This is the same principle as the Rambam's approach in **Hilchos Teshuva Chapter 6** — that one of the punishments for sin is that one cannot do teshuva. It becomes a "cycle" — sin brings punishment, punishment prevents teshuva, which brings more sin.

3. Parallel to Hilchos Talmud Torah — "kol hamekayem es haTorah me'oni": When one still has something to eat but doesn't learn Torah, then Hashem takes away even that — so that one will continue to be unable.

Halacha 1 — Ninth Part: "U'vechen herenu baTorah she'im na'azov haTorah... v'ne'esok b'havlei hazman"

The Rambam's Words:

"And so He informed us in the Torah that if we abandon the Torah... and occupy ourselves with the vanities of time..."

Explanation:

If we will, with our own will, abandon the Torah and occupy ourselves with *havlei hazman* (temporal vanities), evils will come.

Insights and Explanations:

1. Free choice: The Rambam emphasizes that this speaks of when one can still learn — "**when we can still**" — and one decides with one's own will not to do so. This is the distinction — free choice to abandon the Torah.

Halacha 1 — Tenth Part: The Cycle of Punishment — "Tachas asher lo avadta" and "Vayishman Yeshurun vayiv'at"

The Rambam's Words:

The Rambam brings the verse "**Because you did not serve Hashem your God with joy and goodness of heart from abundance of everything**" and the verse "**And Yeshurun grew fat and kicked**."

Explanation:

When a person had everything good ("from abundance of everything") and at that time wanted — with his own will — not to serve Hashem, but to occupy himself with "**havlei hazman**," the punishment is that Hashem removes the good of this world and brings troubles, so that the person can no longer acquire *olam haba* at all.

Insights and Explanations:

1. Three options of "service": A person has three possibilities — serve Hashem, serve himself (this world comfortably), or serve enemies/oppressors (exile, troubles). One who wanted to "serve himself" when he could have served

Hashem, is punished that he must "serve enemies" — and then he can no longer learn at all.

2. **"Tachas" — the opposite mirror:** The verse "tachas asher lo avadta" means that the punishment is a direct mirror of the sin. You chose this world? Hashem makes you busy with this world — but now under troubles, not under comfort. This negates peace of mind, and therefore one cannot acquire wisdom.

3. **How does this align with teshuva at the end of life?** A difficult question: The Rambam says in Hilchos Teshuva that one can do teshuva even at the end of life — how does this align with this principle that punishment negates the possibility of teshuva? This connects to Hilchos Teshuva Chapter 6, that it is a punishment for sins that one cannot do teshuva — "it's all a cycle."

Halacha 1 — Eleventh Part: "Nimtza peirush kol oson habrachos v'haklalot" — The Rambam's General Rule

The Rambam's Words:

"It turns out that the explanation of all those blessings and curses is in this manner: if you serve Hashem with joy and guard His way, He bestows upon you the blessings and distances the curses, until you are free to become wise in Torah and occupy yourselves with it, so that you will merit chayeit ha'olam haba, and it will be good for you in the world that is entirely good, and you will lengthen days in the world that is entirely long."

Explanation:

Blessings = means to be able to learn → olam haba. Curses = troubles that occupy the person → cannot learn → loses olam haba. "Merits both worlds."

Insights and Explanations:

1. **The verse "Ki ein ma'aseh v'cheshbon v'da'as v'chochma bish'ol":** The Rambam brings the verse that after death ("bish'ol" — not Gehinnom, but after dying) one can no longer acquire deeds, da'as, and wisdom. This fits with the Rambam's approach that one needs both: good deeds **and** da'as and wisdom. If one has not acquired wisdom in this world, one can no longer ascend to tzror hachaim.

Halacha 1 — Twelfth Part: "She'bizman she'ha'adam tarud ba'olam hazeh" — The Mechanism

The Rambam's Words:

"For when a person is troubled in this world with illness and war and hunger, he does not occupy himself with wisdom or with mitzvos through which one merits chayeit ha'olam haba."

Explanation:

When a person is occupied with troubles — illness, war, hunger — he cannot be occupied with wisdom and mitzvos.

Insights and Explanations:

1. **"Eino mis'asek" — generally, not necessarily:** The Rambam speaks "in a general way." If a person does manage in troubles to grow in wisdom (like the Chazon Ish who struggled, didn't have children, wasn't a "happy person"), he is higher than the regular level.

2. **The language of punishment — "Mah avi aleichem kol haklalot ha'elu v'asir kol habrachos, ad she'yichlu yemeihem b'vehala u'fachad":** This is exactly the language of the tochacha: "In the evening you will say, 'Who will give morning'... and the fear of your heart."

3. **"V'lo yihyeh lahem lev panui v'lo guf shalem":** The Rambam connects this to what he said earlier: one needs a "complete body" for mitzvos and a "free heart" (a calm heart) to be able to be occupied with wisdom — **"so that they will merit through them chayeit ha'olam haba."** The punishment removes both conditions.

The Main Foundation: One Cannot Have a Bad This World and a Good Next World

The Rambam's General Rule:

There is no such thing that someone should have a bad this world and a good next world. Either one has both worlds, or neither.

Explanation:

If Hashem wants to punish someone, He cannot just take away olam haba — He must also take away this world, so that his soul will not have time to do avodas Hashem. Conversely, if Hashem wants to reward someone, He cannot say "in this world you had a bad life but in the next world it will be good for you" — He must first give him good in this world, and through that he will be able to have olam haba.

Insights and Explanations:

1. **This is the main point that the Rambam says differently from most other commentators:** One cannot compensate for bad things in this world through olam haba. Both must go together. This is the reason why the Torah promises good this world — because without it, olam haba is also not possible.

2. **The logical mechanism — according to the level of wisdom acquired in this world:** As much as one lacks in this world, one also lacks in the next world, because "according to the level of wisdom acquired in this world" — olam haba is proportional to what one acquires in this world. A complete body is a condition — someone who is sick and whose mind doesn't work, he can be the greatest tzaddik, he never eats chametz on Pesach, but he cannot think, and thinking is a condition for olam haba.

3. **The question of "I'fum tza'ara agra" and tzaddik v'ra lo:** We see that people who have troubles can still learn — and even think ten thousand times more than people who have it good! The Rambam himself says that wealth prevents people — when things go well for them they don't think! **Answer:** This is the "exception to the rule." One who fulfills Torah in poverty, who overcomes, through this becomes even better — but this is not the rule, this is the exception. The "main story" of reward and punishment is as the Rambam lays it down.

4. **Innovation regarding the Chazon Ish:** The Chazon Ish himself says that he had "all his days in suffering and pain." But the Rambam would perhaps say that the Chazon Ish actually had a good life — he had tremendous peace of mind, and this is a form of reward. If the Chazon Ish had had an "easy" life, he would perhaps have reached even higher levels of wisdom, and would have had an even greater olam haba.

5. The definition of "punishment" according to the Rambam: One who has troubles in this world — this itself is already a punishment. He is cut off in olam haba, because one cannot — one aspect of the calculation of reward and punishment is that he loses everything in this world, this is already a punishment, this is not a way to receive reward.

6. The Midrash that Jews have olam haba and gentiles this world: It is asked how this aligns with the Rambam — because according to the Rambam one needs both worlds together, not one without the other.

7. [Dispute in the chavrusa:] The chavrusa says: I disagree with the Rambam from beginning to end. What the Rambam says that the Torah must promise good in this world so that one can learn, is not true — one can learn just as well with poverty. **Answer:** Certainly there are many people who overcome, but this is the exception, not the rule. The Rambam lays down a general way that applies to most cases. **Note:** Many great Jews indeed did not agree with the Rambam about this problem. One can disagree with the Rambam.

8. The Rambam's story aligns with "Vayehi bimei shefot hashoftim": The Rambam makes the story in the Torah — like "Vayehi bimei shefot hashoftim" — very beautiful. But in reality we see that it doesn't always align. This is perhaps part of hester panim that we must live with for the last thousand years.

Halacha 1 — Thirteenth Part: Yemos Hamashiach — Why Did Prophets and Sages Long For It?

The Rambam's Words:

"And all of Israel, their prophets and sages, longed... so that they would have rest from the wicked kingdom that does not allow Israel to occupy themselves with Torah and mitzvos properly... and they will find rest for themselves... so that they will merit chayei ha'olam haba... for in those days knowledge and wisdom and truth will increase, as it says, 'For the earth will be full of knowledge of Hashem'."

Explanation:

Yemos hamashiach is not the ultimate purpose itself — it is a preparation for olam haba. The longing for yemos hamashiach is because there will be rest from subjugation to kingdoms, and one will be able to learn Torah properly, and through this merit olam haba.

Insights and Explanations:

1. The question on "nis'avu nevi'eihem v'chachmeihem": If yemos hamashiach is only a time of rest in this world, and the true purpose is olam haba — why did specifically prophets and sages, who understand spiritual reward and spiritual pleasure, long for yemos hamashiach? They should desire to go straight to olam haba! Perhaps all of Israel — simple Jews — is understandable, but prophets and sages?

2. The answer — yemos hamashiach is an "important this world": According to the foundation that the Rambam built: yemos hamashiach is indeed this world (the world continues as usual), but it is a critical preparation for olam haba. One needs to have (a) no subjugation to kingdoms, and (b) a Mashiach who is a good teacher — through this one can teach everyone the way of Hashem and wisdom, and through this merit olam haba. Therefore it is understandable that even

prophets and sages long for it — because specifically a sage wants the **entire world** to come to wisdom.

3. "Malchus harish'a" — deeper meaning: Malchus harish'a doesn't just mean that a kingdom makes a decree that one cannot learn. It means that the entire world lives on foolishness, idolatry, and nonsense — a person cannot feel calm in such an environment. This disturbs not just practically, but also spiritually. The Rambam in **Moreh Nevuchim** brings that prophecy must be from joy, and one who is oppressed under a malchus harish'a has great sadness which prevents prophecy. Also in the **introduction to the Yad HaChazaka** the Rambam writes that when troubles increased, one no longer had the intellect to be able to transmit Torah she'be'al peh from generation to generation properly.

Mashiach's Three Virtues — Kingship, Wisdom, Prophecy

The Rambam's Words:

"When the King Mashiach will arise from the seed of David, possessing wisdom greater than Shlomo, and a great prophet close to Moshe Rabbeinu. Therefore he will teach all the people and instruct them in the way of Hashem."

