

## REVERING TORAH (I)

### Showing Respect

The Rambam writes that it is a *mitzvas aseh* to honor those who know Torah and teach it, for this shows an admiration for HaShem's Torah. In this spirit, it is *parkened* in the *Shulchan Aruch* that one is obligated to rise out of reverence for a *talmid chacham*, and even more so, for one's own *rov*.

(רמב"ם הל' ת"ת פ"ו ה"א, שו"ע יו"ד סי' רמ"ד)

Rava taught: "A person who loves *talmidei chachomim* will have children who will be *talmidei chachomim*. One who honors *talmidei chachomim* will have sons-in-law who will be *talmidei chachomim*. One who is in awe of *talmidei chachomim* will become a *talmid chacham* himself, and if he does not have the capacity to become a scholar, his words will be accepted like those of a *talmid chacham*."

Rava further said: "How foolish are those people that stand up for a *sefer Torah* but not for a *talmid chacham*" – because of the degree to which the Torah empowers them to interpret its words.

(שבת כ"ג ע"ב, מכות כ"ב ע"ב)

When R. Zeira needed to rest from his learning, he would relax near the entrance of the *beis midrash* so that he could rise and thereby express his reverence for the *chachomim* passing by.

(עירובין כ"ח ע"ב)

The two great *geonim*, Reb Akiva Eiger and Reb Yaakov of Lisa (author of the *Nesivos*), were once strolling together, when they passed two youngsters sitting on a bench. The young men noticed the two *geonim* but ignored them and did not stand up.

Reb Akiva Eiger shared his surprise with his colleague: "This is surely the era before the coming of *Moshiach*, when '*chutzpah* will thrive...'"

Reb Yaakov responded, "Not yet! When we will be sitting on the bench and the two youngsters will pass by demanding that we stand up for

them, then that '*chutzpah* will thrive.'"

(סללי תשובה ע' 418)

In a letter to the *yeshiva* in Montreal, the Frierdiker Rebbe highlights essential values that must be transmitted to the children. One of those values: "It is especially vital to guide them to *derech erez* and admiration towards those who study Torah and to elders in general, particularly their own parents."

(אג"ק רי"צ ח"ו ע' קסט)

To be termed a *talmid chacham*, one must have *yiras Shamayim* and observe the *mitzvos* conscientiously. At another level, the Alter Rebbe adds that a true *talmid chacham* is a person who nullifies his own will before the Will of HaShem, and who, like a *talmid*, a humble student, is ready and willing to receive his directives from the level of *Chochma* in the world Above.

(שו"ע יו"ד סי' רמ"ג ס"ג, תנ"א מג"א ק"ט, ג)

### Genuine Admiration

The Frierdiker Rebbe once said: Chassidim are people of outstanding *derech erez*; they love and appreciate those who study Torah. With people educated in the chassidic tradition, these feelings are vibrant and deep-seated, and are expressed in genuine respect.

(סה"מ תש"י ע' 90)

The Tzemach Tzedek once said, "The level of *chassidishkeit* has gone down."

He went on to explain that in the days of the Mitteler Rebbe, first the *melamdim* and *rabbonim* were admitted for *yechidus*, and only then would the *baalei-batim* take their turn. Now, he said, the *baalei-batim* enter first. (After all, they have important matters to discuss; besides, they are the ones who support the *rabbonim*....) Only afterwards are the *rabbonim* and *melamdim* admitted.

When the elder *mashpia*, Reb Groinem, related this story, the *temimim* in Lubavitch asked him why the Tzemach Tzedek did not reverse the

order to the way it had been in the past. Reb Groinem, in true chassidic tradition, explained with a story:

"There was once a villager, a simple *yishuvnik*, who would occasionally visit the *rov* of the nearby town and ask him all his *shaylos*. One day he arrived at the home of the *rov* and found him at a meeting discussing a serious matter with his colleagues. When the meeting ended, the villager presented his *shaylos*, and then asked the *rov* if he could know what was the matter of such great concern.

