



REVERING THE TORAH (IV)

In All Times

The Torah commands us to follow the instructions of the *rabbonim* in each generation. Chazal explain that no matter the greatness of the leading *chachomim*, we are obligated to heed their guidance. Though Yiftach was no comparison to Shmuel HaNavi in greatness, the people of his generation were nevertheless obligated to hold him in equal regard.

The Sefer HaChinuch writes that one who disregards their advice is forfeiting a *mitzvas ase* and deserves great punishment: "For this is a firm pillar upon which the Torah stands, as can be understood by anyone with understanding."

(ס' החינוך מצוה תצה)

Chazal say that one should regard the current *chachomim* just as those from the previous generation. One should not say, "If Rabbi Akiva would be with us, I would learn from him; if Rabbi Zeira and Rabbi Yochanan were alive, I would learn with them." Rather, he should consider the *chachomim* of his own generation with the full respect. This is the meaning of Shlomo Hamelech's words, "Do not justify yourself by saying that the earlier days were better than these."

(קה"ר פ"א, ר"ה כב סע"א)

All Rabbonim

Chazal say, "One who doubts his Rebbe (*hameharher achar rabo*) is regarded as if he doubted the *Shechinah*."

A chossid of the Tzemach Tzedek once went to hear Reb Yisroel of Viletnik. As the *tzaddik* spoke, he thought to himself, "I don't need to listen to him. He's not my Rebbe; I have a different Rebbe."

Reb Yisroel sensed his thoughts, and said, "*Hameharher achar rabo*... – Whoever frees himself from listening since this isn't his Rebbe, for he has a different Rebbe (*acher*), is regarded as if he doubted the *Shechinah*..."

The chossid, who was standing behind Reb Yisroel, assured himself, "Reb Yisroel is certainly not referring to me."

But Reb Yisroel added, "*Hameharher achar*

rabo... – Whoever has doubts when he is behind (*achar*) his Rebbe is regarded as if he doubted the *Shechinah*..."

(ר' מענדל ע' 110, ספורים חסידיים ח"א ע' 49)

Despite Differences

The author of *Ketzos HaChoshen*, a staunch *misnaged*, was the *rov* of Staria, the hometown of many chassidim of the eminent *tzaddik*, the Chozeh of Lublin. Feeling that the chassidim were defying the *Shulchan Aruch*, the *rov* reproved them, and when they ignored him, he pronounced upon them a *cherem* of 30 days. The townsmen adhered to his ruling and kept their distance from the chassidim, who after a while decided to go off and spend the rest of the 30 days with their Rebbe in Lublin.

However, to their surprise, the Rebbe told his *shammes* not to admit them for another two weeks and a few days – for as long as the *cherem* was still in effect.

When they were finally admitted to his presence, the Chozeh reprimanded them for not fully respecting their *rov*. He explained that the Torah requires one to respect a *talmid chacham* absolutely, despite his possible lack in some area of *avodas HaShem*.

(סיפור חסידים זוין תורה ע' 406)

After the Mezritcher Maggid passed away, each of his *talmidim* was allotted a region in which to spread the teachings of *Chassidus*. Russia was apportioned to the Alter Rebbe. Reb Shlomo Karliner, one of his colleagues, once considered moving his community of chassidim to a town in the Alter Rebbe's territory, and he asked the Alter Rebbe for permission.

The Alter Rebbe agreed on three conditions – that Reb Shlomo would not speak disrespectfully of the non-chassidic *lomdim*, that he would not belittle the natural *yiras Shomayim* that Yidden have, and that his chassidim would be encouraged to attain *kedusha* on their own and not rely solely on the *kedusha* of their Rebbe. Reb Shlomo agreed to the first two conditions but not to the third, and finally settled elsewhere.

(לקו"ד ח"א ע' 282)

Even when the *chassidim* suffered at the hands of the *misnagdim*, the Alter Rebbe urged his chassidim to treat their *rabbonim* and *talmidei chachomim* with respect, despite their sharp differences in *avodas HaShem*.

After the Alter Rebbe was imprisoned due to a libel perpetrated by several *misnagdim*, the *chassidim* were reasonably angry, and were once again tempted to voice their opinion against the *misnagdim*.

