

ניצוצי אור Sparks of Light

בס"ד



No. 9

פרשת ויצא תשע"ה

Revering the Torah (III)

Rabbi Shimon Hellinger, Editor

In All Times

The Torah commands us to follow the instructions of the *rabbanim* in each generation. Chazal explain that no matter the greatness of the leading *chachamim*, 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 *mitzvah* *asei* 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 *chachamim* 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 *chachamim* 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 of Lubavitch** once went to hear **Reb Yisroel of Vilednik**. 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 (*acher*) 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*.

(סיפורי 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 **Baal HaTanya**. **Reb Shlomo Karliner**, one of his colleagues, once considered moving his community of *chassidim* to a town in the *Baal HaTanya's* territory, and he asked the *Baal HaTanya* for permission.

The *Baal HaTanya* agreed on three conditions – that *Reb Shlomo* would not to speak disrespectfully of the non-*chassidic lomdim*, that he would not belittle the natural *yiras Shamayim* 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 **Baal HaTanya** urged his *chassidim* to treat their *rabbanim* and *talmidei chachamim* with respect, despite their sharp differences in *avodas HaShem*.

After the *Baal HaTanya* 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 *Baal HaTanya* warns them not to speak negatively about the *talmidei chachamim* "who are not of our group": "Even if these *talmidei chachamim* 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 *Baal HaTanya* 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"ח ח"א ע' ק)

Consider This



Are we really supposed to believe that the *rabbanim* today are of the same stature of the *rabbanim* 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.?

Sparks of Greatness

Maharsha

Reb Shmuel Eliezer Halevi Eidels, known as the *Maharsha*, was born in the year 1555 (ה'ט"ו) in Krakow, Poland. He married the daughter of Mrs. Edel Lifschitz of Posen, and then moved to Posen and established a *yeshiva* there. For twenty years, all the expenses of the *yeshiva* were covered by his mother-in-law. In appreciation of her support, he adopted her name as his surname. After her death, he served as Rabbi in the prominent communities of Chełm, Lublin and Ostroh. He wrote the *Chiddushei Halachos*, a commentary on the *Gemara*, as well as an extensive commentary on the *aggados* of the *Gemara*, known as the *Chiddushei Aggados*, which reflect a wide knowledge of philosophy and *kabbalah*. He passed away on the 5th of Kislev, 1631 (ה'שצ"ב).

The *Maharsha* was loved and respected not only for his great learning, and sterling qualities of character. He was very modest, to the point that at first, he did not disclose the authorship of his commentaries. His house was always open for the needy, and his door is said to have had the following inscription, quoted from *sefer Iyov*: "No stranger shall stay outside overnight; my door is open for every guest."

Hundreds of *talmidim* flocked to the *yeshiva* of the *Maharsha* to learn from him, and soon the the *yeshiva* building was unable to contain everyone. The community decided to erect a new big building. On the day the corner stone was to be lain, a man approached the *shamash*, asking to buy the honor of laying the stone. He was willing to donate up to 500 gold coins, as long as his donation would remain a secret.

Sure enough, when the auction began, the *shamash* raised the bid until the anonymous donor won. Prior to the auction, the man had told the *shamash* that he wanted the honor to be given to the *Maharsha*. After the groundbreaking event, the *Maharsha* instructed the *shamash* to bring forth the donor who had bought him the honor. Upon meeting the *Maharsha*, the man said, "I am not such a wealthy man, but I have no children. I wanted to have the merit of supporting Torah, and therefore gave 500 coins, which is almost all my savings, for this purpose." Hearing this, the *Maharsha* benched the man that in this merit he should have a son who would actually learn in the *yeshiva* his father had helped build. Sure enough, the *bracha* was fulfilled in its entirety.

Library Sparks

Parshas Vayetzei relates how Yakov left his parents, traveling to his uncle Lavan's home in Charan. As a lone traveler, he made his way to an unfamiliar country without financial means. All of his belongings were taken from him, and only his walking staff remained with him. As is written in the *passuk* "ki bemakli avarti es hayarden".

The *Midrash* points out that with his strong *bitachon*, Yakov relied completely on Hashem and was therefore happy and content, without any fear or doubts.

