

## The Rambam Review *Concise overviews of each daily chapter*

### Sunday, September 6th: **Hilchot Kriat Shema, Perek 1**

1

**Overview:** There is a twice-daily command to recite the 3 paragraphs of Kriat Shema (berachot before and after were added rabbinically).

**Remember that?** An important general rule: when one deviates from the form of a beracha set by our sages, he must recite the blessing again.

### Monday, September 7th: **Hilchot Kriat Shema, Perek 2**

2

**Overview:** Focus is only *fully necessary* during the first verse (though mandated by the rest of the recitation), leading to various permissions.

**Remember that?** If involved in learning Torah, one must stop to recite Kriat Shema; but if involved in communal needs, one cannot interrupt!

### Tuesday, September 8th: **Hilchot Kriat Shema, Perek 3**

3

**Overview:** One must be very careful regarding matters of cleanliness and immodesty in the place where he intends to recite Kriat Shema.

**Remember that?** Encountering a bad smell or a dirty area when in the midst of reciting Kriat Shema demands one pause until it has passed.

### Wednesday, September 9th: **Hilchot Kriat Shema, Perek 4**

4

**Overview:** Women and children are not obligated in Kriat Shema, nor are those focused on a mitzvah (such as caring for a dead body).

**Remember that?** The decree of Ezra and his court (a seminal emission, before immersion, prevents recitation of Kriat Shema) was nullified.

### Thursday, September 10th: **Hilchot Tefillah u'Birchat Kohanim, Perek 1**

5

**Overview:** The daily obligation to pray is not biblically bound to time, number, or words (though it *does* have form: praise, requests, thanks).

**Remember that?** Seeing the bungled state of prayer as generations were born into exile, the Great Assembly instituted the structure familiar to all.

### Friday, September 11th: **Hilchot Tefillah u'Birchat Kohanim, Perek 2**

6

**Overview:** The standard 18 blessings became 19 as heretics proliferated. Each special calendar day contains certain adjustments to our prayers.

**Remember that?** In times when one will be unable to focus properly, one can say a condensed version of the 13 bakashot as a single blessing.

### Shabbos Kodesh, September 12th: **Hilchot Tefillah u'Birchat Kohanim, Perek 3**

7

**Overview:** Times for Shachrit: sunrise until 4 hours (if missed, until 6 hours); for Mincha: half hour past midday until sunset; for Arvit: nightfall until daybreak.

**Remember that?** If faced with the option of Mussaf or Mincha, Mincha takes precedence. However, some ruled against this when in a minyan.

## "Survey Says..."

*Rabbinic debate and consensus regarding this week's Rambam*

Likely because many view the notion of reciting Kriat Shema "k'vatikin," just before sunrise, only as a practice of the most pious, Rambam's formulation about a person who "transgresses and delays" (Hil' KS 1:11) being allowed to still fulfill his obligation beyond this time comes across as rather sharp. That being said, this was the halakhic demand as Rambam saw it; in fact, seemingly even to the point of prioritizing this over praying with a minyan (see Shu"t Rambam [ad. loc.]!)

Fortunately for those who awakened a bit later, many others (e.g. Rosh) disagreed with this conclusion and understood that while this time is certainly the ideal time for one to recite Kriat Shema, it is only ideal; nothing has been "violated" by reciting it during the larger span of time allotted to this mitzvah.

Even so, there is much to gain, certainly as the Yomim Noraim near, in appreciating Rambam's view: *mitzvot are opportunities and don't always come easy*. We must see their true value and chase after them!

## TAKE IT HOME

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



In a surprise bit of history mixed into the opening of Sefer Ahava (Hil' KS 1:4), Rambam recounts how Yaakov Avinu gathered his sons around his deathbed and how he was led to the proclamation of "Baruch Shem..." We similarly have the custom of uttering this line after affirming the unity of God.

One cannot help but wonder why it was necessary to inform us of this background. In what way did Rambam feel this altered the halakhic materiel under discussion and thus warranted its inclusion in our context?

R. Nachum Rabinovitch z"l (Yad Peshuta [ad. loc.]) explained that if we did not recite this extra line, we might have merely been telling over what Moshe exhorted the Jews in the Wilderness. But we intend far more. *We accept God's kingship with the Shema; we proclaim our faith, just as the children of Yaakov did years ago*. Thus, we include our patriarch's response too, indicating what was just uttered was not mere lip service, but *actually a deeply assuring affirmation*.

When we proclaim God as King on Rosh HaShana, let us really, sincerely mean it!

## הלכות תפילה ובר"כ פרק ב הלכה א:

**THE LASTING IMPRESSION:**  
*A Maimonidean formulation worth holding onto*

בימי ר"ג רבו המינים בישראל והיו מצירין לישראל ומסיתים אותם לשוב מאחרי ה', וכיון שראה שזו גדולה מכל צרכי בני אדם עמד הוא ובית דינו והתקין ברכה אחת שתהיה בה שאלה מלפני ה' לאבד המינים ...