

הלכות תשובה • פרק שלישי

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

CHAPTER PREVIEW

In this chapter, the Rambam takes us into the awesome reality of how Hashem judges His creation, showing us how every single Yid, and indeed the entire world, is constantly balanced on a scale of merits and sins. We will learn how our personal avodah is never just about ourselves, but how a single mitzvah or, chas v'shalom, a single sin can tip the scales for the whole world.

We will also explore the deep meaning of the shofar's call on Rosh HaShanah, which rouses our neshamos from slumber to do teshuvah. The Rambam guides us through the special custom of klal Yisrael to increase in tzedakah, mitzvos, and heartfelt tefillos during the Aseres Yemei Teshuvah, and explains the beautiful ways in which Hashem, in His great mercy, reckons and forgives our misdeeds.

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

הלכה א

Halacha 1 • The Balance of Merits and Sins of the Individual and the World

כל אחד ואחד מבני האדם

Every single one of the sons of man

יש לו זכויות ועונות.

has to him both merits and sins.

מי שזכויותיו יתרות על עונותיו

One whose merits exceed over his sins is deemed a

צדיק.

righteous person.

ומי שעונותיו יתרות על זכויותיו

And one whose sins exceed over his merits is deemed a

רשע.

wicked person.

מחצה למחצה

One who is half to half, with an equal balance, is a

בינוני.

Beinoni, an intermediate person.

וכן המדינה

And so too regarding the country as a whole: if

אם היו זכויות כל יושביה מרבות על עונותיהן

the merits of all its inhabitants were greater over their sins,

הרי זו צדקת.

behold, this country is righteous.

ואם היו עונותיהם מרבין

And if their sins were greater,

הרי זו רשעה.

behold, this country is wicked.

וכן כל העולם כלו:

And so is the status of all the world entirely, judged as a whole based on the majority of its deeds.

הלכה ב

Halacha 2 · The Weighing of Merits and Sins by the Almighty

אדם שעונותיו מרבין על זכויותיו

A person whose sins are more numerous than his merits

מיד הוא מת ברשעו

immediately he dies in his wickedness, meaning he is sentenced to death by Heaven,

שנאמר על רב עונה.

as it is said in the pasuk, "for the multitude of your sin."

וכן מדינה שעונותיה מרבין

And likewise, a country whose sins are more numerous than its merits,

מיד היא אוכדת

immediately it perishes through destruction,

שנאמר בראשית יח כ "זעקת סדם ועמרה כי רבה" וגו'.

as it is said regarding the destruction of Sodom, "the outcry of Sodom and Amorah because it is great" etc.

וְכֹן כָּל הָעוֹלָם כָּלוֹ

And likewise, all the world entirely,

אִם הָיוּ עֲוֹנוֹתֵיהֶם מְרִבִּין מְזֻכָּרוֹתֵיהֶן

if their sins were more numerous than their merits,

מִיד הֵן נִשְׁחָתִין

immediately they are destroyed,

שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר בְּרֵאשִׁית ו' ה' "וַיֵּרָא ה' כִּי רַבָּה רָעַת הָאָדָם".

as it is said regarding the generation of the Flood, "And He saw, Hashem, that great was the wickedness of man."

וְשֶׁקוֹל זֶה אֵינוֹ לְפִי מִנְיַן הַזְכָּיוֹת וְהָעֲוֹנוֹת

And the weighing of this is not according to the simple number of the merits and the sins,

אֲלָא לְפִי גְדֻלָּתָם.

but according to their magnitude and quality in the eyes of Heaven.

יֵשׁ זְכוּת שֶׁהִיא כֹּנֶנֶד כַּמָּה עֲוֹנוֹת

There is a merit that it is against several sins and outweighs them all,

שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר מְלָכִים א יד יג "יָעַן נִמְצָא בּוֹ דָּבָר טוֹב".

as it is said regarding Aviyah the son of Yarovan, "Because there was found in him a matter good."

וְיֵשׁ עוֹן שֶׁהוּא כֹּנֶנֶד כַּמָּה זְכָיוֹת

And there is a sin that it is against several merits and ruins them all,

שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר קהלת ט יח "וְחֹטֵא אֶחָד יִאַבֵּד טוֹבָה הַרְבֵּה".

as it is said, "and a sinner, one, destroys good, much."

וְאֵין שׁוֹקֵלִין אֶלָּא בְּדַעַתּוֹ שֶׁל אֵל יְדֹעוֹת

And they do not weigh these matters except with the knowledge of the God of knowledge,

וְהוּא הַיּוֹדֵעַ הַיָּאֵד עוֹרְכִין הַזְכָּיוֹת כֹּנֶנֶד הָעֲוֹנוֹת:

and He is the One Who knows how they arrange the merits against the sins.