"The *rov* explained that since it hadn't rained for a while, they were deliberating whether they should declare a day of fasting and *davening* for the much-needed rain, to save them from possible famine. The villager, astonished, offered his counsel.

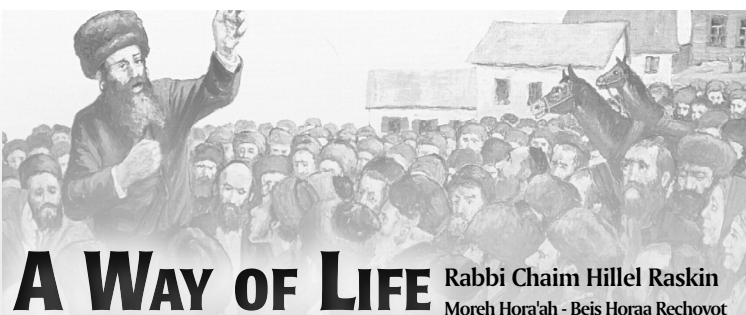
"I have a far simpler solution," he said. "Whenever my cat runs into the house and crouches near the oven, rain begins to fall shortly after. All we must do is grab the cat, place it near the oven, and the rain will surely follow!"

The *mashpia* concluded: "In the days of the Mitteler Rebbe, the *baalei-batim* admired and respected the *melamdim* and *rabbonim* and gave them precedence. But now that the situation has declined and they no longer respect them, rearranging them in the correct order is no more helpful than putting the cat near the oven to bring the rain...."

(רשימות דברים ח"א ע' קלז)

### CONSIDER THIS!

- What is the difference between showing respect and genuine appreciation? Which of them is necessary?



# A WAY OF LIFE

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

## Severance Pay

If I downsize my company and lay off a worker, am I obligated to pay him severance?

- The Torah says that one should not send off a Jewish slave empty handed, and he should give him gifts (*ha'anaka*).<sup>1</sup> Chazal established that the value of these gifts be at least thirty *selo'im* (approx. \$267-285) from produce and livestock.<sup>2</sup>
- Does this requirement apply to a hired worker? *Poskim* point out that this obligation cannot be applied to most workers,<sup>3</sup> since: (a) the *mitzva* of *ha'anaka* only applies during the time of *yovel*, (b) it cannot include a worker who was hired for a job (*kablan*), and (c) it won't include one who leaves mid-term.
- The Sefer Hachinuch writes that nevertheless one should take a lesson from the *mitzvah* of *ha'anaka* and gift any worker when he leaves.<sup>4</sup> Other *rishonim* argue that this application depends on an earlier dispute whether *ha'anaka* is only for a slave sold by *beis din* for stealing or also by a self-sold slave. A hired worker is similar to a man who sold himself, who according to many opinions does not necessitate *ha'anaka*.<sup>5</sup> The Rebbe<sup>6</sup> defends the Sefer Hachinuch's position by explaining that only the self-sold slave doesn't receive *ha'anaka* since he transgressed a prohibition that one may not enslave himself. A hired worker, however, who hasn't transgressed, should be given a parting gift in the spirit of *ha'anaka*. Contemporary *poskim* cite this as a basis for severance pay,<sup>7</sup> and *beis din* actively tries to implement this good practice.
- Common practice (*minhag hamedina*) carries weight in monetary *halacha*.<sup>8</sup> *Poskim* therefore rule that in a country where it is accepted to pay severance to a laid-off worker it is as if they explicitly agreed upon it, and *beis din* can **force** the employer to pay.<sup>9</sup> However, if they agreed beforehand that severance will not be paid, their agreement is binding, since any arrangement in monetary matters is valid (*kol tnai sheb'mamon kayam*).
- Application of specific cases of *minhag hamedina* according to *halacha* is complex and requires the judgment of a *rov* who is knowledgeable in the field.

בהוספה על מנהג המדינה).

1. דברים פ"ו פ"ג.

7. ראה מנח"י ח"ו סי' קס"ז.

