

WELCOME

by Rabbi Yitzchak Etshalom

To Havura L'limud Mishneh Torah L'Rambam

THE MAILING LIST DEDICATED TO STUDYING MAIMONIDES' HALAKHIC CODE, THE MISHNEH TORAH

THE GOAL

The goal of this Havura is to discuss and analyze the text of Rambam's Mishneh Torah. Texts are posted in English, with significant terms and/or words transliterated from the Hebrew and translated. The hope is that the study and analysis of Rambam's texts will reach and inspire as wide an audience as this technology makes possible "to beautify and expand Torah" ***L'hagdil Torah ul'ha'adirah***.

PARAMETERS FOR DISCUSSION

The following are appropriate areas of discussion, within the parameters of this Havura:

1. Discussion relating to source texts for the Rambam (specifically, both Talmuds, Midreshei Halakha and T'nakh)
2. Analysis of the language, style and format of the text;
3. Applications of the text to related areas - including modern situations;
4. Comparisons with the approaches taken by other Rishonim (early Talmudic commentators) and Poskim (codifiers);
5. Clarifying manuscript difficulties and divergencies.

The study is premised upon viewing Rambam's text as inherently valid and worthy of discussion; postings which bring this validity and worth into question will not be accepted. Rambam himself, of course, assumed the validity and authority of Talmudic (and, clearly, Biblical) law and challenging these is also outside the realm of discussion.

THE LIST

Every week there are two postings. The first includes the text and questions which have been discussed during the previous week along with (moderated and, if necessary, edited) answers which were submitted during the week. The second will include the text and questions for the next week. There are generally 1-3 Halakhot (Laws) posted in a given week. Members of the havura are invited to post additional questions in addition to responses to the posted questions. [In every classic edition of MT, the glosses of RABD, R. Abraham ben David of Posquieres, are included. RABD, who lived in Provence, was a contemporary of Rambam. As Rambam was working on the folios of the Mishneh Torah, he would send them out, piece by piece, to the scholarly community in Provence for their perusal. RABD, who often contested his colleagues in acerbic terms, wrote glosses on the Mishneh Torah which became so central to any Mishneh Torah study that they are regularly included in every classic edition. For a fuller treatment of RABD, the haverim are referred to Twersky's Rabad of Posquieres, JPS, 1980. We will include RABD's glosses in our study. They will be preceded with "RABD" and be included in brackets.]

ABOUT THE INSTRUCTOR

Rabbi Etshalom is an alumnus of Yeshivot Kerem b'Yavne and Har Etzion in Israel and presently serves as Educational Coordinator of the Jewish Studies Institute, a joint project of the Yeshiva of Los Angeles and the Simon Wiesenthal Center. Questions, responses and comments can be sent to the author at rebyitz@torah.org. In addition to this class, Rabbi Etshalom also gives a weekly in-depth Parashat haShavua class through Project Genesis, titled "P'shuto shel Mikra".

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