

הלכות ידעות • פרק חמישי

Learned like the daf, the literal words in bold, flowing with the elucidation

CHAPTER PREVIEW

In this chapter, the Rambam takes us to the next level of our avodah, showing how a talmid chacham must carry himself in every single aspect of his daily life. While the previous chapters focused on refining our inner middos and maintaining our physical health, we now learn how a true Torah Sage must stand out through his refined actions. The way he eats, drinks, speaks, walks, dresses, and conducts his business must all reflect a beautiful kiddush Hashem.

We will see how the Rambam guides us to elevate the most mundane physical acts into holy service. By avoiding the self-indulgent ways of the world and adopting a path of modesty and self-control, a person's entire physical existence becomes a vessel for yiras Shamayim and the knowledge of Hashem.

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

הלכה א

Halacha 1 • The Conduct of a Torah Sage in Eating and Drinking Moderately

כָּשֶׁם שֶׁהָחָכֵם נִכָּר בְּחָכְמָתוֹ וּבִידְעוּתוֹ

Just as the wise man is recognized by his wisdom and by his temperaments,

וְהוּא מִבְּדִל בָּהֶם מִשָּׂאֵר הָעָם.

and he is distinguished by them from the rest of the people,

כֹּךָ צָרִיךְ שִׁיחִיָּה נִכָּר בְּמַעֲשָׁיו

so must he be recognized in his actions:

בְּמֵאכְלוֹ וּבְמִשְׁקָהוּ וּבִבְעִילָתוֹ וּבְעֲשִׂית צָרָכָיו

in his eating, and in his drinking, and in his intimate relations, and in the performing of his bodily needs,

וּבְדַבּוּרוֹ וּבְהִלְכוֹ וּבְמַלְבוּשׁוֹ

and in his speech, and in his walking, and in his dress,

וּבְכִלְכּוּל דְּבָרָיו וּבְמִשְׁאָאוֹ וּבְמִתְנֹנוֹ.

and in the management of his affairs, and in his buying and in his selling.

וַיְהִיו כָּל הַמַּעֲשִׂים הָאֵלֶּה נְאֻמִּים וּמִתְקַנִּים בְּיֹתֵר.

And should be all of these actions becoming and proper exceedingly.

כִּי צָד.

How so?

תלמיד חכם לא יהיה גרגרן

A Torah Sage should not be a glutton,

אֶלָּא אוֹכֵל מֵאֶכָּל הָרְאוּי לְהַכְרוֹת גּוּפוֹ.

rather he should eat food that is fitting to keep healthy his body,

וְלֹא יֹאכַל מִמֶּנּוּ אֲכִילָה גְּסָה.

and he should not eat of it an excessive eating.

וְלֹא יִהְיֶה רוֹדֵף לְמִלְאֵת בִּטְנוֹ

And he should not be pursuing to fill his stomach,

כְּאֵלוּ שֶׁמִּתְמַלְאִין מִמֶּאֱכָל וּמִשְׁתָּה עַד שֶׁתִּפַּח כְּרֶסֶם.

like those who stuff themselves with food and drink until swells their belly.

וְעַלֵּיהֶם מִפָּרֶשׁ בַּקִּבְלָה

And about them it is explained in the Tradition of the Prophets:

"וְזִרְיָתִי פָּרֶשׁ עַל פְּנֵיכֶם".

"And I will spread dung upon your faces".

אָמְרוּ חֲכָמִים אֵלּוּ בְּנֵי אָדָם שָׂאוּכָלִין וְשׁוֹתִין וְעוֹשִׂין כָּל יְמֵיהֶם כְּחַגִּים.

Said the Sages: These are the people who eat and drink and make all of their days like festivals.

וְהֵם הָאוֹמְרִים "אֲכוּל וְשָׁתָה כִּי מָחָר נָמוּת".

And they are the ones who say, "Eat and drink, for tomorrow we die".

וְזֶהוּ מֵאֶכָּל הָרָשָׁעִים.

And this is the food of the wicked.

וְשִׁלְחָנוֹת אֵלּוּ הֵם שֶׁגִּנְזָה הַכְּתוּב וְאָמַר

And these tables are they that the verse censured and said:

"כִּי כָּל שִׁלְחָנוֹת מְלֹאוֹ קִיָּא צֹאָה בְּלִי מְקוֹם".

"For all tables are full of vomit excrement, without room".

אֲבָל הַחֲכָם אֵינוֹ אוֹכֵל אֶלָּא תַּבְּשִׁיל אֶחָד אוֹ שְׁנַיִם

But the wise man does not eat except one dish or two,

וְאוֹכֵל מִמֶּנּוּ כַּדֵּי חַיּוֹ וְדִיּוֹ.

and he eats from it enough for his sustenance, and that is sufficient for him.

