

To Your Health - The Torah Way to a Healthy Life in Modern Times by Yechezkel Ishayek Quotes

The Peleh Yo'etz writes: "Whoever doesn't guard himself from everything harmful is answerable for his life and is destined to give accounting for all the lost time he has caused himself!"¹

These words are not merely good advice, nor just a sensible recommendation. They are actually a Torah obligation. Every Jew is obligated to care for his health, as the Torah commands, "V'nishmartem me'od l'nafshoseichem – take great care to preserve your lives" (Devarim 4:15). The Torah teaches us that our body is not our own personal property; we do not have the right do with it as we please. The Creator entrusted us with our bodies to use to fulfill His Will. The body comes with a set of instructions detailing how we should care for it and look after it. Some of these instructions are found in the Written Law, while some are found in the Oral Law, taught to us by our Sages throughout the generations.²

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Imagine that someone has passed away and is now standing before the Heavenly Court, which is examining his deeds and misdeeds. The court says to the defendant, “We find that for a period of fourteen years, you failed to don tefillin, to keep Shabbos, or to fulfill any mitzvos at all!” The poor soul begins to scream, “How can you say that? When did such a thing take place?” And the court explains: “Yes! It’s true! If you had looked after your health, you would have lived another fourteen years – and who knows how many mitzvos you would have fulfilled in those years?”³

One of the best gifts we can give our children is healthy parents.⁴

[Chofetz Chaim]: "Don't learn an overly excessive amount of Torah. A person must protect his body from illness and weakness. Therefore it's necessary to rest take a break and breathe fresh air. It's necessary to take a walk in the late afternoon or to sit in your room and rest. When possible) you should bathe in the river) in order to strengthen the body — because excessive study is the counsel of the yetzer hara, to get us to toil too hard so that the body becomes weakened and so that eventually the person will be forced to stop studying Torah altogether. Then his loss will override his gain. “I know this from my own experience. In my youth, I strained to study Torah, beyond my capacity. My eyes became seriously

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damaged and the doctors ordered me to stop reading altogether for two years. Isn't that proof enough that excessive study is a counsel of the yetzer hara? And if as a result of excessive persistence in Torah study a person fails to take care of his health and becomes ill, Heaven forbid, his normal life span of seventy years could be cut short — and he will surely be held accountable for that in Heaven!⁵

"One of the soundest principles in medicine is that as long as a doctor can prescribe nutritious food he should not prescribe medicine." - Mei'iri⁶

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