

הלכות דעות • פרק רביעי

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

CHAPTER PREVIEW

In this chapter, the Rambam teaches us a fundamental principle of avodas Hashem: keeping the body healthy and strong is not a secular pursuit, but a holy path to knowing the Creator. Since a person cannot properly understand or serve Hashem when he is ill, maintaining one's physical well-being is a direct fulfillment of Hashem's will.

To guide us in this essential avodah, the Rambam lays out practical, daily guidelines for eating, drinking, sleeping, and physical exertion. He teaches us how to master our physical desires, showing that true strength lies in eating only when hungry, stopping before we are full, and engaging in healthy habits that keep the body pure and ready for Torah study.

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

ה"א

שמירת הגוף כחלק מעבודת השם

Halacha 1 • Maintaining a Healthy Body as Part of Serving Hashem

הואיל והיות הגוף בריא ושלם מדרך השם הוא. שהרי אי אפשר

it is impossible for behold it is Hashem from the ways of and whole healthy the body and being Since

שיבין או ידע דבר מדיעת הבורא והוא חולה. לפיכך צריך

must therefore is ill and he the Creator of the knowledge of anything know or that he understand

להרחיק אדם עצמו מדברים המאבדו את הגוף. ולהנהיג עצמו בדברים

to things himself and to accustom the body — that destroy from things himself a person distance

המברין והמחלימים. ואלו הן: לעולם לא יאכל אדם אלא כשהוא

when he is unless a person shall eat not forever they are and these and that strengthen that make healthy

רעב. ולא ישתה אלא כשהוא צמא. ואל ישהא נקביו אפלו רגע

moment even his excretions let him delay and do not thirsty when he is unless shall drink and not hungry

אחד. אלא כל זמן שצריך להשתין או להסד את רגליו יעמד מיד:

immediately he should stand his feet — to cover or to urinate that he needs time all rather one

The Rambam explains that keeping the body healthy is a religious duty because one cannot comprehend the Creator while ill.

ה"ב

הנהגת האכילה וההכנה לה על ידי גישה

Halacha 2 • Proper Eating Habits and Preparing the Body Through Physical Exertion

לא יאכל אדם עד שתתמלא כרסו אלא יפחת כמו רביע משבעתו.

from his satiety a quarter like he should diminish rather his stomach that is filled until a person shall eat Not

ולא ישתה מים בתוך המזון אלא מעט ומזוג ביו. וכשיתחיל המזון

the food and when begins with wine and mixed a little except the meal during water shall he drink and not

לְהִתְעַבֵּל בְּמַעֲיו שׁוֹתָהּ מָה שֶׁהוּא צָרִיךְ לְשׁוֹתָהּ. וְלֹא יִרְבֶּה לְשׁוֹתָהּ
to drink shall he increase and not to drink needs that he what he drinks in his intestines to digest
מִים וְאִפְּלוּ כִּשְׂיִתְעַבֵּל הַמְּזוֹן. וְלֹא יֹאכַל עַד שֶׁיִּבְדֹּק עַצְמוֹ יָפֶה יָפֶה
well well himself that he checks until shall he eat and not the food when is digested and even water
שָׁמָּה יִהְיֶה צָרִיךְ לְנִקְבָּיו. לֹא יֹאכַל אָדָם עַד שֶׁיֵּלֶךְ קֹדֶם אֲכִילָה עַד
until eating before that he walks until a person shall eat not his excretory organs needing he will be lest
שִׂיתְחִיל גּוּפוֹ לָחֶם. אוֹ יַעֲשֶׂה מְלָאכָתוֹ אוֹ יִתְיַגֵּעַ בִּיָּגַע אַחֵר.
other with exertion he exerts himself or his work he does or to warm up his body that begins
כָּלְלוֹ שֶׁל דָּבָר יַעֲנֶה גּוּפוֹ וְיִיָּגַע כָּל יוֹם בְּבִקְרָא עַד
until in the morning day every and exert himself his body he should afflict the matter of the general rule
שִׂיתְחִיל גּוּפוֹ לָחֶם וְיִשְׁקֹט מְעֻט עַד שֶׁתִּתְיַשֵּׁב נַפְשׁוֹ וְאוֹכֵל. וְאִם
and if and then eats his mind that settles until a little and he should rest to warm up his body that begins
רַחֵץ בַּחֲמִין אַחֵר שִׁיָּגַע הָרִי זֶה טוֹב וְאַחֵר כֶּף שׁוֹהָה מְעֻט
a little he waits so and after is good this behold that he exerted himself after in hot water he bathed
וְאוֹכֵל:
and then eats

The Rambam outlines healthy eating practices, advising against overeating, regulating fluid intake during meals, and emphasizing physical exertion before eating.

ה'ל"ג

הַנְּהִיגָת הַגּוּף בְּעֵת הָאֲכִילָה וְאַחֲרֶיהָ

Halacha 3 • Proper Physical Conduct During and Immediately After Eating

לְעוֹלָם כִּשְׂיֹאכַל אָדָם יֵשֵׁב בְּמִקוֹמוֹ אוֹ יֹטֶה עַל שִׁמְאָל. וְלֹא יִהְיֶה
walk and not left on recline or in his place he should sit a person when eats Always
וְלֹא יִרְכַּב וְלֹא יִיָּגַע וְלֹא יִזְעֹזַע גּוּפוֹ וְלֹא יִטְוֶה עַד שִׂיתְעַבֵּל הַמְּזוֹן
the food that digests until stroll and not his body shake and not exert himself and not ride and not
שְׂבִמְעִיו. וְכָל הַמְטִיל אַחֵר אֲכִילָתוֹ אוֹ שִׁיָּגַע הָרִי זֶה מְבִיא עַל
upon brings this behold who exerts himself or his eating after who strolls and anyone that is in his intestines
עַצְמוֹ חֲלָאִים רָעִים וְקָשִׁים:
and harsh bad illnesses himself

The Rambam outlines the healthy physical posture for eating and warns against physical exertion before digestion is complete.