כָּל מִי שֶׁנֶּחֱם עַל הַמִּצְוֹת שֶׁעָשָׂה

Every one who regrets over the mitzvos that he did,

וַתִּהְיֶה עָלָיו הַזְכִּיּוֹת

and wondered over the merits he accumulated,

וַאֲמַר בְּלִבּוֹ

and said in his heart,

וַיֹּמַר הֲוַעֲלֵתִי בַּעֲשֵׂיתִי

"and what did I benefit in doing them?

הֲלוֹאִי לֹא עָשִׂיתִי אוֹתָן

would that I had not done them,"

הֲרִי זֶה אֶבֶד אֶת כָּלִי

behold this one lost all of them,

וְאֵין מְזַכְּרִים לוֹ שׁוּם זְכוּת בְּעוֹלָם

and they do not mention to him any merit in the world,

שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר "וַיִּצְדַּקְתָּ הַצְדִּיק לֹא תַצִּילֵנוּ בְּיוֹם רָשָׁעוֹ"

as it is said in the Navi, "and the righteousness of the righteous will not save him on the day of his wickedness".

אֵין זֶה אֶלָּא בְּתוֹהָה עַל הָרָאוּשׁוֹנוֹת.

This is not said except with one who wonders over the first ones, meaning he completely regrets his past good deeds.

וְכַשֵּׁם שֶׁשׁוֹקֵלִין זְכוּיּוֹת אָדָם וְעוֹנוֹתָיו בַּשָּׁעַת מִיתָתוֹ

And just as they weigh the merits of a person and his sins at the time of his death,

כִּי בְּכָל שָׁנָה וְשָׁנָה שׁוֹקֵלִין עוֹנוֹת כָּל אֶחָד וְאֶחָד מִבְּאֵי הָעוֹלָם עִם זְכוּיָתוֹ

so in every year and year they weigh the sins of every single one of those who enter the world with his merits,

בְּיוֹם טוֹב שֶׁל רֹאשׁ הַשָּׁנָה.

on the Yom Tov of Rosh HaShanah.

מִי שֶׁנִּמְצָא צָדִיק נִחָתָם לְחַיִּים.

One who is found righteous is sealed for life.

ומי שנמצא רשע נחתם למיתה.

And one who is found wicked is sealed for death.

והבינוני תולין אותו עד יום הכפורים

And the Beinoni, the intermediate person, they suspend him until Yom HaKippurim;

אם עשה תשובה נחתם לחיים

if he did teshuvah, he is sealed for life,

ואם לא נחתם למיתה:

and if not, he is sealed for death.

הלכה ד

Halacha 4 • The Allusion of the Shofar and Tipping the Scales of the World to Merit

אף על פי שתקיעת שופר בראש השנה גזרת הכתוב

Even though the sounding of the shofar on Rosh HaShanah is a decree of the Scripture, and we do not need a reason to perform it,

רמז יש בו כלומר

an allusion there is in it, as if to say to us:

עורו ישנים משנתכם ונרדמים הקיצו מתרדמתכם

"Wake up, you sleepy ones, from your sleep, and you who slumber, arise from your slumber!"

וחפשו במעשיכם וחרו בתשובה וזכרו בוראכם.

And search into your deeds, and return in repentance, and remember your Creator!

אלו השוכחים את האמת בהבלי הזמן

These who forget the truth with the vanities of the time,

ושוגים כל שנתם בהבל וריק אשר לא יועיל ולא יציל,

and stray all their year in vanity and emptiness, which will not benefit and will not save you in the end,

הביטו לנפשותיכם והיטיבו דרכיכם ומעלליכם

look to your souls, and improve your ways and your deeds,

ויזב כל אחד מכם דרכו הרעה ומחשבתו אשר לא טובה.

and let abandon, every one of you, his way which is evil, and his thought which is not good."

לְפִיכָּה צָרִיךְ כָּל אָדָם שְׂרָאָה עֲצָמוֹ כָּל הַשָּׁנָה כָּלָה

Therefore, needs every man that he should see himself all the year entirely

כְּאִלוֹ חֲצִי זָכָאי וְחֲצִי חַיִּב.

as if half of him is meritorious and half of him is guilty.

וְכֵן כָּל הָעוֹלָם חֲצִי זָכָאי וְחֲצִי חַיִּב.

And likewise, all the world should be seen as if half of it is meritorious and half of it is guilty.

חָטָא חֲטָא אֶחָד הָרִי הִכְרִיעַ אֶת עֲצָמוֹ וְאֶת כָּל הָעוֹלָם כָּלוּ לְכַף חוֹבָה

If he sinned a sin, one, behold, he tipped himself and all the world entirely to the scale of guilt,

וְגָרַם לוֹ הַשְׁחָתָה.

and caused for himself and the world destruction.