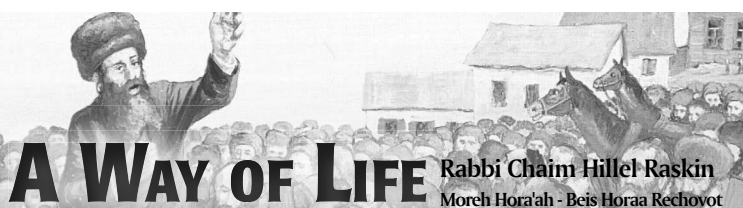
In a second letter to his *chassidim*, the Alter Rebbe warns them not to speak negatively about the *talmidei chachomim* "who are not of our group": "Even if these *talmidei chachomim* speak out against the Baal Shem Tov and his *talmidim*, it is the listener who must do *teshuvah*, since it is his own negative behavior which has caused them to speak like this... HaShem is my witness that the above is all true and not *ch"v* a charade due to fear..."

The Alter Rebbe concludes: "I am sure that for the true *chassidim* these words will be enough. However, since there those who profess themselves as *chassidim*, who think they will impress other *chassidim* by speaking negatively about the *misnagdim*, I therefore demand that anyone who hears another speak disrespectfully, even in jest, report it to me, so that I will know to ban them from visiting me."

(אג"ק אדה"ז ח"א ע' ק)

CONSIDER THIS!

- Are we really supposed to believe that the *rabbonim* today are of the same stature of the *rabbonim* of old? How then can we have a genuine feeling of respect?
- How can one respect a *talmid chochom* knowing that he has opposing views to one's own Rebbe etc.?



A WAY OF LIFE

Rabbi Chaim Hillel Raskin
Moreh Hora'ah - Beis Hora'ah Rechovot

Names in Shidduchim

A bochur was suggested for my daughter but his mother's name is the same as my daughter's. Is that a problem?

- Reb Yehudah Hachosid writes in his will (*tzava'a*) very serious things about making a *shidduch* where the *chossin* has the same name as his father-in-law¹ or the *kallah* as her mother-in-law. While *poskim* question whether the rules of Reb Yehudah Hachosid were intended for all Jews or only for his descendants,² the Tzemach Tzedek quotes the Alter Rebbe that the rule about the names of a *kallah* and her mother-in-law certainly applies to everyone,³ while the other name issues we treat as a *safek*.⁴
- *Poskim* have suggested various reasons for this prohibition: (a) not being able to name a child after that grandparent,⁵ (b) compromise of *kibud av ve'em* when calling the spouse by name,⁶ (c) *ayin hara*.⁷ Accordingly, there would be exceptions to this rule: (a) if the grandparent forgoes having a child named after him, (b) if he refers to his wife differently than how his mother is called, (c) if they don't live together the *ayin hara* is minimized.⁸ However, other *poskim* are of the opinion that we cannot say with certainty what the reason is and we must therefore be stringent in all cases.⁹
- Another rule was that the two *mechutanim* (fathers-in-law) should not have the same name (this is less severe for the *mechutenestes* (mothers-in-law) since their names aren't written into the *ksubah* or *tnayim*).¹⁰ Some hold that it only applies if the names are irregular,¹¹ and some limit it to when it is the parents who are marrying off the children.¹² From the Rebbe's letters it is apparent that we should be concerned for this rule as well.¹³
- The Tzemach Tzedek rules not to be concerned when one side has an additional dissimilar name.¹⁴ Therefore, the practice is for one of the people to add a name, preferably at the beginning of their name.¹⁵ This is usually initiated by receiving an *aliya* with the new name or making a *mi-shebeirach*,¹⁶ but most important is that they actually use their new name.¹⁷ Preferably the change should be made before the *shidduch* is announced or at least 30 days before the writing of the *tnayim*.¹⁸

