

An Adaptation of the Rosh's Sefer

Orchos Chayim

"The Pathways of Life"

ECLECTIC TORAH COMPILATIONS

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AN ADAPTATION OF THE ROSH'S SEFER

ORCHOS CHAYIM

THE PATHWAYS OF LIFE

A STRAIGHT-FORWARD, SIMPLE AND
PRACTICAL GUIDE TO GOOD LIVING

BY RABBI ASHER BEN JEHIEL, THE "ROSH"

WITH HELP FROM THE TRANSLATION OF THE TOSEFOS YOM TOV AND
PARTIALLY REORDERED BASED ON THE MONTEFIORE MANUSCRIPT AS PUBLISHED IN
L'MA'ALAH L'MASKIL BY R' ALEXANDER STERNBUCH, BNEI BRAK, 5754.

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AN ADAPTATION OF ORCHOS CHAYIM THE PATHWAYS OF LIFE

INTRODUCTION

This monograph is an adaptation and slight rearrangement of the order of Rabbeinu Asher's (the Rosh's) short and most lovely, ethical work, Orchos Chayim, the "Pathways of Life", also called Hanhagos HaRosh. This version is an amalgamation of the standard printed edition of the Rosh's work with the expanded translation, originally in Yiddish, and elucidations of the Tosafos Yom Tov, as well as certain modifications and added maxims as found in the "Montefiore manuscript", the latter of which are almost certainly not those of the Rosh himself but, nevertheless, dovetail nicely with the our Master's practical and wise adages.

Herein, the Rosh, exquisitely and inspiringly, encapsulates not only key Laws of the Torah governing the daily life of the Jew, but also identifies the most fundamental modes of behavior that he must scrupulously observe in order to preserve, refine and cultivate a pure, ethical and moral soul. These are the pathways to sincere piety and virtuousness, the path to holiness, and the road to G-d. He tells us not just how we should act, but how to think and what are the proper attitudes to life the committed Jew must have. These surely are absolute prerequisites for proper Torah observance and practice.

I have attempted to be as true to the original as possible, although, assuredly, I have introduced some of my own understandings into the translation. This is inevitable, as any translation is bound inextricably with interpretation. Therefore, I pray that I have not made any error in this work which, in any way may cause someone to be misled, G-d forbid.

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This is what great rabbis have said about Orchos Chayim¹:

- “(this) is a brief work with lofty words of ethics and fear of Heaven by which a person should conduct himself and his family”. (*Chida*)
- “All the Rosh’s words are words of moral reproof”. (*Tosafos Yom Tov*)
- “This work is like good, old, preserved wine which gives joy to (G-d) Above and (man) below, directing him in the correct and straight way”. (*Sha’agas Aryeh*)
- “These are the foundations of the Torah, the compass for (attaining) Awe (of G-d) is embedded herein. This (work) is worthy of being read once every week”. (*Ma’agalei Kitzira*)
- “Great matters are written herein. Take them to heart”. (*Harashaz of Kelm*)
- “Our Sages said four matters require strengthening: Torah, prayer, good deeds and Derech Eretz – i.e. proper, ethical behavior. A lack of Derech Eretz is a deficiency in Torah”. (*R’ Yerucham Lebowitz*)
- “The great principle throughout Orchos Chayim of the Rosh is that even though there is a clear Halachic prohibition in a particular matter, nevertheless the Rosh (explains things) logically; that it is only reasonable that we are required to be ethical and moral, as our Sages have taught Derech Eretz precedes Torah”. (*R’ Daniel Movshowitz*)
- Sefer Orchos Chayim of the Rosh comprises all human behavior and activities. It guides man in his ascent..... The Tosafos Yom Tov in Vienna instructed that this work be learned all year ‘round before Prayers according to the days of the week. It became customary in the Yeshivos to engage in this work during the days of Elul as a rational guide to bring a person to repentance. In Yeshivas Kelm, they learned it all year. This is a proper Sefer Halacha and one must be meticulous with every word, since this came from one of the greatest Sages amongst the Rishonim. The first chapter contains matters one must particularly avoid: “lethal obstacles” which man encounters on a daily basis. It is one’s obligation to make sure his deeds are “in the light of life”, and so he must greatly distance himself from evil traits such as arrogance, anger, and evil speech. (We find that some of) these (maxims) are repeated, because they are the (basic) underpinnings of Man’s attitude and character”. (*R’ Yosef Shlomo Kahaneman, Ga’avad of Ponevezh*)

¹ See Introduction to L’ma’alah L’maskil.

