



לעבן
מיט'ן
רבי'ן

כל התורה כולה!

In connection with the 32nd Siyum HoRambam, we bring an overview on the Rebbe's takona, including a selection of quotes from the Rebbe and the founding concepts of this campaign.

"It's been several years now that I've been waiting for someone to take up the idea of dividing the *sefer* of Rambam as well," the Rebbe announced at the farbrengen of Acharon Shel Pesach, 5744, "until finally they actually did so in one of the *Sefardishe* countries. The entire *sefer* was divided amongst many students, and collectively they completed the entire *sefer* in close proximity to the Rambam's birthday this year."

It was at that historic moment that the Rebbe launched "Mivtza Rambam," a moment that would change our lives as Chassidim forever.

Which *Sefardishe* country was the Rebbe referring to? And what was done there that prompted the Rebbe to mention their act in his *sicha*? To understand this phenomenon we must rewind back to Kislev of that year.

INNOVATION IN MOROCCO

In 5744, Yud-Tes Kislev was on a Friday. The Rebbe's official farbrengen took place on Thursday night, and continued on Shabbos, Chof Kislev. At one point in that farbrengen, while discussing the *siyum* on Shas (in con-

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LIMUD HORAMBAM THE GLOBAL INITIATIVE

Dedicated in honor of the
Temimim - Neiros L'Ho'ir
By **Rabbi and Mrs. Moishe Traxler**
Houston, TX



A NEWS REPORT IN "THE NEW YORK TIMES" ABOUT ONE OF THE FIRST SIYUMEI HORAMBAM.

nection with the Chalukas HaShas conducted each year on Yud-Tes Kislev), the Rebbe declared that the time had come to begin studying the Sefer Halachos of the Rambam, Mishneh Torah, in a similar fashion.

For some reason, no one acted upon this directive—perhaps because it was mentioned passively and without detail. However, in Casablanca, Morocco, the city where the Rambam himself had lived for a while, the Talmidim HaShluchim learned the *sicha* from Shabbos Vayeshev and decided to launch a campaign to fulfill the Rebbe's wishes.

The plan was to apportion the Rambam in the same way Shas was divided: each person would take upon himself to

learn a set of *Halochos*. The campaign would start on Yud Shvat with the goal to collectively finish the entire Mishneh Torah by Yud Alef Nissan.

The *shluchim* took to the field, energetically going to each *Kollel*, *Beis Din*, *shul* and Yeshiva to give them the opportunity to take part in the Mivtza. It is important to remember that in those days thousands of Jews lived in Morocco, many of them big *talmidei chachomim*. Even Rabbi Binyamin Gordetzky, the representative of the Rebbe to Europe and Africa, joined in, and within two weeks every part of Rambam was pledged for.

A remarkable unity enveloped the Torah world of Morocco. The Chief Rabbi

of Morocco, Rabbi Aharon Monsongo, responded excitedly to the proposal, remarking that he had a *k'vius* in Rambam every Motzei Shabbos.

Each set of *Halochos* was taken by another person or group of people besides for *Hilchos Shluchin V'Shutafin*, which was learnt by the *shluchim* together as a group. Rabbi Shlomo Matusof, one of the *shluchim* to Morocco, gave them a special *shiur* in these *Halochos*.

It is interesting to note that they planned on finishing the 83 sets of *Halochos* in honor of Yud Alef Nissan, the day the Rebbe entered his 83rd year.

THE REBBE'S RESPONSE

The Bochorim sent a detailed *Duch* to the Rebbe, and in the beginning of Adar I they received a letter *Kloli-Proti* beginning with the words, "Your letter which was included was received, *V'Tach*." They now felt that they had done the right thing and given the Rebbe *nachas*.

But the story didn't stop there. On Yud Alef Nissan, 5744, the Rebbe made a *Hadran* on Rambam. And although there was no mention in the *sichos* about the *mivtza* in Morocco, the *shluchim* felt the *Hadran* alone was a sign.

