

Rabbi Klapper

Date: September 2020

Course Name: Topics in Rambam

Type of course: Lecture

Year of Studies: 2020-2021

Semester: Fall 2020

Hours/credits: 2

#### Course Description:

The objective of the class is to go through various fundamental topics essential to Judaism through the eyes of the Rambam and other Sages. We will discuss important issues and see various points of view on the major ideas that are the backbone of Judaism.

#### Detailed Lesson plan:

#### **Weeks 1 and 2 – Shabbat**

- Shemot 20:7
- Devarim 5:11
- Mishna Brurah 242:1,
- Yalkut Yosef 242:1
- Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 72:16
- Yalkut Yosef 242:7
- Rambam *Hilchos Shabbos* 30:1
- Shabbat 118a
- Rama 290:2
- Mekor Chaim 271:3

In these lectures, we will discuss the topic of shabbat. We will discuss the spirit of shabbat vs. the laws of shabbat and how they work hand in hand. We will delve into zachor vs. shamor, as well as the concepts of kavod and oneg shabbat where it applies and its limitations.

#### **Weeks 3 and 4- Prayer**

- Deuteronomy 11:13
- Tanit 2a
- Rambam Tefillah 1:1
- Brachot 34b
- Rif 20a,
- Rosh (Brachot 4:19)
- Rambam (Tefillah 5:3)
- Yevamot 105b
- Shulchan Aruch 95:2.
- Mishna Brurah 115:1

In these lectures, we will discuss the ins and outs of prayer. We will attempt to answer some of the most fundamental questions about prayer including: Why must we pray? Doesn't Hashem already know what we want? If Hashem is just won't we receive what we deserve regardless of

whether we pray? Why do we pray so often? And finally, how can we make prayer more meaningful?

### **Weeks 5 and 6- Creation of the world/ Creation of Mankind**

- Rambam (Maimonides), Sefer HaMitzvot, Positive Commandment 8
- Sotah 14a
- Tehilim 145
- Tehilim 86)
- Tehilim 73
- Tehilim 27
- Tehilim 63

These lectures we will discuss why Hashem created the world and our job in the world. We will delve into the issue on a personal, communal, and global level. The lecture includes various opinions and perspectives and will the students to analyze and question the very existence of G-d and mankind.

### **Week 7- Midterm**

### **Weeks 8 and 9- Proof of G-d/ Proof of Divinity of Torah**

- Vayikta 11:4-8
- Vayikra 11:9
- Niddah 51b
- Vayikra 26:46
- Devarim 12:21
- Midrash Tanchuma Parshat Noach 3

In these lectures, we will present various proofs to the existence of G-d and the divinity of the Torah. We will approach the topic from various angles and perspectives, including: scientific, logical, textual and emotional.

### **Weeks 10 and 11- Free Will**

- Devarim 30:15-19
- Rashi- Brachot 33b
- Breishit Rabbah 10:7
- Shmot 7:3
- Rambam Hilchot Teshuva 5:1-2
- Abarbanel, Shmot Chapter 7

In these lectures, we will discuss the topic of free will, where it applies and its limitations. We will also analyze various scenarios that will shed light on the question of free will vs. divine providence

### **Week 12- Final Week - Cumulative Final**

#### **Grading:**

Attendance - 20 % (you can miss 2 classes)

Test 1 - 30%

Final – 50%

#### Bibliography

- <http://www.aish.com/sh/t/e/48961446.html>
- Kaplan, Handbook of Jewish Thought, pg 15-19
- Kaplan, The infinite Light, pg 35
- Luzzato, Derech Hashem, 1:2:1
- Luzzatto, Maamar Halkarim, chapter 10
- Luzzatto, The path of the just, Chapter 1
- Nevensal, BeYitzchak Yikare
- Rabbi Yehuda HaLevi, Kuzari, pg.2
- Shachter, Nefesh HaRav, pg. 152

#### Additional Readings

- Leff, A new Shabbos soul, Feldheim, 2012
- Mykoff, 7th Heaven, Breslov Research Institute, 2008
- Kleinman, Praying with Fire, Artscroll, 2007
- Schroeder, Genesis and the Big Bang, Koinonia House Inc., 1991
- Tatz, Free Will- The Real You, Targum Press