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THESE ARE MATTERS WHICH A PERSON SHOULD AVOID BECAUSE THEY ARE 'OBSTACLES OF DEATH', YET WILL BE ENLIGHTENED BY AS THE 'LIGHT OF LIFE'.

Day One.

Avoid disagreements which are not for the sake of Heaven.²

Distance yourself, as much as possible, from conceit, flattering others, hypocrisy, lies, fraud and dishonesty, mockery, slandering, tale-bearing, provoking others into argument, and anger.

Beware of the danger in making vows. Do not deceive other people, neither in words nor in monetary matters. Do not be envious or hateful of others.

Never call anyone by a derogatory or offensive nickname; and don't invent one for someone. For the one who does so has no place in the World to Come. Do not tell defamatory tales about other people nor listen to or even believe the veracity of gossip.

Do not associate with loiterers and loafers nor frequent the synagogues of the ignorant masses.

Do not look at a woman who is forbidden for you to marry.

² From the Montefiore manuscript of Orchos Chayim as published Kuntres L'Ma'alah L'Maskil, by R' Alexander Sternbuch, Bnei Brak, 5754 and absent in the standard printed editions.

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Do not speak when handling a Cup of Blessing, such as one used during the Grace after Meals (Birkas Hamozone), until you drink from it.

Do not talk between Boruch She'omar and the end of the silent, Shemoneh Esrei Prayer, and including Tachanun, nor when the Chazan is reciting his Repetition, unless it is a matter of Torah, determining a Halacha or performing a pressing Mitzvah, or to greet someone with or respond to Shalom. Do not talk neither when Hallel is recited nor when the Torah is being read in public.

Do not eat Gentile-baked bread, even from their commercial bakeries, unless Jewish-baked bread is unavailable.

Do not participate in dinner parties (attended by a lot of people), except if it involves a Mitzvah.

Do not engage in idle talk, even of those matters which there is no sin.

Make it your habit to fall asleep at night whilst learning Torah, and not in the middle of a pointless conversation. That is, tire yourself on Torah.

Do not put yourself into a matter of doubt regarding the time of sunset and the start of Shabbos. Instruct and caution your family regarding the proper observances of Shabbos. Daven Mincha on Erev Shabbos early in order to accept the Sabbath while it is still daytime.

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When it comes time for any of the three daily Prayers, set aside your business and pray. Concentrate on your prayers. Importantly, do not look at things which are not yours, so that you will not come to illicitly desire them.

Do not speak between the Washing of the Hands and the Blessing on Bread. Be first in wishing people Shalom, good morning and other such salutations.

Praise G-d for satiating your appetite and quenching your thirst. If people curse or shame you, do not answer them at all. Rather, be of those who are offended and not of those who offend. Ignore their bad behavior.

Do not hurry and be argumentative. Stay clear of making oaths and vows, because of the sin of broken promises, one's young children die.

Distance yourself from jesting and anger, for these things confuse the minds and spirits of men. At all times serve your Creator out of love. Forget not any of these matters.

Love G-d with all your heart and soul, and with all your resources. When you recite the Shema, sincerely intend that, were it to be necessary, you would sacrifice your life and all your assets in order to sanctify His Name; and never do anything to desecrate His Name or degrade His Commandments. By doing this, you fulfill the words of the Singer, "Because, for your sake, we are killed all the time" (Psalms 44:23).

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Trust G-d with all your heart and believe in His personal Providence; He, alone, can help everyone with everyone's needs. With this, you unify Him completely, for His Eyes rove everywhere on Earth and see all the doings of Man, without exception. He knows the hearts and minds of everyone. The one who does not believe that He "took you out of the Land of Egypt" does not believe the beginning of the verse "I am the Lord, Your G-d", and he cannot fully make G-d One. What makes Israel special among the Nations of the World, and is the foundation of the entire Torah, is to make G-d One. This has always been at the center of the faith of Israel.



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Day Two.

Distance yourself from arrogance and anger. Rebuke your Evil Inclination and thoughts which exhort you to listen to your own will. Do not follow them. Rather, fulfill the Will and Ways of G-d as revealed in the Torah, which are clear, pure and straight.