Explanation:

Mashiach will unite three virtues: kingship from David, wisdom greater than Shlomo, and prophecy close to Moshe Rabbeinu. Through this he will teach the entire nation.

Insights and Explanations:

1. The three sources of Mashiach's powers: Kingship comes to him from David (seed of David), wisdom he takes from Shlomo (greater than Shlomo), and prophecy he takes from Moshe Rabbeinu (close to Moshe — near to Moshe's level, but not equal, because there is no one greater than Moshe Rabbeinu). This makes him the ideal teacher: he has the authority (kingship), the content (wisdom), and the divine connection (prophecy).

2. "Lafikach yelamed kol ha'am" — Mashiach is primarily a teacher: The main role of Mashiach is not just political-military, but he is a good teacher. When one prays for Mashiach, one is essentially praying for a good teacher. Besides making rest from subjugation to kingdoms (negative — removing obstacles), he also adds positively — he teaches the way of Hashem.

3. "With his mouth he will slay the wicked" — a new explanation: Everyone knows to repeat that Mashiach slays the wicked with his mouth. The innovation: how? Through the fact that he is a good teacher like Shlomo, David, and almost Moshe — he teaches not just Jews, but also gentiles. Through this the wicked are "slain" — not physically, but through wisdom and teaching.

The Gentiles in Yemos Hamashiach

The Rambam's Words (with verses):

"As it says, 'And it will be in the end of days, the mountain of Hashem's house will be established at the top of the mountains... and all the nations will flow to it, and many peoples will go and say, Come and let us go up to the mountain of Hashem... and He

will teach us of His ways and we will walk in His paths, for from Zion will go forth Torah... and He will judge among the nations... and they will beat their swords into plowshares... nation will not lift up sword against nation and they will no longer learn war'."

Explanation:

All nations will come to learn from Mashiach, and through this there will be peace in the world.

Insights and Explanations:

1. **Peace comes from knowledge, not from military power:** The famous piece of prophecy that there will be peace — "nation will not lift up sword against nation" — also comes from knowledge. If there is a dispute, one goes to Mashiach to ask what the

halacha is, and he will rule, and there will be no quarrel. The peace is a result of wisdom, not of force.

2. **A measure for redemption:** As long as nations come to Eretz Yisrael for a new weapon or a better piece of military equipment, they are still far from the redemption of the kingdom of the house of David. The sign of true redemption is when nations come to learn the way of Hashem.

3. **"Kol hagoyim" — explanation:** "Kol hagoyim" doesn't necessarily mean all nations literally, but each nation will send their wise men to learn from the Jews.

4. **Gentiles and olam haba through learning from Mashiach:** According to the Rambam it comes out that the gentiles who will come to learn from Mashiach will ultimately also receive olam haba. The Rambam already said earlier that chasidei umos ha'olam have a portion in olam haba — but here is more: they will have not just good deeds like an ordinary chasid umos ha'olam, but they will have divine wisdom, the occupation with divinity itself.

"Ein bein olam hazeh l'yemos hamashiach ela shibud malchuyos bilvad"

The Rambam's Words:

"And we rely on the words of the early Sages who said: There is no difference between this world and yemos hamashiach except subjugation to kingdoms alone."

Explanation:

The Rambam agrees with the statement of Chazal that the only difference between this world and yemos hamashiach is subjugation to kingdoms.

Insights and Explanations:

1. **Subjugation to kingdoms is not a small matter:** The fact that "there is no difference between this world and yemos hamashiach except subjugation to kingdoms" doesn't mean it's a small thing. A kingdom can bring with it tremendous good things — rest, the ability to learn, a good teacher (Mashiach himself), wisdom for the entire world. "Subjugation to kingdoms alone" includes within it all the positive aspects of a true kingdom of Israel.

[Digression: Small Redemptions and Small Mashiachs]

Just as there is an "beginning of redemption" — which rabbis call "small redemptions" — when there is a bit of rest from the gentiles, so too there are "small Mashiachs." When a small

group of Jews sit together, occupied with mitzvos, with tranquility, and a rabbi teaches them the way of Hashem — this is an aspect of Mashiach. From this Chassidim say that every rebbe is an aspect of Mashiach: what is Mashiach? He teaches the way of Hashem, and one can sit and learn and no one disturbs.

Halacha 2 — The Rambam's Words:

"And from the good things of olam haba, no created being can know its greatness and goodness and beauty except HaKadosh Baruch Hu alone. And not only the reward of olam haba, but even the good that will come to the tzaddik in this world — there is no way to know it properly and no comparison to it except HaKadosh Baruch Hu alone."

Explanation:

The Rambam says that no one can truly know the greatness of olam haba except Hashem. Even the good that comes to the tzaddik in this world cannot be properly known.

Insights and Explanations:

1. **Why does the Rambam bring this here?** After explaining the entire system of reward and punishment, the Rambam reminds us: don't think you understand what olam haba is. It's beyond human comprehension.

2. **"Even the good that will come to the tzaddik in this world":** This is a chiddush — even the this-worldly reward of a tzaddik is beyond our understanding. The Rambam means the spiritual pleasure, the menuchas hanefesh, that a tzaddik has in this world — this itself is something we cannot fully grasp.

Halacha 2 — Continuation: What the Prophets Described

The Rambam's Words:

"And all that the prophets prophesied — they only prophesied about yemos hamashiach. But as for olam haba, 'No eye has seen, O God, besides You'."

Explanation:

All the prophecies in Tanach are only about yemos hamashiach, not about olam haba. Olam haba is completely beyond description — "no eye has seen."

Insights and Explanations:

1. **This is a fundamental principle in the Rambam's approach:** Prophecy can only describe this-worldly matters, even if they are elevated this-worldly matters (like yemos hamashiach). But olam haba, which is purely spiritual, cannot be described in human language at all.

2. **The verse "Lo ra'asa ayin Elokim zulascha":** The Rambam uses this verse to show that olam haba is completely beyond human perception. Even prophets, who have the highest level of human perception, cannot see it.

Halacha 3 — The Rambam's Words:

"And also the great evil and the harsh punishment that comes to the wicked — the prophets did not elaborate on it, so that people would not belittle the good. Rather, they informed us in general terms that we are able to do the good and we are able to do the

evil, and if we do good we will receive good, and if we do evil we will receive evil."

Explanation:

The prophets also didn't elaborate on the punishment of the wicked, so that people wouldn't minimize the reward. They just told us in general: you have free choice, and there are consequences.

Insights and Explanations:

1. Why didn't the prophets elaborate on punishment?

The Rambam explains: if they would describe the terrible punishment in detail, people might think, "Well, if the punishment is so terrible, the reward must not be so great" — they would belittle the reward. Therefore the prophets kept it general.

2. The emphasis on free choice: The main message of the prophets is: you have bechirah, you can choose good or evil, and there are consequences. This is what matters, not the detailed description of reward and punishment.

Halacha 4 — Teshuva is Always Possible

The Rambam's Words:

"And from the ways of teshuva is that the ba'al teshuva should constantly cry out before Hashem with weeping and supplication, and give tzedakah according to his ability, and distance himself greatly from the thing in which he sinned, and change his name as if to say 'I am another, I am not that person who did those deeds,' and change all his deeds for the good and the straight path, and go into exile from his place — for exile atones for sin because it causes him to be submissive and humble and broken-hearted."

Explanation:

The Rambam lists practical ways of doing teshuva: crying out to Hashem, giving tzedakah, distancing from sin, changing one's name (symbolizing becoming a new person), changing all one's deeds, and going into exile.

Insights and Explanations:

1. These are not requirements, but recommendations:

The Rambam uses the language "from the ways of teshuva" — these are effective methods, but not absolute requirements. Teshuva itself only requires the three elements mentioned in earlier chapters: leaving the sin, regretting it, and accepting not to return to it.

2. "Change his name": This is a symbolic act showing that the person considers himself a completely new person. The Rambam brings this from the practice of Chazal who would change the name of a sick person.

3. "Go into exile": Exile is effective for teshuva because it breaks a person's pride and makes him humble. When a person is in a new place where no one knows him, he can more easily change his ways.

Halacha 5 — The Greatness of Ba'alei Teshuva

The Rambam's Words:

"It is very praiseworthy for a ba'al teshuva to confess publicly and to make known his sins to others, and to reveal to them the transgressions he committed against his fellow, saying to them: 'Indeed I sinned

against so-and-so and did such-and-such to him, and behold today I repent and regret it.' And anyone who is arrogant and does not make it known, but rather conceals it — his teshuva is not complete, as it says, 'One who conceals his transgressions will not succeed'."

Explanation:

The Rambam says it is praiseworthy for a ba'al teshuva to confess publicly, especially sins against other people. One who is too proud to do so has not completed his teshuva.

Insights and Explanations:

1. The distinction between sins against Hashem and sins against people: For sins against Hashem, public confession is praiseworthy but not required. But for sins against other people, one must inform them and ask forgiveness — this is not optional.

2. "His teshuva is not complete": The Rambam doesn't say his teshuva is invalid, but that it's not complete. There are levels of teshuva, and public confession (where appropriate) brings one to a higher level.

3. The balance between confession and arrogance: One might think that publicizing one's sins is itself a form of arrogance ("look how great I am that I can admit my sins"). The Rambam addresses this by saying that concealing sins out of arrogance is worse — true humility is admitting one's faults.

Halacha 6 — The Level of Ba'alei Teshuva

The Rambam's Words:

"How great is teshuva! Yesterday he was separated from Hashem, the God of Israel, as it says, 'Your sins have separated between you and your God'; he would cry out and not be answered, as it says, 'Even if you increase prayer, I do not hear'; he would do mitzvos and they would be torn up in his face, as it says, 'Who asked this of you, to trample My courtyards,' and 'If you spread out your hands, I will hide My eyes from you.' And today he is attached to the Shechinah, as it says, 'And you who cling to Hashem your God'; he cries out and is answered immediately, as it says, 'And it will be that before they call, I will answer'; he does mitzvos and they are received with pleasure and joy, as it says, 'For God has already accepted your deeds'; and not only that, but He desires them, as it says, 'Then Hashem will desire the offerings of Yehudah and Yerushalayim.'"

Explanation:

The Rambam describes the dramatic transformation of a ba'al teshuva: from being separated from Hashem, having prayers rejected, and mitzvos torn up — to being attached to the Shechinah, having prayers answered immediately, and mitzvos accepted with pleasure.