THE TAKONA IS LAUNCHED

Eleven days later on Acharon Shel Pesach the Rebbe spoke again, this time mentioning the feat accomplished in Morocco. After completing the *Hadran* on Rambam (that he had begun on Yud Alef Nissan), the Rebbe said:

"While on the topic of Rambam, I'd like to make the following suggestion: we know that there are several study cycles with which people complete the entire Shas (Bavli or Yerushalmi) by learning a small section each day. It would be a good idea to initiate a similar cycle dedicated to the study of Rambam's Mishneh Torah, learning a part each day and completing the entire *sefer* next year on his birthday, 14 Nissan.

"True, a similar idea has already been done in one of the *Sefardische* countries, but there they divided the entire *sefer* by giving each participant a small section to learn. It would be better if each and every

individual would complete the entire *sefer* on his own.”

3 PEROKIM/1 PEREK

A few days later on 25 Nissan, the Rebbe held a *Yechidus Klolis* for the guests that had arrived for Pesach, during which he laid out the details of the new *takona*:

Being that the entire *sefer* of Mishneh Torah includes approximately 1,000 *perokim*, 3 *perokim* should be studied each day in order to complete the entire *sefer* by the Rambam's next birthday. Those who find it difficult to study a full three *perokim* each day, could follow their own cycle by learning only one *perokim* per day,

**“Why have we
come out so
blatantly saying
– הערט זיך איין
אידן! מ'דארף
לערנען רמב"ם!”**

concluding the entire *sefer* in three years.

Immediately following this *sicha*, members of Vaad L'Hafotzas Sichos compiled the “*Moreh Shiur*,” based on specific instructions from the Rebbe, including how to divide the Rambam's introduction as well as the *Minyan Hamitzvos*, and so on.

Later on at that farbrengen, the Rebbe gave a deep explanation on the Rambam's *Hakdoma*. From then on, at almost each and every farbrengen, both weekday and Shabbos, the Rebbe dedicated one *sicha* to discuss that day's lesson in Rambam, thus compiling a wealth

מה שהוא עושה אומר לישראל לעשות

YET IN POLAND

In the 1930's the Friediker Rebbe lived in Poland while the Rebbe and Rebbetzin lived in Berlin and then Paris. Each year they would come for periodical visits to Poland to be with the Friediker Rebbe, especially during the Yom Tov seasons.

One of the students of Tomchei Tmimim in Otwock recalls:

“The Rebbe was often seen going about with a small bag at his side. One of the things we noticed being taken out of the bag was a volume of the Rambam's Mishneh Torah. It was quite clear that the Rebbe held a daily lesson studying the Rambam even back then.”

NIGHTLY STUDY IN 770

After escaping the Nazis and arriving in the USA, the Rebbe and Rebbetzin lived in New York. The following is an account as recalled by Reb Zelig Wallman, one of the students of Tomchei Tmimim 770 in the year 5709:

“A friend of mine and I would sit together each night during the evening Seder to learn *Chassidus* in the main *Zal*, and we noticed a most phenomenal thing. Just before Maariv, the Rebbe would come in and take a volume of the Rambam's Mishneh Torah from the shelf and study from it for a while.

“It was quite clear that he was slowly studying through the entire Mishneh Torah, one *Sefer* at a time, although we

were unable to determine exactly how much ground he covered each day.”



RAIN OR SHINE

Once the Rebbe initiated the *takona* of learning Rambam each day, the Rebbe was commonly seen with a Rambam in hand learning the daily lesson, especially in the car during his trips to and from the Ohel.

Some will recall that even once the car had already parked in the driveway at 770 after returning from the Ohel, the Rebbe remained seated for a while and continued studying from the Rambam while one of the *Mazkirim* would wait until he was finished to open the car door.

Rabbi Chaim Schapiro relates:

“I recall one Sukkos while I was a young Bochur where the Rebbe arrived at 770 in the morning and went into his Sukka in the yard to

shake the Lulav.

