



WORTHY MASHPI'IM

SUITABLE TEACHERS

Chazal say that it is forbidden to learn from one deficient in *emunah*, even Torah, lest one be influenced by their ways.

(שבת עה ע"א, שו"ע יו"ד סי' קל)

Rav Yehudah wanted to place a certain *talmid chacham* in *cherem*, due to his inappropriate behavior. However, he was hesitant to do so, for then the *talmidim* would not be allowed to learn Torah from him.

He consulted with Rabah bar Bar-Chana who told him: The *posuk* says that one should learn Torah from a *talmid chacham* "since he is a *malach of HaShem*". This teaches us that only if the *talmid chacham* behaves like a *malach*, should one learn Torah from him. Since this *talmid chacham* is acting inappropriately, Torah may not be learnt from him, and nothing will be lost by placing him in *cherem*.

(מו"ק יז ע"א, שו"ע אדה"ז הל' ת"ת פ"ד הי"ז)

The Rebbe added that one should prefer to learn Torah from a teacher who feels the *kedusha* of Torah and its connection to HaShem. Then the Torah that one learns will impact the *neschama* of the listener and bring about additional results.

(שיח"ק תש"כ ע' 195)

CHASSIDISHE LEADERSHIP

At the *farbrengen* of Simchas Torah תרפ"ט (1928), the Frierdiker Rebbe was speaking of the need to be connected to the "head" (the Rebbe), when he turned to Reb Chatshe Feigin and said, "This is your job, to see that there should be *mashpi'im* in every town."

Reb Chatshe asked if he should find someone locally who could serve as a *mashpia*, and the Frierdiker Rebbe replied, "Yes, with this they will be connected to the head."

Reb Chatshe then asked, "Is that because the *mashpia* is closer to the head?"

The Frierdiker Rebbe gave his confirmation.

(סה"ש תרפ"ט ע' 49)

The Frierdiker Rebbe said: *Mashpi'im* serve a vital function in *darchei haChassidus*. The process of transmitting and imbuing chassidishe values can be likened to the planting of a seed. The *mashpia* is the planter; the *chossid/ mushpa/ talmid* is the fertile soil; and the quality of the fruits depends largely on the planter's success in preparing the soil. He cannot afford to be lax in this work, because a fruit that is spiritually rotten not only causes serious damage to his own spiritual life; it can also profane the sanctity of *Chassidus* (*chillul kedushas haChassidus*).

(לקו"ד ח"ג ע' תכו)

At the beginning of the *farbrengen* on Yud Beis Tammuz תרצ"ט (1939), it appeared as if something was greatly disturbing the Frierdiker Rebbe. After making a *bracha* and saying "*Ichayim*", the Rebbe began to share his pain.

The Rebbe spoke of the difference between the Chassidim of the past and those of the present: "At *farbrengens* in the past, *eltre chassidim* would speak of *avoda*, using vivid stories of a Rebbe or a *chossid* to illustrate their lessons. When admonishing a younger *chossid*, it was done with sensitivity and genuine sympathy. Today, when gathering at a *farbrengen*, some older *chassidim* joke at the expense of others and everyone laughs. And so, there has risen a new brand of *chassidim* of bad *middos* and inappropriate talk, something unheard of in previous generations."

The Frierdiker Rebbe concluded: "Today as well there are *b"H* many true *eltre chassidim* who continue in the way of *Chassidus* as in the previous generations. It is their obligation to admonish the younger *chassidim* and clarify to them the correct way of *Chassidus*."

Due to its important nature, the *sicha* was immediately printed and distributed amongst the *chassidim* in Warsaw and then again by the Rebbe in the year תש"ח (1948).

(סה"ש תרצ"ט ע' 342 ואילך, סה"מ תש"ח ע' 251 ואילך)

In one letter, the Frierdiker Rebbe bemoaned

the state of some "*mashpi'im*" who, instead of teaching *Chassidus* of the Rebbeim in their original form, use concepts of *Chassidus* as material for their speeches and title as "Chassidus".

"They justify themselves saying that they are doing it so that 'the people should understand', but if fact they are rebelling against Rebbeim and dimming the pure light planted by them. It is therefore no surprise that their words have no lasting impact on the listeners. These speakers have brought shame to the *Chassidus* they claim to stand for, by neglecting the crucial point of "*avodah shebelev*" – heartfelt *davening* and the study of *Chassidus* in a heartfelt manner."

(אג"ק מוהרי"צ ח"א ע' שמו)

CHOOSING A RAV

When introducing the initiative for appointing personal *mashpi'im*, in addition to the already-appointed community *mashpi'im*, the Rebbe set criteria regarding whom one should choose as a mentor.

