

- Where a Farbrengen has already been held, they could surely repeat it with greater quantity and quality – and accompanied with greater publicity.²⁷

מוקדש

לכ"ק אדמו"ר מלך המשיח



לעילוי נשמת

הרה"ח ר' חיים בן ארי' לייב ע"ה

מאריס

נפטר ד' טבת תשס"ח

ת.נ.צ.ב.ה.

"והקיצו ורננו שוכני עפר"

והוא בתוכם תיכף ומיד ממש

נדפס ע"י

משפחתו שיחיו מאריס



לזכות

הרה"ח הרה"ת ר' צבי מרדכי בן שרה

וזוגתו שלומית בת שושנה

ולזכות אחיו ואחותיו:

יוסף יצחק, משה, מנחם מענדל, חנה וחי' מושקא

שיחיו גודמאן



יחי אדוננו מורנו ורבינו מלך המשיח לעולם ועד

a CALL to ACTION

1: "NITEL NACHT" AND
THE WINTER VACATION.

2: 20TH AND 24TH OF TEVES

PRACTICAL INSTRUCTION
FROM THE TEACHINGS OF THE REBBE
5748-5752

A PROJECT OF
HaMaaseh Hu HaIkar

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*Translated in the memory of
Yitzchok Yosef ben Yaakov Mordechai.*



a CALL to ACTION

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should also hold public sessions to study the Alter Rebbe's Shulchan Aruch and Tanya. Where such sessions already exist, we should add to their quantity and quality.²⁵

FOLLOW HIS DIRECTIVES

- “Great is study because it leads to action” – we should increase our practical service that is based on the directives of the Alter Rebbe. This includes the service of Tzedakah – whose great importance is elaborated upon in the Alter Rebbe's “Igeres HaKodesh” and “Igeres HaTeshuvah” – and in a general sense, the service of disseminating Chassidus.²⁶

WITH PUBLICITY

- Nowadays, it is necessary to carry out all of these directives openly and with publicity – not in a surreptitious manner; especially as “it is a Mitzvah to publicize those who perform Mitzvos,” in order that others will learn from our example and follow suit.²⁷

FARBRENG

- In connection with the 24th of Teves, we should hold a Farbrengen where we will study some of the Alter Rebbe's teachings and resolve to implement his directives.²⁷

25. Parshas Shemos 5750; Hisva'aduyos p.161.

26. Ibid.

Illuminate time and space

... To the extent that it has an effect on the realm of time (the Alter Rebbe's second name, “Zalman,” contains the Hebrew letters “Lazman” – “time”). In other words, the study has an effect on the very dimensions of physical time and space, so that the world itself is permeated with the “two lights” (The Alter Rebbe's first name, “Shneur,” contains the words “Shenei Or,” “two lights”) [– the Alter Rebbe having authored two fundamental and innovative works: 1) Shulchan Aruch (the light of the revealed dimension of Torah) and 2) Tanya (the light of the esoteric aspect of Torah)]. (Parshas Shemos 5749; Hisva'aduyos p.186)

27. **Benefits of publicity**

Particularly since “it is a Mitzvah to publicize those who perform Mitzvos” ... and “competition between authors produces an increase in wisdom” – in addition to the virtue of a resolution made publicly and with publicity, i.e., that it creates greater incentive as to its fulfillment. (Parshas Shemos 5750; Hisva'aduyos p.161)

- We should also study the Alter Rebbe's Chassidic discourses that we have only recently merited to publish; as well as his works on the revealed dimensions of the Torah, such as his *Shulchan Aruch*.²¹

FROM ALL THE REBBEIM

- We should study the abovementioned along with their explanation that appear in the works of subsequent Chabad Rebbes²².
- This includes to the explanations of the Alter Rebbe's major works on the revealed dimensions of Torah: The Alter Rebbe's own explanations, those of the Mittler Rebbe (whose book of Halachic rulings was only recently published), *certainly* from the Tzemach Tzedek [who wrote extensively on the above] and all his later successors – as well as the explanations found in Chabad Chassidus.²³

