

Rabbi Klapper

Date: January 2021

Course Name: Topics in Rambam

Type of course: Lecture

Year of Studies: 2020-2021

Semester: Spring 2021

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 – Tefillin

- Devarim 6:8
- Bireishit 17:11
- Mishna Brurah 44:3
- Menachot 44a
- Yeshayahu 38: 16
- Brachot 23a
- Hoshe'a 2:21-22

In these lectures, we will learn about the mitzvah of tefillin and its many different facets. We will discuss its placement, its laws, and its Kedusha. Students will gain a deeper level appreciation as they learn about a common mitzvah with hidden meanings.

Weeks 3 and 4- Taharat Hamishpacha

- Brachot 31a
- Vayikra 15:16
- Vayikra 15:18-30
- Niddah 66a
- Niddah 67b
- Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh Deah, 200
- Remah Yoreh Deah 183:1

In these lectures, we will discover the hidden world of taharat hamishpacha. Students will be introduced to the secret potion that has been holding the Jewish people together for generations. We will discuss, the laws of Niddah, mikvah, and family purity.

Weeks 5 and 6- Reward and Olam Habbah

- Devarim 30:15-19

- Pirkei Avot 4:16
- Pirkei Avot 4:2
- Rabbeinu Yonah on Pirkei Avot 4:2
- Pirkei Avot 1:16
- Kiddushin 39b
- Rambam, 11th Principle of Faith
- Brachot 17a

In these lectures, we will discuss the topics of Reward and Olam Habbah. How quickly does one receive a reward for a good? Does the reward come in this world or the World to Come? Does everyone get the same reward for a given action. What are Yesurim? Tzadik ViRah Lo and Rasha ViTov Lo. Does everyone go to Olam Habbah? These are just some of the questions that we will tackle during our discussions.

Week 7- Midterm Exam

Weeks 8 and 9- Punishment and Gehenom

- Devarim 4:15
- Rambam, 11th Principle of Faith
- Pirkei Avot 1:7
- Tehilim 90
- Devarim 31:29
- Rosh HaShanah 16b
- Pirkei Avot 1:5

In these lectures, we will delve into the concept of punishment and Gehenom. How and why does Hashem punish us? Does everyone get punished? What does tradition teach about what happens to the soul in Gehenom. Does everyone go to gehenom? These are just some of the questions that we will tackle during our discussions.

Weeks 10 and 11- Israel

- *Devarim* 17:14
- Ramban, Commentary on Rambam's Sefer HaMitzvot
- *Bamidbar* 33:53-54
- Ketuvot 110b
- Vayikra 25:38
- Ketuvot 111a
- Sifri Devarim 43

In these lectures, we will discuss the Importance of the land of Israel. Is it a mitzvah to live here? We will analyze the Rambam's view and compare it to the Ramban's view. We will discuss modern day Israel and why Satmar Chassidim do not believe in the state. Lastly, we will discuss mitzvot hatluyot baaretz and how Mitzvot were given to be performed in the land of Israel.

Week 12- Final Week - Cumulative Final

Grading:

Attendance - 20 % (you can miss 2 classes)

Test 1 - 30%

Final – 50%

Bibliography

- Cohen, Alfred S, *Halacha and Contemporary Society*, KTAV Publishing House, 1984
- Eider, Halachos of Tefillin, Chapter III, Section C-13
- Jacobs, Family Purity—A Guide to Marital Fulfillment, chapter 10
- Kanarfogel, Ephraim. "The Aliyah of 'Three Hundred Rabbis' in 1211:Tosafists Attitudes toward Settling in the Land of Israel." *The Jewish Quarterly Review* , vol. 76, no. 3, (Jan. 1986). pp. 191-215
- Kaplan, The Aryeh Kaplan Anthology II, pp. 273-274
- Marienberg, "Traditional Jewish Sexual Practices and Their Possible Impact on Jewish Fertility and Demography," *Harvard Theological Review* 106:3 (2013) 243-286
- Schram, *The Chinese Journal of Medicine*, volume 70, October 2002