

דער הער

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לעבן מיטן רבין

"מה שהוא עושה אומר לישראל לעשות"

STUDYING RAMBAM

This week we will be celebrating the 30th Siyum Harembam since the Rebbe initiated the *Takana* in 5744. In honor of this momentous occasion, we bring our readers some interesting facts and accounts about the Rebbe's *Koch* in learning Rambam.

Yet in Poland

In the 1930's the Frierdiker Rebbe lived in Poland while the Rebbe and Rebbetzin lived in Berlin and Paris. Each year they would come for periodical visits to Poland to be with the Frierdiker 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 Mishne Torah. It was quite clear that the Rebbe had a daily commitment to study 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 Yeshiva Torah V'Daas, New York in the years 5708-9 (1948-9):

"A friend of mine and I would sit together each evening to learn *Shulchan Aruch* in the main *Zal* at 770, and we noticed a most phenomenal thing. Following *Maariv* at 9:00, the Rebbe (or the "Ramash", as he then was known) would come in and take a volume of the Rambam's Mishne Torah off of the shelf and study from it for a while.

"It was quite clear that he was slowly studying through the entire Mishne Torah, one *Sefer* at a time, although we were unable to determine exactly how much he covered per day."

In the Rain as In the Sunshine

Once the Rebbe initiated the *Takana* 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 done to open the car-door for him.

Rabbi Chaim Schapiro relates:

"I recall one Sukkos while I was a young Bochur, 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 entered the Sukka to take the Lulav out to the crowd so that each of the Chassidim would have a chance to make a Brocha on the Rebbe's Lulav.

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

קיום התקנות - אף הוא בחיים

ישנם כו"כ חקנות של בעל הגאולה. שצוה להדפיסם ולפרסמם בכל תפוצות ישראל, כמו: התקנה דלימוד שיעורי חת"ח, חומש תהלים ותנאי, ועוד תקנות כיו"ב, עד לתקנה העיקרית — הפצת אהבת ישראל. וכמו כן ישנם התורות והמאמרים של בעל הגאולה — אשר בהם היתה כל חייתו, 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 "שלושים" ו"שליחות" של בעל הגאולה, אשר "שלוחו של אדם כמותו".

(משיחת ליל ט"ו תמוז תשמ"ה)

(Translation on back)

ביאורים וטעמים לתקנת
הרמב"ם
ראה הוספות ללקו"ש חלק
כ"ד

RAMBAM

THE HISTORY BEHIND THE TAKANA

The year is 5744, the place, New York. A sudden wave of sales catches the sforim dealers of 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 not one set of Rambam to be found, all are out of stock.

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 Farbrengens, 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 Farbrengen was on Shabbos, Chof Kislev. At one point in the Farbrengen, 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 Morocco 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 Morocco, 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 Sefardische 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.

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MAAREI MEKOMOS ON THE RAMBAM

SUMMER, 5744

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

During the Farbrengen of the night of Tu B'av, the Rebbe suggested that a compilation of Maarei-Mekomos be put together, collecting 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 at a later date. Unfortunately, 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 rapidly so that the finished product would be available as soon as possible.

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

By Tuesday morning the work had already begun. Immediately, 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 speedy 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 constantly inquired about their progress. 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!

(Continued from page 2)

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).

Why specifically Rambam—Mishne Torah?

Q&A

One of the main reasons why we learn Rambam is because when everyone learns one subject and sefer, 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.—**שווה לכל**—**בכסף כגדול, 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 (Sefer Ha) Yad sometime Yad Hachazaka.
- The Rebbe said that **רמב"ם** is Rashei Teivos:
"רבות מופתי בארץ מצרים" **"Many miracles in the land of Egypt"** - 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.

Fulfilling the Takanos Makes Him Alive

There are many *takanos* — institutions— of the *Baal Hageula*, [the one who's redemption we are celebrating, i.e. the Friediker Rebbe] which he directed to publish and spread to all Yidden.

For example, the daily study of Chitas, (Chumash, Tehillim, and Tanya) and other *takanos* like them, including his main *takana* - to spread Ahavas Yisroel. So too, there are also his Torah teachings and maamorim, in which he invested and devoted his entire essence.

Therefore, [because he invested his entire being in them] when one learns the Torah of the *Baal HaGeula*, and goes in his ways, through fulfilling his *takanos*, and carrying out his shlichus, this clearly emphasizes the achievements of the *Baal Hageula*. And like we said: "Just as his children are alive, so too he is alive." Meaning: the *Baal Hegeula* lives with us, and more so, lives within us. This affects us until our entire being and all our actions are only "shluchim", messengers, of the *Baal Hegeula*, and "the shliach of a person is like the person himself".

(15 Tammuz 5745)

(Continued from page 3)

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 a 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 Bochurim should also get involved in the work. During the following week, Bochurim and Yungerleit toiled endless hours, and on Erev Rosh Hashanah, the second edition of the Maarei Mekomos Le'harambam was ready for purchase.



מורה נבוכים ללימוד הרמב"ם

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