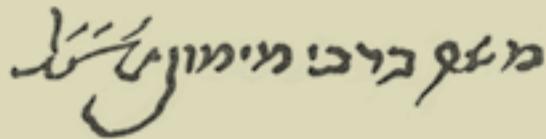


לעילוי בשמת
הרה"ח הת"ר' ירחמיאל בנימין
ב"ר מנחם הלוי ז"ל
קליין
מזכיר של כ"ק אדמו"ר זי"ע
גלב"ע ח"י סיון ה'תשע"ה
~
ולזכות אשתו תבלחט"א
מרת לאה שתחי' קליין
נדפס ע"י משפחתם



א) להשחלל ללמוד בכל יום שלשה פרקים כדי לסיים במשך השנה הבעל"ט,

RABBI M SELIGSON



THE RAMBAM'S SIGNATURE.



Every
Yid.

Every
Halacha.

Every
Day.

THE LANDMARK TAKANA
of
LIMMUD HARAMBAM

How to Learn Rambam

Long before the *takana* of *Limmud HaRambam*, Sefer HaYad was studied by Yidden around the world. They delved into it; *roshei yeshivos* gave *shiurim* on Rambam, deriving heaps of *chiddushim* in *Shas* from every word and letter.

However, by and large the *sefer* was not being used for the purpose its author intended; a *sefer* that every Yid, great or small, old or young, could use to know the entire Torah.

When the Rebbe instituted the daily *limud haRambam* on Acharon Shel Pesach 5744, the original intent and vision for this monumental work finally became a reality.

But this is just one of the many accomplishments of the *takana*. A one of a kind global initiative, uniting each and every Jew, from the wise to the simple, by studying the entire Torah - and specifically *halachos*.

A unity that is a prelude to the coming of Moshiach.

When the Rebbe introduced the method of learning Rambam as we do; studying the entire *sefer perek* by *perek* from start to finish, some may have felt that learning three *perakim* (or even just one *perek*) of Rambam a day is a pace far faster than Sefer HaYad should be studied. They believed that Rambam, being a complex and deep *sefer*, should be studied by first delving into the Gemaras on which a given *halacha* is based, and only afterwards learning *Sefer HaYad*. They believed that to learn Rambam without first studying the applicable *sugyos* in *Shas* would be disrespectful to the Rambam.

But the truth however, is quite the opposite; in order to respect the Rambam, one does not need to first learn the Gemaras. The Rambam did not intend his *sefer* to be a

commentary on *Shas*. In the *hakdama* to Sefer HaYad, he writes:

“I... sought to compose [a work which would include the conclusions] derived from all these texts regarding the forbidden and the permitted, the impure and the pure, and the remainder of the Torah’s laws, all in clear and concise terms, so that the entire *Torah Sheb’al Peh* could be organized in each person’s mouth without questions or objections.

“To summarize: [The intent of this work is] that a person will not need another text at all with regard to any *halacha*. Rather, this text will be a compilation of the entire *Torah Sheb’al Peh*, including also the *takanos*, *minhagim*, and *gezeiros* that were enacted from the time of Moshe Rabbeinu, until the completion of the Gemara, as were explained by the *geonim* in the texts they composed after the Gemara.

“Therefore, I have called this text, *Mishneh Torah* [“the second to the Torah,” with the intent that] a person should first study the *Torah Shebiksav*, and then study this text and comprehend the entire *Torah Sheb’al Peh* from it, without having to study any other text between the two.”

The Rambam makes his intention quite clear: the *sefer*’s purpose is to impart knowledge of the *halachos* of Torah, not the deeper meaning of the Gemara. That is why he called it *Mishneh Torah*; first and foremost, a Yid must learn *Torah Shebiksav*. Then, the secondary obligation is to know the *halachos*, the “Crown of Torah.” For this purpose the Sefer HaYad was written, and its study will give the student knowledge of “every Jewish law,” without need for any other *sefer*.

The Rebbe explains that learning Rambam only for the purpose of deriving *chiddushim* goes against the Rambam’s wishes. Until now, a *sefer* of learning Rambam for the sake of Rambam itself almost didn’t exist.