ה'ל"ד

הַנְּהִיגָת הַשְּׁנָה הַנְּכוֹנָה וּשְׁעוֹתֶיהָ

Halacha 4 • The Proper Conduct of Sleep and Its Required Hours

הַיּוֹם וְהַלַּיְלָה כ"ד שָׁעוֹת. דִּי לוֹ לְאָדָם לִישֹׁן שְׁלִישֵׁן שֶׁהוּא
which is a third of them to sleep for a person is it sufficient hours are twenty-four and the night The day
שְׂמוֹנֶה שָׁעוֹת. וְיִהְיוּ בְּסוֹף הַלַּיְלָה כְּדִי שֶׁתִּהְיֶה מִתְחִלָּתָהּ
from the beginning of that there will be so the night at the end of and they should be hours eight

שָׁנָתוֹ עַד שֶׁתַּעֲלֶה הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ שְׁמוֹנֶה שָׁעוֹת. וְנִמְצָא עוֹמֵד מִמִּטָּתוֹ קֹדֶם

before from his bed he rises and it turns out hours eight the sun rises until his sleep

שֶׁתַּעֲלֶה הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ:

the sun rises

The Rambam explains the ideal duration and timing of sleep for maintaining physical health.

ה' ה

הַנְּהִיגָת הַשָּׁנָה הַכְּרִיפָה וְזִמְנוֹתָהּ

Halacha 5 · Healthy Sleeping Positions and Proper Timing After Eating

לֹא יִישָׁן אָדָם לֹא עַל פָּנָיו וְלֹא עַל עֲרְפוֹ אֲלָא עַל צְדּוֹ. בְּתַחֲלִית

at the beginning of his side on but his back on and not his face on not a person shall sleep not

הַלַּיְלָה עַל צֵד שְׂמָאל. וּבִסּוֹף הַלַּיְלָה עַל צֵד יְמִין. וְלֹא יִישָׁן

shall he sleep and not right the side of on the night and at the end of left the side of on the night

סְמוּךְ לֵאכִילָה אֲלָא יִמְתִּין אַחֲרֵי אֲכִילָה כְּמוֹ שְׁלֹשׁ אוֹ אַרְבַּע שָׁעוֹת. וְלֹא

and not hours four or three about eating after he should wait but to eating close

יִישָׁן בַּיּוֹם:

during the day shall he sleep

The Rambam outlines the proper physical positions for sleep and the necessary interval of time one must wait after eating before going to bed.

ה' ו

סֵדֵר אֲכִילַת מַאֲכָלִים הַמְּשַׁלְשִׁין וְהַמְּאַמְצִין אֶת הַמְּעִים

Halacha 6 · The Proper Order of Eating Laxative and Constipating Foods

דְּבָרִים הַמְּשַׁלְשִׁין אֶת בְּנֵי מַעִים כְּגוֹן עֲנָבִים וְתַאֲנִים וְאַגָּסִים

and pears and mulberries and figs grapes such as bowels the — that loosen Things

וְאַבְטִיחִים וּמִינֵי הַקְּשׁוּאִים וּמִינֵי מִלְּפֻנוֹת אוֹכֵל אוֹתָם הָאָדָם

a person them eats melons and types of cucumbers and types of and watermelons

בְּתַחֲלִית קֹדֶם אֲכִילָה. וְלֹא יַעֲרֹב עִם הַמִּזּוֹן. אֲלָא שׁוֹהָה מְעַט עַד

until a little waits but the food with should he mix them and not the meal before at the beginning

שִׁיצָאוּ מִבֶּטֶן הָעֲלִיוֹן וְאוֹכֵל מִזּוֹנוֹ. וְדְבָרִים שֶׁמְאַמְצִין אֶת בְּנֵי מַעִים

bowels the — that constipate and things his food and eats upper from the stomach they exit

כְּגוֹן רְמוֹנִים וּפְרִישִׁים וְתַפּוּחִים וְקְרוֹסְטוֹמוֹלִין אוֹכֵל אוֹתָן תִּכְף לְמִזּוֹנוֹ.

after his food immediately them he eats and crustumelian and apples and quinces pomegranates such as pears

וְלֹא יִרְבֶּה לֵאכֹל מֵהֶם:

of them to eat should he increase and not

The Rambam outlines the healthy sequence of eating, advising that laxative foods be eaten before the meal and constipating foods in small amounts after the meal.

ה' ז

כְּשִׁירָצָה אָדָם לֵאכֹל בֶּשָׂר עוֹף וּבֶשֶׂר בְּהֵמָה כְּאֶחָד. אוֹכֵל בְּתַחֲלָה
at the beginning he should eat as one animal and meat of poultry meat of to eat a person When he desires
בֶּשֶׂר הָעוֹף. וְכֵן בִּיָּצִים וּבֶשֶׂר עוֹף אוֹכֵל בְּתַחֲלָה בִּיָּצִים. בֶּשָׂר בְּהֵמָה
animal meat of eggs at the beginning he should eat poultry and meat of eggs and so the poultry meat of
דָּקָה וּבֶשֶׂר בְּהֵמָה גְּסָה אוֹכֵל בְּתַחֲלָה בֶּשָׂר דָּקָה. לְעוֹלָם יִקְדִּים
should advance always small meat of at the beginning he should eat large animal and meat of small
אָדָם דְּבָר הַקָּל וּמֵאַחֵר הַכָּבֵד:
the heavy and delay the light the thing a person

The Rambam outlines the healthy dietary practice of eating lighter, more easily digestible foods before heavier ones.