Insights and Explanations:

1. The power of teshuva to completely transform one's relationship with Hashem: The Rambam emphasizes the word "yesterday" and "today" — the change is immediate and complete. This shows the incredible power of teshuva.

2. Even mitzvos done while sinning are rejected: The Rambam brings that even when a sinner does mitzvos, they are "torn up in his face." This is a harsh statement — it means

that mitzvos without teshuva from ongoing sin are not accepted.

3. The progression of acceptance: The Rambam shows a progression: first the person is answered, then his deeds are accepted, and finally — Hashem actually desires them. This shows that a ba'al teshuva can reach the highest levels.

Halacha 7 — Ba'alei Teshuva Are Greater Than Complete Tzaddikim

The Rambam's Words:

"The Sages said: In the place where ba'alei teshuva stand, complete tzaddikim cannot stand. That is to say, their level is greater than the level of those who never sinned at all, because they overcome their inclination more than them."

Explanation:

Ba'alei teshuva reach a higher level than those who never sinned, because they had to overcome their yetzer hara more.

Insights and Explanations:

1. This seems to contradict common sense: How can someone who sinned be greater than someone who never sinned? The Rambam explains: because the ba'al teshuva had to fight harder. He had to overcome not just the temptation to sin, but also the habit of sin and the pull of his past.

2. "They overcome their inclination more": The key is the effort and struggle. A person who never sinned might not have had as strong a yetzer hara, or might not have been in situations of great temptation. The ba'al teshuva proves his strength by overcoming a greater challenge.

3. This applies specifically to one who sinned and then completely changed: The Rambam is not saying that it's better to sin so that one can do teshuva. Rather, once someone

has sinned, if he does complete teshuva, he can reach an even higher level than if he had never sinned.

Summary of Chapter 9

Chapter 9 resolves the apparent contradiction between the spiritual reward of olam haba and the material promises in the Torah. The Rambam explains that this-worldly reward is not the ultimate goal, but rather the means to achieve the ultimate goal of olam haba. Good things in this world — health, peace, prosperity — enable a person to study Torah and do mitzvos properly, which leads to acquiring the wisdom and perfection needed for olam haba. Conversely, troubles and suffering prevent a person from acquiring this wisdom, thus preventing him from reaching olam haba.

The Rambam emphasizes that one cannot have a good olam haba without a good this world, because olam haba is earned through the wisdom and perfection acquired in this world. This is why the Torah promises material reward — not as the ultimate goal, but as the necessary means to reach the ultimate goal.

Yemos hamashiach fits into this system as an ideal this-worldly state where there will be no subjugation to kingdoms, and Mashiach will teach the entire world — both Jews and gentiles — the way of Hashem. This will enable everyone to acquire the wisdom needed for olam haba. Even prophets and sages longed for yemos hamashiach not for its own sake, but because it will enable the entire world to reach the perfection of olam haba.

The chapter concludes by emphasizing that the true nature of olam haba is beyond human comprehension — even prophets could only describe yemos hamashiach, but not olam haba itself, which remains "no eye has seen, O God, besides You."

Full Transcript

Laws of Repentance Chapter 9 – Explanation of the Torah's Promises in This World

Introduction to the Lecture

Speaker 1: Ah, gentlemen, we are learning Laws of Repentance Chapter 9. Say your introduction.

Speaker 2: Yes, we are holding, thank God, almost at the end of Sefer HaMada (Book of Knowledge), and thank God that every lecture is heard by a few hundred people, and it's time to take the lecture to the next level, as they say. We are going to begin soon now Sefer Ahava (Book of Love). Starting from Sefer Ahava, there will now be a sponsor for each lecture, in order to be able to maintain the beit midrash here and so we can continue with the lectures. So every day the names of the donors will be announced, for the elevation of souls, and so forth.

And with God's help we will make a great siyum (celebration of completion) when we finish — it doesn't matter when we finish Sefer HaMada, but in any case certainly when we finish, God willing, Sefer Ahava, we will gather together with hundreds of people, listeners of the lecture, and we will celebrate the simchat haTorah (joy of Torah). Wonderful.

Speaker 1: Chapter 9 inside.

Speaker 2: And one must know that the lecture is usually recorded in advance, so God willing tomorrow we will already begin recording Sefer Ahava. So whoever wants to donate for the first chapter should send a message. Official links will be made with things. One can send a message to me, or to Rabbi Yoel Asher, or to the other gabbaim (administrators) of the lecture, and one can grab a spot. It could be that the first few are already taken, we'll check, but in any case one should already call in. Good.

Ah, now we are going to learn Chapter 9.

Halacha 1 – The Question: How Does the World to Come Align with the Verses About Reward in This World?

The Rambam's Structure in Sefer HaMada

Speaker 2: The Rambam says. So, we have learned, as we have learned, I said earlier, the foundation, or rather, the foundations always in Sefer HaMada, we have already seen this the third time, I think, or even the same sort of structure. First he explains a foundation, he brings upon it several proofs from verses, statements of the Sages, he also explains certain difficulties, intellectual difficulties that people can have in accepting the foundation — that's the first thing. After that comes another paragraph that says, but what does one do with all the verses that seemingly stand opposite?

The Rambam's Greater Secret: The Soul That Lives Forever

And I think there is one greater secret that the Rambam says specifically in Sefer HaMada several times, that besides the body and besides the life force of the person, which sometimes is itself called nefesh or neshama, which is the heart, the blood flow, the whole thing, life that is not body, but there is yet something greater called the comprehension of a person, the wisdom, the nefesh, the neshama – there are different ways to call it, but this is the part where a person is like an angel, and this lives forever. And this is difficult for a person to comprehend. It's difficult for a person to comprehend Godliness, it's difficult for a person to comprehend a pure soul without a body.

Speaker 1: Somewhere I hear someone typing.

The Rambam's Second Chapter: The Talmudic Question

Speaker 2: So, yes, but this is the Rambam's second chapter. He's not speaking of the difficulties, he already spoke about that in the previous chapter. Now he asks more like talmudically, someone says, how can the Rambam say that the essential... let's say exactly what he says and what he brings apparently. The Rambam says that the essential reward, the reward for mitzvot, is only what he calls the World to Come, which means by the Rambam what others call it the World of Souls, or the soul without the body. This is the only, the essential reward. The other will be the good, the good that one receives from mitzvot, from going in the ways of truth, as the Rambam calls it. That's it. Apparently there are many places in the Chumash (Pentateuch) and in Nevi'im and Ketuvim (Prophets and Writings) where it appears that no, that the good from following the Torah is actually yes, things of the body. Therefore he asks the question and he says an answer.

The Words of the Rambam

The Rambam says, "**After we know that the reward for mitzvot...**" After we already know the premise that has been laid down in the last few chapters, that the reward for mitzvot...

Speaker 1: Yes, in the last chapter, but before that a bit yes.

Speaker 2: "**...and the good that we will merit if we keep the way of God...**" And the good that we will merit if we keep the way of God. And the plain mitzvot, mitzvot is all practical mitzvot, positive and negative commandments. The way of God is the beliefs. The way of God is "and you shall walk in His ways," all matters of character traits. "**...and the good that we will merit if we keep the way of God written in the Torah...**"

Speaker 1: No, "written in the Torah" – does it go on the reward for mitzvot or on the good, no? The way of God written in the Torah – he's going to explain.

Speaker 2: Okay. "**...is the life of the World to Come...**"

Discussion: The Rambam's Double Language – Reward for Mitzvot = The Good We Merit

What is that? The life of the World to Come. I always say the translation of these sorts of expressions of the Rambam, that the Rambam says that two things are the same. Usually when the Rambam says a double expression, that means, I think I'm right, that the Rambam means to say that it's the same thing. The reward for mitzvot is the language of the Sages, yes? The reward for mitzvot, apparently means simply, one does mitzvot. The Rambam says, no, the reward for mitzvot is

another way of saying "the good that we encounter if we keep the way of God written in the Torah." Which way of God?

Speaker 1: You're right, the way of God that Avraham Avinu (Abraham our forefather) already had, the way of living like a good person.

Speaker 2: But what is the way of God that stands in the Torah? The mitzvot. The mitzvot are also the way of God written in the Torah.

It's very interesting, because here itself lies such a clear definition between the two. The reward for mitzvot looks like a transaction: you do mitzvot, you receive reward for it. This is already much better defined. It's a certain good, a certain level of goodness that a person merits when he has worked enough and he has kept the way of God. Right, and that's what the life of the World to Come means. It's a translation, the Rambam translates. The reward for mitzvot I would translate as "the good that we encounter if we keep the way of God written in the Torah."

The Verses of the Life of the World to Come and Karet (Excision)

What is the life of the World to Come? He said further, the life of the World to Come, **as it says "so that it will be good for you and you will lengthen days."** "And you will lengthen days" is being in a world where one never dies, a long life. "**And lest you say,**" he said these two things at the beginning of Chapter 7, right?

Further, "**and the vengeance that is taken,**" also the punishment the Rambam said, what is the vengeance? That one avenges the wicked **who abandoned the paths of righteousness written in the Torah.** The vengeance that happens to the wicked who abandon the paths of righteousness that stand in the Torah, "**is karet.**" That the soul is cut off and does not merit the long life, **as it says "that soul shall surely be cut off, its iniquity is upon it."** The soul that has iniquity upon it will be cut off.

Discussion: Karet – Punishment or Natural Consequence?

Speaker 1: If so, it's difficult, he's only saying over what he said just a chapter ago.

Speaker 2: No, it's interesting, because the verse says yes, that the soul that has iniquity in it... It looks less like a reward or punishment, it looks more like one can interpret it: the soul is defiled, it has iniquity in it. If so, automatically the soul cannot comprehend and receive the World to Come, receive eternal life. It's only that it doesn't exist when defiled. There are two, I don't know.

Speaker 1: The simple meaning, the verse speaks in the future.

Speaker 2: No, but he says "and I will destroy," so the karet is the cutting off of the soul, that it cannot, the soul is not capable of reward, of Divine comprehension. But the Rambam mainly means the double language that he brought, the karet in this world and the karet in the World to Come that the Midrash expounds.

The Question: What About the Verses of Reward in This World?

He says, if so, the Rambam says thus, there will come a Jew, someone who learns the lecture, he listens to the lecture, he says, "Okay, I accept the Rambam's premise. But how does it align with all the verses in the Torah? **What shall be done**

with what is written in the Torah, and the Torah writes many times..." The entire Torah stands many times...