COMBINE NIGLEH WITH CHASSIDUS

- We should add in our study of the “two lights” [“Shenei Or” in Hebrew – alluding to the first name of the Alter Rebbe, “Shneur”], namely, the light of Torah's exoteric teachings and the light of its esoteric dimension; studying them in a manner where they are interwoven and form a single entity.²⁴

PUBLIC STUDY SESSIONS

- In addition to our personal study of the above, we

21. Parshas Shemos 5749; Hisva'aduyos p.186.

22. **Ma'amarim of all Rebbeim**

Our study of the Alter Rebbe's teachings should include the Chassidic teachings of the Chabad Rebbes who succeeded him, beginning with the discourses of the Mittler Rebbe – who wrote, in the introduction to his works, that his discourses are in fact the teachings of his father, but with greater elucidation; as well as the explanations and notations of the Tzemach Tzedek [on the Alter Rebbe's discourses].

The same applies to the discourses of the subsequent Rebbes, until our own Rebbe, the Leader of our generation. (Parshas Shemos 5749 – Hisva'aduyos p.188)

23. Parshas Vayera 5751; Hisva'aduyos p.175.

24. Parshas Shemos 5749; Hisva'aduyos p.186.

Foreword

We are pleased to bring you this newly revised edition of *a CALL to ACTION*. Translated from its Hebrew counterpart, *HaMaaseh Hu Halkar*, this presentation is a collection of practical instruction from the Rebbe's Sichos pertaining to "Nitel Nacht" and the winter vacation.

HaMaaseh Hu Halkar is a compilation of Hora'os (“directives”) culled from the Rebbe's talks in the years 5748 to 5752 (1988-1992), from both edited and unedited sources (“Muga” and “Bilti Muga”); we have expended great effort in our attempt to capture some of the Rebbe's carefully calculated and instructive phrasing. This edition's English translation was provided by Rabbi Yaakov Paley.

At this time, when Moshiach's arrival is imminent, the Rebbe, Melech HaMoshiach, has emphasized the primacy of action. We are now beginning to experience the era when we will fully appreciate “the superiority of deed” above scholarship. May this take place completely and immediately!

Editorial Office of
HaMaaseh Hu Halkar
Tevet, 5768

Nitel Nacht

The Jewish way to pass the Eve of Dec 25th

BRIEF HISTORY AND INTRODUCTION

December 25th is universally celebrated by non-Jews as the birthday of the person upon whom a dominant non-Jewish religion was founded; a person who unfortunately also “carried the Halachic status of ‘a Jew who lures other Jews to idol-worship.’” For that reason, a spirit of extreme spiritual impurity prevails on that night.

Additionally, there was a lengthy period in history when it was common for members of that religion to “celebrate” the eve of Dec 25th by attacking Jews; this led to a Rabbinic decision against keeping the Yeshivas open on the eve of Dec 25th.

In the words of the Previous Rebbe, “It is our custom to refrain from studying Torah on “Nitel Nacht”¹ until midnight.” The reason for this restriction – as heard from his father, the Rebbe Rashab – is “in order not to add spiritual vitality” to the forces of impurity. In other words, we do not wish to add spiritual vitality to “that person” [the one whose birth they celebrate] nor to “those who presently follow his views.”²

“Hayom Yom” (entry for Teves 17) quotes the Rebbe Rashab as saying, “I am not fond of those students who begrudge these eight hours and cannot tear themselves away from Torah study...”

1. What does “Nitel” mean?

The word “Nitel” (ניטל) is an allusion to a “lack.” Others say that the word comes from ניתל, meaning “suspended.” In Latin, “natal” means “born”; in this context it refers to the time of birth. (Letter dated 9th Kislev 5735, printed in Likutei Sichos Vol.15, p.554)

2. Letter dated 9th Kislev 5735, printed in Likutei Sichos Vol.15, p.554 and Parshas Vayeishev 5750, footnote 63; Hisva’aduyos p.49-50.

“Torah Or” [on Bereishis and Shemos] and “Likutei Torah” [on Vayikra, Bamidbar and Devarim].