עָשָׂה מִצְוָה אֶחָד הָרִי הִכְרִיעַ אֶת עֲצָמוֹ וְאֶת כָּל הָעוֹלָם כָּלוּ לְכַף זְכוּת

If he performed a mitzvah, one, behold, he tipped himself and all the world entirely to the scale of merit,

וְגָרַם לוֹ וְלָהֶם תְּשׁוּעָה וְהַצָּלָה

and caused for himself and for them deliverance and salvation,

שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר מִשְׁלֵי י' כ"ה "וְצַדִּיק יְסֻד עוֹלָם"

as it is said in Mishlei, chapter 10, pasuk 25, "And a righteous man is the foundation of the world,"

זֶה שֶׁצִּדַּק הִכְרִיעַ אֶת כָּל הָעוֹלָם לְזְכוּת וְהַצִּילוֹ.

meaning this one who acted righteously tipped all the world to merit and saved it.

וּמִפְּנֵי עֲנִיָּן זֶה נִהְגוּ כָּל בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל

And because of this matter, it is customary for all the House of Israel

לְהִרְבּוֹת בְּצִדָּקָה וּבְמַעֲשִׂים טוֹבִים וּלְעֹסֵק בְּמִצְוֹת

to increase in charity and in deeds that are good, and to occupy themselves with mitzvot

מִרֹאשׁ הַשָּׁנָה וְעַד יוֹם הַכִּפּוּרִים יִתֵּר מִכָּל הַשָּׁנָה.

from Rosh HaShanah and until Yom Kippur, more than all the year.

וְנִהְגוּ כָּלָם לָקוּם בַּלַּיְלָה בַּעֲשֻׁרָה יָמִים אֵלּוּ

And it is customary for all of them to rise in the night during the ten days, these, of Teshuvah,

וְלִהְתַּפֵּל לְבִכּוֹתֵי כְּנִסְיוֹת בְּדִבְרֵי תַחֲנוּנִים וּבְכַפּוּשִׁין עַד שִׁיאוֹר הַיּוֹם:

and to pray in houses of assembly with words of supplications and with subduing words of heart, until shines the day.

הלכה ה

Halacha 5 · The Calculation of Sins and Merits and the Portion in the World to Come

בַּשָּׁעָה שֶׁשׁוֹקְלִין עֲוֹנוֹת אָדָם עִם זְכוּתוֹ

At the time that they weigh the sins of a person with his merits in the Heavenly Court,

אִין מַחְשְׁבִין עָלָיו עוֹן שֶׁחָטָא בּוֹ תַּחֲלָה וְלֹא שֵׁנִי

they do not reckon against him the sin that he sinned in it first, and not the second sin,

אֶלָּא מִשְׁלִישֵׁי וְאִילָּהּ.

but from the third and onward is where they begin to count.

אִם נִמְצְאוּ עֲוֹנוֹתָיו מִשְׁלִישֵׁי וְאִילָּהּ מְרַבִּין עַל זְכוּתוֹ

If were found his sins from the third and onward greater than his merits,

אוֹתָם שְׁתֵּי עֲוֹנוֹת מִצְטָרְפִים וְדָנִין אוֹתוֹ עַל הַכֹּל.

those two initial sins combine with the rest, and they judge him for everything.

וְאִם נִמְצְאוּ זְכוּתוֹ כְּנִגְדַּת עֲוֹנוֹתָיו אֲשֶׁר מֵעוֹן שְׁלִישֵׁי וְאִילָּהּ

And if were found his merits equal to his sins which are from the sin the third and onward,

מַעֲבִירִים כָּל עֲוֹנוֹתָיו רִאשׁוֹן רִאשׁוֹן.

they forgive all his sins, first by first, one by one, through Hashem's chessed,

לְפִי שֶׁהַשְּׁלִישִׁי נִחָשֵׁב רִאשׁוֹן שְׁכַבֵּר נִמְחַל הַשְּׁנַיִם.

because the third is considered the first, since already were forgiven the two initial ones.

וְכֵן הָרְבִיעִי הֲרִי הוּא רִאשׁוֹן שְׁכַבֵּר נִמְחַל הַשְּׁלִישִׁי וְכֵן עַד סוֹפָן.

And so the fourth, behold it is the first, since already was forgiven the third, and so until their end.

בְּמָה דְּבָרִים אֲמֹרִים בְּיַחֲד

In what words are said? Regarding an individual,

שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר אִיּוֹב לֵג כַּט "הֵן כָּל אֵלֶּה יַפְעֵל אֵל פַּעַמִּים שְׁלוֹשׁ עִם גָּבֵר."

as it is said in the pasuk in Iyov 33:29, "Behold, all these does God twice, three times, with a man."