Speaker 1: Yes, the Rambam's lecture is called "the entire Torah."

Speaker 2: What about the other entire Torah, the original entire Torah? What stands in it? It stands multiple expressions of, similar to – the Rambam doesn't bring any quote, it's not a quote, but it's like "if you listen, good will come to you," if you will listen to the Torah you will receive the reward, "and if you don't listen, it will happen to you," the opposite will happen to you. Which? **"And all those things in this world,"** and all those things that the Torah says will come to you as reward or punishment, are only things in this world, are things of the world, are worldly things.

The Rambam's List of Reward and Punishment in This World

Such as, as it stands in the Torah many times, if one will do God's will there will be satiety, there will be satisfaction.

Speaker 1: Yes, as we say every day in "V'haya im shamo'a" (And it will be if you listen), there will be food, "and I will give grass in your field for your cattle and you will eat and be satisfied." And if not, there will be famine, "and He will close the heavens and there will be no rain," there will be hunger.

Speaker 2: Or many times in the Torah it stands, if there won't be well-being there will be war, and if there will be well-being there will be peace. Interesting, another thing, he begins with good and ends with bad, except for war and peace he says opposite. And kingdom and lowliness.

Speaker 1: Perhaps war is good...

Speaker 2: No, war doesn't mean one loses. War means to say...

Speaker 1: No, war doesn't mean one loses. War means there will be a state of war, there won't be any rest.

Speaker 2: And kingdom, that is that Jews will be kings, will be great, will be on high, will be elevated, and lowliness, they will be beaten down and subjugated under kingdoms. And dwelling in the Land of Israel, that Jews should dwell in the Land of Israel, or the opposite, Jews should be exiled in exile.

Discussion: The Categories Are Not Exclusive

Speaker 1: On that is war. It can be that Jews dwell in the Land of Israel but there is war. It can be that Jews don't dwell in the Land of Israel but there is peace. It can be that Jews dwell in the Land of Israel but in lowliness, as it was many times Jews were under the Romans, under America being the master, and so forth. He's not the king, he's not the master.

Speaker 2: Or many times it's more specific to success of deeds, "and you will be lost."

Speaker 1: A person, it stands which sort of reward does he mean here?

Speaker 2: But clearly, "and you will be lost" is surely your Torah in your hand, "so that you will succeed in all that you do."

Speaker 1: Yes.

Speaker 2: "And you will be lost" or not having success. **"And the rest of all the words of the covenant,"** or all the other words of the covenant means what stands in Parashat Ha'azinu, or in one of the rebukes, with which the Torah concludes, "the words of the covenant," the words of the covenant is rebuke, yes.

So it's difficult, we said that the essential reward, that the reward for mitzvot is the life of the World to Come, and here stands the life of this world.

The Rambam's Answer: "All These Things Were True and Will Be"

Yes, the Rambam says thus: **"All these things were true and will be."** All these things, all these worldly things, like satiety and famine, war and peace, is true, they were, when Jews were good it was good, and when Jews were not good it was not good. **"And will be,"** it will still be so. And it's also true that in the days of Mashiach (Messiah) there will be all the good things of the Torah.

Discussion: What Does "Were True and Will Be" Mean?

Truth is an interesting thing. Truth is not necessarily what will be. Truth is what is abstract, truth that is not a living body, is always truth. This sort of truth is "were and will be," it was, that means you say it was once good, "and will be," it will still be good, or it will still be good and not bad.

Also perhaps the Rambam means, you shouldn't think that the covenant has been nullified, as other religions think, God forbid, it's still all true.

And perhaps he means "and will be" also even in the days of Mashiach, and even after the days of Mashiach there can still be war. If then Jews, if Jews will be well Mashiach will come, but afterwards Jews will continue, they won't lose free choice. If Jews won't be well, there will come a fresh exile or a fresh lowliness or something like that.

Halacha 1 (Continued) – "Yagi'u" vs. "Tikra": The Precision of Active Providence and Concealment of Providence

"And when we do not transgress the commandments of the Torah," he says, **"all the good things of this world will come to us."** The good things of this world will come to us, all the good things of this world will come. **"And when we transgress them, it will happen to us"** in the language of happening.

Very interesting, he says "tikra" with an alef. "Tikra otanu," it will happen to us **the evils that are written**, as it stands in the verse "all the evils written in this book," will come to us.

The Precision of "Tikra" and the Rambam's Approach in Laws of Fasts

The precision of "tikra" I see is a very good precision. I have now, because it's known the Rambam in Laws of Fasts, which he comes to at the end of Sefer Zemanim (Book of Seasons), that good is intentional as it were, that is, God makes it so a person should feel His providence and the like. But evil is not that God does evil, rather it is the withdrawal of providence, God takes away the providence. This turns, "and I will walk with you in happenstance," the Rambam translates.

So the Rambam says both, yes. Earlier also he said "it will happen to you." So, "if you don't listen it will happen to you." Yes, "yagi'u" he explained, I'm holding you in protection, it will be with providence, with knowledge. And if not, it will happen to you, not that I will do bad to you, but it will happen, in nature bad things will happen to you.

Parallel to the World to Come

It's similar to what the Rambam actually holds about the World to Come also. He translates the World to Come, that when the punishment is not simply that a punishment happens, but you don't have the reward, you don't have the

survival of the soul, so you are lost. Lost is not something that needs to be done positively, it's what will happen to an animal, like an animal.

Alternative Interpretation: "Tikra" in the Language of Reading

It's very interesting, because I would have thought that "tikra" is in the language of reading, not in the language of happening. Meaning like the world is the book, the Torah scroll of God. God reads it out, and the book He reads out, and when actions happen in the world He reads it from the book of the world. As it stands "certainly from the language of reading etc. and to you it will be read etc."

Halacha 1 (Continued) — "Those Good Things Are Not the End of the Reward": This World Is Not the Ultimate Purpose

He says, even so, therefore, **"those good things are not the end of the reward for mitzvot."** The good things are not the full story, it's a part of the story, but that's not the end, that's not the final reward for mitzvot. **"Nor are those evils the end of the vengeance taken from one who transgresses all the mitzvot."** The evils, the bad things that happen as punishment, is not the end of the vengeance, is not the final vengeance taken from one who transgresses all the mitzvot.

The Distinction Between "Sof" (Purpose) and "Emtza'im" (Means)

What he mainly wants to say, and he's going to lay it down at some length so one can understand, because if not one gets lost from the length. The Rambam says a simple thing. The distinction is the end and the means, or as the Rambam says in the introduction, more in English, "the end" and "the means," or in Yiddish, the "how to get there" and the "ultimate purpose."

In other words, the Rambam says, certainly, tachlis (ultimate purpose). In other words, reward for what? The reward for being a good person, being a good Jew, and following the paths of righteousness as written in the Torah, etc. The goal of everything is only Olam Haba (the World to Come).

But in order to merit Olam Haba, one must have Olam Haze (this world). One cannot learn, in Olam Haba one doesn't receive any reward, as he says, serving Hashem doesn't exist in Olam Haba. Or becoming a good person doesn't happen in Olam Haba. In order to be able to merit Olam Haba, one must first have Olam Haze.

Therefore, the blessings are so that one should be able to do, not in the meantime, so that one should be able, it is through this, it is a preparation for the greater reward. It is certainly true, not just to the tavern, one doesn't arrive at the tavern otherwise. It is also part of the preparation. It is the preparation, and it goes specifically this way, because he will bring the verse "ein sachar bishol" (there is no reward in the grave), there is no... and when one is dead one cannot become a tzaddik (righteous person) nor a rasha (wicked person), one must have a person who is a living being.

Halacha 1 (continued) — "Ela kach hi atzat hadevarim": The Rambam's explanation of the system

So that is the essential difference. Certainly it says in the Torah that one will receive all these good things, and it will indeed come. But the Torah is not about that, it is not so that one

should have a good Olam Haze. And reward is also only a step so that one should come to Olam Haba.

He says, **ela kach hi atzat hadevarim** (but this is the counsel of the matter), this is how I will lay it out, and this is the way to understand it. He says, **HaKadosh Baruch Hu natan lanu Torah zo** (The Holy One, Blessed be He, gave us this Torah), yes, the Almighty gave us the Torah, and the Torah is called **etz hachaim** (the tree of life), the tree from which comes forth life, meaning the life of Olam Haba.

"De'ah gemurah nechonah" — Not just simple faith

Kol ha'oseh bah, kol hakatuv bah, veyode'o de'ah gemurah nechonah (whoever does everything written in it, and knows it with complete and correct knowledge), the one who does everything that is written in the Torah, and he knows the Torah, but he doesn't know the Torah just superficially, rather he knows it **de'ah gemurah nechonah** (with complete and correct knowledge), he understands the wisdom of the Torah, the secrets of the Torah correctly, the wisdom of reality, complete and correct **lafukei** (to exclude) the one who knows it only with simple faith, it is not correct knowledge, it is not complete knowledge, **zocheh bah lechayei ha'olam haba** (merits through it the life of the World to Come), the Torah makes him merit the life of Olam Haba.

"Lefi godol ma'asav vegodol chochmato"

And the life of Olam Haba is also not a one size fits all, rather **lefi godol ma'asav vegodol chochmato yihyeh zocheh** (according to the greatness of his deeds and the greatness of his wisdom he will merit), his comprehension of Olam Haba will be, his reward in Olam Haba will be according to how much his deeds and his wisdom were.

But let's just remember, because the Rambam says it at length and he puts in a whole set of words that people don't grasp, the Rambam says that one doesn't receive Olam Haba for doing mitzvos, rather, certainly one must do all the mitzvos, but one must also, it is not enough, one must know what is written in the Torah, in other words, the secrets of the Torah and the wisdom of the Torah, and one must know it with complete knowledge, without that one doesn't receive Olam Haba. This is stated here very clearly.

Halacha 1 (continued) — "Vehivtichanu baTorah she'im na'aseh otah besimchah uvtuvas nefesh"

So that is the general matter, whoever goes in the Torah comes to Olam Haba, certainly. So if so, what do I need?

The Rambam says, **vehivtichanu baTorah** (and He promised us in the Torah), the Almighty promised us in the Torah, **she'im na'aseh otah** (that if we do it), if we do the Torah **besimchah uvtuvas nefesh** (with joy and goodness of soul), we do the Torah with joy and with a good soul, with desire, **venehgeh bechochmata tamid** (and engage in its wisdom always), this is something that the Rambam will bring out a lot later, we will always think in wisdom.

