

הלכות דעות • פרק שני

Complete Word-for-Word Interlinear • Navy & Gold Edition

CHAPTER PREVIEW

In this chapter, the Rambam teaches us how to heal the neshama when a person's middos have become warped and spiritually sick. Just as a physically sick person craves things that are bad for his body, someone with poor middos desires bad traits and finds the good path burdensome. To cure this spiritual illness, one must go to the wise—the healers of souls—who will guide him on how to restore balance.

The Rambam explains the practical method of healing, which involves moving to the opposite extreme for a period of time until the bad trait is uprooted. However, we learn that there are certain exceptionally bad middos, such as pride and anger, where the middle path is forbidden; for these, a person must distance himself completely and adopt the furthest extreme of humility and calmness. The chapter also guides us in the proper path of silence, speaking briefly and with purpose, and the absolute prohibition of deceit and dishonesty.

All introductions, summaries, and contextual notes are the editor's commentary and are not part of the original text.

הליא

רפואת חולי הנפשות על ידי החכמים

Halacha 1 • Healing the Morally Ill Through the Guidance of the Wise

חולי הגוף טועמים המר מתוק ומתוק מר. ויש מן החולים מי
who the sick of and there are bitter and sweet sweet the bitter taste the body The sick of

שמתאוה ותאב למאכלות שאינן ראויין לאכילה כגון העפר והפחם
and the charcoal the earth such as for eating fit that are not for foods and craves desires

ושונא המאכלות הטובים כגון הפת והבשר הכל לפי רב
the severity of according to everything and the meat the bread such as the good the foods and hates

החלי. כך בני אדם שנפשתייהם חולות מתאווים ואוהבים הדעות
the traits and love desire are sick whose souls man children of so the sickness

הרעות ושונאים הדרך הטובה ומתעצלים ללכת בה והיא כבדה עליהם
upon them is heavy and it in it to walk and are lazy the good the path and hate the bad

למאד לפי חלים. וכן ישעיהו אומר באנשים הללו ישעיה ה כ
20 5 Yeshayahu these concerning men says Yeshayahu and so their sickness according to exceedingly

"הוי האמרים לרע טוב ולטוב רע שמים חשך לאור ואור לחשך
for darkness and light for light darkness who place bad and to the good good to the bad those who say Woe

שמים מר למתוק ומתוק למר". ועליהם נאמר משלי ב יג "העוזבים
Those who leave 13 2 Mishlei it is said and concerning them for bitter and sweet for sweet bitter who place

ארחות ישר ללכת בדרךי חשך". ומה היא תקנת חולי הנפשות.
the souls the sick of the remedy of is and what darkness in ways of to walk uprightness paths of

יִלְכוּ אֶצֶל הַחֲכָמִים שֶׁהֵן רוֹפְאֵי הַנֶּפֶשׁוֹת וַיִּרְפְּאוּ חֻלָּיָם
their sickness and they will heal the souls the healers of for they are the wise to they should go
בִּדְעוֹת שֶׁמֶלֶמְדִּין אוֹתָם עַד שֶׁיִּחְזְרוּ לְדֶרֶךְ הַטּוֹבָה. וְהַמִּכְרִים
and those who the good to the path they return them until them that they teach with the traits
recognize
בִּדְעוֹת הָרָעוֹת שֶׁלָּהֶם וְאִינֶם הוֹלְכִים אֶצֶל הַחֲכָמִים לְרַפֵּא אוֹתָם עָלֵיהֶם
concerning them them to heal the wise to going and are not of theirs the bad in the traits
אָמַר שְׁלֹמֹה מִשְׁלֵי א ז "חֲכָמָה וּמוֹסָר אֵוִילִים בָּזוּ":
scorned fools and correction wisdom 7 1 Mishlei Shlomo said

This halacha compares moral corruption to physical illness and explains that those with bad character traits must seek guidance from the Sages to heal their souls.