הוּא שְׁאָמַר שְׁלֹמֹה "צַדִּיק אֹכֵל לְשַׂבַּע נַפְשׁוֹ":

He is the one of whom Shlomo said, "A righteous man eats to satisfy his soul".

הִלָּכָה ב

Halacha 2 · The Proper Conduct of a Wise Man Regarding Eating and Social Meals

כְּשֶׁהֵחָכֵם אוֹכֵל מְעַט זֶה הָרְאוּי לוֹ

When the wise man eats this little amount which is fitting for him,

לֹא יֵאכְלֵנוּ אֶלָּא בְּבֵיתוֹ עַל שְׁלֻחָנוֹ.

he should not eat it except in his own house, at his own table.

וְלֹא יֵאכֹל בְּחֲנוּת וְלֹא בַּשּׁוּק

And he should not eat in a store, and not in the marketplace,

אֶלָּא מִפְּנֵי צָרָה גְּדוֹלָה.

unless because of a great need,

כַּדֵּי שֶׁלֹא יִתְגַּנֶּה בְּפָנֵי הַבְּרִיּוֹת.

so that he will not be viewed with disrespect before people.

וְלֹא יֵאכֹל אֶצֶל עַמֵּי הָאָרֶץ

And he should not eat with the unlearned of the land,

וְלֹא עַל אוֹתָן הַשְּׁלֻחָנוֹת הַמְּלֵאִים קִיא וְצוֹאֵה.

and not at those tables that are filled with vomit and excrement.

וְלֹא יִרְבֶּה סְעֻדוֹתָיו בְּכָל מְקוֹם

And he should not multiply his meals in every place,

וְאַפְלוּ עִם הַחֲכָמִים.

and even with the wise men.

וְלֹא יֵאכֹל בְּסַעֲדוֹת שִׁישׁ בְּהֵן קְבוּץ הָרַבָּה.

And he should not eat at meals that have in them a large gathering.

וְאִין רְאוּי לוֹ לֵאכֹל אֶלָּא בְּסַעֲדָה שֶׁל מִצְוָה בְּלִבְד

And it is not fitting for him to eat except at a meal of a mitzvah only,

כגון סעדת ארוסין ונשואין.

such as the meal of betrothal and marriage;

והוא שיהיה תלמיד חכם שנשא בת תלמיד חכם.

and that is when it is a Torah scholar who married the daughter of a Torah scholar.

והצדיקים והחסידים הראשונים לא אכלו מסעדה שאינה שלהן:

And the righteous and the pious of old did not eat from a meal that was not their own.

הלכה ג

Halacha 3 · The Proper Conduct of a Wise Man Regarding Wine and the Prohibition of Drunkenness

כשהחכם שותה יין

When the wise man drinks wine,

אינו שותה אלא כדי לשרות אכילה שבמעיו.

he does not drink except in order to soften and digest the food that is in his stomach.

וכל המשתכר הרי זה חוטא ומגנה ומפסיד חכמתו.

And anyone who becomes drunk, behold this person is a sinner and disgraceful, and he loses his wisdom.

ואם נשתכר בפני עמי הארץ

And if he became drunk in front of the common people,

הרי זה חלל את השם.

behold this person has desecrated the Name of Hashem.

ואסור לשתות יין בצהרים ואפלו מעט

And it is forbidden to drink wine in the afternoon, and even a little bit,

אלא אם היה בכלל האכילה.

unless it was as part of the meal.

שהשתיה שהיא בכלל האכילה אינה משכרת.

For drinking that is as part of the meal does not intoxicate.

ואין נזהרין אלא מיין שלאחר המזון:

And we are not careful to avoid drinking except from wine that is drunk after the food.

אף על פי שאשתו של אדם מתרת לו תמיד.

Even though a man's wife is permitted to him always, and there is no prohibition of the Torah involved,

ראוי לו לתלמיד חכם שינהיג עצמו בקדושה

it is fitting for a disciple of a Sage that he conduct himself with holiness and self-restraint,

ולא יהא מצוי אצל אשתו כתרנגול

and he should not be frequent with his wife like a rooster, who mates constantly without thought,

אלא מלילי שבת ללילי שבת אם יש בו כח.

rather he should limit this from the nights of Shabbos to the nights of Shabbos, if there is in him strength to do so.

וכשהוא מספר עמה

And when he converseth with her, meaning when he cohabits with her,

לא יספר בתחלת הלילה כשהוא שבע ובטנו מלא.

he should not converse at the beginning of the night when he is sated and his belly is full from dinner,

ולא בסוף הלילה כשהוא רעב.

and not at the end of the night when he is hungry,

אלא באמצע הלילה כשיתעכל המזון שבמעיו.

rather in the middle of the night when the food that is in his innards is digested, which is healthier for the body.