He says here also, do Torah and think in the wisdom of the Torah. Even when he tells us to do, he adds another thing of joy and goodness of soul.

Removing obstacles and adding help

The Rambam says, what will happen, the Torah promises us that if we go with this doing, **sheya'azru otanu** (that they will help us), the Almighty will help us from His side that we should be able to actually complete ourselves in Torah. And what will He do? The Almighty will **remove kol hadevarim**

hamone'im otanu me'asotah (all the things that prevent us from doing it), all things that hold us back from doing the Torah and from learning the Torah, **kegon choli umilchamah vera'av vechayotza bahen** (such as illness and war and famine and the like).

That means, a person learns Torah, but there are world events that prevent him from doing more Torah. The Torah tells us, as you will do your maximum, you will do your effort in learning Torah and doing Torah, the Almighty will remove the things that prevent doing more Torah.

Veyashpia lanu kol hatuvot (and He will bestow upon us all the good things), He will bestow upon us all the good things of peace and abundance and health, and He will give us all the good things **hamechazekot et yadeinu la'asot et kol haTorah, kegon sova veshalom veribuy kesef vezahav** (that strengthen our hands to do all the Torah, such as satiety and peace and abundance of silver and gold). He will give us, we should be satiated and in peace, and we should have enough money. Not because that is the reward, but because this helps us to be able to do the purpose, this helps us that we should be able to learn even more Torah, **kedei shelo nihyeh asukim kol yameinu bidvarim shehaguf tzarich lahem, ela nihyeh fenuyim lilmod bachochmah vela'asot hamitzvah kedei shenizchek lechayyei ha'olam haba** (so that we should not be occupied all our days with things that the body needs, but rather we should be free to learn wisdom and to do the mitzvah in order that we merit the life of the World to Come).

The "parnassah" (livelihood) argument

That means this way, if a person learns Torah, but suddenly he gets some illness, he won't be able to continue learning Torah. That is not fair, because he will do his part, but he won't be able to merit Olam Haba because he couldn't achieve it. The Almighty says, if you will learn, I will make sure that you shouldn't have to be busy with the body. I will make sure that everything should be in order. Therefore you will be able to sit free with tranquility, as it says in the prophets that one will be free, have the mind at peace to be able to learn wisdom and to do mitzvos, kedei shenizchek lechayyei ha'olam haba. The purpose is the life of Olam Haba.

So what one has pleasure in this world if one learns Torah is also the preparation for the true reward which is Olam Haba.

"Lilmod bachochmah" — Not "lilmod baTorah"

And yes, one must note that it doesn't say here "lilmod baTorah" (to learn in Torah), it says **"lilmod bachochmah"** (to learn in wisdom).

Halacha 1 (continued) — The verse "Vetzedakah tihyeh lanu"

Uvchen anu omrim baTorah, achar shehivtiach betuvot ha'olam hazeh (and so we say in the Torah, after it promised the good things of this world), he says, after the Torah promised us the good things of Olam Hazeh, it says in the Torah, **"ve'atah kitvu lachem et hashirah hazot"** (and now write for yourselves this song).

This is how the Rambam interprets this verse, that if we will learn the Torah, the Almighty will give us tzedakah (charity/righteousness), give us good, so that we should be able to continue doing the mitzvos of the Almighty, so that we should be able to come to Olam Haba.

"Tzedakah tihyeh lanu ki" (and it shall be righteousness for us because), that means, if we will not fulfill **"kol hamitzvah hazot"** (all this commandment), the Almighty will give us tzedakah in Olam Hazeh in order to be able to... I mean the opposite, the Rambam says "achar shehivtiach". The Almighty said earlier that we will receive all kinds of good things in Olam Hazeh, and the point of this will be "tzedakah", that we will do tzedakah umishpat (righteousness and justice), that we will do the good deeds that bring to Olam Haba. That's how I would understand from what he says "achar shehivtiach tuvot ha'olam hazeh".

"Sechar mitzvah mitzvah"

So what does the verse add? The Rambam says that after... ah, that the good things of Olam Hazeh he says, as a final thing, "tzedakah tihyeh lanu". So the good things of Olam Hazeh don't come after the mitzvos, rather they come with the mitzvos, to add to be able to do more mitzvos.

Sechar mitzvah mitzvah (the reward of a mitzvah is a mitzvah). The reward of a mitzvah is that you can do another mitzvah.

Halacha 1 (continued) — The negative side: punishment = removing the ability to learn

So the Rambam says further, **"vechen ya'atzuhu da'ato"** (and so his knowledge will counsel him), and now on the negative, now on the punishment: **"vechen ya'anish et ovrei haTorah sheyimna mehem haTorah mida'atam"** (and so He will punish those who transgress the Torah by preventing the Torah from their knowledge), if we will transgress the Torah, He will remove the Torah from our knowledge, He will not let us use our knowledge for Torah.

No, remove the Torah from us, not tear it away, He will not remove our entire knowledge for Torah, but rather what? He will remove our knowledge from "oskim bah" (engaging in it).

What does "da'atam" mean?

I mean that perhaps he means with "da'atam" practically, yes, because in other words, this is the word that he says, he brings in Hilchos Talmud Torah, he says "kol hamekayem et haTorah me'oni" (whoever fulfills the Torah from poverty), that means, while one is fulfilling, and afterwards one receives the punishment, then that is already... when you still have what to eat and you don't learn Torah, then the Almighty will make it so you shouldn't have what to eat, so that you should continue not being able to do Torah.

Parallel to Hilchos Teshuvah Chapter 6

And practically speaking, the matter that he has now said, that when one receives a punishment one cannot learn, this is basically what is said in Hilchos Teshuvah Chapter 6. That it becomes a punishment from the sins that one cannot do teshuvah (repentance). You understand?

Right, it is also still part of the same thing, because they can... this is all a cycle.

Halacha 1 (continued) — "Uvchen hiranu baTorah she'im na'azov haTorah"

Uvchen hiranu baTorah she'im na'azov haTorah (and so He warned us in the Torah that if we abandon the Torah), meaning, if we will abandon the Torah, when we still can, when we decide with our will not to do the Torah, and we will be busy with Olam Hazeh, we will be occupied with the vanities that are dependent on time, that pass by, all foolishness.

Immediately meaning but,

The cycle of punishment - "Vayishman Yeshurun vayiv'at"

Speaker 1:

This is essentially what is said in Hilchos Teshuvah Chapter 6, that it is a punishment from the sins that one cannot do teshuvah, you understand? It is also still part of the same thing, because they can... this is all a cycle.

Veho'il henichuha baTorah (and since He left it in the Torah), she'im na'azov haTorah me'et atah, and we will abandon the Torah when we still can, when we decide with our will not to do the Torah, and we are very busy with Olam Hazeh, we are occupied with the vanities of time, vanities that are dependent on time that passes by, and foolishness. Ke'inyan shene'emar **"vayishman Yeshurun vayiv'at"** (and Yeshurun grew fat and kicked), doesn't mean that it is temporary and it is eternal, it is temporary and it is foolishness.

We read the news, tomorrow or two hours later the news is not true. It is vanities. First of all, the whole thing that the news talks about is foolishness with nonsense, which liar said that Iran has bombs. Secondly, it is time, it is only temporary. Okay, he doesn't mean exactly that.

Ke'inyan shene'emar - this is what it says in the verse **"vayishman Yeshurun vayiv'at"**. This means, he didn't kick because he was hungry, rather he kicked when he was satiated. While he was satiated he still could have.

On this is the punishment, shedino emet (whose judgment is true), the Almighty whose judgment is true, who judges a person according to justice, the justice comes on this, that yoser menu ozevam kol tuvas ha'olam hazeh (He will remove from those who abandon Him all the good of this world), He will remove from the one who abandoned the Almighty the good of Olam Hazeh, shehem chizku gufo velibo (which strengthened his body and heart), because this made it so the person could kick with breadth. **Umevi aleihem kol hara'ot hamone'im otam milknot ha'olam haba** (and He brings upon them all the evils that prevent them from acquiring the World to Come), because the Almighty will not after you have kicked with all good, will you later start wanting to become? No, it is not fitting for you. Mevi aleihem - He brings evil, **kedei sheyimne'u milknot ha'olam haba, kedei sheyo'vedu berisham** (in order that they be prevented from acquiring the World to Come, in order that they perish in their wickedness).

Discussion: How does this fit with teshuvah at the end of life?

Speaker 1:

One must understand, the Rambam has after all also said that one can do teshuvah even at the end of life. One must know how it fits with that halacha.

But the Rambam tells you here the kind of framing, that if when you still could have learned Torah, you didn't have any worries, you preferred, you chose Olam Hazeh over Olam Haba, the Almighty will make it so you should continue being busy and be forced to choose Olam Hazeh simply because this negates yishuv hada'at (peace of mind), and you will have to be busy with your survival, and therefore you will certainly not be able to merit the life of Olam Haba, because you won't have

any knowledge. No wisdom, no soul with which to be able to survive.

The verse "Tachas asher lo avadta" - three options of service

Speaker 1:

Ah, heyos shekatuv baTorah **"ve'avadta et Hashem Elokecha asher shilchecha Hashem Elokecha"** (and you shall serve Hashem your God whom Hashem your God sent you), **"tachas asher lo avadta et Hashem Elokecha besimchah uvetuv levav merov kol"** (because you did not serve Hashem your God with joy and goodness of heart from abundance of all), when things were going well for you, you didn't serve the Almighty merov kol. What will be your punishment is that later you will be busy serving, when then you won't be able to serve the Almighty. You chose Olam Hazeh, the Almighty will make you be busy with Olam Hazeh, but it is also moreover under troubles. It is not serving yourself.

The three options are interesting: you can serve the Almighty, you can serve yourself, or you can serve the Russian, the poritz (landowner), the camp. What? **"Vayishman Yeshurun vayiv'at"**, gorging oneself. So when you were still satiated and calm, you only chose more vayishman Yeshurun, becoming even fatter, and didn't choose for the Almighty. What the punishment will be is that you will unfortunately be busy serving your enemies, and then you won't be able to learn.

Very good. So this is the "tachas". Yes, very good. This is what he learns from the verse. I should have put the verses before. "Tachas" about this is "velo avadta", because "velo avadta" is about "tachas". Yes, it's right, he wants to bring out.