- In particular, we should focus on “timely” topics, by studying the “Chassidisher Parshah” each week – the discourses on that week’s Torah portion.²⁰

HIS OTHER WORKS

20. On Shabbos

Many Chassidim have the custom to study the “Chassidisher Parshah” (“Chassidic Torah portion”) of the week – especially on Shabbos.

During the winter Shabbosos they would study “Torah Or” and during summer – as well as towards the end of the winter season – they would study “Likutei Torah.”

With the family

Many even had the custom to study these works, superficially at least, with their household – and even with their children of Bar Mitzvah age or younger. (Parshas Lech Lecha 5749, footnote 29; Hisva’aduyos p.315)

First priority for a Chassid

Simply put: It is impossible that a “Chassidisher Yid” would not study the “Chassidisher Parshah” – and do so, in fact, even before drinking his mug of tea or coffee...

Lost en route?

For some reason, this custom never quite made it to the shores of America. Perhaps it *did* make it here – yet remained unknown because it was practiced in a surreptitious manner...

After all, all Jews are assumed to have acted properly [and we should give them the benefit of the doubt, by assuming that they did not disregard this practice upon arriving in America].

Practice in public

However – and we have already discussed this point on numerous occasions – unobtrusive conduct [in Yiddish: “Zitzen bai zich unter paplitz”] is absolutely *not* the way to do things nowadays...

Quite the opposite – *everything*, nowadays, should be done with enthusiasm and commotion in order to further disseminate Torah and Judaism. (ibid, p.321)

Like the study of Rambam

Practically speaking: We should promote this practice, i.e., that just as we study the entire Sefer HaRamabam because it contains all the laws of the Torah, so should we study Torah Or and Likutei Torah... [“all their sections, until the very conclusion” – Hisva’aduyos 5752, p.299].

Higher level each time

And after completing this study once, then, in the spirit of the prayer, “Just as You helped me complete this work, so may You help me to begin, etc.,” we should begin the study again – naturally, on a higher level than our first study. (Parshas Chaye Sarah 5752; Sichos Kodesh p.324)

to set aside time on their regular schedules for the purpose of studying the teachings of the Alter Rebbe – his Shulchan Aruch and holy book of Tanya. In our times, a greater need has arisen to promote such study.¹⁵

CHAPTER OF TANYA BEFORE MORNING PRAYERS

- We should strengthen the common practice¹⁶ (for those who are up to it) of studying a chapter of Tanya daily – either successive chapters per day or otherwise – before the morning prayers, and even before¹⁷ “Hareini Mekabel” [“I hereby accept, etc.” – the opening sentence of the morning service in the Chabad Siddur].¹⁸
- In addition to our personal observance of this practice – each according to their ability – we should also publicize and bolster this daily study.¹⁹

STUDY THE CHASSIDIC PARSHAH

- We should increase our study of the Alter Rebbe’s

May it be Hashem’s Will, that we should merit the full revelation of the Alter Rebbe’s Torah teachings extremely soon (both the books he actually authored as well as the manuscripts he penned or that others copied from his original manuscripts) and that all the manuscripts currently in our hands will now finally go to print. (Parshas Vayera 5751; Hisva’aduyos p.175)

15. Parshas Shemos 5750; Hisva’aduyos p.161.

See also Parshas Shemos 5749; Hisva’aduyos p.186.

16. ... This was the good custom of Chassidim – in our times as well as in former times. (Parshas Acharei 5749; Hisva’aduyos p.68)

17. **Tanya before Siddur**

[The Rebbe smiled and said:] I did not inquire of them, whether this study was done *entirely* before prayer, i.e., even before reciting “Hareini Mekabel” – or only after it...

