

א חסידי שער דערהער...

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Maarei Mekomos on the Rambam

Summer, 5744

With the new systematical study of Rambam underway, the Rebbe continually made mention of the new initiative at each Farbrengen, expounding upon the advantages that a study-cycle as this entails, retorting the various attacks on the idea, and above all giving insights on the daily Rambam itself.

During the Farbrengen of the night of Tu B'av, the Rebbe suggested that a compilation of Maarei-Mekomos be constructed, noting all the sources upon which the Rambam based his Piskei-Din. In a letter, the Rambam writes that the fact that he hadn't included the sources in his work bothered him, and that he intended on adding them eventually, but as it seems, this plan did not materialize. Therefore, said the Rebbe, it would be appropriate to collect all the Maarei Mekomos that are dispersed in the commentators of the Rambam, and combine them all into one Sefer. This way they will be readily available to all, and they'll bring an additional excitement while learning Rambam.

The job was given to the members of the Kollel. The Rebbe urged that they do their work hastily so that the finished product would be available at the soonest time possible.

The next morning, Monday, Tu B'av, Rabbi Heller, the Rosh Hakollel, was summoned to Rabbi Hadakov's office and given detailed instructions as how to go about putting the Sefer together.

By Tuesday morning the work had already begun. Immediately, the various jobs were issued to each of the Kollel members, some gathered Seferim for reference, while others sat to write what was to appear in the Sefer.

The following Shabbos was Chof Av (the Rebbe's father's Yartzeit). During the Farbrengen, the Rebbe again urged the compilers to hasten their pace, and then again at an additional Farbrengen that took place that night, on Motzoei Shabbos.

Seeing the Rebbe's insisting on the project's imminent completion, it was decided amongst the members of the Kollel that an immense task would be undertaken in which they'll attempt to finish 60 Perokim of Rambam each day! The Rebbe had promised that with each extra exertion, their work will be only more successful, "Yogaati umotzasi..."

Throughout the week, the Rebbe continually inquired as to where the project stood. On the

following Sunday, 28 Av, when a report was given to the Rebbe about the Sefer, the Rebbe commented that the speed was not sufficient; it lacked the added push of "Mehadrin min Hamihadrin".

Hence, it was decided that the entire project would be completed before the Rebbe took leave for the Ohel the next day (Erev Rosh Chodesh Elul). Many of the Bochorim in 770 were recruited to join the team. All that night and through the morning one could find someone in each corner of 770 toiling to finish his quota in order that the ultimate goal be reached promptly.

Indeed, when the Rebbe took leave for the Ohel that afternoon, he received word that the job was done!

Over the next two and-a-half weeks, the staff at Empire Press worked diligently, printing the Sefer, and before Shabbos Parshas Tavo, Chai Elul, the long awaited Sefer of nearly 1000 pages was completed at last!

That Shabbos the Rebbe entered the Farbrengen carrying the newly-published Sefer in hand. During one of the Sichos, the Rebbe complimented all those who took part in this project for their job well-done, and expounded extensively upon the benefits derived from a compilation as this. The Rambam himself wished to compose it on his own; by doing so we are, in a sense, realizing his wishes. This Sefer will also assist those who want to learn Rambam more intensely, as they will have all the Maarei Mekomos available for them. In conclusion, the Rebbe requested that a second edition be compiled as well, including the sources that were overlooked or omitted for whatever reason from the first one. Again, the Rebbe demanded that the work be done at high-speed, so that the Sefer will be ready before Rosh Hashanah.

After this Sicha, the Rebbe poured L'chaim for some of the coordinators of the project and then handed the bottle to the Rosh Hakollel, Rabbi Heller.

On Monday, 20 Elul, the Rebbe instructed that the Yeshiva Bochorim should also get involved in the work. During the following week, Bochorim and Yungerleit toiled endless hours, and on Erev Rosh Hashanah, the second edition of the Maarei Mekomos Le'harambam was ready for purchase.