ולא יקל בראשו ביותר

And he should not make light of his head excessively,

ולא ינביל את פיו בדברי חבאי ואפלו בינו לבינה.

and he should not make vulgar his mouth with words of nonsense, and even when it is only between him and her in private.

הרי הוא אומר בקבלה מגיד לאדם מה שחזו.

For behold, it says in Tradition, in the words of the Prophets, 'He declares to man what is his conversation.'

אמרו חכמים אפלו שיחה קלה שבין אדם לאשתו עתיד לתן עליה את הדין.

On this, the Sages said: Even light conversation that is between a man and his wife, which is unnecessary for the intimacy, he is destined to give upon it the judgment before Hashem.

ולא יהיו שניהם לא שכורים ולא עצלנים ולא עצבנים, ולא אחד מהן.

And they should not both of them be drunk, and not lazy, and not angry, and not even one of them should be in such a state.

וְלֹא תִהְיֶה יְשָנָה.

And she should not be sleeping during the act.

וְלֹא יֹאנֵס אוֹתָהּ וְהִיא אֵינָה רוֹצָה

And he should not force her when she is not willing,

אֶלָּא בְּרִצּוֹן שְׁנֵיהֶם וּבְשִׂמְחָתָם.

rather it must be with the consent of both of them and with their joy.

יִסְפֹּר וְיִשְׁחַק מְעַט עִמָּה כִּדִּי שֶׁתִּיֵּשֵׁב נַפְשָׁהּ

He should converse and play a little with her in order that her soul should be at ease and she will be happy,

וְיִכָּעַל בְּבוֹשָׁה וְלֹא בְּעִזּוֹת וְיִפְרֹשׁ מִיָּד:

and he should cohabit with modesty and not with boldness, and he should withdraw immediately after the act is completed.

הַלָּכָה ה'

Halacha 5 · The Influence of Holy Conduct During Marital Relations on One's Children

כָּל הַנוֹהֵג מְנֻהָג זֶה

Everyone who conducts himself in this conduct of holiness and modesty,

לֹא דִי לוֹ שֶׁקִּדְּשׁ נַפְשׁוֹ

it is not enough for him that he has sanctified his soul

וְטָהַר עֲצָמוֹ

and purified himself

וְתִקַּן דַּעוֹתָיו

and corrected his character traits,

אֶלָּא שֶׁאֵם הָיוּ לוֹ בָּנִים

but rather, if he has children,

יִהְיוּ נְאִים וּבִישָׁנִים

they will be handsome and modest,

רְאוּיִין לְחֻמָּה וּלְחֻסִּידוֹת.

worthy of wisdom and of piety.

וְכָל הַנוֹהֵג בְּמִנהָגוֹת שְׂאֵר הָעָם

And everyone who conducts himself in the customs of the rest of the people

הֵיוּ לְכִים בַּחֲשֵׁךְ

who walk in the darkness of physical desires,

יִהְיוּ לוֹ בָּנִים כְּמוֹ אוֹתָם הָעָם:

he will have children like those people.

הַלָּכָה ו

Halacha 6· The Practice of Modesty in the Latrine and Covering the Head

צְנִיעוּת גְּדוֹלָה נוֹהֲגִים תַּלְמִידֵי חֲכָמִים בְּעַצְמָן.

Great modesty do disciples of Sages conduct in themselves.

לֹא יִתְבַּזּוּ

They should not demean themselves,

וְלֹא יִתְגַּלוּ רֹאשָׁן וְלֹא גּוּפָן.

and they should not bare their head and not their body.

וְאַפְּלוּ בְּשַׁעַת שִׁיכּוֹנס לְבֵית הַפֶּסֶס יִהְיֶה צָנוּעַ

And even at the time that he enters to the house of the seat, he should be modest,

וְלֹא יִגְלֶה בְּגָדָיו עַד שִׁישֵׁב.

and he should not uncover his garments until he sits.

וְלֹא יִקַּח בְּיָמֶיךָ.

And he should not wipe with the right hand.

וְיִתְרַחַק מִכָּל אָדָם.

And he should distance himself from every man.

וְיִכְנס חֹדֶר לְפָנִים מִחֹדֶר מַעְרָה לְפָנִים מִן הַמַּעְרָה וְנִפְתָּה.

And he should enter a chamber within a chamber, a cave within the cave, and relieve himself.

וְאִם נִפְתָּה אַחֲרֵי הַגֶּדֶר

And if he relieves himself behind the fence,

יִתְרַחֵק כְּדֵי שֶׁלֹּא יִשְׁמַע חֲבֵירוֹ קוֹלוֹ אִם נִתְעַטֵּשׁ.

he should distance himself so that his fellow will not hear his sound if he sneezes or passes wind.