חלי ב

רפואת חלי הנפש על ידי נטיה לקצה הנגדי

Halacha 2 · Healing the Illness of the Soul by Moving to the Opposite Extreme

וְכִיצַד הִיא רְפוּאָתָם. מִי שֶׁהוּא בֹעַל חֲמָה אוֹמְרִים לוֹ לְהִנָּהֵג עֲצֻמוֹ
himself to accustom to him we say wrath a master of who is One their healing is And how
שָׂאֵם הָכָה וְקָלָל לֹא יִרְגִישׁ כָּלֵל. וַיֵּלֶךְ בְּדֶרֶךְ זֶה זְמַן מְרֻבָּה עַד
until long a time this in way and he should go at all he should feel not and cursed he is beaten that if
שִׁיתַּעֲקֹר הַחֲמָה מִלְּבוֹ. וְאִם הָיָה גְבוּהָ לֵב יִנָּהֵג עֲצֻמוֹ בְּכַזְיוֹן
with disgrace himself he should accustom heart haughty of he was And if from his heart the wrath that is uprooted
הִרְבָּה וַיֵּשֶׁב לְמַטָּה מִן הַכֹּל וַיִּלְבַּשׁ בְּלוּיֵי סִחְבוֹת הַמַּבְזוֹת אֵת
their wearers — rags worn out and wear everyone than below and sit much
לֹבֵשֵׁיהֶם וְכִיּוּצָא בְּדִבְרֵיהֶם אֵלּוּ עַד שִׁיעֲקֹר גְּבוּהַ הַלֵּב מִמֶּנּוּ
and he returns from him the heart the haughtiness of that he uproots until these in things and the like
וַיִּחְזֹר לְדֶרֶךְ הָאֲמֻצָּעִית שֶׁהוּא דֶּרֶךְ הַטּוֹבָה. וְלִכְשִׁיחְזֹר לְדֶרֶךְ
middle to the path And when he returns the good the path which is middle to the path
הָאֲמֻצָּעִית יֵלֶךְ בָּהּ כָּל יָמָיו. וְעַל קוֹ זֶה יַעֲשֶׂה בְּשָׂאֵר כָּל
the character traits all with the rest of he should do this line And on his days all in it he should walk
הַדְּעוֹת אִם הָיָה רָחוֹק לְקֶצֶה הָאֶחָד יִרְחִיק עֲצֻמוֹ לְקֶצֶה הַשֵּׁנִי
and behave the second to the extreme himself he should distance the one to the extreme far he was If
וַיִּנָּהֵג בּוֹ זְמַן רַב עַד שֶׁיִּחְזֹר בּוֹ לְדֶרֶךְ הַטּוֹבָה וְהִיא מִדָּה
middle the trait and it the good to the path by it that he returns until long a time in it
בֵּינוֹנִית שֶׁבְּכֹל דָּעָה וְדָעָה:
— and character trait character trait that is in every

The Rambam explains how to cure extreme character traits by temporarily practicing the opposite extreme until one returns to the proper middle path.

חלי ג

וַיֵּשׁ דְּעוֹת שְׂאֵסוֹר לוֹ לְאָדָם לְנֹהֵג בָּהֶן בְּבִינוּנִית אֲלֵא

rather in the middle path with them to behave for a person to him that it is forbidden temperaments And there are

יִתְרַחֵק מִן הַקֶּצֶה הָאֶחָד עַד הַקֶּצֶה הָאֲחֵר. וְהוּא גִבּוֹה לֵב.

heart haughtiness of and it is the other the extreme until the one the extreme from he must distance himself

שְׂאִין דֶּרֶךְ הַטּוֹבָה שְׂיִהֶיָּה אָדָם עָנוּ בְּלִבָּד אֲלֵא שְׂיִהֶיָּה שְׁפַל רוּחַ

spirit lowly of that he should be rather only humble a person that he should be the good the path for it is not

וְתִהְיֶה רוּחוֹ נְמוּכָה לְמָאֵד. וְלִפְיֻכָּה נֶאֱמַר בְּמֹשֶׁה רַבֵּנוּ בַּמְדָּבָר יב ג

3 12 Bamidbar our teacher regarding Moshe it is said and therefore exceedingly lowly his spirit and should be

"עָנוּ מָאֵד" וְלֹא נֶאֱמַר עָנוּ בְּלִבָּד. וְלִפְיֻכָּה צִוּוּ חֲכָמִים מָאֵד

exceedingly the Sages commanded and therefore only humble it is said and not exceedingly humble

