

In honor of the 2nd birthday  
of our son  
**Levi Yitzchok** שיח'ל  
**Backman**  
**3 Menachem Av 5778**

By his parents  
**Bruce and Rochelle**  
and **Family**



# WE HAVEN'T EVEN BEGUN!

THE REBBE'S SHTUREM  
ABOUT THE STUDY OF RAMBAM

In previous issues, we've explored the story behind the Rebbe's *takana* of *limud haRambam*, the story of some of the most notable *siyumim*, and what the Rebbe says on the importance of this *mitvza*.<sup>1</sup>

In honor of the *siyum haRambam* this month, we present this collection of short insights, anecdotes, and *kisvei yad kodesh* related to the *takana*.

## Living Rambam

The Rebbe's intention with the *takana* of Rambam is not that we should merely **learn** the text, but to **live** with it. Much like the Alter Rebbe's demand that we should "live with the times"—not just learn the weekly *parsha* but actually live it, the Rebbe similarly asked that we live with the daily study of Rambam:

"The Rambam tells us that when we learn *Torah Shebiksav* and then study his compilation, we will know the entire Torah!" the Rebbe explains. "Just like we need to live with the weekly *parsha*, we also need to live with today's *shiur* in Rambam."<sup>2</sup>

In this spirit, the Rebbe encouraged people to learn lessons in *avodas Hashem* from the daily *shiur* in Rambam. "The fact that we always try to find a *hora'a* from the day's *shiur* in Rambam is not merely a way of showing a 'kuntz' that we can find one," the Rebbe says. "The real reason is: according to the Torah there is a real lesson that needs to be learned from the day's *shiur*. That's why, when *rabbonim* or featured speakers are looking for something to say at a *drasha* or a *farbrengen*, in addition to speaking about timely topics, they should try to teach a lesson from the daily *shiur* in Rambam..."<sup>3</sup>



19 KISLEV 5745, YOSSI MELAMED VIA JEM 23951

## The Dream

The Rebbe wished for this new initiative to spread across the whole world. In fact, the Rebbe referred to this as his "dream":

"*Yehi ratzon* that this 'dream' of uniting all the Jewish people through the study of Rambam, which has already taken off and is constantly spreading and gaining new adherents each day, should be completely accomplished. Then all the Yidden wherever they may be will be united in a complete manner ('*shleimus*') by completing the Torah in its entirety ('*b'shleimusa*')."<sup>4</sup>

## Don't Just Try!

The Rebbe doesn't want us to merely "try" to fulfill this *takana*. He wants us to actually do it! This is evident from the following edit in the Rebbe's *ksav yad kodesh*, commenting on the Rebbe's biographical sketch printed at the beginning of Hayom Yom. The compiler had written that in 5744, the Rebbe suggested that everyone should begin a daily study of Rambam, and try to learn three *perakim* every day.

The Rebbe crossed a line through "try" ("להשתדל").



LIBRARY OF AGUDAS CHASSIDEI CHABAD

SIYUM HARAMBAM AT THE RAMBAM'S KEVER IN TVERYA, 5745. AMONG THE ATTENDEES IS SEFRADI CHIEF-RABBI MORDECHAI ELIYAHU.

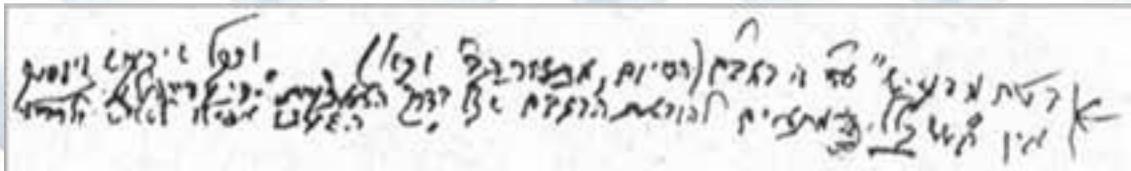
## We Need You!

The Rebbe placed great emphasis on the importance of *siyumim* on Rambam, asking everyone to get involved in hosting and attending them:

"Don't think that just because there will be plenty of other people there, you yourself don't have to attend as well," the Rebbe said. "You think it's a waste of time and energy, you won't be able to contemplate on your studies properly and so on. And you'll also have to greet other people and respond to their '*shalom aleichem*' with an '*aleichem shalom*' (so as not to be considered a thief, as the Gemara asserts). I will just stay home," you say.