* ישנם כ"כ חקנות של בעל הגאולה. שצוה להדפיסם ולפרסמם בכל תפוצות ישראל, כמו: התקנה דלימוד שיעורי חת"ח, חומש תהלים ותניא, 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)



Rambam

The History Behind the Takana

The year is 5744, the place, New York. A sudden wave of sales catches the sform-sellers of the city by surprise. All sets of Rambam, big and small, are being snapped up with alacrity, emptying shelves in bookstores and warehouses across Crown Heights, Boro Park, and Faltbush. There is literally no set of Rambam to be found for sale.

It was right after Pesach 5744 and the Rebbe had just launched a new Takana: Daily Study of the Mishne Torah by the Rambam. Every Lubavitcher suddenly needed his own personal set of Rambam to be able to learn the shiur each day, thus leading to the shortage of Rambams' in the city. To understand this phenomenon we must first rewind back to *Kislev* of that year.

Background

On Yud Tes Kislev each year there is a *minhag* to make a Chalukas HaShas in all Chabad communities. During many of the Yud Tes Kislev Farbrengegens, the Rebbe would talk about the significance of the siyum and encourage everyone to participate by taking a *mesechta*.

In 5744, Yud Tes Kislev was on a Friday so the Farbrengegens was on Shabbos, Chof Kislev. At one point in the Farbrengegens, while discussing the Siyum on Shas, the Rebbe declared that the time had come to begin to study the Sefer Halachos of the Rambam – Mishne Torah in a similar fashion.

For some reason no one acted upon this directive, maybe because it was mentioned quickly, not very clearly and without detail. However, in Casablanca, Morocco the birth-city of the Rambam, the Bochrin Shluchim learned the sicha from Shabbos Vayeshev and decided to launch a campaign to fulfill the Rebbe's wishes.

The plan was to split the Rambam in the same way Shas was divided. Each person would take upon himself to learn a set of Halachos. The campaign would start Yud Shvat with the goal to collectively finish the entire Mishne Torah by Yud Alef Nissan.

The Shluchim threw themselves into the new campaign with vigor, with bochrin Shneur Zalmen Blumenfeld and Binyamin Seribransky taking the responsibility for coordinating the operation. Rabbi Leibel Raskin, Shliach to Morroco pledged his assistance and they launched the campaign.

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 Morocco, many of them big Talmidei Chachamim. Even Rabbi Binyamin Gordetzky, the representative of the Rebbe to Europe and Africa, joined in, and within two weeks every part of Rambam was divided and taken.

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 *kvius* in Rambam every Motzei Shabbos.

Each set of halachos was taken by another person or group of people besides for *Hichos Shluchin V'Shutafin* which was learnt by the Shluchim together as a group. Rabbi Shlomo Matusof, Head Shliach to Morroco, gave them a special shiur in these halachos.

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

The Rebbe's Response

The Bochrin sent a detailed Duch in to the Rebbe and in the beginning of Adar 1 they received a letter Klloli-Proti beginning with the

words "Your letter what 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:

Yud Alef Nissan 5744. The Rebbe made a Hadran on Rambam. Although there was no mention in the sichos about the mivtza of Morocco, the shluchim felt that it was a sign, related to their mivtza.

The Takana is Launched

Eleven days later on Acharon Shel Pesach the Rebbe spoke again. This time the Rebbe was very clear in defining what the new Takana would be:

In the same way that Shas is split in that each person takes part and learns a section each day, similarly, Rambam should also be divided with another section being learnt every day. This should be done before the birthday of the Rambam next year (Yud Daled Nissan) and we will be able to make another Siyum then.

When it comes to Gemara, each participant learns his Masechta throughout the year, collectively completing the entire Shas between all those taking part. Reason being – due to time constraints not every person has the ability to complete Shas on their own.

Many years I have waited for someone to do the same with the Rambam, until finally a group of Yidden from one of the Sefardishe countries took upon themselves to finish the entire Mishne Torah between them, finishing in the days near the birthday of the Rambam.

However, anyone who has the capacity to accept upon himself to learn through the entire Mishne Torah, should do so. And through this he will be connected with many more Yidden.

Why the Whole Rambam?

The reason why each person must learn the entire Rambam himself and not just take one section as is done in Shas is simple.

