

הלכות תשובה • פרק תשיעי

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

CHAPTER PREVIEW

In this chapter, the Rambam addresses a fundamental question that touches the very heart of our avodah: if the ultimate reward for keeping the mitzvot is the World to Come, and the ultimate punishment for the wicked is karet, why does the Torah constantly promise us physical rewards in this world for our obedience, and warn us of worldly suffering if we go astray? We will learn how Hashem manages the physical world to help us succeed in our spiritual journey.

We will also explore the deep yearning of the Jewish people, our Sages, and our prophets for the days of Moshiach. The Rambam explains that our desire for the Messianic era is not for physical luxury or dominance, but rather for the peace and freedom to immerse ourselves in Torah and wisdom without distraction, so that we may all merit the life of the World to Come.

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

ה'א

הקשר בין הברכות הנשמיות לחיי העולם הבא

Halacha 1 • The Relationship Between Material Blessings and the World to Come

מאחר שנודע שמתן שכרן של מצות והטובה שנוזפה לה אם
if it that we will merit and the goodness mitzvot of their reward that the giving of it is known Since

שמרנו דרך ה' הכתוב בתורה היא חיי העולם הבא שנאמר דברים
Devarim as it is said to come the world the life of it is in the Torah written Hashem the way of we keep

כב ז "למען ייטב לך והארכת ימים". והנקמה שנוקמים מן
from that is exacted and the retribution days and you will prolong for you it will be good so that 7 22

הרשעים שעזבו ארחות הצדק הכתובות בתורה היא הכרת שנאמר
as it is said karet it is in the Torah written righteousness the paths of who abandoned the wicked

במדבר טו לא "הכרת תכרת הנפש ההיא עונה בזה". מהו זה שכתוב
that is written this what is is in it its sin that the soul shall be cut off surely cut off 31 15 Bamidbar

בכל התורה כלה אם תשמעו יגיע לכם כף ויקרא כו יד "ואם לא
not and if 14 26 Vayikra so you it will reach you will listen if entirely the Torah in all of

תשמעו" יקרה אתכם כף. וכל אותן הדברים בעולם הזה. כגון שבע
plenty such as this in this world the things those and all so to you it will happen you will listen

ורעב ומלחמה ושלום ומלכות ושפלות וישיבת הארץ וגלות
and exile the land and settlement of and lowliness and sovereignty and peace and war and famine

והצלחת מעשה והפסדו ושאר כל דברי הברית. כל אותן הדברים
the things those all the covenant the words of all and the rest of and its loss deed and the success of

אֱמֶת הָיוּ וַיְהִיוּ וּבְזֶמֶן שָׁאֲנוּ עוֹשִׂים כָּל מִצְוֹת הַתּוֹרָה יִגִּיעוּ
there will reach the Torah the mitzvot of all do that we and at the time and they will be they were truth

אֵלֵינוּ טוֹבוֹת הָעוֹלָם הַזֶּה כָּלָן. וּבְזֶמֶן שָׁאֲנוּ עוֹבְרִין עֲלֵיהֶן
against them transgress that we and at the time all of them this the world the goods of us

תִּקְרָאנָה אוֹתָנוּ הָרָעוֹת הַכְּתוּבוֹת. וְאֵף עַל פִּי כֵן אֵין אוֹתָן הַטּוֹבוֹת
the goods those are not so though and even written the evils us there will happen to

הֵם סוֹף מִתֵּן שְׂכָרָן שֶׁל מִצְוֹת וְלֹא אוֹתָן הָרָעוֹת הֵם סוֹף הַנִּקְמָה
the retribution the end of they the evils those and not mitzvot of their reward the giving of the end of they

שֶׁנוֹקְמִין מֵעוֹבֵר עַל כָּל הַמִּצְוֹת. אֲלֹא כֹךָ הוּא הַכָּרַע כָּל
all the resolution of it thus but the mitzvot all against from one who that is exacted transgresses