The *takana* is to learn Rambam for the sake of Rambam itself; not to figure out the source in *Shas* for the *halachos*, nor to derive *chiddushim*, but simply to understand the *halachos*, as the Rambam intended. (Once this has been accomplished, one can indeed learn *chiddushim* from the precise wording of Rambam.)¹

Restoring the Glory

The Rebbe points out that immediately upon its completion and publishing, the Rambam was indeed studied properly:

Recently we have instituted a new thing; having a set daily study session in the Sefer HaRambam. Essentially this is not completely new; we are restoring an old custom to its full glory (“החזירו עטרה ליושנה”).

In the Rambam’s times, and even for a while after his lifetime, the Sefardic communities had regular study sessions of Rambam. This lasted for quite a few generations. At some point this practice was also accepted in Ashkenazic communities as well.

(*Sicha* 29 Elul 5744)

While Lubavitcher Chassidim had been completing *Shas* every year since the times of the Alter Rebbe by dividing the *mesechtos*, the Rebbe explained that completing Rambam could not be accomplished by splitting the *sefer* up. This is because of a difference between *Shas* and Rambam. Although the placement of the *mesechtos* in *Shas* are in a particular order, the reasons for this order have no *halachic* implication;² thus, one needn’t study *Shas* in a specific order and it can be split up. On the other

hand the Rambam, when writing Sefer HaYad, expected the reader to have studied the entire *sefer* up until the current *halacha* and relied that the student would already know a lot of information.³ The reader, unaware of what the Rambam wrote earlier in the *sefer*, may draw erroneous conclusions from the *halacha* he studies. The only way to properly learn Rambam is in the right order, from beginning to end.⁴

Jewish Unity

“One of the principal elements in the study of *Rambam* is the unification of Jewry,” the Rebbe was quoted in the New York Times as saying.⁵

In those inaugural *sichos*, the Rebbe discussed the oft-mentioned need to unite the Jewish nation. The Rebbe explained that this unity can be accomplished by learning Mishneh Torah daily, because every Yid would be learning the same thing at the same time. Since “a person is wherever his thoughts are,” all Yidden are thus united in their common study. This unity is everlasting, as it is unity through the eternal Torah.

This unity expresses itself practically as well; Yidden who may otherwise have little in common will find a common language in the *inyan* they are all learning.⁶