אֲבָל הַצָּבוּר תּוֹלִין לָהֶן עוֹן רִאשׁוֹן שֵׁנִי וּשְׁלִישִׁי

But for the community, they suspend for them the sin the first, second, and third,

שֶׁנֶאֱמַר עָמוֹס ב' ו' "עַל שְׁלֹשָׁה פְּשָׁעֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְעַל אַרְבָּעָה לֹא אֲשִׁיבֶנּוּ".

as it is said in the pasuk in Amos 2:6, "For three transgressions of Yisrael, and for four, not will I turn it back."

וְכִשְׁמַחְשָׁבִין לָהֶן עַל דְּרָהּ זֶה מַחְשָׁבִין לָהֶן מִרְכִּיבֵי וְאִילָּהּ.

And when they reckon for them in the way of this, they reckon for them from the fourth and onward.

הַבֵּינוֹנִים אִם הָיָה בְּכָלֵל מִחֻצָּה עֲוֹנוֹת שֶׁלָּהֶן שֶׁלֹּא הִנִּיחַ תְּפִלִּין מֵעוֹלָם

As for the Beinonim, if he was in the category of those whose half sins of theirs includes that not he laid tefillin ever,

דָּנִין אוֹתוֹ כְּפִי חֲטָאוֹ וַיֵּשׁ לוֹ חֶלֶק לְעוֹלָם הַבָּא.

they judge him according to his sin, but there is to him a portion in the world the coming.

וְכֹן כָּל הָרָשָׁעִים שֶׁעֲוֹנוֹתֵיהֶן מְרַבִּים

And so, all the wicked whose sins are greater than their merits,

דָּנִין אוֹתָן כְּפִי חֲטָאֵיהֶם וַיֵּשׁ לָהֶן חֶלֶק לְעוֹלָם הַבָּא

they judge them according to their sins, but there is to them a portion in the world the coming,

שֶׁכָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל יֵשׁ לָהֶם חֶלֶק לְעוֹלָם הַבָּא אַף עַל פִּי שֶׁחָטְאוּ

for all of Yisrael have to them a portion in the world the coming, even though they sinned,

שֶׁנֶאֱמַר ישעיה ס כ"א "וְעַמֶּךָ כֻּלָּם צְדִיקִים לְעוֹלָם יִירָשׁוּ אֶרֶץ".

as it is said in the pasuk in Yeshayah 60:21, "And your people, all of them are righteous, forever they shall inherit land."

אֶרֶץ זוֹ מְשָׁל כָּלֹמֶר אֶרֶץ הַחַיִּים וְהוּא הָעוֹלָם הַבָּא.

Land, this is a parable, meaning to say, the land of the living, and it is the world the coming.

וְכֹן חֲסִידֵי אֲמוֹת הָעוֹלָם יֵשׁ לָהֶם חֶלֶק לְעוֹלָם הַבָּא:

And so, the pious of the nations of the world have to them a portion in the world the coming.

הַלָּכָה ו

Halacha 6 • Those Who Have No Portion in the World to Come

וְאֵלֵינוּ הֵן שְׂאִין לָהֶן חֶלֶק לְעוֹלָם הַבָּא

And these are they who do not have a portion in the World to Come,

אֲלָא נִכְרְתִים וְאוֹבְדִין

but instead are cut off and perish,

וְנִדְוָנִין עַל גְּדֹל רָשָׁעִים וְחֲטָאתָם

and are judged for the greatness of their wickedness and their sins

לְעוֹלָם וּלְעוֹלָמֵי עוֹלָמִים.

forever and for eternity of eternities:

הַמִּינִים.

The Minim (heretics),

וְהָאֶפִיקוֹרוֹסִין.

and the Epicursim (scoffers of Torah scholars),

וְהַכּוֹפְרִים בַּתּוֹרָה.

and those who deny the Torah,

וְהַכּוֹפְרִים בַּתְּחֵית הַמֵּתִים וּבְבִיאַת הַגּוֹאֵל.

and those who deny the resurrection of the dead and the coming of the redeemer,

הַמוֹרְדִים.

the rebels (who sin to anger Hashem),

וּמַחֲטִיאֵי הָרַבִּים.

and those who cause the many to sin,

וְהַפּוֹרְשֵׁין מִדֶּרֶךְ צִבּוֹר.

and those who separate from the ways of the community,

וְהַעוֹשֶׂה עֲבֵרוֹת בְּיָד רָמָה בְּפִרְהֶסְיָא כִּיהוֹיָקִים.

and one who performs transgressions with a high hand in public, like King Yehoyakim,

וְהַמוֹסְרִים.

and the informers (who hand over Jewish property or lives to non-Jewish authorities),

וּמַטִּילֵי אֵימָה עַל הַצִּבּוֹר שֶׁלֹּא לְשֵׁם שָׁמַיִם.

and those who cast fear upon the community not for the sake of Heaven,

וְשׁוֹפְכֵי דָמִים.

and shedders of blood (murderers),

וּבַעֲלֵי לָשׁוֹן הָרָע.

and masters of evil tongue (habitual speakers of lashon hara),

וְהַמּוֹשֶׁה עֲרָלְתּוֹ:

and one who extends his foreskin to hide his bris milah.