הַדְּבָרִים. הַקְדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא נָתַן לָנוּ תּוֹרָה זֹאת עֵץ חַיִּים הִיא. וְכָל
and anyone it is life a tree of this Torah to us gave is He Blessed the Holy One the things

הַעוֹשֶׂה כָּל הַכְּתוּב בָּהּ וַיִּוֹדְעוּ דָּעָה גְּמוּלָה נְכוֹנָה זוֹכָה בָּהּ לְחַיֵּי
to the life of through it merits proper complete with knowledge and knows it in it that is written all who does

הָעוֹלָם הַבֹּא. וְלִפִּי גָדֹל מַעֲשָׂיו וְרַב חֲכָמָתוֹ הוּא זוֹכָה.
merits he his wisdom and the abundance of his deeds the greatness of and according to to come the world

וְהַבְטִיחָנוּ בַּתּוֹרָה שָׂאֵם נַעֲשֶׂה אוֹתָהּ בְּשִׂמְחָה וּבְטוֹבַת נַפְשׁ
soul and with goodness of with joy it we perform that if in the Torah and He promised us

וְנִהְיֶה בְּחֲכָמָתָהּ תָּמִיד שִׁסְרִי מִמֶּנּוּ כָּל הַדְּבָרִים הַמוֹנְעִים אוֹתָנוּ
us that prevent the things all from us that He will remove always on its wisdom and we meditate

מִלַּעֲשׂוֹתָהּ כְּגוֹן חֲלִי וּמִלְחָמָה וָרָעַב וְכִיּוֹצָא בָּהֶן. וַיִּשְׁפִּיעַ לָנוּ כָּל
all upon us and He will bestow of them and the like and famine and war sickness such as from performing it

הַטּוֹבוֹת הַמַּחֲזִיקוֹת אֶת יְדֵינוּ לַעֲשׂוֹת הַתּוֹרָה כְּגוֹן שְׂבַע וְשָׁלוֹם וְרַבּוּי
and abundance of and peace plenty such as the Torah to perform our hands — that strengthen the goods

כֶּסֶף וְזָהָב. כִּדִּי שֶׁלֹּא נַעֲסֹק כָּל יָמֵינוּ בְּדְבָרִים שֶׁהַגּוֹף צָרִיךְ לָהֶן
them needs that the body with things our days all we will occupy that not in order and gold silver ourselves

אֲלֹא נִשְׁבּ פְּנוּיִים לְלַמֵּד בְּחֲכָמָה וּלַעֲשׂוֹת הַמִּצְוָה כִּדִּי שֶׁנִּזְכָּה
in order the mitzvah and to perform wisdom to learn free we will sit but

לְחַיֵּי הָעוֹלָם הַבֹּא. וְכֵן הוּא אוֹמֵר בַּתּוֹרָה אַחֵר שֶׁהַבְטִיחַ
after in the Torah says He and so to come the world to the life of that we will merit

בְּטוֹבוֹת הָעוֹלָם הַזֶּה דְּבָרִים ו' כה "וּצְדָקָה תִּהְיֶה לָנוּ" וְגו'.
for us it will be and righteousness 25 6 Devarim this the world with the goods of that He promised

וְכֵן הוֹדִיעָנוּ בַּתּוֹרָה שָׂאֵם נַעֲזֹב הַתּוֹרָה מִדַּעַת וְנַעֲסֹק בְּהַבְלִי
and we occupy willingly the Torah we abandon that if in the Torah He informed us and so etc. ourselves

הַיָּמִן כְּעֵנֶן שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר דְּבָרִים לֵב טו "וַיִּשְׁמַן יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּבְעֹט",

Yeshurun and he grew fat 15 32 Devarim as it is said like the matter the time with the vanities of

שֶׁדִּין הָאֱמֶת יָסִיר מִן הָעֹזִיבִים כָּל טוֹבוֹת הָעוֹלָם הַזֶּה

the world the goods of all those who abandon from will remove the Truth that the Judge of and kicked