It is logical to presume that this study took place *before* prayer and *before* “Hareini Mekabel” – in other words, they first studied a chapter of Tanya and only then opened a Siddur and recited Hareini. (Parshas Acharei 5749; Hisva’aduyos p.75)

18. Parshas Shemos 5750; Hisva’aduyos p.161.

Its our custom too

It is rather peculiar that this custom has not received proper publicity; after all, Chassidim have continued this practice into our present generation as well – as I have personally witnessed. (Parshas Acharei 5749; Hisva’aduyos p.75)

19. By fulfilling this practice, they are fulfilling a positive command of the Torah, namely, to study (the Oral) Torah. (Parshas Acharei 5749; Hisva’aduyos p.69)

FOLLOW THE CURRENT NON-JEWISH CALENDAR

- Nowadays, the timing of “Nitel Nacht” follows the non-Jewish calendar that is used in America and most other countries (including Russia, who used to follow a different calendar), i.e., the 25th of December.³

REBBE’S GAME OF CHESS

- The Rebbe Rashab would spend “Nitel Nacht” playing chess or providing advice for those playing the game.

The reason⁴ behind this practice is that even the very lowliest time on the calendar, which cannot be refined in a “direct” manner via Torah study, should at least be utilized – and thereby elevated – by engaging in a gainful pursuit, such as a game which clearly sharpens one’s mind.²

DON’T SQUANDER YOUR TIME

- The Rebbe Rashab’s custom provides us with an instruction:

We should not squander the time of “Nitel Nacht” by doing nothing at all, G-d Forbid; rather we should spend it in a gainful manner (particularly in a manner that increases wisdom⁵) or to

3. ... Unlike the Russian Calendar that existed prior to the Revolution. (ibid, footnote 63) [December 25 in the Gregorian calendar, comes in the Julian calendar on January 7.]

4. **The lack is not ours**

The Previous Rebbe once recounted how his father (the Rebbe Rashab) would play chess on that night ... This was the Rebbe Rashab’s way of providing a lesson and directive that even during a time which apparently can only be used to guard oneself from evil, a “lack” [as opposed to actively doing good via Torah and Mitzvos], nevertheless, this very lowest point in time ... should at least be utilized, etc. [see main text above for continuation] (ibid, page 50)

5. **Three winning reasons**

... When one does so with the above intentions in mind. (ibid.)

(1) The game of chess increases the sharpness of one’s mind, enabling him to later study Torah on a far better level; (2) it leads to a Kiddush Hashem and the praise of the Jewish people by the gentiles (who prize skilled chess-players and) who see that the Jews are “a wise and understanding nation” in this particular field of wisdom as well; and (3) even as a mundane way to make an income, i.e. as a

perform acts of Tzedakah and kindness – or even by simply taking care of the house and so forth.⁶

VIEW IMAGES OF THE REBBE

- We could also utilize the time to picture the image of the Rebbe Rashab in our minds, either through personal memories or based on a picture that is presently available.⁷

The very image of his holy countenance is enough to inspire love and awe of Heaven and the like, in SSSSSSSSSSaccordance with the manner in which he conducted himself. This will encourage us to follow his ways and implement his instructions.²

Winter Vacation

INTRODUCTION

Winter Vacation coincides with the non-Jewish festive season. Jewish students in non-Jewish public schools find themselves free from their studies and open to the prevalent influences.

The Rebbe suggests turning this factor to the benefit of Jewry, by reaching out to these students.

chess-player, not only is chess no worse than any other form of business, it in fact has the advantage of involving wisdom. (ibid.)

6. He always had a missing button

I once heard an account concerning one of the Yeshivah Bochurim who regularly wore garments that lacked some buttons. When asked what it is that prevents him from simply sewing them back on, he answered that if he were to do so now, he would have nothing to do on “Nitel Nacht”! ... Which Yeshivah Bochor would dream of doing absolutely nothing with his time?! He would rather use the time gainfully, to sew his buttons back on; sewing them in accordance with Jewish custom, so that the garment closes right-over-left, leaving the right side predominant. [The right symbolizes Chessed, “kindness” and holiness, while the left represents Gevurah, “severity”] (ibid.)

7. Similar to the verse, “And your eyes will behold your Teacher,” which in this case refers to the [the Rebbe Rashab] founder of the Tomchei Temimim Yeshivah.