וְאִם נִפְנָה בְּבִקְעָה

And if he relieves himself in a valley,

יִרְחִיק כְּדֵי שֶׁלֹּא יֵרְאֶה חֲבֵירוֹ פְּרוּעוֹ.

he should distance himself so that his fellow will not see his baring.

וְלֹא יִדְבֹּר כְּשֶׁהוּא נִפְנָה אֶפְלוּ לְצִרְהָ גְדוֹל.

And he should not speak when he relieves himself, even for a great need.

וּכְדֻרָּהּ שֶׁנוֹהֵג צְנִיעוּת בַּיּוֹם בְּבֵית הַכֶּסֶּא כִּךָּ נוֹהֵג בַּלַּיְלָה.

And like the way that he conducts modesty by day in the house of the seat, so he conducts by night.

וְלְעוֹלָם יִלְמַד אָדָם עֲצֻמוֹ לְהַפְנוֹת שַׁחְרִית וְעֶרְבִית בְּלֵבָד

And always a man should train himself to relieve himself morning and evening only,

כְּדֵי שֶׁלֹּא יִתְרַחֵק:

so that he must not distance himself during the day.

הִלְכָּה ז

Halacha 7 - The Proper Conduct of a Torah Sage in Speech and Social Relations

תִּלְמִיד חֶכֶם לֹא יִהְיֶה צוֹעֵק וְצוֹחֵ בִּשְׁעַת דְּבוּרוֹ בְּבִהְמוֹת וְחִיּוֹת.

A disciple of a Sage should not be shouting and shrieking at the time of his speaking like animals and wild beasts.

וְלֹא יִגְבִּיֶה קוֹלוֹ בְּיוֹתֵר

And he should not raise his voice excessively,

אֶלָּא דְּבוּרוֹ בְּנִחָת עִם כָּל הַבָּרִיּוֹת.

rather his speaking should be gently with all people.

וּכְשִׁידְבֹּר בְּנִחָת יִזְהַר שֶׁלֹּא יִתְרַחֵק

And when he speaks gently, he should take care that he does not distance himself too much in his mannerisms,

עַד שֶׁיֵּרְאֶה כְּדִבְרֵי גִּסֵּי הָרוּחַ.

until it appears like the words of those who are haughty of spirit.

וּמִקָּדִים שְׁלוֹם לְכָל הָאָדָם

And he initiates greeting to every man,

כְּדִי שֶׁתֵּהֵא רוּחַן נִוְחָה הֵימָּנוּ.

so that their spirit will be pleased with him.

וְדֵן אֶת כָּל הָאָדָם לְכַף זְכוּת.

And he judges every man to the scale of merit.

מְסַפֵּר בְּשִׂבְחַ חֲבֵרוֹ וְלֹא בְּגִנּוּתוֹ כָּלֵל.

He speaks of the praise of his fellow, and not of his shame at all.

אוֹהֵב שְׁלוֹם וְרוֹדֵף שְׁלוֹם.

He is one who is loving peace and pursuing peace.

אִם רוֹאֶה שֶׁדִּבְרָיו מוֹעִילִים וְנִשְׁמָעִים אוֹמֵר

If he sees that his words are effective and heard, he speaks,

וְאִם לֹא שׁוֹתֵק.

and if not, he remains silent.

כִּיצַד.

How so?

לֹא יִרְצֶה חֲבֵרוֹ בְּשַׁעַת כַּעֲסוֹ.

He should not placate his fellow at the time of his anger,

וְלֹא יִשְׁאַל לוֹ עַל נִדְרוֹ בְּשַׁעַת שְׁנִדָּר

and he should not ask him about his vow at the hour that he vowed,

עַד שֶׁתִּתְקַרֵּר דַּעְתּוֹ וְיָנוּחַ.

until his mind cools down and he rests.

וְלֹא יִנְחֲמֵנוּ בְּשַׁעַת שְׁמִתּוֹ מִטָּל לְפָנָיו

And he should not comfort him at the hour that his dead is lying before him,

מִפְּנֵי שֶׁהוּא בְּחוּל עַד שֶׁיִּקְבְּרֵהוּ.

because he is distressed, until he buries him.

וְכֵן כָּל כַּיּוֹצֵא בָּאלוֹ.

And so all similar to these.

וְלֹא יִרְאֶה לְחֵבְרוֹ בְּשַׁעַת קִלְקָלָתוֹ

And he should not look at his fellow at the time of his disgrace,

אֶלָּא יַעֲלִים עֵינָיו מִמֶּנּוּ.

rather he should hide his eyes from him.

וְלֹא יִשְׁנֶה בְּדַבּוּרוֹ.