"But it's important for each and every individual to attend, as the *possuk* says ברב עם הדרת מלך—the king's glory is in a multitude of people..."<sup>25</sup>

We can glean at least a glimpse into the broad scope of *siyumim* and publicity the Rebbe expected from this handwritten note to Rabbi Adin Even Yisroel (Steinzaltz):



בטח "מרעיש" ע"ד הרמב"ם (הסיום, מחזור הב' וכו') וככל שירעיש ויוסיף אין חשש כלל המתאים להוראת הרמב"ם שצריך להיות בדרך האמצעית" כי עדיין לא הגענו אפילו לשליש ולרביעי.

You are certainly "creating a tumult" about Rambam (the *siyum* [on the first cycle, the start of] the second cycle, etc.). No matter how much you increase in the tumult [publicity and fanfare], you need not worry whether this is in line with the Rambam's ruling that one should [always] take the "midpoint path,"<sup>26</sup> because we have not yet even reached a third or a quarter [of where we need to be].

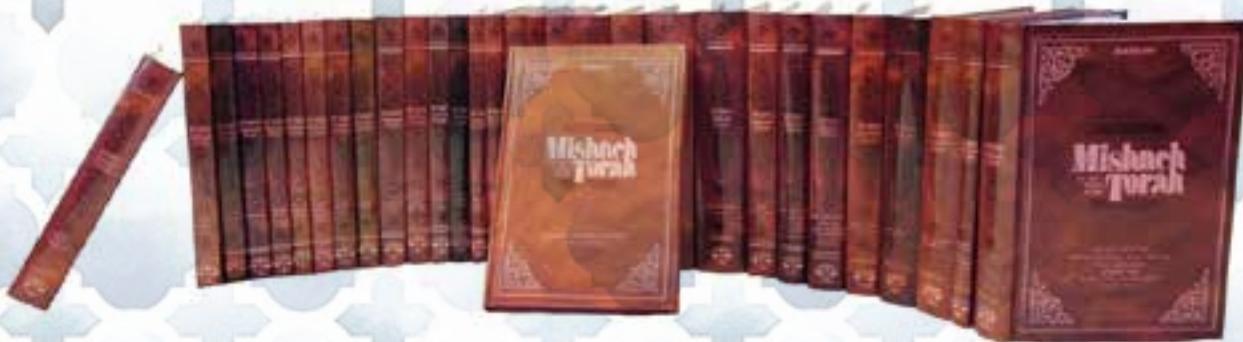
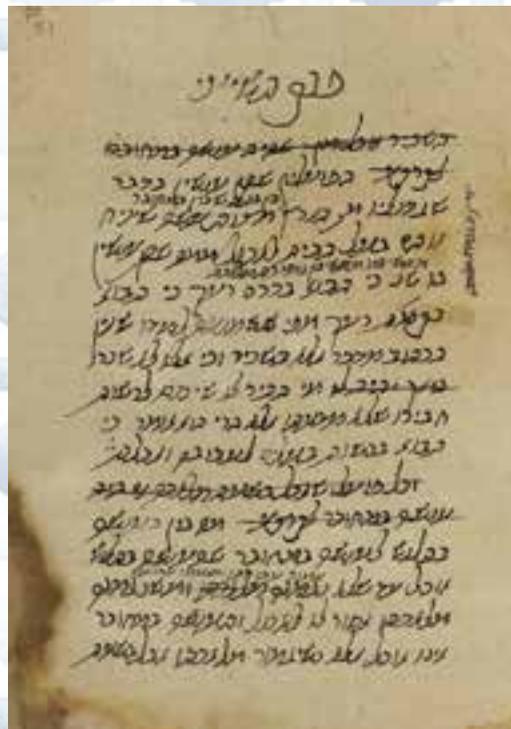
The Rebbe urged everyone to influence others to join in as well. "When you feel a sense of *achdus Yisroel* connecting you with Yidden all around the world, you will naturally want to connect with them even more by all studying the same *halachos* each day."<sup>27</sup>

## Nightly Study in 770

The following is an account as recalled by Reb Zelig Wallman, one of the students in Tomchei Tmimim 770 in the year 5709:

“A friend of mine and I would sit together each night during the evening *sefer* to learn Chassidus in the main *zal*, and we noticed a most phenomenal thing. Just before *maariv* the Rebbe (“Ramash”, as he was then known) would come in, take a volume of the Rambam’s Mishneh Torah off of 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 he covered per day.”<sup>8</sup>



## Best You Could Be

As we know, the Rebbe set up three tracks of Rambam study: Three *perokim* a day, one *perek* a day, and Sefer Hamitzvos.