מָאֵד הָיָה שְׁפַל רוּחַ. וְעוֹד אָמְרוּ שְׁכָל הַמַּגְבִּיָּה לְבוֹ כָּפַר

denies his heart who elevates that anyone they said and further spirit lowly of be exceedingly

בְּעֶקֶר שְׁנֵאמַר דְּבָרִים ח יד "וְרָם לְבָבְךָ וְשָׁכַחְתָּ אֶת ה'

Hashem — and you will forget your heart and will be haughty 14 8 Devarim as it is said the essential principle

אֱלֹהֶיךָ". וְעוֹד אָמְרוּ בְּשִׁמְתָא מֵאֵן דְּאִית בֵּיה גְּסוּת הָרוּחַ וְאִפְלוּ

and even the spirit arrogance of in him that has whoever under a ban of they said and further your God ostracism

מִקְצָתָהּ. וְכֵן הַפֶּעַם מִדָּה רָעָה הִיא עַד לְמָאֵד וְרֵאיוֹי לְאָדָם

for a person and it is proper exceedingly until it is bad a trait anger and likewise a part of it

שְׂיִתְרַחֵק מִמֶּנָּה עַד הַקֶּצֶה הָאֲחֵר. וְיִלְמַד עֲצָמוֹ שְׁלֹא

that not himself and he should teach the other the extreme until from it that he distance himself

יִכְעַס וְאִפְלוּ עַל דְּבַר שְׂרֵאוֹי לְכַעַס עָלָיו. וְאִם רָצָה לְהִטִּיל

to cast he wished and if upon it to be angry that is proper a matter upon and even he should become angry

אִימָה עַל בָּנָיו וּבְנֵי בֵיתוֹ אוֹ עַל הַצִּבּוֹר אִם הָיָה פְּרָנָס

a leader he was if the community upon or his household and the members of his children upon fear

וְרָצָה לְכַעַס עָלֵיהֶן כְּדִי שְׂיִחְזְרוּ לְמוֹטָב יִרְאֶה עֲצָמוֹ בְּפָנֵיהֶם

before them himself he should show to the good that they should return in order upon them to be angry and he wished

שֶׁהוּא כּוֹעֵס כְּדִי לִיִּסְרָם וְתִהְיֶה דַעְתּוֹ מִיִּשְׁכָּת בֵּינוּ לְבֵין עֲצָמוֹ

himself to between between him calm his mind and should be to chastise them in order is angry that he

כְּאָדָם שֶׁהוּא מְדַמָּה כּוֹעֵס בְּשַׁעַת פְּעֻסוֹ וְהוּא אֵינוֹ כּוֹעֵס. אָמְרוּ חֲכָמִים

the Sages said angry is not and he his anger at the time of angry acts who like a person

הָרֵאשׁוֹנִים כָּל הַכּוֹעֵס כְּאֵלוֹ עוֹבֵד עֲבוֹדַת כּוֹכָבִים. וְאָמְרוּ שְׁכָל

that anyone and they said stars worship of he worships is as if who becomes angry anyone the early ones

הַפּוֹעֵס אִם חָכָם הוּא חֲכָמָתוֹ מִסֵּתִלְקֶת מִמֶּנּוּ וְאִם נָבִיא הוּא נְבוּאָתוֹ
his prophecy he is a prophet and if from him departs his wisdom he is a wise man if who becomes angry

מִסֵּתִלְקֶת מִמֶּנּוּ. וּבַעֲלֵי כַעַס אֵין חַיֵּיהֶם חַיִּים. לְפִיכָךְ צִוּ
they commanded therefore a life their life is not anger and the masters of from him departs

לְהִתְרַחֵק מִן הַכַּעַס עַד שִׁנְהֵיג עֲצָמוֹ שְׁלֹא יִרְגִישׁ אֶפְלוּ לְדַבָּרִים
to things even he should feel that not himself that he accustoms until the anger from to distance oneself