Alter Rebbe’s case, however, this significance is greatly amplified – for he was, in the words of the Baal Shem Tov, “a brand new soul” which “descended into this world in order to illuminate it with the light of the revealed dimensions of Torah and (the light) of Chassidus²⁶; it is a soul that will sacrifice itself for the good of Chassidus and whose accomplishments will bring about the era of Moshiach.”

ADD IN ALL HOLY MATTERS

- This is a day in which we should add in all holy undertakings, and particularly matters that are associated with the actions, spiritual service and teachings of the Alter Rebbe.¹³
- We should then continue these heightened activities throughout the rest of the year.¹³

TANYA AND ALTER REBBE’S SHULCHAN ARUCH

- It is worthwhile and fitting for each man and woman¹⁴

13. Powerful day

... For it is now that “all the deeds, Torah study and divine service that he performed throughout his lifetime” rises [further] on High and is [simultaneously further] revealed Below – to the extent that it create salvation in the midst of the earth. (Parshas Shemos 5749; Hisva’aduyos p.186)

Take the hint

This is just a “hint to the wise” of what is required in the proper utilization of the Alter Rebbe’s Yahrzeit. Each person should “take the hint” and add further to these directives according to their understanding and ability. (ibid, p.188)

14. Woman should study Chassidus

... Women are also obliged to study those Torah laws that are applicable to them – as well as to study Chassidus.

Rebbetzin Chanah

... In fact, my own mother, of blessed memory, was the one who transcribed – with great precision and speed – the Chassidic discourses that would arrive at the home of her father, who was an adherent of the Rebbe Maharash.

(It was customary in those times for people to eagerly await the arrival of a Chassidic discourse from the town of Lubavitch [i.e., the arrival of a Chassid who just returned from a visit to the Rebbe and could repeat the new discourses he heard there]. They would immediately transcribe these discourses and produce a number of handwritten copies.)

Receive and publish all Ma’amarim

of the annual study of Rambam on his actual Yahrtzait.¹²

ERETZ YISRAEL AND CHUTZ LA'ARETZ

- At least one celebration for completing the annual study of Rambam should be held in Eretz Yisrael, preferably by Rambam's gravesite in Teveria.
- At least one celebration should be held in the Diaspora as well.
- If possible, there should be *numerous* celebrations, *both* in Eretz Yisrael as well as in the Diaspora.¹²

24th of Teves

Yahrtzait of the Alter Rebbe

BRIEF HISTORY

The Alter Rebbe (Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi) was the saintly founder of Chabad Chassidus. Amongst other teachings, he authored the (Alter Rebbe's) Shulchan Aruch and the Tanya (the "Written Torah of Chassidus").

The Alter Rebbe was born in Liozna, White Russia, on the 18th of Elul 5505 (1745); he passed away in Pyena on the 24th of Teves 5573 (1812) and was buried in Haditch.

The Yahrtzeit of every Tzaddik is highly significant for his followers and all of Jewry [See footnote 13]. In the

12. Generate merit for all Jewry

Since "we may acquire something positive or meritorious on behalf of a fellow Jew even in his absence [although he is unaware of our action on his behalf]," those celebrating the completion the entire book of Rambam on the day of his Yahrtzait also create merit for all Jewry wherever they are – even including those who already celebrated the completion over the last few days (or are only scheduled to celebrate it in a few days from now).

This way, all Jewry will attain the lofty virtue and auspicious affect ("Segulah") of having celebrated the completion the book of Rambam on the auspicious day of his Yahrtzait – the 20th of Teves. (Parshas Vayechi 5749; Hisva'aduyos p.158)

TEACH THEM TORAH

- We should utilize the winter vacation by reaching out to Jewish children who study in Public Schools and are exposed to the non-Jewish environment.