הִלְכָּה ז

Halacha 7: Five Categories of Minim Who Deny the Oneness and Incorporeality of Hashem

חֲמִשָּׁה הֵן הַנִּקְרָאִים מִיְנִיּוֹת.

Five are those who are called Minim (heretics):

הָאוֹמֵר שֶׁאֵין שָׁם אֱלֹהִים וְאֵין לְעוֹלָם מְנַהִיג.

One who says that there is not there a God and there is not for the world a ruler;

וְהָאוֹמֵר שֶׁיֵּשׁ שָׁם מְנַהִיג אֲבָל הֵן שְׁנַיִם אוֹ יוֹתֵר.

and one who says that there is there a ruler but they are two or more;

וְהָאוֹמֵר שֶׁיֵּשׁ שָׁם רַבּוֹן אֶחָד אֲבָל שֶׁהוּא גּוֹף וְכַעַל תְּמוּנָה.

and one who says that there is there Master one but that He is a body and possessor of form, chas v'shalom;

וְכֵן הָאוֹמֵר שֶׁאֵינוֹ לְבַדּוֹ הָרֵאשׁוֹן וְצוּר לְכָל.

and likewise one who says that He is not alone the First and Creator of everything;

וְכֵן הָעוֹבֵד כּוֹכַב אוֹ מְזָל וְזוּלָתוֹ כְּדֵי לְהִיּוֹת מִלִּיץ בֵּינּוֹ וּבֵין רַבּוֹן הָעוֹלָמִים.

and likewise one who serves a star or constellation and other than it in order to be an intermediary between him and between the Master of the worlds.

כָּל אֶחָד מֵחֲמִשָּׁה אֵלֵּיו הוּא מִין:

Every one of these five, these, he is a Min.

הִלְכָּה ח

Halacha 8: Defining the Epicursim and Those Who Deny the Torah

שְׁלֹשָׁה הֵן הַנִּקְרָאִים אֶפִּיקוּרִסִּין.

Three are those who are called Epicursim, heretics who deny the fundamental truths of Hashem's connection to mankind:

הָאוֹמֵר שֶׁאֵין שָׁם נְבוּאָה כָּלֵל

One who says that there is no prophecy at all,

וְאֵין שָׁם מַדַּע שֶׁמִּגִּיעַ מִהַבּוֹרָא לְלֵב בְּנֵי הָאָדָם.

and there is no knowledge that reaches from the Creator to the heart of the children of man;

וְהַמְכַחֵשׁ נְבוּאָתוֹ שֶׁל מֹשֶׁה רַבֵּנוֹ.

and one who denies the prophecy of Moshe our teacher, refusing to accept his unique level of nevuah;

וְהַאֲמִיר שֶׁאֵין הַבּוֹרָא יוֹדֵעַ מַעֲשֵׂה בְּנֵי הָאָדָם.

and one who says that the Creator does not know the deeds of the children of man, denying Hashem's hashgacha pratis.

כָּל אֶחָד מִשְׁלָשָׁה אֱלֹוֵ הֵן אֶפִיקוֹרוֹסִים.

Each one of these three, these are Epicursim.

שְׁלֹשָׁה הֵן הַכּוֹפְרִים בַּתּוֹרָה.

Three are those who deny the Torah:

הַאֲמִיר שֶׁאֵין הַתּוֹרָה מֵעַם ה'

One who says that the Torah is not from Hashem;

אֶפְלוּ פָסוּק אֶחָד אֶפְלוּ תִבָּה אַחַת

even if he says this about one verse, even about one word,

אִם אָמַר מֹשֶׁה אָמְרוּ מִפִּי עֲצָמוֹ הֲרִי זֶה כּוֹפֵר בַּתּוֹרָה.

if he said that Moshe said it from his own mouth and not from Hashem, behold this one denies the Torah.

וְכֵן הַכּוֹפֵר בְּפִירוּשָׁה וְהוּא תּוֹרָה שֶׁבְּעַל פֶּה

And likewise, one who denies its explanation, and it is the Oral Torah,

וְהַמְכַחֵשׁ מַגִּידָהּ כְּגוֹן צְדוֹק וּבֵיתוֹס.

and one who disputes its spokesmen, the Chachanim of the Mesorah, such as Tzadok and Beitus.

וְהַאֲמִיר שֶׁהַבּוֹרָא הֵחֲלִיף מִצְוָה זֹאת בְּמִצְוָה אַחֶרֶת

And one who says that the Creator exchanged this mitzvah for another mitzvah,

וּכְבָּר בְּטָלָה תּוֹרָה זֹאת אֶף עַל פִּי שֶׁהָיָה הִיָּתָה מֵעַם ה'

and this Torah has already been annulled, even though it was originally from Hashem,

כְּגוֹן הַהֲגָרִים.

such as the Arabs, the Muslims, who claim a new revelation replaced the Torah.