ה'ל' ח

בַּיָּמֹת הַחֶמָּה אוֹכֵל מֵאֲכָלִים הַקָּרִים וְלֹא יִרְבֶּה בְּתַבָּלִים וְאוֹכֵל
and one should eat spices increase and not that are cold foods one should eat the sun In the days of
אֶת הַחֶמֶץ. וּבַיָּמֹת הַגֶּשְׁמִים אוֹכֵל מֵאֲכָלִים הַחֲמִים וּמִרְבֶּה
and increase that are warm foods one should eat the rains and in the days of vinegar —
בְּתַבָּלִים וְאוֹכֵל מְעַט מִן הַחֲרָדֵל וּמִן הַחֲלִיתִית. וְעַל דֶּרֶךְ זֶה הוֹלֵךְ
one should go this way and according to chilitit and of mustard of a little and eat spices
וְעוֹשֶׂה בַּמְּקוֹמוֹת הַקָּרִים וּבַמְּקוֹמוֹת הַחֲמִים בְּכָל מְקוֹם וּמְקוֹם הָרְאוּי
what is appropriate and place place in every that are hot and in places that are cold in places and act
לוֹ:
for it

The Rambam outlines how one should adjust their diet between summer and winter, as well as between hot and cold climates, to maintain physical health.

ה'ל' ט

יֵשׁ מֵאֲכָלוֹת שֶׁהֵם רָעִים בְּיוֹתֵר עַד מְאֹד וְרְאוּי לֵאדָּם שְׁלֹא
that not for a person and it is proper very until exceedingly bad that they are foods There are
לֵאכֹלָן לְעוֹלָם. כְּגוֹן הַדְּגִים הַגְּדוֹלִים הַמְּלוּחִים הַיִּשְׁנִים. וְהַגְּבִינָה הַמְּלוּחָה
the salted and the cheese the aged the salted the large the fish such as ever to eat them
הַיִּשְׁנָה. וְהַכֶּמְחִין וּפְטָרִיּוֹת וְהַבֶּשֶׂר הַמְּלִיחַ הַיִּשְׁן. וְיֵינִין מִגִּתּוֹ. וְתַבְשִׁיל
and cooked food from its press and wine the aged the salted and the meat and mushrooms and the truffles the aged
שֶׁשָּׂהָא עַד שֶׁנִּדְּף רִיחוֹ. וְכֵן כָּל מֵאֲכָל שֶׁרִיחוֹ רָע אוֹ מֵר בְּיוֹתֵר. הֲרִי
behold exceedingly bitter or is bad that its odor food any and so its odor that spoiled until that remained

אלו לגוף כמו סם המות. ויש מאכלות שהן רעים אבל אינן
they are not but bad that they are foods and there are death poison of are like to the body these

כמו הראשונים לרע. לפיכך ראוי לאדם שלא לאכל מהן אלא מעט
a little except from them to eat that not for a person it is proper therefore for badness the first ones like

ואחר ימים הרבה. ולא ירגיל עצמו להיות מזונו מהם או לאכלן
to eat them or from them his food to be himself shall he accustom and not many days and after

עם מזונו תמיד. כגון דגים גדולים וגבינה וחלב ששקה אחר שנחלב
that it was milked after that remained and milk and cheese large fish such as constantly his food with

כ"ד שעות. ובשר שורים גדולים ותישים גדולים והפול
and the horse-bean large and he-goats large oxen and meat of hours twenty-four

והעדשים והספיר ולחם שעורים ולחם מצות והכרוב והחציר
and the leek and the cabbage matzot and bread of barley and bread of and the chickpea and the lentils

והבצלים והשומים והחרדל והצנון. כל אלו מאכלים רעים הם אין
it is not they are bad foods these all of and the radish and the mustard and the garlic and the onions

ראוי לאדם לאכל מאלו אלא מעט עד מאד ובימות הגשמים. אבל
but the rains and in the days of very until a little except from these to eat for a person proper

בימות החמה לא יאכל מהן כלל. והפול והעדשים בלבד אין
it is not alone and the lentils and the horse-bean at all from them shall he eat not the sun in the days of

ראוי לאכלן לא בימות החמה ולא בימות הגשמים. והדלועין אוכלין
one may eat and the squashes the rains in the days of and not the sun in the days of not to eat them proper

מהן בימות החמה:
the sun in the days of from them

The Rambam lists foods that are extremely harmful to the body and should be avoided entirely, as well as moderately harmful foods that should only be eaten sparingly and in specific seasons.

הלי

מאכלות המזיקים מעט והנהגת החכם בהם

Halacha 10 - Foods that are Slightly Harmful and the Wise Person's Conduct Regarding Them

ויש מאכלות שהם רעים ואינן כמו אלו. והם עוף המים
the water fowl of and they are these like but they are not bad that they are foods And there are

ובני יונה הקטנים והתמרים ולחם קלוי בשמן או לחם שנלוש
that was kneaded bread or in oil roasted and bread and dates the small ones pigeons and young

בשמן והסלת שנפו אותה כל צרכה עד שלא נשארה בה ריח
a trace of in it remained that not until its need all it that they sifted and fine flour in oil

מורסן. והציר והמוריס. אין ראוי להרבות מאכלות אלו. ואדם
and a person these foods of to increase proper it is not and pickled fish oil and fish brine bran

שֶׁהוּא חָכָם וְכוּכֵשׁ אֶת יָצְרוֹ וְלֹא יִמְשֹׁךְ אַחֵר תַּאֲוָתוֹ וְלֹא יֹאכַל
eat and does not his desire after draw and does not his inclination — and conquers wise who is
מִן הַנִּזְכָּרִים כָּלוּם אֵלָּא אִם נִצָּרָךְ לָהֶם לְרִפּוּאָה הֵרִי זֶה גִּבּוֹר:
is a hero this one behold for healing them he needs · unless anything the mentioned ones from

The Rambam lists foods that are moderately harmful to health and advises that a wise person should avoid them entirely unless needed for medical reasons.