הַמְכַּעֲסִים וְזוֹ הִיא הַדֶּרֶךְ הַטּוֹבָה. וְדֶרֶךְ הַצַּדִּיקִים הֵן עֲלוּבִין
shamed they are the righteous and the way of the good the path it is and this that provoke anger

וְאֵינָן עוֹלָבִין שׁוֹמְעִים חֲרָפָתָם וְאֵינָם מְשִׁיבִין עוֹשִׁין מֵאַהֲבָה
from love they act answer and they do not their insult they hear shame and they do not

וְשִׂמְחִים בְּיִסּוּרִים. וְעַלֵּיהֶם הַכָּתוּב אוֹמֵר שׁוֹפְטִים הֵ לֹא "וְאַהֲבִיו
and those who love 31 5 Shoftim says the verse and upon them in sufferings and are joyous
Him

כִּצֵּאת הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ בְּגִבְרָתוֹ:"

in its strength the sun are like the going out of

The Rambam explains that while most character traits require a middle path, arrogance and anger are so destructive that one must distance himself to the furthest extreme.

הליד

מַעֲלֵת הַשְּׁתִּיקָה וְהַמְּעוּט בְּדַבָּרִים

Halacha 4 · The Virtue of Silence and Restricting One's Speech

לְעוֹלָם יִרְבֶּה אָדָם בְּשִׁתִּיקָה וְלֹא יִדְבֹּר אֶלָּא אוֹ בְּדַבָּר חֲכָמָה אוֹ
or wisdom with matters of either except speak and not in silence a person should increase Always

בְּדַבָּרִים שְׁצָרֵיהֶם לָהֶם לְחַיֵּי גּוֹפּוֹ. אָמְרוּ עַל רַב תַּלְמִיד רַבֵּנוּ
our teacher the disciple of Rav about They said his body for the life of for them that are necessary with things

הַקָּדוֹשׁ שְׁלֹא שָׁח שְׂיַחָה בְּטִלָּה כָּל יָמָיו. וְזוֹ הִיא שְׂיַחַת רַב כָּל
all most of the conversation of it is and this his days all idle conversation he spoke that not the holy

אָדָם. וְאַפְלוּ בְּצָרְכֵי הַגּוּף לֹא יִרְבֶּה אָדָם דְּבָרִים. וְעַל זֶה
this and on words a person should increase not the body regarding the needs of And even people

צִוּ חֲכָמִים וְאָמְרוּ כָּל הַמְּרַבֶּה דְּבָרִים מְבִיא חֵטָא. וְאָמְרוּ מִשְׁנָה
Mishnah and they said sin brings words increases whoever and said the Sages commanded

אָבוֹת אִיזוֹ "לֹא מְצָאתִי לַגּוּף טוֹב אֶלָּא שְׁתִּיקָה". וְכֵן בְּדַבָּרֵי תוֹרָה
Torah in words of And likewise silence" than better for the body have I found "Not 17 1 Avos

וּבְדַבָּרֵי חֲכָמָה יִהְיוּ דְּבָרֵי הָאָדָם מְעַטִּים וְעֲנִינֵיהֶם מְרֻבִּים. וְהוּא
and that is abundant and their content few the person the words of should be wisdom and in words of

שְׁצִו חֲכָמִים וְאָמְרוּ גִמְרָא פִּסְחִים ג ב "לְעוֹלָם יִשְׁנָה אָדָם
a person should teach "Always 2 3 Pesachim Gemara and said the Sages what commanded

לְתַלְמִידָיו דֶּרֶךְ קְצָרָה". אֲבָל אִם הָיוּ הַדְּבָרִים מְרֻבִּין וְהָעֲנָן מְעַט הָרִי
behold scant and the content many the words were if But concise" a way to his students

זו סכלות ועל זה נאמר קהלת ה ב "כי בא החלום ברב ענין
matters with a multitude of the dream comes "For 2 5 Koheles it is said this and on foolishness this is
וקול כסיל ברב דברים":
words" with a multitude of a fool and the voice of

The Rambam explains the importance of silence, advising that one should only speak of wisdom or physical necessities, and even then, keep one's words brief and meaningful.

