

Rambam Yomi

b'sd

4 Strengthening Limud HaRambam Worldwide in the light of Chassidus

Week of Parshas Balak 5772

Story. In the previous generation there was a superb scholar that has been quite unknown beyond his community and those that met him. Rabbi Israel Isaac Kahanovitch, whose Hilula fell on 11 Tammuz (1945), was the Chief Rabbi of all of Western Canada and the Western United States from 1905-1945. Rabbi Kahanovitch attended the musar yeshivas of Slobodka and Novardok, and was ordained as a Rav by the Aruch HaShulchan, who was the foremost Posek in his generation in Europe. While Rav of Winnipeg his halachic rulings reached from Toronto to Los Angeles. In fact, both cities requested his permanent station, but he would not leave his position of head of Winnipeg Jewry, as well as his two specific congregations, Beth Jacob and Ashkenazi. Every Shabbos he would speak fiery drashas about supporting the return to Eretz HaKodesh, for he had seen the damage in war torn Europe, from which he fled. In addition, he sent millions of dollars to Eretz Yisroel to help support the Jewish settlers. When Rav Kook, Chief Rabbi of Eretz HaKodesh passed away, Rabbi Kahanovitch was asked to become his successor, but again he refused because of his dedication to his community. In addition to correspondence with Rav Kook, the Rebbe and Previous Chabad Rebbe wrote to Rabbi Kahanovitch for support on issues facing the Jewish People (see index to Igros Kodesh). Until his last days he would spend his spare moments helping orphans, widows, and refugees, and still find time to review the Gemorah and Shulchan Aruch, of which he was completely fluent. The author of this work hopes that this small biography can give honor to his great-grandfather, whose inspiration drives him every day. In addition he hopes the merit of Rabbi Israel Isaac will protect his descendants and Klal Yisroel.

Contact: Rabbi Yonason Kahanovitch at kahanovitch@yahoo.ca about this project or phone 973-223-7877. Thank you to this week's sponsors who helped get this out to all the shuls in Crown Heights. If you want to continue to receive this, please make a dedication. Thank you.

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This week's 'perek echad Rambam' commences hilchos 'Hotzah':
Hil. Shabbos Ch 13

He who transfers an object from a public domain outwards 4 amos (cubits) is not obligated (to bring a korban if he transferred accidentally, or kareis if intentional) until he has uprooted that item from a space of 4 squared tefachim (hand-breadths) or more, and places it on a place of (similar minimal dimensions) 4 squared (tefachim).

1. Talmud Gemorah Shabbos 4a
2. Background of Melacha Hotzah: When Bnei Yisroel would travel in the desert it was required to dismantle the Mishkan. The 'Kerashim' (planks), which formed the walls of the Mishkan, would be placed on special wagons called 'agalos' (Gemorah Shabbos 49b). These planks had to be handed from person to person onto each wagon, from back to front. (see Mishna ibid 'Hazorek' 96a which states that this was the service of the Levites, and that the planks were passed ('hosashta') but not thrown out of respect and due to their weight). The wagon bed was a different domain than the desert, and thus the transfer of the planks from the wagon floor to the desert floor was Hotzah from the private to public domain. The Gemorah on 49b thus says: "just as the Levites transferred the 'kerashim' from the desert floor to the wagon, you should not transfer between the 'reshus ha'rabin' and the 'reshus ha'yachid' (...and vice versa)." The Gemorah concludes that passing the 'kerashim' between wagons implies the forbidden act for us to pass an item between private domains to a public domain.
3. Severity of Hotzah: This is the most extensively spoken about melacha in the the whole Shas and commentaries. Indeed, hotzah is the most spoken about single topic in all of Shas because it is severe and complex. This severity is expressed in the rabbinic ban of blowing shofar when Rosh Hashano falls on Shabbos. The Rabbis ordained this in fear of the Baal Tokeah bringing the Shofar in the public domain (Rosh Hashana 29b) This ban is despite the fact that the gemara states, "Any year which the Shofar sound is not heard at its start will end in the sound of weeping (G-d forbid)." (Note that Chassidus takes a seemingly opposite approach and says that Shabbos accomplishes the same spiritual influence of shofar in the absence of blowing. In addition, this can be explained by the concept of the act of not transgressing a command is considered a mitzvah as it says in Kiddushin 39b, "He who has abstained from sin even passively is rewarded as if he as performed a positive commandment." (See also Tanya, Lmitrei Amarim Ch 27)).
4. Yirmiyoh 17:21 says that the Bais Hamikdash could not have been destroyed if the laws of Hotzah were properly observed.
5. Hotzah is complex because it is an abstract melacha, being that it does not involve creative activity (Tosfos Shabbos 2a). In addition, it is hard to avoid carrying because it involves a person's necessities. For example, when everyone had his cholent warmed at a public fire, he would have to carry it from his private quarters to the oven. This required an eruv (see Rambam Pirush Hamishnayos Shabbos 1:1 where he asks why the Gemorah starts with Hotzah yet it's the 39th melacha, and ibid 12:8, and he answers because it is learned from a drasha and not explicit in the Chumash). See a good perspective on this topic from Rabbi Ribiat's 39 Melachot.