Distance yourself from falsehood and matters of lies. Do not use G-d's Name in vain nor ever express any of G-d's various Names in a filthy place, even if you have reason to use one of them.

Remove the yoke of envy which burdens the hearts of men. Rely not on people; be modest and humble before your Creator. Trust not in gold and wealth, for this is the first step in idolatry, and causes you to divert your attention from the Holy One, blessed be He. Disburse your monies as He wishes, for He has the power to restore all your losses, and satisfy all your and your household's needs.

Know who is this G-d of your fathers. Know that your words will be weighed in the Scale of Justice, and justice will be meted out. Say nothing wrong or irrational or inappropriate. Keep your word and do not change what you have promised. Make the dispersion of your monies easier than your speech. Do not be quick in speaking evil. Therefore, do not say a harsh word, even if there is good reason to nor say nothing until you weigh your words sensibly and carefully.

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Confess your sins each morning and evening. Remember Zion and Jerusalem with a broken heart, sincere concern, groans and tears.

Always have in mind the day of your demise, and equip yourself with the provisions for your final trip, that is Torah and good deeds. If you remember this at all times, as well as regretting your sins and doing repentance, you will be prepared for the day of death and your journey to the Next World; and your bed should be soaked in tears remembering your sins. It should frighten you to contemplate that even the great and pious Talmudic Scholar, Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakai of blessed memory, who was the leader of Israel during the time of the destruction of the Second Temple, and who had many outstanding students who he taught until they, themselves, were great Torah scholars, was himself afraid of his ultimate fate when he took ill. He was an exemplary human being and learned much Torah and did enormous good. And yet, he was terrified that maybe he failed to do enough good or that possibly he may have once committed some minor injustice and, for that, Gehinna was awaiting him. All the more so should we be horrified.

Be a good friend to the G-d-fearing. Associate and bond with them. Distance yourself from those who are ungodly, lawless and unjust. Love your reprovers and their admonitions.

It is beneficial and proper for you to belittle your good deeds in your own eyes, while exaggerating the number and gravity of your offenses. Contemplate, at all times, the

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boundless compassion and unlimited grace your Creator bestows upon you; the One who feeds you when you need to be fed. Do not serve Him for recompense, rather do so because you were so commanded, and for the glorification of His Holy Name.

Remember and speak of this at all times: at night when you retire, envelop yourself with love for Him. In the day, when you arise, when you go about your business, turn to Him, be quick and meticulous with your service to Him. With this, He will give you strength and support, and direct you to do His Will.

Pray with devotion, for prayer is worship of the heart. Think. Was your son to speak frivolously with you, would you not be angry with him? So, too, you who came from a putrid drop, standing before the King and Master of the world, should you not be earnest in your prayers? Do not be like a slave who was assigned an honorable task, one beneficial for him, and yet he spoils it. How dare he stand before the king! What, then, would be better than to ask for forgiveness when we say "*Selach lonu*" (forgive us) in the Shemoneh Esrei, but worse than to recite it without intent? If it is impossible to maintain concentration and devotion during the entire Prayer, say at least the first Blessing of the Shemoneh Esrei with sincerity, as well as the first verse of Krias Shema. For one does not fulfill his obligation for Prayer if he does not say at least these sections with intent.

Learn the weekly Torah portion each week, reciting the Torah text twice, the Targum once, and then learn Rashi's

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commentary. This should be completed before the time the Reader concludes the weekly, public Torah reading in Synagogue on Shabbos morning. Understand what Rashi is saying. Greatly embrace and attach yourself to his commentary. When learning Gemara, be certain that you correctly understand that, too, and cling to it. For it is a proper thing to learn Mishna and Gemara, and one will receive reward for so doing. The one who sacrifices himself and carefully and scrupulously learns Gemara so that he understands it correctly, makes himself beloved. There is no greater and unique a reward than there will be for learning Torah, and no better profession than to learn Gemara. The Mishna says that learning Torah is equal, for G-d, to all the best Good Deeds. It is impossible to properly understand the Torah without the Gemara. Talmud Torah is equal to all else.



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Day Three.