A bit later, Reb Meir Harlig, after receiving the Rebbe's Lulav to be brought out to the crowd so that each of the Chassidim would have an opportunity to make a Brocha on the Rebbe's Lulav, would reenter the Rebbe's Sukkah to set out some *Mezonos* for the Rebbe.

“It was then that I witnessed a most amazing sight: while a light rain spilled from the sky, the Rebbe stood in the Sukka with a Rambam in his hands and was shaking back and forth, learning diligently.”



BY THE DIRECTIVE OF THE REBBE, RABBI LEVI BISTRITSKY LEADS A SIYUM HORAMBAM AT THE RAMBAM'S KEVER IN TEVERIA.



THE GRAND SIYUM HORAMBAM IN NEW YORK. CREDITS: LUBAVITCH ARCHIVES

of novel explanations in the Rambam's Mishneh Torah. (Many of these sichos were later compiled together and published in a sefer called "יין מלכות").

SEFER HAMITZVOS

The first actual study-cycle was scheduled to begin on Sunday, 27 Nissan. The day before, on Shabbos Parshas Kedoshim, the Rebbe again dedicated a *sicha* to the new *takona*. For those who would find it difficult to study the Mishneh Torah itself (primarily women and children), the Rebbe added another cycle: a daily lesson in Sefer Hamitzvos. The

participants in this cycle would learn the Mitzvos corresponding to the same Halochos as those learning three *perokim*, as they appear in the Rambam's Sefer Hamitzvos.

THE STUDY BEGINS

On Sunday it began. Chassidim across the globe took to the Rebbe's new *takona* excitedly. In Eretz Yisroel, more than a *minyan* of Anash dressed in their Shabbos attire, headed by Rabbi Levi Bistritski of Tzfas (whom the Rebbe referred to as the "*Mora D'asra* of the Rambam's *Tziyun*"), traveled to the Rambam's *kever* in Teve-

ria to commence this historic first study cycle of Mishneh Torah.

Even behind the Iron Curtain, Chassidim did their best to heed the Rebbe's call.

"We didn't even have a full set of Rambam at hand," recalls Rabbi Itche Kogan of Leningrad. "A friend of mine had only a few booklets of the Rambam's Hilchos Shabbos, but I visited his home and we studied together. True, it wasn't exactly what the Rebbe intended, but we felt that at least, in this manner, we could participate in the new *takona*."

WHY RAMBAM?

The reasons specified by the Rebbe for initiating the *takona* can be categorized in two main points:

a) **Achdus Yisroel:**

By each and every Yid studying the same section each day, a bond is created among *Klal Yisroel*.

[The Rambam writes in his *hakdoma* that the *sefer* is intended "לקטן ולגדול", I.e. for every single Jew, no matter what background he has in other areas of Torah. Everyone is capable of understanding and appreciating the text, each on their own level of depth.]

b) **Kol HaTorah Kulah:**

The Rambam's Mishneh Torah is the only *sefer* that contains all the Halochos of Torah pertaining to each period in history—including the times when the *Beis Hamikdash* stood, as well as the times of Moshiach. In fact, the Rambam writes in his *hakdoma* that by learning *Torah Shebiksav* and then his *sefer* alone, one will have studied through the entire Torah. The Alter Rebbe rules in Hilchos Talmud Torah that every person is obligated to know the entire Torah; learning Rambam is an efficient way of achieving that goal.

When specifying these reasons, the Rebbe added that truthfully there are more reasons for the new *takona*, but these will suffice (מפני טעמים אלו, ועוד טעמים).

SHTUREM UN L'YAREM!

On the following Shabbos, Parshas Emor, the Rebbe held a surprise far-

brenge, explaining that one of the reasons for this was in connection with the commencement of the Rambam study.

"One might ask", said the Rebbe, "Why have we suddenly begun with this *shturem* about studying Rambam? Why have we come out so blatantly saying – הערט זיך איין אידן! מ'דארף לערנען רמב"ם! Surely there are plenty of people who already learned Rambam in the past, so why the tumult now?"