שֶׁהֵן חֲזָקוֹ יְדֵיהֶם לִבְעוֹט וַיִּמְבִּיא עֲלֵיהֶם כָּל הָרָעוֹת הַמוֹנְעִים אוֹתָן

that prevent the evils all upon them and He brings to kick their hands strengthened which they this

מִלְקָנֹת הָעוֹלָם הֵבֵא כְּדֵי שְׂיֵאָבְדוּ בְּרָשָׁעִים. הוּא שֶׁכָּתוּב

it is in their wickedness that they will perish in order to come the world from acquiring them

בַּתּוֹרָה דְּבָרִים כֹּחַ מִזֵּי "תַּחַת אֲשֶׁר לֹא עֲבַדְתָּ אֶת ה'" וְגו', דְּבָרִים

etc. Hashem — you served not because 47 28 Devarim in the Torah that is written

כֹּחַ מִחַ "וְעֲבַדְתָּ" אֶת אֲיִבֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁלַחְנוּ ה' בְּךָ. נִמְצָא

against you Hashem He will send whom your enemies — and you shall serve 48 28 Devarim

פְּרוֹשׁ כָּל אוֹתָן הַבְּרָכוֹת וְהַקְלָלוֹת עַל דֶּרֶךְ זוֹ, כְּלוֹמַר

this the path of on and the curses the blessings those all the explanation of it is found

אִם עֲבַדְתֶּם אֶת ה' בְּשִׂמְחָה וּשְׂמֵרְתֶּם דְּרָכָיו מִשְׁפִּיעַ לָכֶם

He bestows His way and you keep with joy Hashem — you serve if meaning to say

הַבְּרָכוֹת הָאֵלֶּה וּמִרְחִיק הַקְלָלוֹת מִכֶּם עַד שֶׁתִּהְיוּ פְּנוּיִים לְהִתְחַפֵּם

free that you will be until from you the curses and He distances these the blessings upon you

בַּתּוֹרָה וְלַעֲסֹק בָּהּ כְּדֵי שֶׁתִּזְכּוּ לַחַיִּי הָעוֹלָם הֵבֵא וַיֵּיטֵב

to come the world to the life of that you will merit in order in it and to occupy in the Torah to gain wisdom yourselves

לָךְ לְעוֹלָם שְׂכָלוֹ טוֹב וְתֹארוֹךְ יָמֶיךָ לְעוֹלָם שְׂכָלוֹ

in the world days and you will prolong good that is entirely in the world for you and it will be good

אָרְךְ וְנִמְצָאתָם זֹכִין לְשְׁנֵי הָעוֹלָמוֹת, לְחַיִּים טוֹבִים בְּעוֹלָם

good to life the worlds to two of meriting and you are found long that is entirely

הַזֶּה הַמְּבִיאִים לַחַיִּי הָעוֹלָם הֵבֵא. שָׂאֵם לֹא יִקְנֶה פֹה חֲכָמָה

here one acquires not for if to come the world to the life of that bring this in the world

וּמַעֲשִׂים טוֹבִים אֵין לוֹ בְּמָה יִזְכֶּה שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר קֵהֶלֶת ט י "כִּי אֵין

for 10 9 Koheles as it is said he will merit with what to him there is not good and deeds wisdom

מַעֲשֶׂה וְחֶשְׁבוֹן וְדַעַת וְחֲכָמָה בְּשֵׂאוֹל". וְאִם עֲזַבְתָּם אֶת ה'

— you abandoned and if in the grave and wisdom and knowledge and accounting deed there is no

וּשְׂגִיתָם בְּמֵאֵכָל וּבְמִשְׁתָּה וּזְנוּת וְדוּמָה לָהֶם מְבִיא עֲלֵיכֶם

He brings of them and the like and licentiousness and with drink with food and you went astray Hashem

כָּל הַקְלָלוֹת הָאֵלֶּה וּמִסִּיר כָּל הַבְּרָכוֹת עַד שֶׁיִּכְלוּ יְמֵיכֶם

that there will end until the blessings all and He removes these the curses all upon you