ה'לי יא

הַנְּהִיגָת אֲכִילַת פְּרוֹת הָאֵילָן וְהַמִּזְקִין לַגּוֹף

Halacha 11 · The Proper Consumption of Tree Fruits and Those That Harm the Body

לְעוֹלָם יִמְנַע אָדָם עֲצָמוֹ מִפְּרוֹת הָאֵילָנוֹת. וְלֹא יֵרָבֶה מֵהֶן
of them should he eat much and not the trees from fruits of himself a person should withhold Always
וְאִפְלוּ יִבְשִׁין וְאֵין צָרִיךְ לוֹמַר רְטָבִים. אֲבָל קֹדֶם שִׁיתִּבְשְׁלוּ כָּל צָרָכָן
their need all they ripen before but fresh to say need and there is no dried and even
הֵרִי הוּא כְּתֻרְבוֹת לַגּוֹף. וְכֵן הַחֲרוּבִים רָעִים לְעוֹלָם. וְכָל הַפְּרוֹת
fruits and all always are bad carobs and likewise to the body are like swords they behold
הַחֲמוּצִין רָעִים וְאֵין אוֹכְלִין מֵהֶן אֵלָּא מְעַט בַּיּוֹמֹת הַחֶמֶה וּבִמְקוֹמוֹת
and in places the heat in the days of a little except of them eat and one does not are bad that are sour
הַחֹמִים. וְהַתְּאֵנִים וְהָעֲנָבִים וְהַשְּׁקָדִים לְעוֹלָם טוֹבִים בֵּין רְטָבִין בֵּין
whether fresh whether are good always and almonds and grapes and figs that are hot
יִבְשִׁין וְאוֹכֵל אָדָם מֵהֶם כָּל צָרָכּוֹ. וְלֹא יִתְמִיד אֲכִילָתָם אֵף עַל
· even their eating should he make but not his need all of them a person and may eat dried
constant

כִּי שֶׁהֵן טוֹבִים מִכָּל פְּרֵי הָאֵילָנוֹת:

the trees fruit of than all better they are though

This halacha outlines which fruits are beneficial or harmful to human health, advising on moderation and seasonal consumption.

ה'לי יב

הַנְּהִיגָת אֲכִילַת דְּבַשׁ וַיֵּין וְהַתְּקַרְשׁ בֵּין הַקִּיץ לַחֲרֹף

Halacha 12 · The Effects of Honey and Wine and Seasonal Adjustments to Food Intake

הַדְּבַשׁ וְהַיֵּין רַע לְקִטְנִים וְיִפָּה לְזָקֵנִים וְכָל שָׁכֵן בַּיּוֹמֹת הַגֶּשְׁמִים.
the rains in the days of the more so and all for the old and good for the young are bad and wine Honey
וְצָרִיךְ אָדָם לֶאֱכַל בַּיּוֹמֹת הַחֶמֶה שְׁנֵי שְׁלִישִׁים מֵה שֶׁהוּא אוֹכֵל בַּיּוֹמֹת
in the days of eats that he of what thirds two the sun in the days of to eat a person and needs
הַגֶּשְׁמִים:
the rains

The Rambam explains that honey and wine are beneficial for the elderly but harmful to the young, and that one must reduce their food intake during the summer months.

ה'לי ג

לְעוֹלָם יִשְׁתַּדֵּל אָדָם שְׂיִהְיוּ מַעְיו רְפִין כָּל יָמָיו וְיִהְיֶה קָרוֹב
close and he should be his days all loose his bowels that should be a person should strive Always

לְשִׁלּוֹשׁ מַעֲט. וְזֶה כָּלָל גָּדוֹל בְּרִפּוּאָה כָּל זְמַן שֶׁהָרַעִי נִמָּנַע אוֹ
or is withheld that the stool time any in medicine great is a principle and this slightly to diarrhea

יוֹצֵא בְקָשִׁי חֲלָאִים רָעִים בָּאִים. וּבִמָּה יִרְפֶּה אָדָם מַעְיו אִם
if his bowels a person shall loosen and with what come bad illnesses with difficulty comes out

יִתְאַמְצוּ מַעֲט. אִם הָיָה בְּחֹר בָּבֶקֶר יֹאכֵל בְּבֶקֶר מְלֻוּחִים
salted herbs in the morning in the morning he should eat a young man he is if slightly they become constipated

שְׁלוּקִים מִתְבָּלִין בְּשֶׁמֶן זֵית וּבְמוֹרִיִּים וּבִמְלַח בְּלֹא פֶת. אוֹ יִשְׁתֶּה
he should drink or bread without and with salt and with fish brine olives with oil of seasoned boiled

מִי שֶׁלֵק שֶׁל תְּרֵדִין אוֹ כְּרוֹב בְּשֶׁמֶן זֵית וּמוֹרִיִּים וּמְלַח. וְאִם הָיָה
he is and if and salt and fish brine olives with oil of cabbage or spinach of boiled vegetables water of

זָקֵן יִשְׁתֶּה דְּבַשׁ מְזוּג בְּמִים חֲמוִים בְּבֶקֶר וְיִשְׁהֵא כְּמוֹ אַרְבַּע
four about and he should wait in the morning hot with water diluted honey he should drink an old man

שָׁעוֹת וְאַחֵר כֶּךָ יֹאכֵל סְעֻדָּתוֹ. וְיַעֲשֶׂה כֵן יוֹם אֶחָד אוֹ שְׁלֹשָׁה אוֹ
or three or one day so and he should do his meal he should eat so and after hours

אַרְבָּעָה יָמִים אִם צָרִיךְ לָכֶּךָ עַד שֶׁיִּרְפוּ מַעְיו:
his bowels that loosen until he needs if days four

The Rambam outlines dietary methods for young and old individuals to prevent constipation, which he considers a primary cause of illness.

חלי יד

הנהגת הבריאות על ידי התעמלות ואכילה מעוטה

Halacha 14 · Maintaining Physical Health through Exercise and Moderate Eating

וְעוֹד כָּלֵל אַחֵר אָמְרוּ בְּבִרְיאוֹת הַגּוּף. כָּל זְמַן שֶׁאָדָם מִתְעַמֵּל
exercises that a person the time all the body concerning the health they said other principle And another of

וְיִגַּע הֶרְבֵּה וְאִינוֹ שָׂבַע וּמַעְיו רְפִין אֵין חֲלִי בָּא עָלָיו וְכַחוֹ
and his strength upon him comes sickness no are loose and his bowels satiated and is not much and exerts himself

מִתְחַזֵּק. וְאַפְלוֹ אוֹכֵל מֵאֲכָלוֹת הָרָעִים:
that are bad foods he eats and even if grows stronger

The Rambam explains that physical exercise and avoiding overeating are the primary safeguards against illness, even when consuming unhealthy foods.