"Besimchah uvetuv levav" - What does service with joy mean?

Speaker 1:

And this is apparently also the "simchah vetuv levav" is the joy of goodness of soul that he said earlier. I don't know exactly what he means, because there it says the opposite, the Rambam says if one has served the Almighty besimchah uvetuv levav, it continues to be his simchah vetuv levav. Right? That is the word. One must understand.

Nimtza (it turns out), comes out, that perush kol otan haberachot vehaklalat hu al derech zeh (the explanation of all those blessings and curses is in this manner), that all the blessings and curses that are written in the Torah are in this way: **im avadtem et Hashem besimchah ushamartem darko, mashpia lachem et haberachot ha'elu umerachik haklalat, ad shetihyu fenuyim lehachkim baTorah vela'asok bah, kedei shetizku lechayyei ha'olam haba, veyitav lecha le'olam** (if you serve Hashem with joy and keep His way, He bestows upon you these blessings and distances the curses, until you are free to become wise in Torah and to engage in it, in order that you merit the life of the World to Come, and it will be good for you forever), to be good, **le'olam shekulo tov, veta'arich yamim le'olam shekulo aruch** (forever that is all good, and you will lengthen days forever that is all long). Therefore it comes out that he was meritorious for two worlds, for the life of Olam Hazeh, and he was also meritorious for the life of Olam Haba, and the face is quite similar.

Discussion: Two interpretations in "tachas asher lo avadta"

Speaker 1:

But the matter, the Rambam puts it in. Okay, the verse means **"tachas asher lo avadta"**, how one takes to explain. But how does one interpret the verse? There are two interpretations in the verse. One can interpret the verse, that while there was joy, things were going well, as the Rambam says, you were not the first of your deeds serving Hashem but that you serve the Torah? Merov kol, merov kol means when you had everything good, then you could have served the Almighty besimchah uvetuv levav.

Right, he says, it can also be, that besimchah is a dispute among the commentators, most commentators don't learn this way. It can also be that besimchah is a way of serving the Almighty. But what is the difference? What does it mean to serve the Almighty besimchah uvtuv nefesh? So it is today from the Rambam here also, besimchah uvtuv nefesh that you serve the Almighty is... somehow one must understand.

I mean that when a person serves the Almighty with joy means that he already understands then that his essence is his soul, that his essence is his knowledge. Maybe, maybe, something like that. Very good. That means the joy is to say... that the joy shows that he checks the "merov kol", he knows that this is it. He rejoices that he can serve the Almighty, because he knows that this is the true good.

Very good. So the service besimchah as opposed to service not besimchah is one who knows, like serving from love and not from love, as he will say in Chapter 10. Right, next chapter. That if it had said service osher besimchah, one could have meant that he still unfortunately has the Lithuanian interpretation, he unfortunately means that one does mitzvos and the Almighty gives reward.

Speaker 2:

No, the Rambam himself, we learned the ba'al teshuvah, the virtue of a ba'al teshuvah, because he has already tasted bad, therefore it comes to him harder. The Rambam also knows this thing of lefum tze'ara agra (according to the pain is the reward), and one sees it in other kinds of places.

Speaker 1:

I didn't say that he doesn't know, but the ba'al teshuvah can also be one who knows that it is truly not good, he unfortunately fell and started.

Speaker 2:

You have here two people, one who serves from fear and one who serves from joy. Joy is not fear, okay. What do I mean? The Rambam tells you further.

Speaker 1:

But further, the essence, she'ein avodah ela besimchah (there is no service except with joy). The essential purpose is further, that after one receives from the Almighty abundance, one should continue to be able to serve Him.

The verse "Ki ein ma'aseh vecheshbon veda'at vechochmah bishol"

English Translation

Speaker 1:

But he explains, why is the upper portion missing in such a way to come to the upper portion in this world? Because "im lo yikneh" (if he does not acquire), here when one is in this world, if one has not acquired wisdom and good deeds, "v'lo umah yizkeh" (and with what will he merit), he has nothing

with which to merit eternal life in the World to Come. As it says, as if **"there is no deed, no reckoning, no knowledge, no wisdom in Sheol"**. After one has died, "uv'sheol" (and in Sheol) doesn't mean here in Gehinnom, the reckoning means after death in the grave, but he means to say after the grave, he means for the wicked.

It means let's say, if someone has done deeds and reckoning with knowledge in this world, he will then ascend, he will be in the "tzror hachaim" (bundle of life). If not, he will not ascend. What is already too late, because he can no longer now make any knowledge and wisdom, he can no longer acquire any deed of knowledge and wisdom.

It's very clear, because the Rambam said one must have deeds, and one must have knowledge and wisdom. What does the verse count here... deeds, what "cheshbon" (reckoning) is I don't know, but knowledge and wisdom I understand. Perhaps it should be "his deeds and reckoning and with knowledge and wisdom." Now I would perhaps have thought "his deeds and reckoning and with knowledge and with wisdom." From root and thought. Yes, I don't know.

Discussion: Why Can't One After Death?

Speaker 2:

Is this... it's interesting, the part that bothers me something. After all, it's not the body. Why can't one without a body do mitzvos. I don't understand you. Okay, anyway. I would have said that one only needs... yes?

Speaker 1:

I understand my problem. At least how one needs a body. Write that one needs a body. The main service is wisdom.

Speaker 2:

Yes, but the main service is wisdom. So now I have a problem and I have a body. So okay, I die. I can't have a body. They can only think. I can't have any test. Why...

Speaker 1:

No, then you can no longer. It's over. No. You don't have then and not difficult. Okay. I don't know difficult. I when I need to understand. I need to understand need.

Speaker 2:

No, I understand what you're saying. It's something to understand. First, one should understand, something is still missing with the understanding, when it's still technical. Could be. Not about this, one has struggled with it. Let me explain, where he... needs to be much smaller, when one is much bigger, perhaps you should understand?

"And If You Forsake Hashem" - The Punishment of Abandoning the Torah

Speaker 1:

When one says forsake Hashem, he says here the opposite above how the Almighty is, there is a whole "azavtem et Hashem" (you have forsaken Hashem), so what you have chosen in this world against the Almighty, when the Jews became busy with what they invested "b'maachal uv'mishte' uv'taanug v'domeh lahem" (in food and drink and pleasure and the like), then what? **"I will bring upon you all these curses, and I will remove all the blessings, until their days are consumed and their years end in terror and dread"**. This is exactly the language of the rebuke, yes, **"In the evening you will say, 'Who will give morning'... and the dread of your heart"**.

"And they will not have a free heart nor a whole body". The Rambam said earlier that one must have a whole body to be able to do the mitzvos, and one must have a free heart, the heart must be available and must be calm, to do the mitzvos, **in order to merit through them the life of the World to Come.**

And he says thus, "both worlds," this is the punishment is the same way as the reward. Why? On the contrary, he says, **"for when a person is troubled in this world with illness and war and famine, he does not engage in wisdom nor in mitzvos through which one merits the life of the World to Come".**

Discussion: Can One Have a Bad This World and a Good World to Come?

Speaker 1:

It's very interesting, it comes out according to the Rambam, there is no such thing, one says in the Midrash that the Jews took the World to Come and the gentiles this world. I mean perhaps one can learn it differently, but what is the simple meaning?

I mean thus, the Rambam would probably have agreed that if there is a Jew who is indeed in illness, and he sits and he manages to learn, and he manages to be engaged in wisdom, he must indeed be, he must indeed be, that he receives in this world, he receives in the World to Come. But he says thus, "he does not engage." But if there is a person who has managed yes, the Rambam says that this is the general rule, this is generally speaking. But if there is a person who manages yes in war or in illness to grow in wisdom, his soul will indeed be ready for all these things.

The Chazon Ish and Other Great Ones in Troubles

Speaker 1:

Let's speak about illness. Perhaps, perhaps, perhaps, perhaps, perhaps, perhaps. Let's say, the few Jews who are indeed, there was a Second World War in the Holocaust, most Jews indeed thought nothing of the Almighty. But if there were the few Jews who even in those most difficult troubles grew in understanding of wisdom and in divine comprehension, it's another world.

Let's say thus, first of all, there is no such exceptional thing. The Chazon Ish struggled, he didn't have children, he wasn't a happy person. The Rambam says that he was indeed, he was higher than the regular level, he indeed could manage.

Speaker 2:

I don't agree with this. If when it's true, the whole piece of the Rambam's words wouldn't have been correct. Let's say clearly, let's say what the Rambam speaks of in a general manner. The Rambam may hold differently than all other previous Jews, okay? He may say something.

The Rambam says thus, there is no such thing to be able to have a bad this world and a good World to Come. There is no such thing. If there were such a thing, the Torah wouldn't have said so.

The Principle of the Rambam: One Cannot Have a Bad This World and a Good World to Come

Speaker 1:

If so, if you answer thus, the whole piece of the Rambam's words wouldn't have been correct. Let's say a principle. The Rambam may hold differently than other pious Jews, okay?

He may say something. The Rambam says thus, there is no such thing, you say I say no contradiction, no, it is indeed a contradiction.

The Rambam says there is no such thing that you should have a bad this world and a good World to Come. There is no such thing. If there were such a thing, the Torah wouldn't have said promises of a good this world.

The normal order is, you say that it's worked out for the Jewish people collectively, but for individuals it's not correct. But the Rambam says, the way it goes is, that either one has both worlds yes, or both worlds not. That is the way.

To such an extent, that when the Almighty wants to punish someone, He cannot take away only the World to Come, He must give him, He must take away also this world, his soul should not have any time to do the service of Hashem.

The same thing, if the Almighty wants to give someone reward, He cannot say, "I will give you in this world you had a bad life, but in the World to Come it will be good for you." No. He must give him good first in this world, and through this he will be able to have the World to Come.

The Question of "According to the Pain is the Reward" and Tzaddik V'Ra Lo

Speaker 2:

You say that even if one is not strong, even if it's difficult, he can work out wisdom. Even the one who has it easier, can he work out more wisdom when it goes easier for him. It's not a question on the Rambam.

The question is indeed a greater question, not only on the Rambam, it is indeed a question. If there is reward in this world, why do we see righteous people who don't receive the reward?

Speaker 1:

The Rambam says that it's so, let's speak what the Rambam says. The Rambam says that one cannot receive reward. The righteous, no, again, no, world.

Speaker 2:

You say what does "according to the pain is the reward" mean? According to the pain is the reward means that even if one has no money, does that mean he can't give away a little time to learn?