בְּבִהְלָה וּפְחַד וְלֹא יִהְיֶה לָכֶם לֵב פָּנוּי וְלֹא גּוֹף שָׁלֵם לַעֲשׂוֹת

complete a body and not free a heart to you there will be and not and fear in confusion your days

הַמִּצְוֹת כְּדֵי שְׂתַאבְדּוּ מִחַיֵּי הָעוֹלָם הַבָּא וְנִמְצָא שְׂאֵבֶדְתֶּם

and it is found to come the world from the life of that you will perish in order the mitzvot to perform

שְׁנֵי עוֹלָמוֹת. שְׂבֻזְמָן שְׂאָדָם טְרוּד בְּעוֹלָם הַזֶּה בְּחַלִּי וּבְמִלְחָמָה

with sickness this in the world is troubled that a person for at the time worlds two that you lost

וְרַעְבוֹן אֵינוֹ מִתְעַסֵּק לֹא בְחָכְמָה וְלֹא בַּמִּצְוֹת שֶׁבָּהֶן

with mitzvot nor with wisdom neither occupying himself he is not and famine and with war

זוֹכִין לְחַיֵּי הָעוֹלָם הַבָּא:

the world to the life of one merits that through them

This halacha explains that the physical rewards and punishments mentioned in the Torah are not the ultimate reward, but rather conditions to enable or hinder our spiritual pursuit of the World to Come.

ה'י"ב

הַכְּסוּפִים לַיָּמֹת הַמָּשִׁיחַ וְהַהֶבְדֵּל מֵהָעוֹלָם הַבָּא

Halacha 2 · The Yearning for the Messianic Era and Its Distinction from the World to Come

וּמִפְּנֵי זֶה נִתְּאוּ כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל נְבִיאֵיהֶם וְחַכְמֵיהֶם לַיָּמֹת הַמָּשִׁיחַ כְּדֵי

in order the Messiah for the days of and their Sages their prophets Israel all of yearned this And because of

שְׁיִנוּחוֹ מִמְּלָכוֹת שְׂאֵינָן מְנִיחוֹת לָהֶן לְעֵסֶק בְּתוֹרָה

with the Torah to occupy themselves them allow that do not from the kingdoms that they may rest

וּבַמִּצְוֹת כְּהֵגֹן. וְיִמְצְאוּ לָהֶם מְרֻגָּע וְיִרְבוּ בְּחָכְמָה כְּדֵי

in order in wisdom and they will increase rest for themselves and they will find properly and with the mitzvot

שְׂיִזְכּוּ לְחַיֵּי הָעוֹלָם הַבָּא. לְפִי שְׂבָאוֹתֵן הַיָּמִים תִּרְבֶּה הַדַּעַה

the knowledge will increase days that in those because to Come the World the life of that they will merit

וְהַחֲכָמָה וְהָאֱמֶת שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר יִשְׁעִיהָ יֵא ט "כִּי מְלֵאָה הָאָרֶץ דַּעַה אֶת

— with knowledge of the earth filled is For 9 11 Yeshayahu as it is said and the truth and the wisdom

ה'". וְנֶאֱמַר יִרְמִיָּה לֹא לֵג "וְלֹא יִלְמְדוּ אִישׁ אֶת אָחִיו וְאִישׁ אֶת

— and a man his brother — a man will teach And not 33 31 Yirmeyahu and it is said Hashem

רֵעֵהוּ". וְנֶאֱמַר יַחֲזַקְאֵל לוֹ כּו "וְהִסְרֹתִי אֶת לֵב הָאָבֶן מִבְּשָׂרְכֶם".

from your flesh the stone the heart of — And I will remove 26 36 Yechezkel and it is said his fellow

מִפְּנֵי שְׂאוֹתוֹ הַמֶּלֶךְ שֶׁיַּעֲמֵד מִזֶּרַע דָּוִד בַּעַל חָכְמָה יִהְיֶה יֵתֵר

greater will be wisdom a master of Dovid from the seed of who will arise king that that because