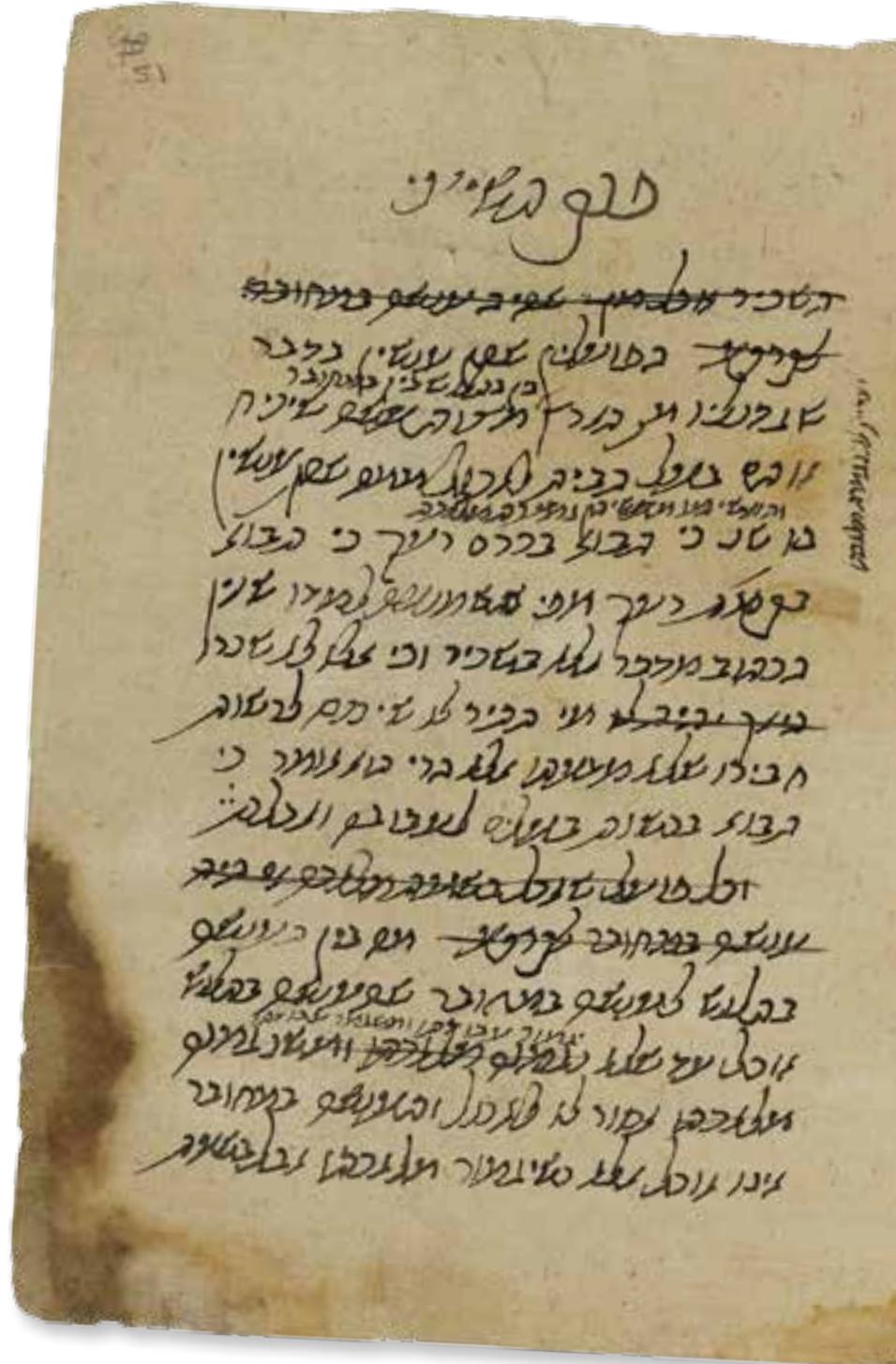
However, this unity could really be accomplished by the simultaneous

study of any *sefer* in Torah. Why then was Rambam chosen?

The Rebbe went on to explain that Sefer HaYad has two unique advantages:

1) As explained in Likkutei Torah⁷, the Jewish people are one united

body, but there are still some that are considered like “heads” and some that are like the “feet.” While there is a significant difference between scholars and simple folk when it comes to the give-and-take of *pilpul*, the difference fades when it comes to *halacha*. The



A PAGE OF MISHNE TORAH WRITTEN IN THE RAMBAM'S HANDWRITING.

Yidden who may have little in common will find a common language in the Torah they are all learning

schism between scholars and simple people with respect to *pilpul* can be compared to the difference between the head and the foot. The purpose of the head is logic and understanding, while the feet's purpose is walking—getting things done. On the other hand, when it comes to learning straightforward, practical *halachos*; simple dos and don'ts, all Yidden are equal.⁸

Sefer Hayad, a *sefer* of *halachos*, is a *sefer* that all Yidden can share an equal understanding of.

2) Yidden derive their *chayus* from Torah and are one with Torah—ישראל—אורייתא וקב"ה כולא חד the Yidden, the Torah, and Hashem are all one. Naturally, anything that is to be accomplished among Yidden must

come from Torah. Hence, שלימות העם—unity and completeness of the Jewish People—must come about through שלימות התורה—completeness in Torah; and the *sefer* used for that purpose must be one that contains the entire Torah.⁹

Sefer HaYad is unique in that it includes all of the *halachos* of the Torah. There are other *sefarim* of *halachos*, but none of them are comprehensive. For example, Shulchan Aruch contains only the *halachos* applicable to today, while Sefer HaYad also includes *halachos* that only apply during the times of the *Beis Hamikdash*, as well as *halachos* of *tumah* and *taharah*.