Speaker 1:

The Rambam means indeed but something that he lacks. How much he lacks in this world, he also lacks in the World to Come, because **according to the measure of wisdom that one acquires in this world** etc.

The Chazon Ish as an Example

Speaker 2:

So you will also agree that the Chazon Ish with his poverty achieved more soul than his neighbor who had everything going well for him and learned a little. That's not the point. His reward in the World to Come will still be able to be greater than the neighbor who indeed had in this world.

Speaker 1:

The Chazon Ish himself, the Rambam says, but come, I don't know, let's not say names, because it's confused the conversation when one says names. I mean, anyway, what the Rambam says is, whoever has a bad life in this world, also

always has a bad life in the World to Come. The word "always" he says. And he says that this is what happens.

Exception to the Rule

Speaker 2:

Just as in every matter there is an exception to the rule, and he speaks of the supremely holy.

Speaker 1:

No, leave off the supremely holy, this is a way of thinking. We're speaking now clearly. Do you agree? It's always so. If it were... It's not always so. A little, the world doesn't show so. The Rambam lays down a general way that can apply to very many cases, or to most cases. But there are indeed cases where...

Speaker 2:

No, let's hear, it's not true. Because let's understand, if it's not true, if so it's indeed not true that one must have a this world in tranquility and ease to be able to learn, to be able to speak.

The Condition of a Whole Body

Speaker 1:

It is indeed true, one must have a whole body. You know what, forget about things. A whole body, do you agree? Someone is sick, he can be a great righteous person, a great pious person, he never eats any chametz on Pesach. But his mind doesn't work for him, he can't think. And the Rambam says that thinking is a condition for this world. He can be the greatest righteous person, he won't have neither this world nor the World to Come.

Why not? Probably he once sinned. You're going to ask, you may not ask any questions about tzaddik v'ra lo (the righteous and it goes badly for him), I don't know. But the fact is that it's true. Do you agree? So says the Rambam. It's not that someone was sick and afterwards he can think. There is such a thing that someone is weak and he learns and he overcomes. The Rambam says that ideally he should learn Torah, certainly.

People Who Think During Illness

Speaker 2:

There are people who when they are sick think ten thousand times more than all people who are calm and everything goes well for them. Because thinking...

Speaker 1:

Those people, specifically the Rambam says, the wealth prevents people who when things go well for them don't think. He says that all day they can't think and can't have. And about this the Torah says, he says. It's not always so. Okay, the Rambam would ask a question. But you say that the Rambam says that the logic that the Rambam says is...

The Rambam's Logic According to Levels

Speaker 2:

A person who needs to think nothing and things go well for him recognition of good. The Rambam indeed said according to the levels. The person who indeed seeks the World to Come...

Speaker 1:

Exactly. So now, let's go to each level that we're speaking about. There is, the one who doesn't think because things go well for him, will in the end not have that things should go well

for him, and consequently he won't think, and consequently he won't have any World to Come.

And conversely, the one who fulfills the Torah from poverty, certainly, the reward of the Chazon Ish is that he should have indeed money. If it didn't succeed is a question, but that's how it should work, that he should have indeed money so that he should be able to have this world. And therefore he will indeed have much peace of soul through the Chazon Ish. That is perhaps the reward, it's not normal, it's a manner of reward, it's a tremendous peace of soul.

Okay, but I just want to bring out, this doesn't negate what I'm saying, that according to the Rambam, the one who has troubles in this world goes straight to Gehinnom, not to Gehinnom, he will be cut off in the World to Come, because one cannot, one deed of the reckoning of reward and punishment, this is that he will lose in this world everything, that is already a punishment, that is not a way how one can receive reward. So it comes out from this chapter, because not this is the whole thing.

The Rambam Speaks a General Picture

Speaker 2:

You say a tremendous question, but the Rambam doesn't speak of one hundred percent of people, the Rambam speaks a general picture, he speaks a tract of a reckoning also with each individual, but there are people who don't fit into this chapter, let's go further.

Speaker 1:

The exception to the rule, the one who doesn't have a connection with settled mind, is not the main point that the Rambam says here differently than most other Jews, which is that if someone has a bad life, one cannot compensate for the badness in this world in the World to Come. It must go both together, the normal way is that it goes both together. So it is simply, so it appears from the Rambam simply, but there is also an exception to the rule, let's go further. The exception to the rule doesn't have the problem.

There Are People Who Hear Us Out

Speaker 2:

It's cruelty to say so, because one may not say so, there are people who hear us out who don't have it.

Speaker 1:

There is still, the world didn't begin and end with the Rambam. The Rambam lays down a beautiful Torah, but there are still parts that don't fit into the puzzle, and there is a place for them too, and let's go learn further.

The topic that appears to us as cruelty doesn't change the reality, it's an interesting problem, it's a reality. The Rambam lays down a story that exists in a general manner. The question is indeed a greater question, it's indeed just so why a righteous person receives... One indeed also sees people who are righteous receive the punishment, it's just indeed a question on the Rambam.

Discussion: The Question of Tzaddik V'Ra Lo on the Rambam

Speaker 2:

Someone who is accustomed to say the question, just as there is it's difficult for him in this world, it's difficult for him in the World to Come. Okay, did you say that?

Speaker 1:

No, you don't agree with my question. If there is a question that a righteous person goes badly in this world, you must answer that in the World to Come it will indeed go well for him. Perhaps the same way that the Almighty doesn't always understand when He makes a bad...

No, that itself is not enough, because there are people who indeed have troubles in this world, and they indeed settle their soul, they are indeed free. It could be they would have been more free if they hadn't had any suffering, but they are still more free than very many people who are very free, but they are not free.

This is a difficult question, this is the tzaddik v'ra lo question, this is all the people that we hold that they are righteous, but generally they receive punishment. It's still a problem, this is a difficult problem. The Rambam doesn't speak about your question.

The Question on the Greater Framing**Speaker 2:**

I don't agree, because the question is on the greater framing, that whoever things go well for in this world also goes well for him in that world. This is not true, because it's not true, because it's not so that all people have tranquility, and the truth is that they think more. Thinking is not so strongly with tranquility. This is the question on the Rambam.

Speaker 1:

I disagree with the entire Rambam, from beginning to end. I disagree with the whole thing. What the Rambam says that the Torah must promise good in this world so that one should be able to learn, is not true. One can learn just as well with poverty.

Speaker 2:

That is nonsense. Certainly one cannot learn as well with poverty.

Speaker 1:

Certainly there are many people who overcome themselves, and they indeed learn, but this is the exception to the rule. This is not the permission of the whole thing. The exception to the rule must be, I am right, you are right that the exception to the rule must be, because this begins the whole thing. The one who fulfills the Torah from poverty, that he overcomes himself, through this he becomes even more, and conversely, the Ishmael enemy that you speak of, is the exception to the rule that you speak of. But the essential logic is still so.

What Should One Do?**Speaker 2:**

What should one do? It's correct that many great Jews didn't agree with the Rambam indeed about this problem. One can disagree with the Rambam.

Speaker 1:

Again, the Rambam makes that the story in the Torah that we say "and it was in the days when the judges judged" is very beautiful. Now we have a question that in reality one sees very much that it doesn't match. One must understand that perhaps this is a part of the hiding of the face that we must live for the last thousand years.

Further Clarifications**Speaker 2:**

I didn't want to argue. I'm saying there are two other things that don't fit. One thing that doesn't fit is what you're saying about the Rambam, because in general the Rambam says that one who goes and exerts himself a bit will become even better. Then there's a second question that not always does the whole plan succeed. Okay, that's already the tzaddik v'ra lo (righteous person who suffers) question.

Speaker 1:

I wanted to say that if you see a person who has suffering but he's still mashlim (perfecting) his intellect, certainly he would have had a greater Olam Haba (World to Come) if he had, let's think, let's say for example, let's think if the Chazon Ish would have had an "easy" life, he would also have been wealthy, everything would have gone well for him, perhaps he would have reached much higher levels in wisdom, he would have had an even greater Olam Haba. But that's not our history.

But the Rambam who says that one who has troubles in Olam Hazeh (this world) becomes nervous, is only if because of the troubles he actually learns nothing. True, true, that's a truth. By the way, the Chazon Ish, it could be he had an "easy" life.

"Libo Panui" (His Heart is Free) is a Tremendous Thing**Speaker 2:**

Indeed, if a person figures out how to overcome and he receives a punishment in Olam Hazeh, still "libo panui" (his heart is free), that's a tremendous thing. No one disputes this. The Rambam says that through this one must get a better life. Eh, not always does it succeed, that's already the old question.

But it could be correct that the Rambam would have said that the Chazon Ish had such a good life. You say he only had troubles. The Chazon Ish himself says that he had "all his days in suffering and pain," but a humble person, I'll let you pass without an evil eye, and I'll say that he had a good life.

The Rambam Speaks of the "Main Story" of Reward and Punishment**Speaker 1:**

The Rambam in this chapter doesn't want to come into every kind of situation. There are still situations where a person can have troubles and yet be "libo panui." But the Torah isn't built for that situation. The Torah is built that whoever it is... the "main story" of reward and punishment is what the Rambam says here.

Transition to the Last Section of the Chapter**Speaker 1:**

And therefore, let's bring it out. So, now let's just try to say what the Rambam is going to answer in the last section. Until now we've already answered, and we said that Rabbi Yehoshua doesn't agree so well with this answer. Not only Rabbi Yehoshua, just a regular Jew.

That the question, when the Rambam says that a tzaddik's reward is in Olam Haba, if so why does the Torah speak of reward in Olam Hazeh? The Rambam answers, not as a goal, but as "im timtza" (if you find). So that the reward in Olam Hazeh should be received, and conversely, through the punishment, one doesn't have Olam Hazeh, one shouldn't merit the reward of Olam Haba.

The New Question from the Rambam: Why Do We Talk So Much About Yemos HaMashiach (the Messianic Era)?**Speaker 1:**

Now the Rambam asks, there's even another difficult question. Perhaps you agree that it's a question. I would say more, the Rambam said earlier that Yemos HaMashiach is basically a time when we'll be calmer in order to be able to learn. The Rambam asks a question, why did the Rebbe cry that Rabbi Elazar ben Azarya should come for a few dollars? What's going on here? It can't be!