In the middle of this journey he lay down on the ground to sleep and rest. The *passuk* describes how he surrounded his head with stones to protect it from harm.

This raises a question: Why wasn't he concerned with the rest of his body? If he trusted that Hashem would save him, wouldn't his head be safe as well?

This teaches us a powerful and important lesson. Yakov was heading toward an evil place, where people were corrupt and cruel. The name of the city, Charan, by definition means anger, as the *Midrash* says "charon af shel Makom" (the wrath of Hashem).

Yakov understood that great challenges were awaiting him there. Therefore, he wanted to shield and protect himself from their negative influences.

Thus he specifically surrounded his head with stones, to steel and guard his mind against the immorality and corruption he will be facing there.

After being totally immersed in Torah learning at the *Yeshiva* of Shem ve'Ever for 14 years, he will now go out for the very first time to earn a living. The *passuk* stipulates an important condition regarding the world of business. "Yegia kapecha ki sochal", one should toil with his "hands". His "head", though, should remain connected to Hashem, through Torah and *Avoda*. Even if one's job requires focus and concentration, he should remember his primary purpose in life. His job should only be a means to a goal, and spend his spare time wisely, performing *Mitzvos* and learning Torah.

He would then be blessed with the *bracha* of "Ashrecha vetov lach", he will be fortunate in this world and in the world to come.

Yakov used stones, a *domem*, as a protective wall. A stone in an object which remains stationary exactly where it was placed, unless moved by an outside force. So, too, must we serve Hashem by putting aside our personal wishes and wisdom to do the will of our boss, the Almighty. Then will we merit spiritual and physical success just the way Yakov did. "Vayifrotz ha'ish me'od me'od", he succeeded to raise 12 righteous children with an abundance of wealth too!

Halacha Sparks

Genetically Engineered Fowl

Rabbi Chaim Chazan

What is the din if genes of a predatory bird (which is not kosher) were inserted into an egg of a chicken, causing the hatched chick to exhibit predatory tendencies although it looks exactly like a chicken, possessing all the signs of a kosher bird? Is it kosher?

In defining the *kashrus* of birds, the Torah lists all the non-kosher birds, but does not give us signs as to which birds are kosher, as it did with animals and fish. However the *chachamim* describe three physical signs shared by all kosher birds.

There is a *machlokes* amongst the *rishonim* if these signs can be relied upon to rule a bird as kosher, or is a *mesorah* also necessary (a tradition that this bird was customarily eaten). The ruling of the *Shulchan Aruch* and the *Rama* is (albeit with slight variances between them) that only species with a *mesorah* may be eaten.

However if a bird possesses the kosher signs but displays predatory tendencies, then even according to those who rely on the kosher signs some say it is forbidden. The *Maharshal* regards the predatory tendencies as an abnormality and therefore permits the bird. The *Shach* (as explained by *meforshim*) writes that we must be concerned that perhaps the kosher signs are the irregularity, but truly the bird is not kosher.

In our case where we can attribute the predatory tendencies to the genes that were inserted, there is no reason for concern. Therefore it is possible that all *poskim* would agree that we deem the bird as kosher, and that its predator traits are abnormal. However in practice it is proper to refrain from eating such a bird, since we find that the *Rema* was very stringent concerning the *kashrus* of birds.

משנה חולין דף נט ובגמ' דף סג, רמב"ם הל' מאכלות אסורות פ"א ה"ד, טור י"ד ס"י פב בשם רש"י, ים של שלמה חולין פ"ג ס"י קטן, שו"ע י"ד ס"י פב וש"ך ס"ק ח', שו"ת משיב בהלכה י"ד ס"י ח

We will be opening our new English lending library, featuring an expansive collection of the latest and classic Jewish literature, *iy"h* Sunday Parshas Vayeshev, December 7th 2014.

Our new exciting *shiurim* program will also be operating soon! *Shiurim* will be taking place weekly at our state of the of the art library for men. Lectures will be taking place for women as well on a variety interesting & important topics.

New extended library hours: Sunday : 2:00 pm - 9:30 pm. Monday - Thursday: 2:00 pm - 10:30 pm.