We should positively influence them by drawing them into a Jewish environment and enrolling them in Jewish schools; we should teach them Torah and matters of general Judaism, and give them a kosher education founded on pure holiness.⁸

ENROLL IN YESHIVAH

- Clearly, we should work on influencing parents to enroll their children – immediately – in an institution where they will receive a fully sanctified education.⁸

8. Parshas Vayeishev 5750; Hisva'aduyos p.51-52.

מוקדש

לכ"ק אדמו"ר מלך המשיח



לזכות

הבחור הבר מצוה הת' שלום מנחם מענדל הלוי שי'

טויבער

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הרה"ח הרה"ת יוסף יצחק הלוי זוגתו שמחה ומשפחתם

שיחיו טויבער



לזכות

הרה"ח הרה"ת ר' צבי מרדכי בן שרה

וזוגתו שלומית בת שושנה

ולזכות בנם משה לרגל יום הולדתו ט"ז טבת לשנת

הצלחה

ולזכות אחיו ואחותיו:

יוסף יצחק, מנחם מענדל, חנה וחי' מושקא

שיחיו גודמאן



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Thank you

Mishneh Torah per day – in order to complete the entire book in one year.⁹

TZEDAKAH

• We should add in Tzedakah in connection with the Yahrzeit.¹⁰

FARBRENGENS EVERYWHERE

• Every location should boast a Farbrengen in honor of Rambam's Yahrzeit.

• Even those who have already announced that they will be holding a Farbrengen should not rest; they are able and expected to further increase their efforts in this regard.¹¹

JOINT CELEBRATIONS

• [The completion of the annual study cycle of Rambam sometimes occurs in close proximity to Rambam's Yahrzeit. On one such occasion, the Rebbe said:] It would be worthwhile and fitting to celebrate the completion

We should connect this practice with giving Tzedakah, in keeping with the teaching of our Sages, "He would first give a coin to a pauper and only then pray." [If Tzedakah is necessary in order to pray successfully, then] how much more so [is it indispensable] for succeeding in our study of the laws of the entire Torah – whose success is dependant upon blessing from Above (as we recite upon completing Rambam, "Just as *You helped me* complete this book, so may *You help me* to complete additional books"). [To receive this divine assistance in study] we certainly need to give Tzedakah. (Night following 29th of Teves 5750; Hisva'aduyos p.149)

9. Night following 29th of Teves 5750; Hisva'aduyos p.148.

Ideally – three chapters a day. (Parshas Shemos 5750; Hisva'aduyos p.161)

See also Parshas Shemos 5751; Hisva'aduyos p.153

10. **Tzedakah**

Since this Shabbos follows – and is therefore a continuation of – the 20th of Teves (Rambam's Yahrzeit) and the 24th of Teves (the Alter Rebbe's Yahrzeit), it is extremely fitting and worthwhile for each of us to increase in matters that relate to Rambam and the Alter Rebbe, via giving extra Tzedakah.

The great significance of Tzedakah is explained in the Alter Rebbe's Igeres HaKodesh and Igeres HaTeshuvah. (Parshas Shemos 5750; Hisva'aduyos p.161). See footnote 9 above.

11. Parshas Shemos 5750; Hisva'aduyos p.153 – in main text and footnote 48.

RAMBAM ENCAPSULATES ENTIRE TORAH

- One of the immense benefits of studying Mishneh Torah is that it covers *all* of Torah's laws, both those that are currently applicable as well as those that were relevant when the Beis HaMikdash still stood – or, more importantly, which will *again* become pertinent with the arrival of the ultimate Redemption.⁷

LAWS OF MOSHIACH

- Of particular significance is the study of the last two chapters of the final section of Mishneh Torah – the “Laws of Kings” – detailing the laws regarding Moshiach.⁶

INFLUENCE ALL JEWS TO STUDY RAMBAM

- In addition to our personal study of Rambam, we should also spread this practice among the Jews around us – men, women, and children – in great numbers.⁶
- We should spread this practice in a manner that will inspire others to follow our example, so that they, in turn, will influence as many as *they* can to study Rambam.⁶

THREE CHAPTER A DAY

- On the day of the Yahrtzait, we should put far greater effort⁸ into promoting the study of three chapters of

Nowadays, the Jewish people's spiritual service should be geared towards ... preparing ourselves – and others – for the days of Moshiach

... Primarily, this includes – in connection with the Rambam's Yahrtzait – bolstering and increasing our study of Mishneh Torah, as well as joining one of the daily cycles in the study of Mishneh Torah. (Parshas Shemos 5752; Hisva'aduyos p.107)

7. Laws pertaining to the Holy Temple

... As a preparation for the immanent era of Redemption, we are required to study topics that relate to the Third Beis HaMikdash – so that we will know how to go about constructing it, or exactly how to participate by contributing towards the Beis HaMikdash and so forth. For example, we should study Hilchos Beis HaBechirah [the initial chapters of Rambam's Sefer Avodah, concerning the design of the Beis HaMikdash].