חלי טו

הנזק של אכילה גסה וחסר התעמלות

Halacha 15 · The Danger of Overeating and the Importance of Physical Exercise

וְכָל מִי שֶׁהוּא יוֹשֵׁב לְבִטָּח וְאִינוֹ מִתְעַמֵּל. אוֹ מִי שֶׁמְשַׁהֵּא נִקְבִּיו. אוֹ
or his excretions who delays one or exercise and does not idle sitting he is who And anyone

מִי שֶׁמָעִי קָשִׁין. אֲפֹלוּ אָכַל מֵאֲכָלוֹת טוֹבִים וְשָׁמַר עֲצָמוֹ עַל פִּי
 the rule of according to himself and guarded good foods he ate even if are hard whose bowels one
 הָרְפוּאָה. כָּל יָמָיו יִהְיוּ מִכְאוּבִים וְכָחוֹ תִשָּׁשׁ. וְאֲכִילָה גְסָה לְגוּף
 to the body of excessive And eating will weaken and his strength pains will be his days all medicine
 כָּל אָדָם כִּמוֹ סֵם הַמָּוֶת. וְהוּא עֵקֶר לְכָל הַחֲלָאִים. וְרַב הַחֲלָאִים
 the illnesses And most of illnesses of all is the root and it death poison of is like man every
 שֶׁבָּאִים עַל הָאָדָם אֵינָם אֲלָא אוֹ מִפְּנֵי מֵאֲכָלִים רָעִים. אוֹ מִפְּנֵי שֶׁהוּא
 that he because or bad foods because of either but are not man upon that come
 מִמֶּלֶא בִטְנוֹ וְאוֹכֵל אֲכִילָה גְסָה אֲפֹלוּ מִמֵּאֲכָלִים טוֹבִים. הוּא שֶׁשְׁלֹמֹה
 what Shlomo This is good of foods even excessive eating and eats his belly fills
 אָמַר בְּחֻמָּתוֹ מִשְׁלִי כֹא כֹג "שֹׁמֵר פִּי וּלְשׁוֹנוֹ שֹׁמֵר מִצָּרוֹת נַפְשׁוֹ".
 his soul from troubles guards and his tongue his mouth He who guards 23 21 Mishlei in his wisdom said
 כָּלוּמֶר שׁוֹמֵר פִּי מִלֶּאֱכֹל מֵאֲכָל רָע אוֹ מִלְשָׁבֵעַ וּלְשׁוֹנוֹ מִלְדַּבֵּר
 from speaking and his tongue from overeating or bad food from eating his mouth guards meaning to say
 אֲלָא בְצָרְכּוֹ:
 for his needs except

The Rambam explains that overeating and physical inactivity are the primary causes of illness, referencing King Shlomo's wisdom.

ה'ת"ז

הַנְּהִיגַת הַמֶּרְחֵץ וּבְדִיקַת הַנֶּקֶבִים

Halacha 16 · The Proper Manner of Bathing and Examining One's Bodily Needs

דֶּרֶךְ הֶרְחִיצָה. שִׁיכְנִס אָדָם לְמֶרְחֵץ מִשְׁבַּעַה יָמִים לְשִׁבְעָה יָמִים.
 days to seven days from seven the bathhouse a person is that should enter bathing The way of
 וְלֹא יִכְנֹס סָמוּךְ לְאֲכִילָה. וְלֹא כִּשְׁהוּא רָעֵב. אֲלָא כִּשְׁיִתְחִיל הַמְּזוֹן
 the food when begins but hungry when he is and not to eating close should he enter and not
 לְהִתְעַפֵּל. וְרוֹחֵץ כָּל גּוּפוֹ בְּחֻמִּין שְׂאִין הַגּוֹף נִכְוָה בָּהֶן. וְרֹאשׁוֹ בְּלִבָּד
 only and his head by them is scalded the body that not in hot water his body all of and he washes to digest
 בְּחֻמִּין שֶׁהַגּוֹף נִכְוָה בָּהֶן. וְאַחֵר כֶּף יִרְחֹץ גּוּפוֹ בְּפוֹשְׁרִין וְאַחֵר כֶּף
 that and after in lukewarm water his body he should wash that and after by them is scalded that the body in hot water
 בְּפוֹשְׁרִין מִן הַפוֹשְׁרִין עַד שִׁירְחֹץ בְּצוֹנָן. וְלֹא יַעֲבֹר עַל רֹאשׁוֹ
 his head over should he pass and not in cold water he washes until the lukewarm water less than in lukewarm water
 מִיָּם לֹא פּוֹשְׁרִין וְלֹא צוֹנָן. וְלֹא יִרְחֹץ בְּצוֹנָן בַּיּוֹמֹת הַגְּשָׁמִים. וְלֹא
 and not the rains in the days of in cold water should he wash and not cold nor lukewarm neither water
 יִרְחֹץ עַד שִׁיִּזְעַ וַיִּפְרֹךְ כָּל גּוּפוֹ. וְלֹא יֵאָרִיךְ בַּמֶּרְחֵץ אֲלָא
 but in the bathhouse should he linger and not his body all of and massages he sweats until should he wash
 כִּשְׁיִזְעַ וַיִּפְרֹךְ גּוּפוֹ יִשְׁתַּטֵּף וַיֵּצֵא. וּבּוֹדֵק עֲצָמוֹ קֹדֶם שֶׁיִּכְנֹס
 he enters before himself and he examines and leave he should rinse his body and massages when he sweats

לְמַרְחֵץ וְאַחֵר שֵׁיצָא שָׁמָּה יֵהָא צָרִיךְ לְנִקְבֵּיו. וְכֵן בּוֹדֵק אָדָם עַצְמוֹ
himself a person examines and so his orifices needing he will be lest he leaves and after the bathhouse
תָּמִיד קֹדֶם אֲכִילָה וְאַחֵר אֲכִילָה. וְקֹדֶם בְּעִילָה וְאַחֵר בְּעִילָה. וְקֹדֶם
and before intercourse and after intercourse and before eating and after eating before always
שְׁיִיגַע וְיִתְעַמַּל וְאַחֵר שְׁיִיגַע וְיִתְעַמַּל. וְקֹדֶם שְׁיִישׁוּן וְאַחֵר שְׁיִישׁוּן.
he sleeps and after he sleeps and before and exercises he exerts and after and exercises he exerts
וּבְשַׁעוֹר הַכֹּל עֶשְׂרֵה:
ten everything and in the total of

The Rambam outlines the healthy practices for bathing in a bathhouse and lists ten occasions when a person must check if they need to relieve themselves.