There is a rule that the Rambam wrote the halachos in order, meaning that he relies on what he wrote previously, and trusting the student to remember, while not requiring information from later in the *sefer*. The result is that one who learns a halacha from the middle of Rambam is liable to misunderstand the Rambam, for he might be missing a piece of vital information. To make sure that this will not happen, it is crucial to learn Rambam in order.

Shas on the other hand is not an orderly compilation, each Mesechta being self-sufficient. This is why although when dividing Shas each person can take one section and complete it, in Rambam anyone who had not yet learnt the previous halachos is not learning correctly.

Therefore the recommendation is, to learn the entire Rambam, in order, thereby having complete and correct knowledge. (See Q and A for more details.)

Siyumim

The first siyum was on Yud Alef Nissan, the second on Chof Hey Adar and the third on Yud Shvat.

The Rebbe asked that they make the Siyumim on a grand scale with much festivity. Indeed, many Rabbanim, Askanim and Chassidishe Rebbes participated in the siyumim.

The first Siyum was also 850 years to the Rambams birth. Shluchim all over the world made very big *shturem*, and received proclamations honoring the Rambam. There were also celebrations in Cordova (his birthplace) in Cairo (where he lived) and in Tverya (where his *kever* is).



שערי צנינה

R' Zalman Zlatapolsky's Niggun

R' Shneur Zalman Zlatapolsky was a chassid of the Rebbe Maharash, and the Rebbe Rashab.

On occasions, when he would arrive in Lubavitch, the Rebbe Maharash would say special maamarim for him. Besides for being a *baal moichin* and possessing a big chassidish heart, he was also dedicated and sophisticated. Everything R' Zalman did, was with *mesinus, haskalah dik* and thought over, he would have a special seder how he would travel to Lubavitch, be by the Rebbe, how much time he would spend there and how he would take leave of the Rebbe.

R' Zalman was one of the extraordinary Chassidim, for whom traveling to Lubavitch, hearing ma'amarei Chassidus and entering for *yechidus* was a rejuvenation of energy, and held a very high esteem in his life.¹

In the winter of 5673, the Rebbe Rashab was visiting Menton, France for health reasons; Menton is a resort city, known for its clear air and hot sun even in the winter. There he used to spend many hours strolling with the Friediker Rebbe on the banks of the river. Far away from people they would sit on the sand and discuss lofty subjects; the Friediker Rebbe merited hearing many special things then.

On one occasion, the Rebbe Rashab pointed out to him a bench situated in a corner of stunning nature, between the water and the trees of the forest, and told him that it was on this bench that in the year 5645 - three years after the *histalkus* of his Rebbe the Rebbe Maharash - R' Zalman sat deep in thought and sang with great *dvaykus*.

The episode the Rebbe Rashab was referring to is as follows: R' Zalman was then visiting the Rebbe Rashab (in those years the Rebbe Rashab lived in a house near the river) when he first came it was quite early in the morning, and it was not possible to see the Rebbe, so R' Zalman walked into the yard, sat down on a bench and got mesmerized in a niggun. At around 6 or 7 in the morning, the Rebbe Rashab heard a familiar voice singing. He went outside and saw R' Zalman sitting on a bench deep in thought with his eyes shut tight, tears pouring down his cheeks, overcome with the emotion of this heartfelt niggun. The Rebbe did not want to disturb him, and left as he came.

"Looking at him -the Rebbe Rashab told the Friedikker Rebbe- one could see on his face the yearning of a Chossid who has lost his Rebbe in body, but the Rebbe's *tziur ruchni* stands before him."

Later on, the Rebbe Rashab asked R' Zalman, which maamar of the Rebbe Maharash he was thinking at that time.

R' Zalman who was a Kremenchuker Chassid- a maskil and not known for being emotional, nevertheless, when he was asked this question, he broke down in tears and after coming to, he answered: the Rebbe said such-and-such maamor on this and this shabbos.²

Sefer Haniggunim writes how this niggun: "expresses a soulful yearning and thirsting which arises from the depths of one's heart, and it arouses memories of better days which were permeated with G-dly light."