The Rambam has a tremendous answer according to the principle he stated. And now the question you asked earlier about Yemos HaMashiach becomes better. Earlier you said that Yemos HaMashiach is a time when we'll be able to learn better, but that's not the ultimate purpose, the ultimate purpose is Olam Haba. So why do we talk so much about Yemos HaMashiach? Why don't we say, why shouldn't we speak directly about the radiance of Olam Haba?

A Precision in Language: "All of Israel, Their Prophets and Sages, Desired"

Speaker 1:

He says, "**All of Israel, their prophets and sages, desired.**" Obviously all of Israel, but the prophets and sages too? Obviously the prophets and sages are part of all Israel. Why must you first say all of Israel and then say prophets and sages?

The Question on "All of Israel, Their Prophets and Sages, Desired"

What's going on here? It can't be. The Rambam has a tremendous answer according to the principle he just stated.

So now what he said earlier about Yemos HaMashiach becomes better. Earlier the Rambam said, Yemos HaMashiach is simply a time when we'll be able to learn better. But that's not the ultimate purpose, the ultimate purpose is Olam Haba. So why do we speak of a desire for Yemos HaMashiach? Why shouldn't we speak directly about the desire for Olam Haba?

He says, "**And therefore all of Israel, their prophets and sages, desired.**" Never mind all of Israel is no proof, but their prophets and sages too? I mean that the prophets and sages are the all of Israel whom I care about, and we speak of them afterwards. Also, "all the prophets only prophesied about Yemos HaMashiach," they indeed speak the whole time about Yemos HaMashiach.

The prophets and sages saw the mixed multitude, which, yes, God forbid, "all Israel has a portion." He means to say, all of Israel plus their prophets and sages. He means to say, all the prophets didn't understand? Never mind all of Israel, but the prophets and sages understood, they had a soul to understand spiritual reward, spiritual pleasure.

Why were they desirous of the days of King Mashiach, which is basically a time when there won't be exile, "**so that they should be at ease from the wicked kingdom that doesn't allow Israel to engage in Torah and mitzvos properly**"?

The Deeper Meaning of "Wicked Kingdom"

The wicked kingdom prevents Jews from being engaged in Torah and mitzvos properly. As we learned in the Rambam's introduction, that when troubles multiplied, they no longer had the intellect to be able to transmit the Oral Torah from generation to generation as it should be. And we see there that exile has an effect on Torah and mitzvos.

But they desired to be able to have a time when they'll have rest, "and they'll find rest for themselves." Obviously, the ultimate purpose itself is also not the kingdom. Do I care that I should have a Jewish prime minister? That's not the point. Rather obviously I should have rest, so that the simple Jews will be able to learn calmly, and the wise people will be able to increase wisdom, "**so that they merit the life of the World to Come.**" The Rambam says, "for in those days..."

So that's already enough. That is, one thing, he's explaining. And then the Rambam adds that Mashiach will also help the yeshivos, he'll also make, he'll also be a great rosh yeshiva. Not only negatively removing the subjugation of kingdoms. Perhaps he means that the subjugation of kingdoms is the troubles of that time? In Pesukei D'Zimra, both things.

But he adds to this, that when we pray for Mashiach, we're essentially praying for a good rebbe. Because Mashiach, besides being Mashiach, is indeed a good king who makes our land restful.

By the way, from the Rambam in Moreh Nevuchim where he says in one place why there's no prophecy in exile, one thing could be that the Almighty doesn't want it, or as a punishment. Then the Rambam says that nature is also a giant. The Rambam says that prophecy must be from joy, and one who has great sadness, that one is unfortunately oppressed under a wicked kingdom.

I want to bring out that wicked kingdom doesn't only mean that the kingdom makes a decree that one can't learn. The kingdom works on foolishness, the whole world lives on nonsense and idolatry and I know what other nonsense and foolishness and nonsense. A person can't feel calm.

"The Earth Will Be Full of Knowledge of Hashem" — The Three Things

And he says, "and in those days knowledge will increase," there will be more knowledge and wisdom and truth. As it says, "**for the earth will be full of knowledge of Hashem.**" What are the three things? The world will become full of knowledge of Hashem.

And he says, "they will no longer teach each other war," yes? No, no, no, "**they will no longer teach each other saying 'know Hashem' for they will all know Me.**" They won't need to learn, perhaps that's the wisdom they'll have. Knowledge. Ah, it also says by the seed of David knowledge, okay.

No, no, no, "**and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh,**" they also have knowledge and wisdom there. Knowledge and wisdom is also a preparation for truth, as if knowledge and wisdom to understand the truth.

Mashiach's Three Qualities — Kingship, Wisdom, Prophecy

How does the Rambam say, how will there be knowledge and wisdom? "**When the King Mashiach from the seed of David will arise,**" the king who will arise from the seed of David, will be "**a master of wisdom greater than Solomon.**" So kingship comes to him because of David, additionally he'll receive wisdom from Solomon, more than Solomon. "**And a great prophet close to Moses our teacher.**" Greater than Moses our teacher there isn't. A great prophet who is close to Moses our teacher, he's near to the level of Moses our teacher.

So kingship he'll take from David, wisdom he'll take from Solomon, and prophecy he'll take from Moses our teacher.

Therefore, the person won't be the model from him. Therefore, **"he'll teach all the people,"** he'll teach out the whole nation, because one has the wisdom, the nation is subject to him because he's the king, and the wisdom he has like Solomon, and he'll teach out prophecy, **"and he'll instruct them in the way of Hashem,"** how to be able to learn the way of Hashem.

The Nations in Yemos HaMashiach — Peace Through Knowledge

Not only the Jews, **"all the nations,"** all peoples and all will come to hear. Therefore there won't be any war.

Interesting, the reason why the nations will leave the Jews alone isn't because of war, rather it's an explicit verse, look over the verse in Isaiah, it's also in another place. As it says, **"and it will be in the end of days the mountain of Hashem's house will be established at the top of the mountains,"** and all nations, **"and all the nations will stream to it."** All nations will come.

What does it say afterwards? **"And many peoples will go and say 'come and let us go up to the mountain of Hashem etc. and He will teach us of His ways,'** that's what the Rambam said, **"and we will walk in His paths for from Zion will go forth Torah."**

What will then be? **"And He will judge among the nations and rebuke many peoples, and they will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks, nation will not lift up sword against nation and they will no longer learn war."** Afterwards comes, all nations will understand "basic" wisdom, and the Jews are completely **"House of Jacob, come and let us walk in the light of Hashem."**

I want to bring out what everyone recognizes in this piece of prophecy, that there will be peace, but it also comes from knowledge. If there's a dispute, they'll go to Mashiach to ask what the halacha is, and he'll do as he says, and there won't be any struggle, any war.

So as long as we know that if nations do come to the Land of Israel it's because of some new "Iran weapon" or some better piece of warfare, they're still far from the redemption of the kingdom of the house of David.

"With His Mouth He'll Slay the Wicked" — A New Explanation

True. So if there's also a beauty, everyone knows to repeat the Rambam that Mashiach will come with his mouth to slay the wicked. How will he with his mouth slay the wicked? Through the fact that Mashiach will be a good rebbe, like Solomon and like David and almost like Moses, and he'll teach out not only for the Jews, for the nations too.

Why won't the nations fight with us? He must teach out for the nations also. It doesn't only say that he'll teach out the nations, he'll speak to the Jews and the nations will listen. They'll stand there on the side and "listen." It's important, they'll come to hear, yes.

Yes, but conversely, it's an even greater novelty. The virtue of the Jews is that Jews need to hear Mashiach. But the gentile, you don't understand him, he only comes because he heard that he's a good speaker, that he teaches out the way of

Hashem. "All the nations" doesn't mean all peoples, but just every nation will send their sages to learn from the Jews. Yes. They'll make great "trenches" to have room for everyone.

But I mean there's a beauty, because "the earth will be full of knowledge of Hashem." In other words, why do Jews pray for Mashiach? In order to have rest and a good rebbe. He says, just a simple Jew thinks about Mashiach because he wants to already have rest, good. But why a prophet and a sage? Because only a sage wants the whole world to come to wisdom.

The Answer to the Question — Yemos HaMashiach is an "Important Olam Haze" "

But that's still not the ultimate purpose. The ultimate reward in its entirety, a final good that has no interruption and no deficiency, which has no interruption, it doesn't end, and no deficiency, it lacks no deficiency, is Olam Haba.

But what is Mashiach? Olam Haze, it's something that happens in the world. We are the world continues in its way, people will still have the nature of the world. The perfection of the kingdom, the ultimate purpose of Israel, with all the good things he enumerated of wisdom. Very good. The kingdom of Israel also means that Mashiach who is a very good rebbe and everything.

He says, we agree with what the early sages said, **"there is no difference between this world and Yemos HaMashiach except the subjugation of kingdoms alone."** What this brings is that it means a kingdom, but it means that the subjugation of kingdoms is not a small thing, because a kingdom can bring with it tremendously good things.

Very good. That's the answer to the question. Why do we want Yemos HaMashiach? If Yemos HaMashiach is in Olam Haze, the answer is because it's an important Olam Haze. In Olam Haze one must not have subjugation of kingdoms, and one must have a Mashiach who is a good rebbe, through this one can teach out from each one the wisdom and the way of Hashem, and through this one can merit Olam Haba. Very good. Wow, the strength is no longer there. Very good, yes, one must work.

Digression: Small Redemptions and Small Mashiachs

Well, by the way, just as there is like an initial redemption, which the rebbes call small redemptions, that one has a bit of rest from the nations, there are also small Mashiachs. Yes, when a small group of Jews comes together, they're engaged in mitzvos, with calmness. From this the Chassidim say that every rebbe is an aspect of Mashiach. What is Mashiach? He teaches out the way of Hashem.

And that we can sit here and learn and no one disturbs us. I don't mean to say that we are Mashiach, but perhaps yes? Not yet. But if the community will send in enough and more vows and donations so that we can sustain the classes, and we can learn more hours a day, and we have rest from everything, and we can learn Torah. As the Rav said, if we'll keep learning, the community will send in money.

Gentiles Who Learn from Mashiach and Olam Haba

But it's interesting, I would have thought that according to the Rambam it comes out that the gentiles who will come to learn from Mashiach will in the end also receive Olam Haba. Certainly, the righteous of the nations of the world, he said earlier, have a portion in Olam Haba. I say, but if they learn, if they learn from Mashiach, because they must have the wisdom

of Godliness more than just a righteous gentile who only does,
but they must have the engagement which is Godliness.

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