And he should not alter in his speech,

וְלֹא יוֹסִיף וְלֹא יִגְרַע

and he should not add, and he should not diminish,

אֶלָּא בְּדִבְרֵי שָׁלוֹם וְכִיּוֹצֵא בָהֶן.

except in matters of peace and similar to them.

כָּלְלוֹ שֶׁל דָּבָר

The general rule of the matter is:

אֵינוֹ מְדַבֵּר אֶלָּא בְּדִבְרֵי חֲכָמָה אוֹ בְּגִמְלוֹת חֲסִידִים וְכִיּוֹצֵא בָהֶן.

he does not speak except in words of wisdom or in acts of kindness and similar to them.

וְלֹא יִסְפָּר עִם אִשָּׁה בַּשּׁוּק

And he should not converse with a woman in the marketplace,

וְאִפְּלוּ הִיא אִשְׁתּוֹ אוֹ אַחֻתּוֹ אוֹ בִּתּוֹ:

and even if she is his wife, or his sister, or his daughter.

הַלָּכָה ח

Halacha 8 · The Proper Gait and Demeanor of a Torah Scholar in Public

לֹא יֵלֶךְ תִּלְמִיד חָכָם בְּקוֹמָה זְקוּפָה וְגֵרוֹן נָטוּי

A disciple of a Sage should not walk with an erect stature and an outstretched neck, which shows arrogance,

כַּעֲנָנִין שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר יִשְׁעִיהָ גִטָּו "וְתִלְכְּנָה נְטוּיֹת גֵּרוֹן וּמִשְׁקָרוֹת עֵינֵיהֶם".

like the matter as it is said in the rebuke of the prophet Yeshayahu: "and they walk with outstretched necks and with ogling eyes."

וְלֹא יִהְיֶה עֶקֶב בְּצַד גּוֹדֵל בְּנִחַת כְּמוֹ הַנָּשִׁים וְגִסֵּי הָרוּחַ

And he should not walk heel beside toe gently, taking tiny, affected steps, like the women and the haughty of spirit do,

כַּעֲנֵן שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר יִשְׁעִיהָ ג' טז "הָלוֹךְ וְטֹפֵף תִּלְכְּנָה וּבִרְגְלֵיהֶם תַּעֲכֹסְנָה".

like the matter as it is said: "walking and mincing they walk, and with their feet they make a tinkling."

וְלֹא יָרוּץ בִּרְשׁוֹת הָרֶבִים כְּמִנְהַג מְשֻׁעָעִים.

And he should not run in the public domain like the custom of madmen, which is undignified.

וְלֹא יִכְפֹּף קוֹמָתוֹ כְּבַעֲלֵי חֲטוּטָרַת.

And he should not bend his stature excessively, walking with his head bowed down like those with a hunchback, which looks like false humility.

אֲלָא מִסְתַּכֵּל לְמַטָּה כְּמוֹ שֶׁהוּא עוֹמֵד בְּתַפְלָה.

Rather, he should walk upright, looking downward toward the ground like that he stands in prayer, with awe of Heaven.

וּמִהֲלֹךְ בְּשׁוּק כְּאָדָם שֶׁהוּא טְרוֹד בְּעִסְקָיו.

And he should be walking in the marketplace like a person who is preoccupied with his business, not looking around idly.

גַּם מִמַּהֲלָכּוֹ שֶׁל אָדָם נֶכֶד אִם חָכָם וּבָעֵל דַּעְיָה הוּא אוֹ שׁוֹטֵה וְסָכָל.

Also from the gait of a person it is recognizable if he is a wise man and a master of understanding, or a fool and a simpleton.

וְכֵן אָמַר שְׁלֹמֹה בְּחֻמְתּוֹ קֹהֵלֶת י ג' "וְגַם בַּדֶּרֶךְ כְּשֶׁסָּכָל הֵלֵךְ לְבוֹ חֶסֶד וְאָמַר לְכָל סָכָל הוּא".

And so said Shlomo in his wisdom: "And also on the way, when a fool walks, his heart lacks, and he says to all, 'A fool he is.'"

הוּא מוֹדִיעַ לְכָל עַל עֲצָמוֹ שֶׁהוּא סָכָל:

By his very manner of walking, he informs to all about himself that he is a fool.

הִלְכָּה ט

Halacha 9 • The Proper Clothing and Public Demeanor of a Torah Sage

מִלְבוּשׁ תַּלְמִיד חָכָם מְלֻבוּשׁ נָאֶה וְנָקִי.

The clothing of a disciple of a Sage should be clothing that is attractive and clean.

וְאִסּוּר לוֹ שִׁימָצָא בְּבִגְדוֹ כֶּתֶם אוֹ שְׁמִנוּנִית וְכִיּוֹצֵא בָהֶן.

And it is forbidden for him that there be found on his garment a stain or grease and the like of them.