כָּל אֶחָד מִשְׁלָשָׁה אֱלֹוֵ כּוֹפֵר בַּתּוֹרָה:

Each one of these three denies the Torah.

שנים הם המומרים מישראל.

Two are the apostates from Israel, meaning there are two categories of a mumar:

המומר לעברה אחת והמומר לכל התורה כלה.

the apostate to a transgression single, and the apostate to all of the Torah entirely.

מומר לעברה אחת זה שהחזיק עצמו לעשות אותה עברה בזדון

An apostate to a transgression single, this is one who established himself to do that transgression willfully,

והרגל ונתפרסם בה

and became accustomed and became public in it,

אפילו היתה מן הקלות

even if it was from the light ones among the mitzvot,

כגון שהחזק תמיד ללבש שעטנז או להקיף פאה

for example, one who was established constantly to wear shatnez or to round the corner of the head,

ונמצא פאלו בטלה מצוה זו מן העולם אצלו

and it turns out as if was nullified this mitzvah from the world by him,

הרי זה מומר לאותו דבר

behold, this one is an apostate for that matter;

והוא שיעשה להכעיס.

and this is specifically that he does it to anger Hashem, rather than out of physical desire.

מומר לכל התורה כלה

An apostate to all of the Torah entirely,

כגון החוזרים לדת העובדי פוכבים בשעה שגוזרין גזרה

for example, those who return to the religions of the worshippers of stars at a time that they decree a decree against the Jews,

וידבק בהם ויאמר

and he clings to them and says,

מה בצע לי להדבק בישראל שהם שפלים ונרדפים

"What gain is there for me to cling to Israel, who are lowly and pursued?

טוב לי שאֶדְבֵּק בְּאֵלֵי שִׂידִים תְּקִיפָה.

Better for me that I cling to these whose hand is strong."

הֲרִי זֶה מוֹמֵר לְכָל הַתּוֹרָה כָּלָה:

Behold, this one is an apostate to all of the Torah entirely.

הִלְכָּה י

Halacha 10 · Those Who Cause the Public to Sin Through Force or Enticement

מִחֲטִיאי הָרַבִּים כִּיצַד.

Regarding those who cause the public to sin, how so?

אֶחָד שֶׁחֲטִיא בְּדָבָר גָּדוֹל כְּגוֹן יִרְבָּעָם וְצָדוֹק וּבִיתוֹס.

It is the same for one who caused others to sin in a major matter, such as Yaroveam, and Tzadok, and Beitus,

וְאֶחָד שֶׁחֲטִיא בְּדָבָר קָל אֲפִלּוּ לְבָטֵל מִצְוַת עֲשֵׂה.

and it is the same for one who caused others to sin in a minor matter, even if it was only to nullify a positive commandment.

וְאֶחָד הָאוֹנֵס אֲחֵרִים עַד שִׁיחָטְאוּ כַּמִּנְשָׁה שֶׁהָיָה הוֹרֵג אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל עַד שִׁיעַבְדוּ עַבְדֹּת פּוֹכְבִּים,

And it is the same for one who coerces others until they sin, like Menasheh, who would kill — Jews until they would worship stars,

אוֹ שֶׁהִטְעָה אֲחֵרִים וְהִדִּיחָם בַּיָּשׁוּעַ:

or one who misled others and led them astray, like Yeshu.

הִלְכָּה יא

Halacha 11 · One Who Separates from the Community and One Who Sins Brazenly

הַפּוֹרֵשׁ מִדֶּרֶכֵי צִבּוֹר

One who separates from the ways of the community,

אֲףֵּי עַל פִּי שֶׁלֹּא עָבַר עֲבֵרוֹת

even though he did not actively transgress sins,

אֲלָא נִבְדָּל מֵעֵדֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל

but instead he is separated from the congregation of Yisrael,

וְאֵינוֹ עוֹשֶׂה מִצְוֹת בְּכָל לֵךְ

and is not doing mitzvot in their collective,

וְלֹא נִכְנָס בְּצָרָתָן

and is not entering into their distress to feel their pain,

וְלֹא מִתְעַנֶּה בְּתַעֲנִיתָן

and is not fasting in their fast days,

אֲלֵא הוּא לֵךְ בְּדַרְכּוֹ כְּאַחַד מִגּוֹיֵי הָאָרֶץ

but goes in his own way like one of the nations of the earth,

וְכֵאלוֹ אֵינוֹ מֵהֶן

and as if he is not of them, the holy nation of Yisrael,

אֵין לוֹ חֶלֶק לְעוֹלָם הַבָּא.

there is not to him a portion in the world to come.