2. ראה גמ' קידושין י"ז ע"א.

3. וראה משפט הפועלים פרק י"ח וש"ת בצל החכמה ח"ג סי' ק'.

8. ראה גמ' בב"מ פ"ג ע"א. וראה סי' משפטי חושן סי' של"א הערה א' לגדרים בזה.

4. מצוה תפ"ב. וראה גמ' שבת קכ"ז ע"ב.

9. ראה משפטי חושן סוף הספר בערך פיצויי פטורין פ"א אות ג'. וראה משפטי ליעקב ח"ב סי' כ"ה.

5. מנח"י שם.

6. לקו"ש ח"ט ע' 153 (משמע שצריך לתת

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## OUR HEROES

### Reb Peretz Chein



Reb Peretz Chein was a chossid of the Mittlerer Rebbe, and was among those who influenced the Tzemach Tzedek to accept the *nesius*, and he was also instrumental in the appointment of the Rebbe Maharash as Rebbe. He merited seeing six Rabbeim, from the Alter Rebbe, who he saw while still a baby, through the Friediker Rebbe, when the Rebbe was in his boyhood years. Reb Peretz was a *rov* in Nevel, then in Beshenkovitz and later in Tchernigov. He passed away 26<sup>th</sup> of Iyar תרמ"ג (1883).

The Mittlerer Rebbe once told Reb Peretz to perform "*Tikun Chatzos*." Later on, when he came for *Yechidus*, he told the Rebbe that he had stopped, and explained: "To say *Tikun Chatzos* with a truthful heart, I am incapable of, and to lie to myself and say it anyway, this I do not want to do..." The Rebbe accepted his argument.

During the weeks before his passing, Reb Peretz continued with his *avoda* as usual. Three days before he passed away he called his son Radatz and told him:

"Many years ago my mother appeared to me and told me three things: (1) 'I have been sent from *shamayim* to tell you that your *chazarah* of what you have already learned is more precious than the learning for the first time.' (2) '*Machshavos zaros* during *davening* is like *piggul*' (a *karban* which was brought with the incorrect intentions and therefore invalid). (3) She also revealed to me all major occurrences that would take place until the end of my life. Now, since the last of those occurrences has happened today, I know that my end is near."

Hearing this, Radatz left the room white and trembling.

On Shabbos, Reb Peretz *davened* for exceptionally long amount of time, and sent a message that the *seudah* should start without him. Everyone understood that something is about to happen, and they ate their *seudah* quickly.

Having finished their *seudah*, many people gathered to hear the davening of Reb Peretz. The recitation of *Shema* and *Boruch Sheim* alone extended for an hour and a half. After finishing *davening* he inconspicuously sent Reb Shalom Reb Hillel's (the *talmid* of Reb Hillel Paritcher) to visit a nearby *shul* (since he was a *kohen*). As he finished *Shmoneh Esreh* of *mincha* his *neshama* departed.

(שמו"ס ח"א ע' 276)

## A MOMENT WITH THE REBBE

### The Common Misconception

"There is a common misconception," the Rebbe said repeatedly, "that *tznius* is exclusively for women. This is an invention of the *yetzer hara*! The *Shulchan Aruch*, which is applicable in all generations, in the city and in the country, has prescribed in its very first *halachos* the manner men should behave." (*Sichos Kodesh* 5724, page 461)

"I have received a picture," the Rebbe said disappointedly at the *farbrengen* of Shabbas Terumah 5741 (1981), "where people with full beards are dressed inappropriately..."

"I hope this year won't be a repeat of last year: of people with full beards wearing shorts! This comes from shortness, or a lack, of *seichel*..." (*Sichos Kodesh* 5723, page 319)

Reb Shneur Zalman Gafni relates:

"During Tishrei 5730, the Rebbe told me in *yechidus* that *tznius* is not only for women. The Rebbe elaborated, 'This is the simple reasoning why a *rov* wears a long jacket – since it is more *tzanua*.'"



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