ה'ל"ז

הַנְּהִגַת הָאָדָם בְּצֵאתוֹ מִן הַמְּרִחֵץ וּמִנִּיעַת שְׁתִּית מִמֶּם קָרִים

Halacha 17 · Proper Conduct Upon Leaving the Bathhouse and the Prohibition of Drinking Cold Water

כְּשֵׁיצָא אָדָם מִן הַמְּרִחֵץ יִלְבֹּשׁ בְּגָדָיו וַיִּכְסֶּה רֹאשׁוֹ בְּבֵית הַחִיצוֹן
the outer in the room his head and cover his clothes he should dress the bathhouse from a person When he leaves
כְּדִי שֶׁלֹּא תִשְׁלֹט בּוֹ רוּחַ קָרָה. וְאַפְלוּ בַּיָּמֹת הַחֲמָה צָרִיךְ לְהִזָּהֵר.
to be careful he needs the sun in the days of and even cold a wind in him will rule that not so
וַיִּשְׁתָּה אַחֵר שֵׁיצָא עַד שֶׁתִּתְּיָשֵׁב נַפְשׁוֹ וְיִנּוּחַ גּוּפוֹ וְתִסּוּר הַחֲמִימוֹת
the warmth and departs his body and rests his soul settles until that he leaves after and he should wait
וְאַחֵר כֶּךָ יֹאכַל. וְאִם יָשָׁן מְעַט כְּשֵׁיצָא מִן הַמְּרִחֵץ קֹדֶם אֲכִילָה הָרִי
behold eating before the bathhouse from when he leaves a little he sleeps and if he should eat that and after
זֶה יָפָה מְאֹד. וְלֹא יִשְׁתֶּה מִמֶּם קָרִים בְּצֵאתוֹ מִן הַמְּרִחֵץ וְאִין
and there is no the bathhouse from upon his leaving cold water should he drink and not very is good this
צָרִיךְ לוֹמַר שֶׁלֹּא יִשְׁתֶּה בַּמְּרִחֵץ. וְאִם צָמָא כְּשֵׁיצָא מִן הַמְּרִחֵץ
the bathhouse from when he left he is thirsty and if in the bathhouse should he drink that not to say need
וְאִינוּ יָכוֹל לְמַנֵּעַ עַצְמוֹ יַעֲרֹב הַמַּיִם בֵּינָן אוֹ בְּדִבְשׁ וַיִּשְׁתֶּה. וְאִם
and if and drink with honey or with wine the water he should mix himself to restrain able and he is not
סָדָה בְּשֶׁמֶן בַּמְּרִחֵץ בַּיָּמֹת הַגְּשָׁמִים אַחֵר שֶׁיִּשְׁתַּטֵּף הָרִי זֶה טוֹב:
is good this behold that he rinses after the rains in the days of in the bathhouse with oil he anoints

This halacha outlines the physical precautions one must take after bathing, including dressing warmly, resting before eating, and avoiding cold drinks.

ה'ל"ח

הַנְּהִגַת הַקִּזָּז דָּם וּשְׁמִירַת הַכְּרִיאוֹת

Halacha 18 · The Proper Conduct of Bloodletting and Guarding One's Health

לֹא יִרְגִּיל אָדָם לְהַקִּיז דָּם תָּמִיד. וְלֹא יִקְיֶז אֶלָּא אִם יִהְיֶה צָרִיךְ
need there will be unless should he let and not constantly blood to let a person should accustom Not
לוֹ בְּיוֹתֵר. וְלֹא יִקְיֶז לֹא בַּיָּמֹת הַחֲמָה וְלֹא בַּיָּמֹת הַגְּשָׁמִים אֶלָּא
but the rains in the days of and not the sun in the days of not should he let and not exceedingly for him

מַעַט בְּיָמֵי נִסָּן וּמַעַט בְּיָמֵי תִשְׁרֵי. וּמֵאַחֵר חֲמֵשִׁים שָׁנָה לֹא יִקְיֶז
should he let not years fifty and after Tishrei in the days of and a little Nisan in the days of a little
כָּלֵל. וְלֹא יִקְיֶז אָדָם דָּם וְיִכְנֹס לַמְרָחֵץ בּוֹ בַּיּוֹם. וְלֹא יִקְיֶז וַיֵּצֵא
and go out should he let and not day on that the bathhouse and enter blood a person should let and not at all
לַדֶּרֶךְ. וְלֹא בַּיּוֹם שֶׁיָּבוֹא מִן הַדֶּרֶךְ. וַיֹּאכַל וַיִּשְׁתֶּה בַּיּוֹם
on the day of and drink and he should eat the journey from that he comes on the day and not on a journey
הַהֲקִזָּה פְּחוֹת מִמָּה שֶׁהוּא רָגִיל. וַיִּנּוּחַ בַּיּוֹם הַהֲקִזָּה וְלֹא
and not the bloodletting on the day of and he should rest accustomed he is than what less the bloodletting
יִיגַע וְלֹא יִתְעַמֵּל וְלֹא יִטְוֵל:
should he stroll and not should he exercise and not should he exert himself

The Rambam outlines the strict health precautions and limitations regarding bloodletting, warning against its frequent practice.