הָעוֹשֶׂה עֲבֻרוֹת בְּיַד רָמָה כִּיהוֹיָקִים

One who does sins with a high hand, defiantly, like King Yehoyakim,

בֵּין שְׁעֵשָׂה קְלֹת בֵּין שְׁעֵשָׂה חֲמֹרוֹת

whether he did light ones or whether he did severe ones,

אֵין לוֹ חֶלֶק לְעוֹלָם הַבָּא.

there is not to him a portion in the world to come.

זֶהוּ הַנִּקְרָא מְגַלֵּה פָּנִים בַּתּוֹרָה

And this is the one called revealing faces in the Torah,

מִפְּנֵי שֶׁהָעַז מִצָּחוֹ וְגִלָּה פָּנָיו

because he made brazen his forehead and revealed his face,

וְלֹא בּוֹשׁ מִדְּבָרֵי תּוֹרָה:

and was not ashamed from the words of Torah.

הַלָּכָה יב

Halacha 12· One Who Betrays a Fellow Jew or His Property to Non-Jews

שְׁנַיִם הֵם הַמוֹסְרִין.

Two are the informers who are excluded from the World to Come:

המוֹסֵר חֲבֵירו בְּיַד עֲכוּ"ם לְהַרְגוֹ אוֹ לְהַכּוֹתוֹ.

one who delivers his fellow into the hand of a non-Jew to kill him or to beat him;

וְהַמוֹסֵר מָמוֹן חֲבֵירו בְּיַד עֲכוּ"ם אוֹ בְּיַד אֲנָס שֶׁהוּא כְּעֲכוּ"ם.

and one who delivers the money of his fellow into the hand of a non-Jew or into the hand of an extortioner who is like a non-Jew, thereby causing him financial ruin.

וּשְׁנֵיהֶם אֵין לָהֶם חֵלֶק לְעוֹלָם הַבָּא:

And both of them do not have a portion in the World to Come.

הִלְכָּה יג

Halacha 13 · One Who Casts Fear Upon the Community for Selfish Honor

מְטִילֵי אֵימָה עַל הַצִּבּוּר שֶׁלֹּא לְשֵׁם שָׁמַיִם

Those who cast fear upon the community not for the sake of Heaven—

זֶה הָרוֹדֵה צִבּוּר בְּחֹזֶקָה

this is a leader who rules a community with force,

וְהֵם יִרְאוּם וּמִפְּחָדֵם מִמְּנוֹ

and they are afraid and terrified of him,

וּכְוֹנֵתוֹ לְכָבוֹד עַצְמוֹ

and his intention is only for the honor of himself,

וְכָל חֲפָצָיו שֶׁלֹּא לְכָבוֹד שָׁמַיִם

and all his desires are not for the honor of Heaven,

כְּגוֹן מְלָכֵי הָעֲכוּ"ם:

such as kings of the idolaters.

הִלְכָּה יד

Halacha 14 · Acceptance of Repentance for All Sins Even When Done in Secret

כָּל אֶחָד וְאֶחָד מֵעֲשָׂרִים וָאַרְבָּעָה אֲנָשִׁים אֵלּוּ שֶׁמִּנִּינוּ

Every single one of these twenty-four categories of people whom we have counted in the previous halachos,

אֲףֵי עַל פִּי שֶׁהֵן מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל

even though they are from Israel,

אֵין לָהֶם חֵלֶק לְעוֹלָם הַבָּא.

they have no portion in the World to Come.

וְיֵשׁ עֲבֵרוֹת קְלוֹת מֵאלוֹ

And there are transgressions lighter than these,

וְאֵף עַל פִּי כֹן אָמְרוּ חֲכָמִים שֶׁהֲרִיגִל בָּהֶן אֵין לָהֶם חֵלֶק לְעוֹלָם הַבָּא

and even so, the Sages said that one who is accustomed to them has no portion in the World to Come;

וְכֵדִי וְכִדְאֵי הֵן לְהִתְרַחֵק מֵהֶן וּלְהִזָּהֵר בָּהֶן.

and they are fitting and worthy to distance oneself from them and to be careful with them.

וְאֵלּוּ הֵן.

And these are they:

הַמְכַנֶּה שֵׁם לְחֵבְרוֹ.

One who invents a nickname for his fellow to embarrass him,

וְהַקּוֹרֵא לְחֵבְרוֹ בְּכִנּוּיוֹ.

and one who calls his fellow by his nickname even if others invented it,

וְהַמְלַבֵּין פְּנֵי חֵבְרוֹ בְּרַבִּים.

and one who whitens the face of his fellow in public by shaming him,

וְהַמְתַּכְפִּיד בְּקִלּוֹן חֵבְרוֹ.

and one who honors himself through the shame of his fellow,

וְהַמְבִּזֶּה תַּלְמִידֵי חֲכָמִים.

and one who disgraces Torah scholars,

וְהַמְבִּזֶּה רַבּוֹתָיו.

and one who disgraces his teachers,

וְהַמְבִּזֶּה אֶת הַמוֹעֲדוֹת.

and one who disgraces the festivals by treating Chol HaMoed like a weekday,

וְהַמְחַלֵּל אֶת הַקֳּדָשִׁים.

and one who profanes sacred things.