In recent years, the custom to study Rambam daily has spread throughout Jewry. (Night following 29th of Teves 5750; Hisva'aduyos p.148)

8. Enlist G-d's help in studying Rambam

a CALL to ACTION

20TH AND 24TH OF TEVES

PRACTICAL INSTRUCTION
FROM THE TEACHINGS OF THE REBBE
5748-5752

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Thank you

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JOIN THE STUDY CYCLE

- A great number of Jews follow the systematic study of Rambam. If you have not participated in this study in the past, join in now; if you are already participating, bolster the practice.

- [There are three study cycles to choose from – based on ability:]

A) Three chapters of Mishneh Torah per day [completing the entire book annually];

B) One chapter of Mishneh Torah per day [completing it once every three years];

C) A daily selection from Sefer HaMitzvos [that is arranged to parallel the topics being studied by cycle (A). Sefer HaMitzvos was written by Rambam as an introductory work to Mishneh Torah, and contains – in brief – each of the 613 commandments and their Scriptural source.]⁶

which the Rambam based his works; or 3) studying books that are based on the Rambam's works. This includes studying the source and foundation for the entire Torah, namely, the Written Torah [the Chumash]. (Parshas Shemos 5752; Sichos Kodesh p.523)

This is the principle directive that we are to take from this Shabbos and this Farbrengen: We should undertake to increase our study of Sefer HaRambam [“Mishneh Torah”], and do so in a manner of “studying and teaching,” i.e., studying on our own as well as with others. (ibid, p.529)

As we already mentioned, the chief directive from this Shabbos is to resolve to increase our study of Sefer HaRambam – the more the better! (ibid, p.530)

6. [In Sefer HaMitzvos, Rambam records each commandment, gives a short description, states its Scriptural source and often proves why he considers certain laws to be distinct commands – which necessitates quoting Talmudic and Midrashic sources. Mishneh Torah, on the other hand, is a fourteen volume compendium containing a detailed description of the numerous laws governing each commandment.

For the sake of harmonizing the study cycles, Chabad has published books of Sefer HaMitzvos; instead of presenting all the Positive Commands followed by all the Prohibitions (as per the original Sefer HaMitzvos), they re-arranged the order so that the laws studied in brief by those following the Sefer HaMitzvos cycle will parallel the laws being studied that same day in detail in the Mishneh Torah (three chapter per day) cycle.]

Learn Rambam, bring Moshiach

SPREAD TORAH, MITZVOS – AND STUDY OF RAMBAM

• Rambam composed his masterpiece,² “Mishneh Torah,” for the benefit of all Jewry.³ For that reason, his *Yahrzait* should be utilized⁴ to bolster Torah study and the observance of Mitzvah among all Jewry – with foremost attention being given to the study of “Mishneh Torah.”⁵

2. [Rambam produced a number of other fundamental works; among them: “Pirush HaMishnayos” (Explanation to the Mishnah); “Moreh Nevuchim” (Guide for the Perplexed – clarifications on Torah and Jewish faith); Yud Gimmel Ikkarim (Thirteen Principles of Faith – recited daily by many communities); “Sefer HaMitzvos” (Book of the 613 Commandments – briefly outlining each of the Torah’s commandments along with its Scriptural source).]

In the Holy Tongue

His main work was the “Mishneh Torah” [his fourteen volume code of Jewish law containing all of the Torah’s laws]. Parenthetically, it was the only work that Rambam wrote in Lashon HaKodesh (Hebrew) [and not Arabic]. (Parshas Shemos 5751; Hisva’aduyos p.153)

3. One book for all Jews

Rambam states in his Introduction to Mishneh Torah, “I saw fit to author ... codifying the laws of the Torah ... in a clear and concise manner ... so that all the laws will be open and accessible for everyone, great and small alike.