הלכות

הנהגת התשמיש הנכונה לשמירת הבריאות

Halacha 19 - Proper Conduct Regarding Marital Relations for Maintaining Physical Health

שְׂכֵבֶת זָרַע הִיא כֹּחַ הַגּוּף וְחַיּוֹ וּמֵאֹרֶת הָעֵינַיִם וְכָל שֶׁתֵּצֵא
it goes out and whenever the eyes and the light of and its life the body the strength of is emission semen
בְּיוֹתֵר הַגּוּף כָּלָה וְכֹחוֹ כָּלָה וְחַיּוֹ אוֹבְדִים. הוּא שֶׁאָמַר שְׁלֹמֹה
Shlomo as said it is is lost and its life is depleted and its strength is depleted the body excessively
בְּחֻמָּתוֹ מִשְׁלִי לֹא ג "אֵל תֵּתֵן לְנָשִׁים חֵילָה". כָּל הַשְּׁטוּף
in intercourse who is steeped anyone your strength to women give do not 31 Proverbs in his wisdom
בְּבַעֲיָלָה זִקְנָה קוֹפֶצֶת עָלָיו. וְכֹחוֹ תִּשָּׁשׁ. וְעֵינָיו כְּהוֹת. וְרִיחַ רַע
emanates bad and an odor become dim and his eyes is weakened and his strength upon him springs old age
נוֹדֵף מִפִּיו וּמִשְׁחָיו. וּשְׁעַר רֹאשׁוֹ וְגִבּוֹת עֵינָיו וְרִיסֵי
his eyes and the lashes of his eyes and the brows of his head and the hair of and from his armpit from his mouth
עֵינָיו נוֹשְׁרוֹת. וּשְׁעַר זִקְנוֹ וּשְׁחָיו וּשְׁעַר רַגְלָיו רֶבָה. שְׁנָיו נוֹפְלוֹת.
and many fall out his teeth increases his legs and the hair of and his armpit his beard and the hair of fall out
וְהַרְבֵּה כְּאֵבִים חוּץ מֵאלוֹ בָּאִים עָלָיו. אָמְרוּ חֲכָמֵי הָרוֹפְאִים אֶחָד
from a thousand one the doctors the wise of said upon him come these besides pains
מֵאֶלֶף מֵת בְּשָׂאֵר חֲלָאִים וְהָאֵלֶּף מֵרַב הַתְּשָׁמִישׁ. לְפִיכָךְ צָרִיךְ
a person must therefore intercourse from the excess of and the thousand illnesses from other dies
אָדָם לְהִזָּהֵר בְּדַבָּר זֶה אִם רָצָה לְחַיּוֹת בְּטוֹבָה. וְלֹא יִבְעֵל
except he should engage in and not in wellness to live he wishes if matter in this be careful
אֶלָּא כְּשִׁימְצָא גּוּפוֹ בָּרִיא וְחֲזָק בְּיוֹתֵר וְהוּא מִתְקַשֶּׁה הַרְבֵּה
not much has an erection and he exceedingly and strong healthy his body when is found

שְׁלֹא לִדְעֹתוֹ. וּמִסֵּיחַ עֲצָמוֹ לְדַבֵּר אַחֵר וְהִקְשׁוּי בּוֹ כְּשֶׁהָיָה.
and there is found as it was remains in him and the erection other to a matter himself and he diverts by his intent
וְיִמָּצָא כְּכֹד מִמֶּתְנֵיוֹ וּלְמַטָּה וּכְאֵלּוֹ חוּטֵי הַבֵּיצִים נִמְשָׁכִים וּבָשָׂרוֹ
is warm and his flesh are stretched the testicles the cords of and as if and below from his loins a heaviness
חֵם. זֶה צָרִיךְ לְבַעַל וּרְפוּאָה לוֹ שֶׁיִּבְעֵל.
not that he engage in for him and it is a cure to engage in needs this one intercourse
לֹא יִבְעֵל אָדָם וְהוּא שָׁבַע וְלֹא רָעַב אֶלָּא אַחֵר שִׁיתַּעֲפֹל
the food that is digested after except hungry and not is full while he a person should engage in intercourse
הַמִּזוֹן שְׂבִמְעִיו. וַיִּבְדֹּק נִקְבָּיו קֹדֶם בְּעִילָהּ וּלְאַחֵר בְּעִילָהּ.
and not intercourse and after intercourse before his orifices and he should check that is in his bowels
וְלֹא יִבְעֵל מְעֻמָּד וְלֹא מִיָּשֵׁב. וְלֹא בְּבֵית הַמְּרֻחָץ וְלֹא
on the day and not the bath in the house of and not sitting and not standing should he engage in intercourse
בְּיוֹם שִׁיכְנָס לְמֶרְחָץ. וְלֹא בְּיוֹם הַקְּזָה. וְלֹא בְּיוֹם יְצִיאָהּ
on a journey departure on the day of and not bloodletting on the day of and not the bathhouse that he enters
לְדֶרֶךְ אוֹ בִּיאָה מִן הַדֶּרֶךְ לֹא לְפָנֵיהֶם וְלֹא לְאַחֲרֵיהֶם:
— after them and not before them not the journey from arrival or

The Rambam outlines the physical toll of excessive marital relations and details the specific physiological conditions and times when intercourse is medically appropriate.

הליכ

הַנִּהְגָּת הַפְּרִיאוֹת וְהַהִכָּטָה מִחֲלֵי

Halacha 20 · Healthy Conduct and the Guarantee of Freedom from Illness

כָּל הַמְּנַהִיג עֲצָמוֹ בְּדַרְכִּים אֵלּוֹ שֶׁהוֹרִינוּ אֲנִי עָרַב לוֹ שְׂאִינוּ
that he will not to him guarantee I that we have instructed these in ways himself who conducts All
בָּא לְיָדֵי חֲלֵי כָּל יָמָיו עַד שְׂיִזְקִין הֶרְבֵּה וְיָמוֹת וְאִינוּ צָרִיךְ לְרוֹפֵא.
a doctor need and he will not and dies much he ages until his days all illness to the hands of come
וְיִהְיֶה גּוֹפוֹ שָׁלֵם וְעוֹמֵד עַל בְּרִיו כָּל יָמָיו. אֶלָּא אִם כֵּן הָיָה גּוֹפוֹ רַע
bad his body was unless his days all its health upon and standing whole his body and will be
מִתְחִלָּת בְּרִיתוֹ. אוֹ אִם הָיָה רָגִיל בְּמִנְהַג מִן הַמְּנַהֲגוֹת הָרָעִים
the bad the habits from to a habit accustomed he was if or his creation from the beginning of
מִתְחִלָּת מוֹלְדָתוֹ. אוֹ אִם תִּבּוֹא מַכַּת דָּבָר אוֹ מַכַּת בְּצָרָת
drought a plague of or pestilence a plague of there comes if or his birth from the beginning of
לְעוֹלָם:
to the world

The Rambam guarantees that one who follows these health guidelines will remain healthy throughout his life, barring congenital defects, bad habits from birth, or global plagues.