בְּמָה דְּבָרִים אֲמוּרִים שֶׁכָּל אֶחָד מֵאלוֹ אֵין לוֹ חֵלֶק לְעוֹלָם הַבָּא

In what cases are these words said, that every one of these has no portion in the World to Come?

כְּשֶׁמֵּת בְּלֹא תְּשׁוּבָה

When he died without repentance.

אָבֵל אִם שָׁב מִרְשָׁעוֹ וּמֵת וְהוּא בָּעַל תְּשׁוּבָה

But if he repented from his wickedness and died, and he is a master of repentance,

הֲרִי זֶה מִבְּנֵי הָעוֹלָם הַבָּא

behold, this one is of the people of the World to Come,

שְׁאִין לָהּ דָּבָר שֶׁעוֹמֵד בְּפָנֵי הַתְּשׁוּבָה.

for there is nothing that stands before repentance.

אֲפִלּוּ כִּפְּר בְּעֶקֶר כָּל יָמָיו וּבִאֲחֻרּוֹנָה שָׁב

Even if he denied the fundamental principle of our faith all his days, and in the end he repented,

יֵשׁ לוֹ חֵלֶק לְעוֹלָם הַבָּא

he has a portion in the World to Come,

שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר יִשְׁעִיה נָו יֵט "שְׁלֹום שְׁלֹום לְרַחוּק וְלִקְרוֹב אָמַר ה' וְרָפָאתִיו".

as it is said, 'Peace, peace to the far and to the near, said Hashem, and I will heal him.'

כָּל הָרָשָׁעִים וְהַמּוֹמְרִים וְכִיּוֹצֵא בָהֶן שֶׁחָזְרוּ בַּתְּשׁוּבָה

All the wicked, and the apostates, and those similar to them, who returned in repentance,

בֵּין בְּגָלוּי בֵּין בְּמִטְמוֹנוֹת מְקַבְּלִין אוֹתָן

whether openly or in secret, we accept them,

שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר יִרְמְיָה ג' יד "שׁוּבוּ בָנִים שׁוֹכְבִים".

as it is said, 'Return, wayward children.'

אֲף עַל פִּי שֶׁעֲדִין שׁוֹכֵב הוּא

Even though he is still wayward in the eyes of people,

שֶׁחָרִי בִּסְתֵּר שָׁב וְלֹא בְּגָלוּי

since he repented in secret and not openly,

מְקַבְּלִין אוֹתוֹ בַּתְּשׁוּבָה:

we accept him in repentance before Hashem.

The Rambam begins by defining the categories of Tzaddik, Rasha, and Beinoni based on the balance of merits and sins, explaining that this reckoning is made not just by number but by the quality and weight of each deed, which only the Knowing God can measure. He warns that regretting one's past good deeds wipes them out completely, and describes how the world is judged on Rosh HaShanah, with the Beinoni's verdict hanging in the balance until Yom Kippur. The shofar serves as a wake-up call to abandon vanity and return to Hashem, prompting us to view ourselves and the world as equally balanced so that our next deed can bring salvation. Finally, the Rambam details the merciful system of how individual and communal sins are counted, explaining that while those with serious sins are punished accordingly, every Yid ultimately retains a portion in the World to Come.

לְמַעֲשֶׂה WHAT TO TAKE HOME

My dear talmid, look at how the Rambam describes the delicate balance of the world. We often think of our lives as a massive, unmovable history of who we have been, but the Torah teaches us a completely different reality. At this very moment, you are standing on a scale that is perfectly balanced, fifty-fifty. Not only you, but the entire world is hanging in the exact same balance.

This means there is no such thing as an insignificant act. The next small mitzvah you do, the next word of Torah you study, or the extra tzedakah you give does not just add a drop to the ocean. It has the power to tip the scales for your entire life and bring salvation to the whole world. Hashem is waiting for your single move to tip the balance to the side of merit.

Conversely, we must protect the good we have already built. The Rambam warns us that regretting our past mitzvos can wash them away. We must cherish every good deed we have ever done, holding onto them with joy and using that momentum to wake up from our slumber, just as the shofar calls us to do.

Today, perform one small, deliberate mitzvah, whether it is giving a coin to tzedakah, saying a brachah with extra focus, or learning one halachah, with the conscious intention that this single act is tipping the scale of your life and the entire world to the side of merit.