When the Rebbe Rashab was still in Lubavitch, this niggun was the Niggun Hachanah which was sung before he would say Chassidus. When the Rebbe moved to Rostov in 5676 however, they began to sing the Niggun Hachanah as we know it -"the Rostover Niggun".

1. Sefer Hasichos Kayitz 5700 p. 162

2. Likutei Diburim 5692, Sefer Hasichos 5707 p. 7,107. Igros Kodesh Rebbe Ray"atz vol. 14 p. 437.

This niggun can be heard on Heichal Neggina tape 19, song 5-6.

א ציור פון א חסיד

Reb Shilem Kuryatin part 3

[We continue with the description by Rabbi Shemaryahu Sosonkin of how the Rebbe Rashab's maamarim were recorded:]

"Once the Rebbe had finished delivering the maamar he would daven Maariv with the assembled crowd, after which most students and visitors would return to their lodgings for the Shabbos meal. However, a small group remained behind and sat down together to discuss what they had just heard.... The student in charge of this review was Shilem. Although he was not more intellectually gifted than the other chozrim, his unusual ability to listen and concentrate enabled him to repeat most precisely what had been said. He would begin to review the maamar with the others until they too were able to repeat it. Only then would this group daven and eat their Shabbos meal. Then, because they were afraid that they might forget the maamar over Shabbos, they would meet again afterwards to go through it once more, no matter how late this might have been. Once they had repeated it a second time, they would go to bed.

"The next morning, Shilem, together with his assistants and a few prominent chassidim, would walk over to the Rebbe's home. The Rebbe would sit while Shilem repeated the maamar. If anything was missing or confused, the Rebbe would correct him or clarify a difficult point. Then Shilem would leave and repeat it once more, perfectly. After the seuda, Shilem's assistants repeated the maamar aloud. However, most people preferred to hear it from Shilem himself. After Minchah he would say it once more."

This became Shilem's regular routine every Shabbos and Yom-Tov.

A Strenuous Tishrei

Reb Shalom Ber Notik once related: "One year, Rosh HaShanah fell out on Thursday and Friday, and a number of additional maamarim were delivered throughout Tishrei. Over Shmini Atzeres and Simchas Torah (which also fell on Thursday and Friday) and Shabbos Bereishis, which was the next day, the Rebbe delivered even more maamorim.

Shilem didn't rest for a minute. During those three days, each actual maamar and its review, as well as the Hakofos and davening, only left him enough time to make Kiddush and eat a bite. He worked like a machine, without a break....

"After Havdalah, Shilem passed out. No one was able to revive him. Doctors were summoned but even they could not get him to regain consciousness, and they began to fear for his life. The Rebbe was soon informed of the situation. He listened intently to what had happened but did not seem worried. Instead, he simply said that Shilem should be put to bed. The young man slept almost around the clock and woke up completely refreshed."

The Czarist Conscription Office

Throughout those years Shilem followed the usual, rigorous course of study expected of Talmidim in Tomchei T'mimim. In 5667, like many young men of his age, he was called up for military service. That year, during Simchas Torah, the Rebbe Rashab spoke about the function of a Jew in elevating the sparks of Kedushah buried in profane places.

The Rebbe comments on this statement of the Rebbe Rashab: "This refers to being released from military service. Call-up took place at the beginning of the winter and those who were due to be conscripted would go to the Rebbe [Rashab] on Simchas Torah to receive his blessing.... When Shilem (also known from the name of his birthplace as Reb Shilem Dissner) was called up, the Rebbe [Rashab] said: 'You will eventually be released, but [in order to liberate] the spark that needs to be elevated by you, you will have to pass through the *oblast*.' (Each Russian province, or *oblast* had its own conscription office.) He added that the local area office, where Shilem was the only Jew to present himself, existed just so that Shilem could pass through it."

When Shilem finally received his discharge from military service, he returned to the yeshivah and once again threw himself into his studies.



21st MARCH 1973.

The Lubavitcher Rebbe,
thank you for your love and concern which you
have so freely shown to me during my stay
here and with Meir Abeksera. Thank you for
the many things I have learned from your life.