הליכא

וְכָל הַמִּנְהָגוֹת הַטּוֹבוֹת הָאֵלּוּ שְׁאִמְרָנוּ אֵין רְאוּי לְנַהֵג בָּהֶן אֶלָּא
except with them to behave proper there is not that we said these the good the habits And all
הַבְּרִיא. אֲבָל הַחוֹלָה אוֹ מִי שְׁאֶחָד מֵאֵיבָרָיו חוֹלָה אוֹ מִי שֶׁנֶּהֱגַ מִנְהָג רַע
bad a habit who behaved one or is sick of his limbs who one one or the sick but the healthy
שָׁנִים רַבּוֹת. יֵשׁ לְכָל אֶחָד מֵהֶם דְּרָכִים אֲחֵרִים וְהַנְהָגוֹת כְּפִי חֲלָיו
his illness according to and conducts other ways of them one for every there is many years
כְּמוֹ שְׂתִבְאָר בְּסֵפֶר הָרְפוּאוֹת. וְשְׁנוּי וְסֵת תְּחִלַּת חֲלִי:
illness is the beginning of habit and a change of the medicines in the book of as will be explained just

The Rambam explains that healthy lifestyle habits are meant for healthy individuals, whereas the sick or those with established bad habits require specialized medical guidance.

הליכב

הנהגת הבריא והחולה במקום שאין בו רופא

Halacha 22 · The Conduct of the Healthy and Sick Where No Doctor is Available

כָּל מְקוֹם שֶׁאֵין בוֹ רוֹפֵא. אֶחָד הַבְּרִיא וְאֶחָד הַחוֹלָה אֵין רְאוּי
proper it is not the sick person and both the healthy person both a doctor in it that there is not place Any
לֹ לָזוּז מִכָּל הַדְּרָכִים הָאֵלּוּ שֶׁנֶּאֱמָרוּ בְּפֶרֶק זֶה. שְׁכָּל אֶחָד מֵהֶן
of them one for each this in chapter that were said these the ways from all to budge for him
לְאַחֲרִית טוֹבָה מְבִיא:
brings good to an end

This halacha emphasizes that in the absence of a physician, one must strictly adhere to the dietary and hygienic rules detailed in this chapter to maintain health.

הליכב

עשרה דברים הנצרכים בעיר לתלמיד חכם

Halacha 23 · Ten Essential Communal Institutions Required for a Torah Sage to Dwell in a City

כָּל עִיר שֶׁאֵין בָּהּ עֶשְׂרֵה דְּבָרִים הָאֵלּוּ אֵין תִּלְמִיד חָכֵם רִשְׁאִי לָדוּר
to dwell permitted of a Sage a disciple is not these things ten in it that does not have city Any
בְּתוֹכָהּ. וְאֵלּוּ הֵן: רוֹפֵא. וְאֶמֶן. וּבֵית הַמְּרֻחָץ. וּבֵית הַכִּסֵּא.
the chair and a house of bath and a house of and a bloodletter a doctor are they and these within it
וּמִים מְצוּיִין כְּגוֹן נָהָר וּמַעְיָן. וּבֵית הַכְּנֶסֶת. וּמְלָמֵד תִּינוּקוֹת.
children and a teacher of assembly and a house of or a spring a river such as available and water
וְלִבְלָר. וְגִבְאִי צְדָקָה. וּבֵית דִּין מַכִּים וְחוֹבְשִׁים:
and imprisons that lashes judgment and a house of charity and a collector of and a scribe

The Rambam lists the ten essential public services and institutions that must be present in a city before a Torah scholar is permitted to reside there.

The Rambam begins by outlining the proper times and measures for eating and drinking, emphasizing that one should never overeat and must always attend to his bodily needs immediately. He details the importance of physical exertion and sweat-producing tasks before meals, followed by proper rest, and explains the correct posture for eating and sleeping, including the ideal eight hours of sleep. Finally, he categorizes various foods—ranging from highly beneficial fruits like figs and grapes, to extremely harmful foods that act like poison, to seasonal adjustments for summer and winter—urging the wise person to overcome his desires and eat solely for the sake of maintaining a healthy body to serve Hashem.

לְמַעֲשֶׂה WHAT TO TAKE HOME

The Rambam is teaching us a profound, life-altering chiddush here: taking care of your physical health is not a distraction from your avodah, nor is it merely a worldly necessity. It is 'mi-darhei Hashem', an actual path of serving the Creator. When you eat mindfully, sleep properly, and care for your body, you are not just engaging in physical maintenance; you are building the very vessel required to hold yiras Shamayim and Torah knowledge. A sick or exhausted body simply cannot sustain the deep mental clarity needed to know and serve Hashem.

This means we must stop viewing our physical habits as separate from our spiritual lives. The table where you eat is an altar, and the way you treat your sleep and digestion is a direct reflection of your ratzon to serve Hashem with a clear mind. When you restrain yourself from overeating, or when you make sure to get enough sleep so you can rise before the sun, you are acting as a true gibor who conquers his yetzer hara for the sake of Heaven.

Today, treat one physical act of self-care as a holy avodah. Before you eat your next meal, pause, check that you are actually hungry, and resolve to stop eating when you are three-quarters full, consciously dedicating the physical strength you gain to the service of Hashem.