Never eat or drink anything without making the appropriate blessings before and after with as much zeal as you can. Comprehend the meaning of the blessing. Cover your head when mentioning G-d's Name, and close your eyes. When making a blessing or praying to G-d be not as it says, "With their mouths and lips they honored Me, but their hearts were distant from Me" (Isaiah 29:13).

Wash your hands before praying and eating. When you come from the bathroom, make the Asher Yotzar blessing, but do not make the blessing on washing the hands³.

Make fringes (Tzitzis) on the four corners of your garment in order that you remember G-d's commandments, and in order that you sanctify yourself in all your doings. Act with modesty in the bathroom. When at home, remember that you will be held accountable for even light conversations between husband and wife. Do not accustom yourself to act frivolously, and put the fear of Heaven upon yourself. Do not gaze at a woman, even one who is permitted to you. Place Mezuzos on all your doorposts.

Do not reveal the secrets of others. Even non-confidential matters, keep in the confines of your heart. If you again hear these same things from someone else, do not tell him that you have heard this before. You need not tell

³ The Rosh says that if one is about to say his Prayers, he should add the blessing Al Nitilas Yodoyim; but the Halacha is not like him, excepting in the morning before Shacharis.

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your wife everything, and do not assume that she will keep secrets.

Be heedful to pray at set times in the morning, afternoon and evening. Prepare yourself an hour before the time so that you can pray with intent. Be punctual, and be of the first ten in the Minyan. Do not speak idle talk in Shul. Make sure you are not without Tallis and Tefillin.

Weigh carefully each step you take. Be moderate with food and drink, and with all your attributes. Take the middle path and do not veer neither to the right or left. Stick to the truth. Deal honestly with people. Vigorously pursue peace and friendship between people.

Pursue justice! For the one who pursues justice and righteousness and gives charity and is quick with his compassion – in words and deeds - will find life and justice and honor. Do not fail to give the half Shekel once a year. Each week and month donate as much as you can to charity. Each day, before Prayers, give at least something, however small, to charity. When you can, tithe your assets and profits. Make sure you always are stocked with food and other provisions and resources at home with which you can readily help the needy, whether they are dead or alive, poor or rich.

Establish times for Torah before you eat and before you retire to bed at night. Speak Torah at your table. Instruct the members of your household to do right; train and caution them in accordance with the ways of the Torah. Let them not speak conceitedly. Warn them against speaking in a

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degrading and shameful manner. Remember, the first thing a person will be judged on when he arrives before the Heavenly Court is whether or not he established times for Torah.

Do the Will of your Maker! Commit in your heart to discharge all what your Creator and Master has requested of you! Be as equally happy with your portion in life whether you have been allotted a little or much. Beseech G-d, at all times, that He turn your heart to executing His commandments. Cast your fate with G-d in all what you do. Do not be stingy with regard to expenditures for all the needs of the Sabbath or the Holidays. Try and bring these days in early, while it is still daylight, for this is honor for them. Enjoy them with good food and drink, and respectful clothing, and spend half the day in the Study Hall and the synagogue. Honor these days when they begin and when they end. Set a table at the end of the Sabbath.

Be as happy when you are rebuked as you would be if you found great spoils of war - for which you never have to pay. The wise man loves the one who admonishes him, for open reproof is better than concealed love, and it is pleasant for him.

Understand how things will end up before you begin them. Contemplate the loss of not performing a Mitzvah versus the reward for performing it, as well as the punishment for sinning against the reward for avoiding the sin. The wise man sees the consequences of his actions.

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Do not rely on your own will and judgment. Listen to advice and accept reproof. Be quick to perform your tasks, and all G-d's commandments. Above all, never think evil.

Do not accustom yourself to arise from your bed lazy. Rather, rise promptly in order to serve your Maker. Do not sleep a lot like an indolent person. Train yourself to rise early, at sunrise. Arise from your bed at the morning chirp of the birds in order to serve the Holy One, blessed be He.

Run to the House of Prayer; never be late. Watch that you do not step into filth. Concentrate on your prayers and not on other matters. Be prompt to bless and glorify your Maker. Do not speak mockingly or otherwise when the Chazan is praying. Be meticulous in answering Amen. Do not pray with soiled and impure hands or an unclean body, for your prayers will not be heard or accepted. Do not pray quickly nor swallow your words. Rather, have proper intent, and pray at ease, understand what you are saying, enunciating and slightly vocalizing each word.