וְלֹא יִלְבַּשׁ לֹא מְלֻבוּשׁ מְלָכִים כְּגוֹן בִּגְדֵי זָהָב וְאַרְגָּמָן שֶׁהַכָּל מִסְתַּכְּלִין בָּהֶן.

And not shall he wear not clothing of kings, such as garments of gold and purple, which everyone gaze at them.

וְלֹא מְלֻבוּשׁ עֲנִיִּים שֶׁהוּא מְכַזֵּה אֶת לֹבֶשָׁיו אֲלָא בִּגְדִים פִּינוּנִים נְאִים.

And not clothing of poor people which shames its wearers, but rather garments that are average and attractive.

וְלֹא יִהְיֶה בְּשָׂרוֹ נִרְאָה מִתַּחַת מְדִיו כְּמוֹ בְּגָדֵי הַפְּשָׁתָן הַקֵּלִים בְּיוֹתֵר שְׁעוֹשִׂים בְּמִצְרַיִם.

And not shall be his flesh visible from under his garments, like those garments of linen that are light exceedingly that they make in Mitzrayim.

וְלֹא יִהְיוּ בְּגָדָיו סְחוּבִין עַל הָאָרֶץ כְּמוֹ בְּגָדֵי גִסֵּי הָרוּחַ אֲלֵא עַד עֲקֵבוֹ וּבֵית יָד שְׁלוֹ עַד רֹאשֵׁי אֶצְבָּעוֹתָיו.

And not shall be his garments dragging on the ground like the garments of haughty of spirit, but they should reach until his heel, and the house of hand of his should reach until the tips of his fingers.

וְלֹא יִשְׁלָשֵׁל טְלִיתוֹ מִפְּנֵי שְׁנִירָאָה כְּגִסּוֹת הָרוּחַ אֲלֵא בְּשִׁכְת בְּלֶבֶד אִם אֵין לוֹ לְהַחֲלִיף.

And not shall he let hang down his cloak, because that it appears like haughtiness of spirit, except on Shabbos alone if there is not to him another garment to change into.

וְלֹא יִנָּעַל מִנְעָלִים מְטֻלָּאִים טְלָאִי עַל גִּבִּי טְלָאִי בְּיָמֹת הַחֲמָה.

And not shall he wear shoes patched with a patch upon the back of a patch in the days of the sun.

אָבֵל בְּיָמֹת הַגֶּשְׁמִים מִתֵּר אִם הָיָה עָנִי.

But in the days of the rains it is permitted if he was poor.

לֹא יֵצֵא מְבֻשָּׁם לְשׁוּק וְלֹא בְּבִגְדִים מְבֻשָּׁמִים וְלֹא יִשִּׁים בְּשֵׁם בְּשָׂעָרוֹ.

Not shall he go out perfumed to the marketplace, and not with garments perfumed, and not shall he put perfume in his hair.

אָבֵל אִם מָשַׁח בְּשָׂרוֹ בְּבֻשָּׁם כִּדִּי לְהַעֲבִיר אֶת הַזֵּהָמָא מִתֵּר.

But if he smeared his flesh with perfume in order to remove the filth, it is permitted.

וְכֵן לֹא יֵצֵא יְחִידִי בַּלַּיְלָה.

And likewise, not shall he go out alone at night.

אֲלֵא אִם כֵּן הָיָה לוֹ זְמַן קְבוּעַ לְצֵאת בּוֹ לְתַלְמוּדוֹ.

Unless there was to him a time fixed to go out in it for his study.

כָּל אֵלֵּוּ מִפְּנֵי הַחֶשֶׁד:

All of these restrictions are because of suspicion.

A disciple of a Sage manages his affairs with judgment and proper balance.

אוֹכֵל וְשׂוֹתֶה וְזֶן אֶת אֲנָשֵׁי בֵּיתוֹ כַּפִּי מְמוֹנוֹ וְהִצְלָחָתוֹ.

He eats and drinks and sustains the people of his household according to his wealth and his success, living within his means.

וְלֹא יִטְרִיחַ עַל עֲצָמוֹ יוֹתֵר מִדָּאִי.

And he should not burden himself to spend more than enough, so as not to fall into debt.

צִוּוּ חֲכָמִים בְּדֶרֶךְ אֶרֶץ שֶׁלֹּא יֹאכַל אָדָם בֶּשֶׂר אֶלָּא לְתַאֲבוֹן.

The Sages commanded regarding the way of the land, as a matter of proper conduct, that a person should not eat meat except with a specific appetite and craving for it, rather than as a daily habit.

שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר דְּבָרִים יב כ "כִּי תִאְוָה נַפְשְׁךָ לֵאכֹל בֶּשֶׂר".

As it is said in the Torah in Devarim 12:20, "When your soul desires to eat meat," showing that meat should be eaten when one truly desires it.