The Rebbe once explained:

“It is important to remember that those who learn *perek echad* each day should not feel dejected *chas v’shalom*. Firstly, because dejection is the antithesis of Torah study: Torah must be learned with an open mind. Additionally, if one is at the level where he can only learn one *perek*, then it is just as good as learning three *perokim*. On the other hand, if one has the ability to learn three *perokim*, he does not fulfill his obligation by only learning one. And more so: learning one *perek* can be considered *bittul Torah* for this individual!

“Obviously, it is better to learn one *perek* than not to learn any at all, *rachmana l’itzlan*. But still, he will not fulfill his obligation by learning only one *perek*.”<sup>9</sup>

The Rebbe connected the study of Rambam with many blessings. A shliach once wrote to the Rebbe that he accumulated much debt and asked for a *bracha* to be relieved of it. The Rebbe responded: By paying up your “debt” of not-yet studied Rambam, you will be able to pay off the monetary debt as well.

There are 83 sets of *halachos* in Rambam, the Rebbe pointed out. The word for illness in the Torah is “מחלה”, which has the *gematriya* of 83. By studying Rambam, we will be healed of all sicknesses; to the extent that, as the Torah says, “לא אשים עליך”—the sickness never even begins.<sup>10</sup>





THE REBBE THANKS SEN. BOSCHWITZ FOR HIS ROLE IN THE SIYUM HARAMBAM IN MINNESOTA DURING THE FARBRENGEN OF CHOF AV 5745.



RABBI MOSHE FELLER WITH SEN. RUDY BOSCHWITZ.

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## Evergrowing Effect

Ever since meeting Rabbi Moshe Feller in the early 5730s, Senator Rudy Boschwitz became tremendously instrumental in assisting the activities of Chabad both in his field and beyond. He helped Lubavitch of Minnesota raise large sums of money as well as offering practical help to get through the red tape of bureaucracy whenever needed.

Perhaps most notably, Senator Boschwitz fought very hard to uphold the Rebbe's view on the travesty of the so-called Zero Population Growth,<sup>11</sup> and despite fierce opposition, he was able to sign a bill into law about this.

In 5745, Rabbi Feller planned to hold a grand first *siyum haRambam* with dignitaries and distinguished individuals, and Senator Boschwitz helped facilitate the preparations, both financially and logistically.

A few months later, at the farbrengen of Chof Av 5745, Senator Boschwitz visited the Rebbe for the first time, after years of actively supporting the Rebbe's endeavors. He was given a seat on the dais, and between *sichos* had an opportunity to approach the Rebbe.

Rabbi Feller listened in closely to see how the Rebbe would address the man who had been a pioneering force amongst supporters of Chabad.

However the Rebbe turned to Senator Boschwitz, and zeroed in on one particular item:

The Rebbe turned to him with a warm smile and exclaimed: "Thank you very much for the *siyum haRambam*! Rabbi Feller told me about it..."

To the Rebbe, despite the myriad of other areas of concern, what was of utmost importance was the *siyum haRambam*.

**The Rebbe:** Thank you very much for [your participation in] the *siyum* of the Rambam. I heard from Rabbi Feller [the Rebbe pointed in his direction] that it was very successful. And certainly you will influence many people around you.

**Mr. Boschwitz:** I hope so...

**The Rebbe:** ...Then and also now. Everyone will rave about your speech and about your participation, and I hope that this will add to your appetite to do all these things, many times more.<sup>12</sup>

1. See *The Global Initiative*, Derher Shevat 5774.

2. Hisvaaduyos 5746 vol. 1, p. 207.

3. Hisvaaduyos 5749 vol. 1, p. 309.

4. Hisvaaduyos 5744 vol. 4, p. 2222.

5. Hisvaaduyos 5748 vol. 2, p. 252.

6. Rambam Hilchos De'os, 1:4.

7. Hisvaaduyos 5744 vol. 3, p. 1961.

8. Yemei Melech vol. 2, p. 626.

9. Hisvaaduyos 5745 vol. 2, p. 1326

10. Hisvaaduyos 5746 vol. 2, p. 246.

11. Maintaining a population size by limiting the number of live births.

12. Video recording of Farbrengen, Chof Menachem-Av 5745, released by JEM.