Never forget that death can come suddenly and that there will be judgment before G-d. Do not forget your omnipotent Creator. Direct your entire will and hopes to Him. Imagine that He is standing before you at all times.

Do not perform any Mitzvah in order to receive a reward nor distance yourself from sin simply to avoid punishment from Him. Rather, serve G-d out of true love. Do not be overly joyous. Remember that life is fleeting. You are

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descendant of Adam, the first man, who was created from dust, and in the end you will be consumed by worms.



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Day Four.

Do not procrastinate in performing a Mitzvah which falls in your lap. Do it right away and for the sake of Heaven. Do not say, “I will do it tomorrow” lest you not have the time or opportunity to do so then.

Do not be lazy in reciting the Blessing of the Moon, as this is a most delightful prayer for Heaven. From the time of the Exodus from Egypt until the destruction of the Temple, G-d dwelt amongst us in the Tabernacle and Temple, and was close to us. This is what is called the Shechina (G-d’s neighboring Presence). Now, when we sanctify the New Moon, G-d again draws His Shechina near to us. How can we not be diligent and careful that we do not omit this blessing? For if Israel did not merit anything other than receiving the Shechina but once a month with this prayer, this would be enough!

Do not separate yourself from learning Torah wisdom and ethics. Allow yourself to be covered with the dust of the feet of the Sages by following in their footsteps, and you, too, will become wise.

Do nothing to mislead people or that would cause them to joke about. For it is the manner of the ignorant masses to latch onto the mistakes and the bad things people do, yet they disregard the good in people.

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Never stop performing acts of loving-kindness⁴ even though others mock you for this. Never be ashamed to perform a Mitzvah.

Never make fun of your father or mother nor minimize their honor, and do not cause them any pain or distress. Honor them as much as you can while they are alive. Do not clench tight your fist and desist from always giving to the poor and indigent. Never turn from helping your relatives making like you don't know them. Rush to prepare food for them immediately, they may be ravenous.

Do not be irate with wayfarers and your guests. Receive them with a cheerful face. Do not fail to give them provisions for their journeys. Accompany them on their way, and comfort them for they are far from home and dejected. Do not tarry in bringing a tithe to the communal kitchen. The act of bringing charity in secret checks G-d's anger against you. Do not look towards those who are wealthier than you. Rather, turn your sights to those less fortunate than you. By so doing, you will avoid jealousy and happy with your own lot, and you will be able conduct a G-d-fearing and Jewish life.

Do not look up to those who are lesser than you in their Service of G-d or their Awe of Heaven. Rather, set your eyes on those who are greater than you in these affairs.

⁴ Alternatively, "Do not stop in the middle of performing an act of loving-kindness because someone is mocking you".

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Do not be quick to anger about anything. Be slow to anger lest you lose your wisdom. Do not speak perversely and with foul language for you will be judged for all what you say. Never raise a hand against your fellow man, even were he to curse your mother or father to your face.

Do not remain angry with your fellow man for even one day. Beg forgiveness from him before he comes and asks forgiveness from you. Never speak evil or slanderously about anyone. Never be contentious or spread lies about other people. Do not overreact and respond hastily and vehemently to someone who speaks bad things.

Do not scream and yell like a wild, boorish person, for by so doing you will lose your Fear of Heaven. Do not speak so loudly at home that your voice can be heard outside of your house. Do not bellow like an animal. Always speak gently.

Don't involve yourself in other people's disputes and don't take sides, for in the end they will reconcile and the side you took up against will be angry with you because you interfered in the argument.

Do not respond to those who curse or revile you or those you call you a liar. Seal your lips and be silent lest you heat up your heart to anger. Never humiliate anyone in public for one who does so has no portion in the World to Come.

Never bully anyone because you are stronger than him. Remember, there may come a time when you will be the

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weak one. Do not be arrogant with people. Be of a lowly spirit, and consider yourself like the dirt upon which everyone tramples. Never pursue honor or authority. Never aspire to heights beyond your capabilities⁵.

Do not shame anyone or anything, for there is no one who does not have his hour or anything which doesn't have its place or a circumstance where it is needed. Never compel people to honor you because of your wealth or powerful position. Someone might resent this and will try to disgrace you or cause your downfall in return.



⁵ Literally, what you deserve.

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Day Five.

