

The Rambam Review *Concise overviews of each daily chapter*

Sunday, August 9th: **Hilchot Talmud Torah, Perek 2**

Overview: Jewish schools must be established everywhere and cannot be prevented. Children are taught diligently and exactly.

Remember that? If there are 25 students or less, one teacher suffices. If between 26 and 40, an assistant is needed. If 41, two teachers are needed.

Monday, August 10th: **Hilchot Talmud Torah, Perek 3**

Overview: Talmud Torah is the weightiest mitzvah, and its crown is the loftiest crown. While it is open to all, only sincere dedication will attain it.

Remember that? The first of all matters judged in the Heavenly Court is how one has fulfilled the mitzvah of Talmud Torah. May we be prepared...

Tuesday, August 11th: **Hilchot Talmud Torah, Perek 4**

Overview: Only students ready to be taught are taught, and only fitting teachers teach. Back-and-forth should be calm, patient, and orderly.

Remember that? Only words of Torah can be spoken in a Beit Medrash. Even after a sneeze, no *gesundheit* (and hopefully no Yankees either)!

Wednesday, August 12th: **Hilchot Talmud Torah, Perek 5**

Overview: The highest possible honor and reverence are due to one's Rabbi. Though particulars can be waived, the principle remains true.

Remember that? Without permission, it is forbidden to establish oneself as an authority to render halachic decisions during one's Rabbi's lifetime.

Thursday, August 13th: **Hilchot Talmud Torah, Perek 6**

Overview: Torah scholars must be honored. One must rise before them (as well as before the elderly), and they receive privilege in certain arenas.

Remember that? A student sitting by his teacher all day long only rises before him twice — once in the morning and once at night — but no more.

Friday, August 14th: **Hilchot Talmud Torah, Perek 7**

Overview: Two levels of excommunication (*nidui*, and the more intense *cheirem*) can be used to ostracize a wrongdoer until he makes amends.

Remember that? If a Torah scholar is offended privately, he can forgive the slight; but if in public, he must avenge the Torah's honor like a viper!

Shabbos Kodesh, August 15th: **Hilchot Avodat Kochavim, Perek 1**

Overview: Idolatry began as a grave error in judgement; nurtured, over time it entrenched fully. Avraham broke free. In Egypt, all was nearly lost.

Remember that? Avraham's teachings rang so deeply of truth that *tens of thousands* followed him, despite his almost being killed for his beliefs!

"Survey Says..."

Rabbinic debate and consensus regarding this week's Rambam

With biting rhetoric, Rambam strongly attacked the practice of many (even Geonim) to receive support from communal funds to study Torah (e.g. Hilchot Talmud Torah 3:10).

This condemnation itself met very harsh resistance. Most of the greatest poskim (e.g. Tashbetz 1:147, Kesef Mishna [ad loc.], others) countered the many proofs mustered by the great sage and denied his conclusions. Now, different forms of allowances were outlined (e.g. Rav Moshe Feinstein felt even Rambam would permit this if otherwise impossible to learn [Igrot Moshe, YD 4:36]), but suffice to say the institution of "kollel" was defended.

Nonetheless, it is worth noting that while we may not pasken like Rambam, his offered perspective should color our own. The *ideal* of self-sufficiency must still be underscored, the given monies must not be *demand*ed, and *crude materialism* must not dare try to inflate their amount. ואכמ"ל.

TAKE IT HOME

A clear and powerful message from the Rambam to share with the family and apply to our lives



In a stirring fashion, Rambam concludes his discussion of the honor due to a Rabbi by unequivocally stating the need for the Rabbi as well to honor his students and draw them close (Hilchot Talmud Torah 5:12-13). Why is this concern and love mandated? After all, is this not a one-way relationship? "It is not," Rambam emphatically retorts; not remotely. Students are the children who benefit the Rabbi in this world as well as the next. They sharpen him with questions and crystalize his wisdom, making it deeper and sparkling.

We may often encounter individuals who we feel we help more than they help us. They sap our time and energy with their needs and a steady stream of issues. Yet we would do well to consider that our gifts are just that — *gifts* — which God has granted to assist *all* of His children. When less fortunate people come our way, we must recognize that it isn't at all clear who is helping who. Not only do we capitalize on the chance to *maximally utilize* the deposits we safeguard, we also are *made better ourselves* in the very process! It really doesn't get better than that...

הלכות תלמוד תורה פרק ג הלכה ט:

... כך דברי תורה אינם נמצאים בגסי הרוח ולא בלב כל גבה לב אלא בדכא ושפל רוח שמתאבק בעפר רגלי החכמים ומסיר התאוות ותענוגי הזמן מלבו ועושה מלאכה בכל יום מעט כדי חייו אם לא היה לו מה יאכל ושאר יומו וילילו עוסק בתורה.

THE LASTING IMPRESSION:

A Maimonidean formulation worth holding onto