דִּיּוֹ לְבָרִיא לֵאכֹל בֶּשֶׂר מֵעֶרֶב שַׁבָּת לְעֶרֶב שַׁבָּת.

It is sufficient for a healthy person to eat meat from the eve of Shabbos to the eve of Shabbos, in honor of the holy day.

וְאִם הָיָה עֹשֶׂיר כִּדִּי לֵאכֹל בֶּשֶׂר בְּכָל יוֹם אוֹכֵל.

And if he was wealthy enough to eat meat on every day, he may eat it daily.

צִוּוּ חֲכָמִים וְאָמְרוּ לְעוֹלָם יֹאכַל אָדָם פָּחוֹת מִן הֶרְאוּי לוֹ לְפִי מְמוֹנוֹ

The Sages commanded and they said: Always should a person eat less than what is fitting for him according to his wealth, so he does not squander his resources on food;

וַיִּלְבַּשׁ כְּרָאוּי לוֹ

and he should dress as is fitting for him, to maintain a respectable appearance according to his status;

וַיַּכְבֵּד אִשְׁתּוֹ וּבָנָיו יוֹתֵר מִן הֶרְאוּי לוֹ:

and he should honor his wife and his children by providing for them more than what is fitting for him, even beyond his standard means, to keep them happy and secure.

הַלְכָּה יא

Halacha 11 · The Proper Order of Establishing a Livelihood, Acquiring a Home, and Marriage

דֶּרֶךְ בְּעָלֵי יָדְעָה

The way of possessors of wisdom

שִׁיקְבַּע לוֹ אָדָם מְלָאכָה הַמְּפִרְנֶסֶת אוֹתוֹ תַּחֲלָה.

is that a person should establish for himself an occupation that supports him first.

ואחר כך יקנה בית דירה.

And after that, he should purchase a house of dwelling.

ואחר כך ישא אשה.

And after that, he should marry a wife.

שנאמר "מי האיש אשר נטע כרם ולא חלו".

As it is said in the Torah regarding those who return from the battlefield: "Who is the man who has planted a vineyard and not redeemed it?" which refers to a person's livelihood,

"מי האיש אשר בנה בית חדש ולא חנכו".

and then, "Who is the man who has built a new house and not dedicated it?"

"מי האיש אשר ארש אשה ולא לקחה".

and only after that, "Who is the man who has betrothed a woman and not taken her?"

אבל הטפשיים מתחילים לשא אשה

But the fools begin by rushing to marry a wife,

ואחר כך אם תמצא ידו יקנה בית

and after that, if his hand can find the means, he purchases a house,

ואחר כך בסוף ימיו יחזר לבקש אמונות או יתפרנס מן הצדקה.

and after that, at the end of his days, he goes around to seek a trade, or is forced to be supported from charity.

וכן הוא אומר בקללות

And so it says in the curses in the Torah, showing this backward order:

"אשה תארש" "בית תבנה" "כרם תטע".

"A wife you shall betroth," "a house you shall build," "a vineyard you shall plant."

כלומר יהיו מעשיהם הפוכים כדי שלא תצליח את דרכיה.

Meaning to say, your deeds will be upside down in order that you will not succeed in your ways.

ובברכה הוא אומר

And in the blessing of a righteous person, it says:

"ויהי דוד לכל דרכו משפיל וְה' עִמּוֹ":

"And Dovid was successful in all his ways, and Hashem was with him."

ואסור לו לאדם להפקיר או להקדיש כל נכסיו

And it is forbidden for a person to make ownerless or to consecrate all of his possessions

ויטריח על הבריות.

and thereby burden himself upon the creations by relying on charity.

ולא ימכר שדה ויקנה בית

And he should not sell a field and buy a house, which is a less stable investment,

ולא בית ויקנה מטלטלין

and not sell a house and buy movable property, which can easily be lost or damaged,

או יעשה סחורה בדמי ביתו.

or make merchandise with the money of his house, risking his primary dwelling in business.

אבל מוכר הוא מטלטלין וקונה שדה.

But he may sell movable property and buy a field, upgrading to a more permanent asset.

כללו של דבר ישים מגמתו להצליח נכסיו

The general rule of the matter is that he should place his purpose to make successful his possessions through responsible management,

ולהחליף הפלג בקיים.

and to exchange the fleeting for the enduring.

ולא תהיה פונתו להנות מעט לפי שעה

And his intention should not be to benefit a little for the moment,

או להנות מעט ויפסיד הרבה:

or to benefit a little and end up losing much in the long run.

משאו ומתנו של תלמיד חכם באמת ובאמונה.

The business and dealings of a disciple of a Sage must be conducted with truth and with faithfulness.

אומר על לאו לאו ועל הן הן.