Never let up in your pursuit of making new friends and supporters. Do not take lightly even one enemy. Never embarrass or humiliate anyone in public, for one who does so has no portion in the World to Come.

Do not consider lightly something your friend acquired, for this will upset him and cause him consternation. To do so is the manner of fools. Do not trust in your own wealth, for anyone who trusts in his money accumulates enemies, and will falter and collapse because of them.

Never say, “G-d has made me rich because of my righteousness”. Rather, be worried that you have received your reward in this World, and not in the World to Come⁶.

Do not make it a habit to oppose your neighbors or fellow citizens and communal leaders. Sublimate your will to theirs.

Do not cause your fellow man to turn from the good way to a bad one, like those who entice and seduce people from the worship of G-d.

Do not make it a habit to eat out of your home with large groups of people other than for purposes of a Mitzvah. Do not be a gourmand and stuff your belly with food, for many illnesses result from overeating. Do not become

⁶ Where the rewards are greater.

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accustomed to getting drunk. You might act foolishly or speak foul-mouthed, and then regret what you have done. Do not socialize with people who devour wine or are gluttonous carnivores lest you forget your Maker and make yourself ill or become sinful.

Never be angry with your wife. If you pushed her away with your left hand, draw her near energetically with your right, and without delay. Do not terrorize your family and household for many serious failings result from such behavior. Never humiliate your wife. Rather, honor her and, by so doing, she will avoid sin.

Never be alone in a room with any woman other than your wife, mother or daughter, and even if there are two women with you. Never look at women or their clothing. Never praise a woman for her beauty or her good deeds lest others suspect her of immorality⁷.

Do not make it your habit to hang around with mockers and lowlifes lest they draw you into sin.

Do not venerate yourself nor make yourself precious in your own eyes. Rather, underrate yourself.

Do not be lazy in pursuing wisdom nor slow in respectfully rebuking your friend in private.

⁷ Literally, “and others will come and praise her”. That language is difficult. Rabbi Reuven Melamed in the name of Rabbi E. Lopian says that this text is a printer’s error and should read, “and others will come to desire her.”

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Act patiently. Do your work with forethought and not hastily.

Speak only when the time is right and never say anything which has no benefit. Simply, scrupulously watch what you say. Even regarding matters which are beneficial and not damaging, talk succinctly. Speak to the point.

Never speak with someone who is overly agitated or fanatical, for not only will he disregard your words, he will denigrate them.

Perpetually make efforts to acquire and maintain a faithful friend. Good friends are most beneficial.



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Day Six.

Do not be oblivious to the good that others do for you. Acknowledge even those who do something as simple as open a door for you⁸, which you surely could have done on your own.

Do not inveigle your fellow man with flattery. Never say anything you do not mean.

Make an effort to be first in the saying of Shalom to everyone, Jew and Gentile alike, because of peace. For you should have good and friendly neighborly relations with everyone. Never anger a Gentile for every Gentile has his hour; his memory is long, and he keeps his anger forever. Never utter a lie or speak deceitfully. Be trustworthy with everyone, Jew and Gentile alike.

Never join with an evil person or one who is sinful or one who is angry or irate or a fool. For one day you will be shamed by them.

Train yourself to only stand near a wise and astute man. Listen carefully to, understand and abide by his words. Do not even think that you can best a wise Torah scholar. You will not get any cleverer for trying to do so, nor will this result in your being considered a greater scholar.

⁸ Train your children to acknowledge other peoples' kindnesses by always saying "thank you" or by making some other obvious gesture. The very first thing we do when we awake each morning is say the very words "Modeh Ani" thanking G-d for returning our souls to our quiescent bodies. Hakaras Hatov is fundamental to Torah Im Derech Eretz. - RB

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●⁹ Do not break into the speech of another person, for this is the attribute of a Golem (i.e. a dunce). Do not respond until you hear everything that is to be said.

Do not be pedantic and petty with other people about every little thing they do. Doing so will result in accruing needless enemies.

Make no effort to learn about other people's secrets or things which have been hidden from you. Do nothing in private for which you would be humiliated if done in public. Never asks, "Who sees me?"

● Pay no attention to slanderous talk, for this is injurious to three: the one who speaks it, the one who listens to it, and the one about whom it is spoken.

Think no evil of the one who comes to apologize to you, regardless if he is telling the truth or lying.