מִשְׁלֹמֹה. וְנִבְיָא גָדוֹל הוּא קָרוֹב לְמֹשֶׁה רַבֵּנוּ. וְלִפְיִכָּךְ יִלְמַד כָּל

all of he will teach and therefore our teacher to Moshe close he is great and a prophet than Shlomo

הָעָם וְיוֹרָה אוֹתָם דֶּרֶךְ ה'. וְיָבוֹאוּ כָּל הַגּוֹיִם לְשִׁמְעוֹ שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר

as it is said to hear him the nations all of and will come Hashem the path of them and instruct the nation

יִשְׁעִיהָ ב ב "וְהָיָה בְּאַחֲרִית הַיָּמִים נִכּוֹן יִהְיֶה הַר בֵּית ה'

Hashem the House of the mountain of will be established the days in the end of And it shall be 2 2 Yeshayahu

בְּרֹאשׁ הַהָרִים". וְסוֹף כָּל הַשָּׂכָר כָּלוּ וְהַטּוֹבָה הָאַחֲרוֹנָה שְׂאִין

which there is not the ultimate and the good entirely the reward all of And the end of the mountains at the head of

לָהּ הַפְּסִיק וְגִרְעוֹן הוּא חַיִּי הָעוֹלָם הַבָּא. אֲבָל יָמוֹת הַמָּשִׁיחַ הוּא

is the Messiah the days of but to Come the World the life of is or decrease interruption to it

הָעוֹלָם הַזֶּה וְעוֹלָם כְּמִנְהַגוֹ הוֹלֵךְ אֲלָא שְׁהַמְלָכוֹת תִּחְזֹר לְיִשְׂרָאֵל.

to Israel will return that the sovereignty except goes on according to its custom and the world world this

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הַמָּשִׁיחַ אֲלָא שְׁעֶבֶד מַלְכוּת בְּלִבָּד:

alone the kingdoms subjugation to except the Messiah

The Rambam explains that the Sages and prophets yearned for the Messianic era not for material gain, but to study Torah undisturbed, though the ultimate reward remains the spiritual World to Come.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

The Rambam resolves the apparent contradiction regarding Torah rewards by explaining that the physical blessings promised in this world—such as peace, health, and prosperity—are not the ultimate reward for mitzvos, but rather a divine means to remove obstacles so we can study Torah and gain the wisdom needed to merit the World to Come. Conversely, worldly curses are a form of retribution that deprives the wicked of these conducive conditions, leaving them to forfeit both worlds. This understanding clarifies why Klal Yisrael and our Sages yearn so deeply for the Messianic era: it will be a time of rest from the oppression of the nations, allowing us to freely pursue the knowledge of Hashem under the guidance of Moshiach, a great prophet and teacher who will instruct the entire world in the ways of Hashem.

My dear talmid, when you look at the physical blessings the Torah promises us, health, peace, and livelihood, you might think these are the ultimate goals of our avodah. But the Rambam teaches us a profound secret about how Hashem runs His world: physical comfort is not your reward; it is your workspace. Hashem promises to clear the obstacles of worry, illness, and financial stress from your path for one reason only, so that you can have a 'lev panui', a free and quiet heart, to learn His Torah and do His mitzvos without distraction.

This means that every moment of ease, every dollar of profit, and every day of good health you are blessed with is actually a divine vote of confidence. Hashem is saying, 'I am giving you this peace so you can use it to build your neshama for the World to Come.' If we take those blessings and use them only to indulge in the physical world, we miss the entire point and risk losing both worlds. Our physical life is the ultimate preparation ground; there is no Torah study or growth in the grave.

Today, look at whatever peace or comfort you have in your life, even a quiet hour or a comfortable room, not just as a convenience, but as a holy gift of time and space given to you by Hashem to connect with Him. Use that quiet moment to learn a halacha or do a chesed with joy.

Takeaway for today: Identify one area of comfort or free time you enjoy today, and consciously dedicate at least five minutes of that quiet space to learning Torah or doing a mitzvah, recognizing that Hashem gave you this peace specifically for this purpose.