... It is for that reason, that I have called this work ‘Mishneh Torah’ [for one need but read the Torah [i.e., the Chumash – the Written Torah] and then read this compilation in order to gain knowledge of the entire Oral Torah.” (Night following 29th of Teves 5750; Hisva’aduyos p.148)

4. Heaven and earth light up on a Yahrzait

As the Alter Rebbe explains in Igeres HaKodesh regarding a Tzaddik’s Yahrzait [known as a “Yom Hilulah” – a day of celebration rivaling that of a wedding], “all of his deeds, Torah-study and divine service that he performed throughout his lifetime ... is then revealed and shines forth in open revelation from Above ... and it creates salvations in the midst of the earth.”

Translate into action

We could readily appreciate that the unique quality of this day should arouse us to increase our study of Torah and observance of Mitzvos. The main thing is [not the arousal, but] the practical implementation [of our decisions] – in keeping with the principle that surrounds all Torah and Mitzvos, namely, “The main thing is the deed!”

[While this is true of every Tzaddik’s Yahrzait,] all the above is further underscored regarding the Rambam’s Yahrzait – since he composed his masterpiece, “Mishneh Torah,” for the benefit of all Jewry. Certainly, then, his Yahrzait should produce an addition in the actual study of Torah and observance of Mitzvos by *all Jewry*. (ibid.)

5. Ibid.

Teacher of Jewry

This directive applies to each Jew. After all, every Jew “lives” with Rambam – either 1) through studying his actual works; or 2) through studying the books upon

Foreword

We are pleased to bring you this newly revised edition of *a CALL to ACTION*. Translated from its Hebrew counterpart, *HaMaaseh Hu Halkar*, this presentation is a collection of practical instruction from the Rebbe’s Sichos pertaining to the 20th of Teves (Yahrzait of the Rambam) and the 24th of Teves (Yahrzait of the Alter Rebbe).

HaMaaseh Hu Halkar is a compilation of Hora’os (“directives”) culled from the Rebbe’s talks in the years 5748 to 5752 (1988-1992), from both edited and unedited sources (“Muga” and “Bilti Muga”); we have expended great effort in our attempt to capture some of the Rebbe’s carefully calculated and instructive phrasing. This edition’s English translation was provided by Rabbi Yaakov Paley.

At this time, when Moshiach’s arrival is imminent, the Rebbe, Melech HaMoshiach, has emphasized the primacy of action. We are now beginning to experience the era when we will fully appreciate “the superiority of deed” above scholarship. May this take place completely and immediately!

Editorial Office of
HaMaaseh Hu Halkar
Teves, 5768

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20th of Teves

Yahrtzait of the Rambam

INTRODUCTION

Rambam (an acronym for Rabbi Moshe Ben Maimon) was born in Cordova, Spain, on the 14th of Nissan 4895 (1135); he passed away on the 20th of Teves 4965 (1204) and was buried in Teveria.

Amongst his many outstanding works and great accomplishments for Jewry, Rambam is best known for his fourteen volume codification of the laws of the entire Torah (including both laws that are presently applicable and those that are not). Such a work had never been prepared before his time and has not been repeated since.

[The inscription on his tombstone attests to his prominence; it reads: From Moshe to Moshe, none rose like Moshe. In other words, history had not produced anyone like Rambam since the times of Moshe Rabbeinu.]

The Rebbe strongly encouraged a regular study of Rambam's codification – known as “Mishneh Torah,” “Yad HaChazakah,” or simply “Yad” – with the intention that all Jews will cover the entire Torah (as encapsulated in the Yad) either annually or every three years.

The Rebbe further emphasized the association between Rambam and the Alter Rebbe [See below, 24th of Teves] – an association that is highlighted by the proximity of their Yahrtsaits (the 20th and 24th of Teves, respectively); they both authored classic works on Jewish law and fundamental guides that point the way to divine service.¹