● Do not hold yourself as being too important to do work or that doing so would be embarrassing for you.

Never rely on receiving other people's gifts, for they are only human beings¹⁰. Work for your sustenance.

⁹ Maxims shown with a bullet in this chapter are not found in the standard printed editions of Orchos Chayim; see Introduction.

¹⁰ They may not be able to fulfill their promise to give you the gift and you will be left in want.

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- Do not desire a fortune for which you have to work very hard and exert great effort. It is better to suffice with the one handful you already have, than have to struggle for two.

Never make your money more important for yourself than your general well-being as, for example, by putting yourself in danger by cheating on your taxes or traveling clandestinely alone.

- Do not yearn for a woman because of her beauty or wealth, for these things are transitory, and you may just end up with something quite different.

Never be envious. This is a terrible, incurable illness.

- Be neither saddened by events nor worried by your troubles. If things are going bad for you, search your soul for sins, and repent. Neither be overjoyed when things are going good. A sobering thought is that you may now not receive your reward in the Next World. Never deceive or cheat a poor man, a widow or an orphan. The punishment for doing so is very, very great.

Do not make vowing a habit, even for a true matter, for children die because of false oaths.

- Never mention G-d's Name in vain.

- Never deviate from local convention, whatever that may be. This will endear you to your comrades.

AN ADAPTATION OF ORCHOS CHAYIM THE PATHWAYS OF LIFE

Never delay in making total repentance nor tarry in seeking emotional, spiritual or religious help.

- Train yourself to always take the middle road in everything you do and in your behavior.¹¹

Do not occupy yourself with useless activities. Listen not to nonsense.

- Establish times for Torah!



¹¹ Everything in moderation.

AN ADAPTATION OF ORCHOS CHAYIM THE PATHWAYS OF LIFE

Day Seven – A Summary.

Tithe for the benefit of charity all the profits and savings G-d has granted you.

Give charity immediately, and as much as you can. Fix an amount to give at the end of every month and year.

Pray three times each day, every evening, morning and afternoon with the congregation. Don Tefillin *and wear Tzitzis* every day.

Affix a Mezuzah on every one of your doorposts and gates upon which the Law requires one. It is insufficient to have a Mezuzah only on the front door or gate.

Establish fixed times for learning Torah.

Be faithful and honest in your business dealings, and in your speech.

Honor those who learn Torah, as much as you can.

Do not hold back from reproving your fellow lest you carry the burden of the sin by your silence. Judge your fellow man as innocent; always give him the benefit of the doubt. Each night, before going to sleep, forgive anyone who sinned against you in words.

Try to make peace between husband and wife, and between other people.

AN ADAPTATION OF ORCHOS CHAYIM THE PATHWAYS OF LIFE

Caution your family regarding the proper observance of praying, ritually washing the hands, and reciting blessings on anything from which we benefit, such as before food, drink or things we smell.

Give charity every Friday. Learn the weekly Torah portion by reading the text twice, the Targum once, and Rashi's commentary.

Read Rabbeinu Yona's Letter of Repentance the week before Rosh Hashanah (*Rosh Chodesh*¹²).

Establish the eating of the Third Meal every Shabbos afternoon after Mincha. Honor Shabbos, as it is a blessing which your G-d gave to you as a present. Set your table for a meal on Saturday night after Havdalah, eating at least something, however little.

Help your fellow man with whatever he needs, whether it is material or with words.

Repent every night before retiring, except on those nights when it is forbidden to deliver a eulogy or to fast. Mourn your sins, the length of the Exile, and the destruction of our glorious and holy Temple – may it be quickly rebuilt in our days. Fast once each month on a day when the Torah is read. If you cannot do this, give charity.

¹² In some texts, it says Rosh Chodesh.

AN ADAPTATION OF ORCHOS CHAYIM THE PATHWAYS OF LIFE

Perform all your good deeds modestly and humbly, and not for public adulation. What can be done quietly should not be done with fanfare in public. For this is the Service of G-d which is the choicest and most desired by Him.

THESE ARE THE PROSCRIPTIONS WHICH BRING GREAT GOOD.
BLESSED IS THE PERSON WHO TAKES NOTE OF THESE MATTERS.



לע"נ

אמי מורתי רצה בת מנשה הכהן ז"ל

ת.נ.צ.ב.ה.