

What the Rambam Was Thinking

TRANSCEND
Dvar Torah



We have all heard of the Rambam, and we are well aware of the Rebbe's *takana* to study Rambam each and every day. When asked the question, "What is so special about the Rambam?", often the conversation revolves around the *sefer*. But what is unique and special about the *sefer*.

In the *sichah* of Shemos, the Rebbe explores Rambam the individual and his unique life story as a lesson in how to live within *Galus* and yet transcend it.

Moshe was born in Cordoba, Spain, on the fourteenth of Nisan (erev Pesach) of the year 4895 (1135 C.E.). His father Maimon, a direct descendant of King David, was a judge in the city's rabbinical court. His mother passed away when he was still a small child.

At the age of thirteen, his family was forced to flee Cordoba when a fanatical Islamic sect took control of the city; the Jews were attacked by rioters and many synagogues were destroyed.

Moshe and his family traveled from place to place looking where to relocate. Not finding anything suitable in Spain, he and his father and younger brother, David, moved to Fez, Morocco, for five years. In 4925 (1165 C.E.), he visited Eretz Yisrael and then moved to Alexandria, Egypt. Later, he settled in Fustat, today known as Old Cairo, where he lived until his passing.¹

Where did the Rambam author *Mishneh Torah*? In Egypt. In the darkness of *Galus*,

he composed the transformative *sefer* that would bring light and life to Yidden for hundreds of years, in the most difficult of circumstances. Even the *sefer* that guides our daily behaviors—*Shulchan Aruch*—is based heavily on the Rambam.

In other words, the Rambam teaches us how to live in *Galus* and yet to completely transcend it. What is going on around us does not define us. A Yid does not have to be defined by *Galus*.

We see this even more so by the fact that the Rambam authored a *sefer* that includes every mitzvah, even those that aren't practiced in the time of *Galus*. *Halachos* of the Beis Hamikdash, *Halachos* of Mashiach—through these he is teaching us that we mustn't be locked into the mindset of today. We can get ready and live in a world of Mashiach and the Beis Hamikdash. We can live the future within the present.

What does this mean to our lives today?

The Rebbe tasks us with the mission to reveal within our current *Galus*, within our own Mitzrayim, the Geulah. We do this by preparing ourselves and those around us for the reality of Mashiach living.

One way we do so is by strengthening our commitment to learning Rambam, by committing or strengthening our commitment to the daily learning set up by the Rebbe. By learning Rambam, we take on his incredible strength and vision, and we thereby become able to Transcend.

¹ Details of his life taken from Chabad.org.