He says on a no, "no," and on a yes, "yes."

מִדְקָדֵק עַל עַצְמוֹ בְּחִשְׁבוֹן

He is exacting on himself in his accounting,

וְנוֹתֵן וּמוֹתֵר לְאַחֲרִים כְּשִׁיקַח מֵהֶן

and he gives and waives money to others when he buys from them,

וְלֹא יִדְקָדֵק עֲלֵיהֶן.

and he will not be exacting upon them.

וְנוֹתֵן דָּמֵי הַמָּקַח לֹא לְתֵר

And he pays the money of the purchase immediately,

וְאִינוֹ נֹעֲשֶׂה לֹא עֶרֶב וְלֹא קִבְּלָן

and he does not become neither a guarantor nor a co-signer for others' loans,

וְלֹא יָבוֹא בְּהַרְשָׁאָה.

and he will not enter litigation with a power of attorney to sue on behalf of others.

אִינוֹ מַחֲיֵב עַצְמוֹ בְּדַבְרֵי מָקַח וּמִמְכָּר בְּמָקוֹם שֶׁלֹּא חִיְבָה אוֹתוֹ תּוֹרָה.

He does not obligate himself in matters of buying and selling in a place where the Torah did not obligate him,

כִּדִּי שִׁיעֲמַד בְּדַבּוּרוֹ וְלֹא יִשְׁנֶהוּ.

in order that he will stand by his word and not change it.

וְאִם נִתְחַיְבוּ לוֹ אַחֲרִים בְּדִין

And if others became obligated to him by the law,

מֵאַרְיֵה וּמִזֵּחַל לָהֶן וּמִלָּוָה וְחוּנָן.

he extends time for payment, and forgives them, and lends them money, and shows favor.

וְלֹא יֵרֵד לְתוֹךְ אֲמָנוּת חֲבֵרוֹ.

And he will not descend into the trade of his fellow to compete unfairly.

וְלֹא יַצַּר לְאָדָם לְעוֹלָם בְּחַיָּיו.

And he will not cause distress to a person ever in his life.

כָּלְלוֹ שֶׁל דָּבָר יִהְיֶה מִן הַנִּרְדָּפִים וְלֹא מִן הַרוֹדָפִים

The general rule of the matter: he should be from the pursued and not from the pursuers,

מִן הַנִּעְלָכִים וְלֹא מִן הַעוֹלָכִים.

from the insulted and not from the insulting.

וְאָדָם שֶׁעוֹשֶׂה כָּל הַמַּעֲשִׂים הָאֵלֶּה וְכִיּוֹצֵא בָהֶן

And a person who does all these deeds and similar to them,

עָלָיו הַפֶּתוּחַ אוֹמֵר וַיֹּאמֶר לִי עַבְדִּי אַתָּה יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר בָּךְ אֶתְפָּאֵר:

upon him the verse says, "And He said to me, 'My servant you are, Yisrael, whom in you I will be glorified.'"

CHAPTER SUMMARY

The chapter begins by outlining how a talmid chacham must be recognized through his refined conduct in all areas of life, starting with his eating habits. The Rambam warns strongly against gluttony and overindulgence, which the Sages compare to the ways of the wicked, and instead directs the wise man to eat simple, healthy meals solely to sustain his body. By eating with holiness and restraint, the righteous person fulfills the words of Shlomo Hamelech, eating only to satisfy his soul and keep his body fit for the service of Hashem.

לְמַעֲשֶׂה WHAT TO TAKE HOME

My dear talmid, when we think of a Torah scholar, we often picture someone sitting in the beis medrash with an open Gemara. But the Rambam is teaching us a profound chiddush here: the true test of a ben Torah is not just how he learns, but how he eats, how he speaks, how he conducts himself in his most private moments, and even how he walks down the street. A Yid's entire physical existence must be refined, elevated, and distinct from the coarse, self-indulgent ways of the world.

Look at how the Rambam describes the way we eat and drink. The world says, "Eat and drink, for tomorrow we die", a life focused on filling the stomach and chasing physical pleasure. But a wise person eats simply, solely to keep his body healthy to serve Hashem. Even in the most intimate and hidden parts of life, a Yid acts with deep tznius, holiness, and gentle respect. Our speech should be soft and pleasant, never shouting like animals, and we must always judge others favorably and seek peace.

This is our avodah. We do not separate the spiritual from the physical; we bring the spiritual down into the physical. When you carry yourself with dignity, refinement, and self-control in your daily, mundane activities, you are making a kiddush Hashem with your very body and showing what it truly means to be a servant of Hashem.

Today, before you sit down to eat a meal or a snack, pause for three seconds. Remind yourself that you are eating to have strength to serve Hashem, and leave over just one small bite on your plate to show that you control your desires, rather than letting them control you.