The Rambam clearly states that his *sefer* contains the entire *Torah Shebal Peh*, making the Sefer Hayad the only compilation that a person can use to learn the entire Torah. This is why the *possuk* that the Rambam uses to open his *sefer* is “אז לא אבוש בהביטי אל כל” מצותיך—Then I will not be ashamed when I gaze at all Your mitzvos.”

Sefer HaYad contains all of Torah, making it the ideal *sefer* to be used to unite all Yidden through learning all of Torah.

The Greatness of Halacha

There are many components to the mitzvah of Torah study: 1) Practical knowledge—studying the *halachos* that everyone must know



THE REBBE HOLDS A RAMBAM WHILE VISITING THE CHILDREN AT THE LAG B'OMER FAIR, 5744.

Sefer HaYad contains all of Torah, making it the ideal sefer to be used to unite all Yidden through learning all of Torah.



in order to perform the mitzvos. 2) To know the entire *Torah Shebiksav* and *Torah Sheb'al Peh*—this includes *Bavli*, *Yerushalmi*, *Sifra*, *Sifri*, *Tosefta*, *Midrashim*, and much more, as detailed in *Hilchos Talmud Torah*.¹⁰ 3) Studying *halacha* in general, even the *halachos* that are not practically applicable today.

But if the uniqueness of *halacha* lies in its practicality, what makes *halacha* that is not practical unique?

Our *chachomim* placed *halacha* in high regard, referring to it as “the Crown of Torah.”¹¹

The Alter Rebbe explains in *Tanya*¹² that just as a crown surrounds a person’s head, the “head” of Torah—the give-and-take of analysis in Torah, is surrounded by the “crown”—the *halachic* conclusion that arises out of it, which is Hashem’s will (רצון האלוקי) that governs our actions. This Divine will in *halacha* is greater and more elevated than the “head” of Torah, like a crown that is above and surrounding the head.

Therefore, learning Rambam—a *sefer* of *halachos*—has the advantage that the person learning connects himself with Hashem’s will. This advantage is one that learning any *sefer halacha* would provide. However, when one studies Rambam, a *sefer* which contains all the *halachos*, one connects himself to Hashem’s will in its entirety.¹³

The Mitzvah of Knowing all of Torah

In *Hilchos Talmud Torah*,¹⁴ the Alter Rebbe defines the obligation

for every Yid to learn and know all of Torah to include learning and knowing all 613 mitzvos along with their *halachos*, which are detailed in *Torah Sheb'al Peh*.¹⁵ This is what the Rambam accomplishes in his *sefer*—he collects the *halachos* from throughout *Shas* that are applicable to all 613 mitzvos.

Thus, by learning *Sefer HaYad*, a Yid fulfills his obligation to learn and know the entire Torah, making it the ideal *sefer* to be used to unite all Yidden through learning all of Torah.

The Alter Rebbe also details¹⁶ a *machlokes* between the Rambam and the Rosh regarding the study of *halachos*. The Rambam’s opinion is that one needn’t learn the reasons for the *halachos* in order to be able to fully understand them. The Alter Rebbe proves that this is the Rambam’s opinion from the fact that his *sefer*, *Mishneh Torah*, does not contain the reasons for the *halachos*. The Rosh, on the other hand, holds that learning the reasons for the *halachos* is absolutely necessary, for without knowing the reason behind the *halacha*, one could easily misunderstand its intent, and mistakenly use this *halacha* as a basis to rule in a case that seems similar, but is in truth different. The Alter Rebbe goes on to explain that in order to fulfill the mitzvah of knowing all of Torah, it is sufficient to merely know the *halachos* themselves, without their reasons. According to the Rosh, on the other hand, this mitzvah requires one to know the *halachos* of the mitzvos along with their reasons.

The Alter Rebbe rules like the Rosh; that one must learn the *halachos* together with their reasons. This, then, leads to the question; how can we fulfill the mitzvah of knowing all of Torah by learning Rambam, when a key component—the reasons behind the *halachos*—is missing?