I would stay longer, but the attitude
to Chit hurts me. I plan to leave (Lord
willing), tomorrow. My only goal, I hope,
is to find the Perfect Will of God.

Handwritten notes in Hebrew, including a box with the words 'אני יודע' (I know) and various phrases like 'אני לא רוצה...' (I don't want...), 'אני רוצה...' (I want...), and 'אני חושב...' (I think...).

In preparation for Yud Alef Nissan we bring you a Ksav Yad Kodesh printed in the front of Chelek Chof Ches Igros Kodesh.

This *ma'ane* was written on Yud Zayin Adar 5733 [תשל"ג] to a man who the Rebbe was being *mekarev* to Yiddishkeit.

When he came to the Farbrengen on Shabbos Parshas Para, a full sicha was dedicated to him.

Everyone knows the great effect that being by the Rebbe has on ones *neschama*. This man was so sunken in the depths of *klipta*, that even after a period of time in 770, he was ready to abandon his Yiddishkeit because of his foreign beliefs.

And the Rebbe, caring for every single Yid no matter who he is or how far he fell, demands from him to stay in the Rebbe's *Daled Amos*, for this will help him.

Not just to stay for a long period of time, but to stay for the Yomim Tovim. Being by the Rebbe for Yom Tov is something else. And the Rebbe puts Yud Alef Nissan on par with the *Sholosh Regalim*.

[י"ז אדר שני, ה'תשל"ג]
אינו נכון כלל וכלל ובודאי אשר אין זה רצון השם. וישאר כאן
עכ"פ עד לאחר תשרי הבע"ל - באופן שנוכל לחוג ביחד כל ג' הרגלים
(וכן יום הולדתי) - כולל שמחת תורה - וינצל הזמן ללימוד התורה
ועיון בה בחיות ועד שיוכל להחיות גם אחרים.
והשם יצליחו - כי זהו רצון השם.
אזכיר עה"צ.

Q & A: Why Rambam and not some other Sefer?



One of the main reasons why we learn Rambam is because if everyone learns one thing, it unites them.

There are 3 reasons why specifically Mishne Torah of Rambam:

1. It is a Sefer of Halochos, which are easy to understand, even though the halacha is not like the Rambam in many cases, however, it is very clear-cut and defined compared to a *svarah* or *shita* or another *eideleh inyan*. Therefore it is easier for **everyone** to learn it. - כקטן כגדול, שווה לכל נפש -

2. Rambam includes all the parts of the Torah, including mitzvos that don't apply today; for example *korbanos* and mitzvos about Moshiach.

3. By learning Rambam you learn the **entire** Torah (Shba'al Peh). In the *Hakdama* he writes that the goal of writing Mishne Torah is that one can learn just Torah Sheb'Ksav and then go straight to Mishne Torah and not need any other *sefer*.

A few interesting points:

- When the Rebbe mentions Rambam in short, it is called Yad.
- The Rebbe said that רמב"ם is Rashei Teivos: "רבות מופתי בארץ מצרים" - the Rambam lived in Egypt.
- Many countries printed stamps in honor of the Rambam's 850th birthday. The Rebbe spoke about this on Yud Alef Nissan 5745.

מורה שיעור ללימוד הרמב"ם	ג' פרקים ליום	פרק א' ליום
י"ט אדר ב'	הל' אבל פ' יב-יד	הל' טומאות אוכלין פ' ה'
כ' אדר ב'	הל' מלכים ומלחמותיהם פ' א-ג	פרק ו'
כ"א אדר ב'	פ' ד-ו	פרק ז'
כ"ב אדר ב'	פ' ז-ט	פרק ח'
כ"ג אדר ב'	פ' יב-יג	פרק ט'
כ"ד אדר ב'	אז וגו'. כל המצות... שנת החמה	פרק י"ד
כ"ה אדר ב'	מצות עשה. א מצוה ראשונה...	פרק י"א

לזכות
הילד דובער שי' לברטוב
לרגל תספורת הראשונה
י"ז אדר שני ה'תשע"א