ה' ה

חשיבות השתיקה ולמוד בנחת

Halacha 5 · The Importance of Silence and Teaching Students with Tranquility

משנה אבות ג יג "סיג לחכמה שתיקה". לפיכך לא ימהר להשיב
to answer should he hasten not Therefore is silence for wisdom A safeguard 13 3 Avos Mishnah
ולא ירבה לדבר. וילמד לתלמידים בשובה ונחת בלא
without and tranquility with calmness the students And he should teach to speak should he increase and not
צעקה ובלא אריכות לשון. הוא שאמר שלמה קהלת ט יז "דברי
The words of 17 9 Koheles Shlomo is what said That of tongue lengthiness and without shouting
חכמים בנחת נשמעים":
are heard in tranquility the wise

This halacha emphasizes the virtue of silence as a safeguard for wisdom and instructs teachers to instruct their students calmly and without shouting.

ה' ו

אסור גנבת דעת הבריות וחייב דבור אמת

Halacha 6 · The Prohibition of Deceiving People and the Obligation of Truthful Speech

אסור לאדם להנהיג עצמו בדברי חלקות ופתוי. ולא יהיה אחד
one shall he be and not and enticement smoothness with words of himself to conduct for a person It is forbidden
בפה ואחד בלב אלא תוכו פירו והענין שבלב הוא הדבר
is the thing it that is in the heart and the matter like his outside his inside rather in the heart and one in the mouth
שפפה. ואסור לגנב דעת הבריות ואפלו דעת הנכרי. כיצד.
how so the non-Jew the mind of and even the people the mind of to steal and it is forbidden that is in the mouth
לא ימכר לנכרי בשר נבלה במקום בשר שחוטא. ולא מנעל של
of a shoe and not a slaughtered animal meat of in place of a carcass meat of to a non-Jew shall he sell not
מתה במקום מנעל של שחוטא. ולא יסרהב בחברו שיאכל
that he should eat · his fellow shall he press and not a slaughtered animal of a shoe in place of a dead animal
אצלו והוא יודע שאינו אוכל. ולא ירבה לו בתקרבת והוא
and he with gifts to him shall he offer and not eat that he will not knows and he with him
abundantly

יודע שאינו מקבל. ולא יפתח לו חביות שהוא צריך לפתחן
to open them needs that he barrels for him shall he open and not accept that he will not knows
למכרן כדי לפתותו שבשביל כבודו פתח וכן כל פיוצא בו. ואפלו
and even to it that is similar all and so he opened his honor that for the sake of to entice him in order to sell them

מִלֵּה אַחַת שֶׁל פִּתּוּי וְשֶׁל גְּנִבַת דַּעַת אָסוּר, אֲלֵא שֹׁפֵת אֱמֶת וְרוּחַ
and a spirit truth lip of rather is forbidden the mind stealing of and of enticement of one word
נִכּוֹן וְלֵב טָהוֹר מִכָּל עֲמָל וְהוֹת:
and mischief deceit from all pure and a heart proper

This halacha teaches that one must maintain absolute honesty in speech and action, forbidding any form of deception or false impressions, even toward non-Jews.

ה'ל"ז

הַנִּהְגֻת הָאָדָם בְּמִדַּת הַבִּינּוּנִית וְהִתְרַחֲקוּת מִן הַקְּצוּת

Halacha 7: Following the Middle Path in Temperament and Avoiding Extreme Character Traits