The Rebbe gives two answers:

Firstly, one would still be fulfilling the mitzvah according to the Rambam.¹⁷

Secondly, nowadays, most Yidden are not able to learn and know all the *halachos* with their reasons. Indeed we find that the Rambam wrote about his day and age that learning *halacha* from Gemara is something that “requires broad knowledge, a wise spirit, and much time,” (and as a result a *sefer* that is “clear and concise, without questions or answers” was needed). So, if this was true of the Rambam’s generation, all the more so it can be said of our generation, that at the very least one should learn the *halachos* themselves, without their reasons, to fulfill the mitzvah of knowing the entire Torah.

The Rebbe then explains, after a lengthy explanation of the definition of the mitzvah of knowing all of Torah according to the Alter Rebbe, that the Alter Rebbe agrees that someone who cannot learn and remember all of the *halachos* with their reasons (due to a lack of time or intellectual capacity—both reasons that apply to most people today), should learn the meaning of the 613 mitzvos to the best of his ability, i.e. the *halachos* from *Mishnayos* and Rambam.¹⁸

In the Meantime

It is a mitzvah for every single Yid to know all the *halachos* of the Torah.

Obviously, then, it is important for everyone to learn Rambam. There is no other *sefer* that includes all the *halachos* of each and every one of the 613 mitzvos; both the ones that are applicable today, as well as those only for the time of the *Beis Hamikdash*. There is no other way to fulfill the obligation of knowing the entire Torah other than by learning the Rambam!

Studying Rambam is not exclusively for Lubavitch. Someone might say, “I am not a Lubavitcher, so I don’t have to take part in this; I’ll study something else.”

Go find a *sefer*—other than Rambam—that enumerates and explains the *halachos* of every single mitzvah. Then there will be room for argument!

In the meantime, until you find another *sefer* like this, you must learn Rambam, because you have an obligation to know all of the mitzvos already today. And you probably won’t find another *sefer* anyway; according to the experts, a *sefer* of this kind has yet to be published!

(*Sicha Shavuot 5745*)

Halachos Without Reasons

The Rebbe addressed a question that seems to arise from the words of the Rosh.

The Rosh writes, “Those who rule a *halacha* from Rambam without being well-versed in Gemara—to know from where his words are derived—are making a mistake. They err in permitting the forbidden and forbidding the permitted. Because [the Rambam] did not bring proofs and sources, like other authors of *sifrei halacha*, which would be able to be used to reach correct and true conclusions. [The Rambam] instead wrote his *sefer* as one who is prophesizing, without reason or proof. Anyone who reads it believes that he understands it, but this is not the case, for if one is not well-versed in Gemara, he will not understand the matter in its true depth, and will stumble in ruling and teaching. Therefore, a person should not rely on his reading of [the Rambam’s] *sefer* to

rule and teach, unless he finds a proof in the Gemara [for his ruling.]

Based on this, some people believed that it is forbidden to learn Rambam on its own, without knowing the reasons for the *halachos*.

The Rebbe explained just how implausible it is to say that this is what the Rosh meant. This flies in the face of the very reasons that Rambam wrote his *sefer*—that it be learned on its own and that even a youngster incapable of understanding the reasons should be able to know the *halachos*.

If it were to be forbidden to learn Rambam without also learning the applicable *sugyos* in *Shas*, the same would apply to Shulchan Aruch—it would be forbidden to learn the words of the Mechaber and the Rama without knowing their reasons. This would obviously be in direct contradiction to the established Jewish custom to learn Shulchan Aruch without the accompanying *sugyos* in *Shas*. One cannot say that this is what the Rosh intended.

Rather, it is certainly permitted, and in fact required, to learn Rambam as he himself intended; to gain simple knowledge of the *halachos*.

The Rosh’s ban on ruling from Rambam applies only to matters that are not clearly written in the *Sefer HaYad*, so that one would have to extrapolate the correct *halacha* from a similar case that is written in the *sefer*. In the case of *halachos* that are clearly written in Rambam, the Rosh certainly agrees that one may rule from the *Sefer HaYad*.