"The answer," said the Rebbe, "is that the world today is (spiritually) asleep, and the only way to awaken everyone is by making a *shturem* and *l'yareh* about learning Rambam."¹

"KAV SHELOI"

Over the years, the Rebbe spoke about *Limud HoRambam* at virtually every single weekday and Shabbos farbrengen from the time the *takona* was launched. In addition to the many deep explanations and dissertations in the Rambam's actual text, there were numerous times when the Rebbe spoke about the great advantages of studying the entire Rambam, and the importance of *Takonas Limud HoRambam*.

In the sicha of Erev Yom Kippur, 5746, the Rebbe stressed, "The new daily study of Rambam bears special significance in the fact that it constitutes '*Kav sheloi*' (one's personal and dearly held possession) for: a) It was willingly accepted by each individual, and b) It is a fairly new idea, and not merely an old commitment."

In a *Yechidus* with Reb Gershon B. Jacobson at the end of Nissan, 5745 (approximately one year after the *takona* was launched), the Rebbe disclosed that, "Instituting the daily study of Rambam was an innovative idea, in the spirit of '*Le'chatchila Aribber*'. I myself did not imagine that within one year the project would reach such a magnitude."

THE RAMBAM WOULD NOT ALLOW IT!

Making mention of those who opposed the new *takona*, the Rebbe continued in that same *Yechidus*:

"I cannot fathom, how could the study of Rambam be met with opposition?



What could be wrong with learning Rambam? The same is true with the opposition some people had when we launched Mivtza Tefillin; what is it that bothers people about putting Tefillin on another Yid? You don't approve of teaching Chassidus to bochurim? Fine, I may be able to understand your issue. But studying Rambam and putting on Tefillin with Yidden, what could be wrong with that?

"My only explanation is that people are intimidated by Lubavitch. Whatever Lubavitch says, they feel the need to say

the opposite! If I would announce that there are Ten *Dibros*, they would respond that there are only nine."

In a sicha said by the Rebbe around that time (Lag B'omer, 5745), the Rebbe added:

"There are those who make '*letzonus*' from the study of Rambam. Amongst all of those people, you will not find even one that has completed the study of one full *sefer* of Rambam from beginning to end. He may have a very good head; he knows how to say a good *shiur*, and he even knows how to make *letzonus*. But if you will ask him earnestly, you can be certain that he has never studied one full *sefer* of the Rambam's fourteen *seforim* in its entirety.

"How am I so sure? Because if he had obtained a real connection with the Rambam by learning even part of his *sefer* properly, the Rambam himself would never let him make *letzonus* from the study of Rambam."²

BEST REASON TO FARBRENG!

One of the important elements of *Takonas Limud HoRambam* stressed by the Rebbe numerous times, was the importance of arranging proper *siyumin* at the end of each cycle. The Rebbe's involvement in the grand *siyumin* in New York and elsewhere, as well as the beauti-

קיום התקנות – אף הוא בחיים

ישנם כו"כ חקנות של בעל הגאולה, שצוה להדפיסם ולפרסמם בכל תפוצות ישראל, כמו: התקנה דלימוד שיעורי חת"ת, חומש תהלים ותנ"א, ועוד תקנות כיו"ב, עד לתקנה העיקרית – הפצת אהבת ישראל. וכמו כן ישנם התורות והמאמרים של בעל הגאולה – אשר בהם היתה כל חיותו, ובהם הכניס ומסר את עצמותו כו' ולכן, כאשר לומדים את תורתו של בעל הגאולה, והולכים בדרכיו ע"י קיום תקנותיו, מילוי שליחותו וכו' – אזי מודגשת בגלוי פעולתו של בעל הגאולה, וכאמור, "מה זרעו בחיים אף הוא בחיים", היינו, שבעל הגאולה חי עמנו ("הוא בחיים") ויתירה מזו – חי בנו, ועד שכל מציאותנו ופעולותינו אינם אלא בתור "שלוחים" ו"שליחות" של בעל הגאולה, אשר "שלוחו של אדם כמותו".

(משיחת ליל ט"ו תמוז תשמ"ה)



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