לֹא יִהְיֶה אָדָם בַּעַל שְׂחוק וּמִהֲתָלוּת וְלֹא עֵצִב וְאוֹנָן אֲלֵא שִׂמְחָה. כִּי
so happy but and mourning sad and not and jesting laughter given to a person should be not
אָמְרוּ חֲכָמִים שְׂחוק וְקִלּוּת רֹאשׁ מְרַגְּלִין אֶת הָאָדָם לְעִרְוָה.
to lewdness a person — accustom head and lightness of laughter the Sages said
וְצוּוּ שֶׁלֹא יִהְיֶה אָדָם פָּרוֹץ בְּצִחוק וְלֹא עֵצִב וּמִתְאַבֵּל אֲלֵא
but and mourning sad and not in laughter unrestrained a person should be that not and they commanded
מִקְבֵּל אֶת כָּל הָאָדָם בְּסִכָּר פָּנִים יָפוּת. וְכֵן לֹא יִהְיֶה בַּעַל
possessor of should he be not and likewise face expression of with a pleasant person every — receiving
נֶפֶשׁ רַחֲבָה נִבְהָל לַהוֹן וְלֹא עֵצִב וּבָטֵל מִמְּלָאכָה. אֲלֵא בַּעַל עֵין טוֹבָה
good an eye possessor of but from work and idle lazy and not for wealth rushing wide a soul
מִמַּעַט בְּעֵסֶק וְעוֹסֵק בְּתוֹרָה. וְאוֹתוֹ הַמַּעַט שֶׁהוּא חֵלְקוֹ יִשְׂמַח
he should rejoice his portion which is little and with that with Torah and occupying himself in business limiting
בּוֹ. וְלֹא בַּעַל קִטְטָה וְלֹא בַּעַל קִנְיָה וְלֹא בַּעַל תַּאֲוָה וְלֹא
and not desire a possessor of and not envy a possessor of and not quarrel a possessor of and not in it
רוֹדֵף אַחֵר הַכְּבוֹד. כִּי אָמְרוּ חֲכָמִים הַקִּנְיָה וְהַתַּאֲוָה וְהַכְּבוֹד מוֹצִיאִין אֶת
— remove and honor and desire envy the Sages said so honor after pursuing
הָאָדָם מִן הָעוֹלָם. כָּלֹל שֶׁל דָּבָר יֵלֵךְ בְּמִדָּה הַבִּינּוּנִית
the middle in the path he should walk the matter of the general principle the world from a person
שֶׁבְּכָל דָּעָה וְדַעָה עַד שֶׁיִּהְיוּ כָּל דְּעוּתָיו מְכוּוֹנּוֹת בְּאַמְצָעוֹת. וְהוּא
and this is in the middle aligned his traits all that will be until and trait trait that is in every
שֶׁשְׁלֹמֹה אָמַר מִשְׁלֵי ד' כו "פֶּלֶס מַעְגַּל רַגְלָהּ וְכָל דִּרְכֶיהָ יִכְנוּ":
will be established your ways and all your foot the path of balance twenty-six four Proverbs said what Shlomo

The Rambam outlines the ideal middle path of character traits, warning against extremes of laughter, sadness, greed, and envy, and encouraging contentment and Torah study.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

The chapter begins by comparing moral illness to physical sickness, explaining that those with bad middos must seek out the wise to heal their souls. The Rambam outlines the method of spiritual healing: a person who has strayed to one extreme must accustom himself to the opposite extreme for a long time until he can return to the proper middle path. However, for pride

and anger, one must completely distance himself to the furthest extreme, as the Sages warned that anger is akin to idol worship and pride is like denying Hashem's presence. Finally, the Rambam instructs us on the great value of silence, teaching that one should speak briefly and only when necessary, and strictly forbids any form of deceit, smooth-tongued behavior, or dishonesty, even toward a non-Jew.

לְמַעֲשֶׂה WHAT TO TAKE HOME

When a person is physically sick, their taste buds get warped; they crave dirt and charcoal while despising wholesome bread and meat. The Rambam is teaching us a profound truth about our spiritual lives: when our middos are damaged, our spiritual taste buds are broken too. We actually begin to crave the very things that poison our souls, like anger, pride, and empty chatter, while finding the sweet, healthy path of Torah and refined character to be heavy and bitter.

To heal, we cannot rely on our own warped taste buds. We must go to the 'healers of the soul', our chachamim, and follow their prescription, which often requires us to bend all the way to the opposite extreme to break the habit. If we suffer from anger, we must practice absolute silence and restraint, even when we feel entirely justified in exploding. We must train ourselves to act calm on the outside, even if we have to pretend, until the quiet penetrates our hearts and restores our spiritual health.

Today, identify one area where your 'spiritual taste buds' might be slightly warped, perhaps a tendency to snap in anger or engage in idle gossip. For just this one day, practice the opposite extreme: if you feel the urge to speak sharply or gossip, choose absolute silence instead.