In addition, the Rosh’s intention was only to prevent *ruling* from Rambam (by extrapolation). However, it is certain that the Rosh agrees that one may *learn* the simple *halachos* without knowing the reasons, and one’s knowledge of the *halachos*, while incomplete without the reasons, would still be considered knowledge, and the *takana* of Rambam is not for the purpose of knowing how to conduct oneself, but merely to know the *halachos*.¹⁹

Bringing the Geulah

There are two reasons that learning Rambam hastens the Geulah:

1) Since *golus* was caused by the opposite of *ahavas Yisroel*, it follows that *ahavas Yisroel* removes the reason for *golus*, and with it, *golus* itself. Therefore, the Jewish unity fostered by the study of Rambam helps bring *geulah*.

2) Chazal tell us: “The exiles will only be redeemed by virtue of Mishnayos, as it says, ‘Even when they are placed among nations I will collect them.’” Mishnayos are *halachos* gathered and taught without necessarily including their reasons. Similarly, the Rambam is “Concise... without questions and answers.” So just like the study of Mishnayos, the study itself of the *halachos* of Rambam hastens the *geulah*. This is also connected with the saying of Chazal



13 KISLEV 5745, YOSSI MELAMED via JEM 23951

that, “Everyone who learns *halachos* every day is guaranteed a portion in *Olam Haba*.” The *Olam Haba* that will take place in the physical realm, with physical bodies, will happen when Moshiach comes and *techiyas hameisim* takes place, may it happen speedily. ¹

1. This point was explained in numerous *sichos* around the time of the *takana*. See, for example, Hisvaaduyos 5744 vol. 3 p. 1949 and on; Hisvaaduyos 5745 vol. 3 p. 1442.
2. Bava Kamma 102a; Tosafos at the beginning of Bava Metzia
3. Yad Malachi - Klalei Rambam, paragraph 6.
4. Likkutei Sichos vol 27 p. 232 note 27
5. “Thousands Honor Maimonides by Year of Study” NYT March 10, 1986
6. Likkutei Sichos Ibid. p. 230
7. In the *maamar* “Atem Nitzavim”
8. Toras Menachem 5744 part 3 p. 1983
9. Likkutei Sichos vol. 32 p. 271
10. Perek 1, se’if 4; Perek 2, se’if 2.
11. Megilla 28b
12. Tanya - Iggeres Hakodesh 29
13. See Likkutei Sichos vol. 32 p. 257.
14. Perek 2
15. See the Alter Rebbe’s *Hilchos Talmud Torah*.

16. Tanya - Kuntres Acharon beginning of chapter 2.

17. Likkutei Sichos vol. 32 p. 231 note 24

18. See Likkutei Sichos vol 36 p. 22-24 and the *sicha* of Shavuos 5745 for a lengthy discussion of these topics; only a few points are brought here.

19. This is only a brief synopsis; much of the explanation has not been quoted for the sake of brevity. See the explanation at length in the *sichos* of 12 Sivan, 12 Tammuz, Shabbos Parshas Pinchas, 15 Av in 5744, and 14 Kislev 5745.

One Halacha in Depth

A set quota of *halachos* that must be learned daily could be seen as a hindrance to proper study. Since the quota is consistent, but a person’s responsibilities may change from day to day, and along with them his available time for learning, he may find that on some days he only has enough time to learn the *halachos* in a very simple way, without studying in depth. When the Rebbe introduced the *takana* of Rambam, he addressed this concern.

The Rebbe said that to start, the issue can be avoided if everyone realizes that since they are learning Hashem’s Torah, it is not appropriate to learn it without studying in depth.

The Rebbe also went on to say that even if this concern persists, the *takana* of splitting up Rambam into daily quotas has a precedent: the daily *shiur* of Tanya. The Frierdiker Rebbe split up Tanya into daily quotas, without concern that this could lead to learning without the requisite depth. This being the case, certainly Rambam can be split up without concern.

The Rebbe also instructed that at the very least, one should learn one *halacha* out of the day’s *perakim* in depth.

(Likkutei Sichos vol. 27 p. 231, 233)