7. שו"ת דבר אליהו פערלאר סי' ל"ב. שו"ת פרי השדה ח"א סי' ס"ט.
8. ראה צוואת ריה"ח ע"פ הר"ר מרגליות.
9. שו"ת מערכת חו"כ אות י'. וראה אג"מ יו"ד ח"ג סי' קל"ג שנתון מוקדם לטעמים בצוואה.
10. צוואת ריה"ח אות כ"ד (ועיי"ש שיש שהסתפק אם ד"ז הוא לזרעו בלבד או לכל העולם, ומסיים ויש להזהר).
11. שם משמעון אות ו' (ועיי"ש שדן באם צד אחד כהן או לו).
12. אבני צדק סי' ו' (וראה צוואת ריה"ח עם פירוש הר"ר מרגליות).
13. משמעות אג"ק ח"ח עמ' קל"ו.
14. שו"ת אבה"ע ח"א סקמ"ג, ופס"ד ליו"ד סי' קט"ז ("אין השמות שווין ממש אין שום חשש כלל וכלל"), וראה במכתבי רבינו (שידו"ג שם). כבר כתוב בפנים.
15. אג"ק ח"ז ע' רע"ו.
16. ראה אג"ק ח"ג עמ' גנ"א "במי שברך כשא" מקרוביה יעלה לתורה".
17. ראה אג"ק ח"ז ע' תמ"ו.
18. אג"ק ח"ז שם. וראה חט"ז ע' שכ"ט (ל' יום לפני שיגמרו העניין).

לע"נ מרת ציפא אסתר בת ר' שלום דובער ע"ה

OUR HEROES

Reb Chaim Ber Wilensky



Reb Yitzchak Chaim Dovber HaLevi Wilensky ("Reb Chaim Ber Kremenchuger") was born around 5597 (1837) and was a chossid of the Tzemach Tzedek, the Rebbe Maharash and the Rebbe Rashab. He was one of the "Kremenchuger Beralach," a group of great chassidim in Kremenchug named DovBer after the Mittlerer Rebbe. He was a phenomenal *maskil* and a reserved but firm leader. Reb Chaim Ber passed away on the second night of Chanukah, 5653 (1892) and is buried in Kremenchug.

In a questionnaire which the Friediker Rebbe sent to Reb Michoel Wilensky to fill out about his father, he writes what he heard from the Rebbe Rashab at a gathering of *Simchas Beis Hashoeiva* in the year 5654 (1894):

First the Rebbe spoke about the previous chassidim of Kremenchug, and then he said "*Olam HaTikkun* [the realm of correction and stability] began with Chaim Ber." He continued to speak of how wary my father was of behaving in a manner that might make him look pretentious: how much he deliberated until he decided to wear a *gartel* for *davening*.

He then added, "He was here for several years. I had then repeated my father's *maamar* for him with my own 'introduction.' My father's words are good, so he had what to work with, but he didn't take anything from my additions (those last words the Rebbe said with a smile). The skill of listening, I saw in him. He listened without making a single move, yet all of his limbs heard. He listened with his entire being, until he became red behind his ears."

In another section, the son writes:

Everything about him gave the opposite impression of who he really was. Starting from his outward appearance—which mostly had nothing to do with him—he didn't look like a "chossid": He was a tall man with hardened facial features, a beard as neat as if it were trimmed, and he was extremely particular about the cleanliness of his clothes.

He looked as though he were a cold and calculated man who is impressed by nothing, someone who knows his value and is confident in himself. So much so that people would joke that he was a man whom death could not reach, due to his healthy body and nerves of steel. The truth, however, was quite the opposite, and those who were close to him, dubbed him, "the cold firebrand."

For the full questionnaire and other stories, see "The Cold Firebrand – The Life of R. Chaim Ber Wilensky" in *Perspectives Fifteen*.

A MOMENT WITH THE REBBE

The Rebbe Envis Me

Professor Velvel Green related: I once wrote to the Rebbe that I felt uncomfortable representing him in spreading *Yiddishkeit*, since I was not yet a committed chossid.

The Rebbe answered, in a letter dated 24 Nissan 5727 (1967): "The Rebbe Maharash once told the chossid Reb Elya Abeler, a market trader, 'Elya, I envy you. You travel to the market, where you have the opportunity to spread Torah. This creates a joy in heaven.'"

The Rebbe continued, "This story speaks for itself. I will only add the obvious, that envy in matters of Torah and *mitzvos* is quite in order."

During the winter of 5728 (1968), I traveled to Detroit to deliver a lecture. However, when I arrived, I found that all the *shluchim* had disappeared. They had traveled to New York for the Yud Tes Kislev *farbrengen*!

I was confused. I placed a call to 770, and asked whether I should also be there. The *mazkir* conveyed the Rebbe's response: "As far as I am concerned, by doing your work in Detroit you are closer to me than if you would sit next to me in 770!"

(Professor Green Sholom Ubracha, pp. 78, 120)