Firstly, said the Rebbe, a *mashpia* must have the three qualities that characterize Yidden in general: he must be compassionate, bashful and kind – visibly so, and to a degree appropriate to his position.

Secondly, *Chazal* teach that one should learn Torah from a *rav* who resembles a *malach*. This means that the *rav* should be far removed from personal bias and envy, so that he can advise a fellow Yid without any personal interests involved.

(תו"מ תשמ"ח ח"ב ע' 632, 691)

CONSIDER THIS!

- Why does the personal lifestyle of the teacher matter, if what he is teaching is true?
- How does one know who is worthy of serving as an *example* for *chassidim*?

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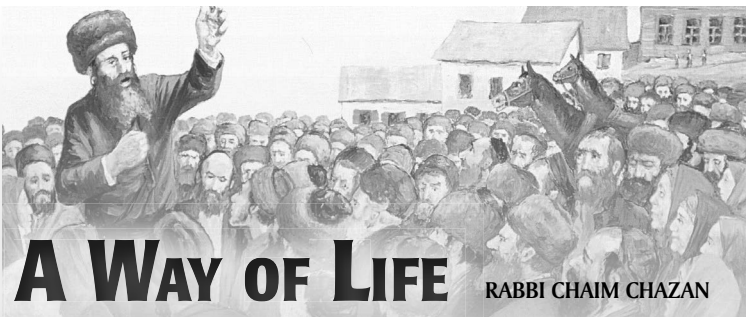
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A WAY OF LIFE RABBI CHAIM CHAZAN

RISING FOR A BLIND TALMID CHOCHOM

Is there an obligation to rise before a blind *talmid chochom* who is unaware you're standing up for him?

- The Torah commands us “*vehodarto p'nei zokein* – honor the presence of an elder” (*Vayikra* 19:32), which *Chazal* (*Kidishun* 33:b) interpret as referring to a *talmid chochom* irrespective of his age.
- The idea behind the mitzvah is to display honor to Torah by respecting those who study it. Therefore it is applicable not only when the *talmid chochom* is aware of the honor being accorded to him. Respecting *talmidei chachomim* is for the benefit of others as well including the person sitting. Therefore *poskim* write that one is obligated to rise even for a blind *talmid chochom*.
- Conversely, when rising is not a form of honor in a particular setting, such as when one is in the *mikveh*, there is no obligation to rise.
- In other words: there is an obligation on the individual to respect Torah scholars. That *chiyuv* is unrelated to whether the *talmid chochom* is aware or not. Hence even when the blind *talmid chochom* will remain unaware of the honor, the obligation to honor him still rest on the individual.

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א' אייר



THE CHACHAM TZVI

Reb Tzvi Hirsh Ashkenazi, known by the title of his *sefer*, the "Chacham Tzvi", was a *talmid* of his grandfather the "Shaar Efraim". At first, he was Rov of the kehilos "AHU" (Altoona, Hamburg, Vandsbek) and later, he became the Rov in Amsterdam. Because of an argument there, he moved locations and took on the *rabanus* in London, and later on in Lemberg, where he passed away on the 1st of Iyar, תע"ח (1718). One of his sons was Reb Yaakov Emden, the *Yaavetz*.



When the Chacham Tzvi came Lemberg, the heads of the community prepared a large Shabbos seuda to be served to the *baalei-batim* after his *drasha*. The main host of the meal was an affluent Yid who had close connections to the government officials, and had been eager for the famous Chacham Tzvi to become Rov of Lemberg.

Arranging the seating, the wealthy Yid sat the important *baalei-batim* at the head and the poor *talmidai chachomim* at the end. Seeing this, the Chacham Tzvi moved his seat to the end of the table, placing himself among the *lomdim*... This greatly aggravated the rich man and he began spewing sharp insults at the *lomdim*. The Chacham Tzvi was a very heated individual, and hearing these words, he took off his shoe and threw it at the head of the wealthy Yid.

The man informed the authorities, and a court case was arranged in Vienna. At the hearing, the Chacham Tzvi himself came fourth with a fiery defense speech, explaining the honor that ought to be given to the Torah and those who study it and the precept of "*Lo saguru mipnei ish*", that a Rov may not be intimidated by anyone. The speech made a profound impact on the judges and they freed the Rov from all charges. From then on, he was treated with great reverence by government officials.



The Chacham Tzvi had a custom of going through old letters that had been sent to him and reading over the many titles of honor that people bestowed on him. When asked what was his intent when doing this, he explained, "If the world writes such titles, this obligates me to be so much more careful with my deeds, for what would the world think if such a person sinned?"

With this, he gave a *perush* to the *possuk*: "*Adam bikar*" - if a person has honor, "*velo yavin*" – and he does not take a lesson from it, "*nimshal kabehaimos nidmu*" – he is surely likened to an animal...

לזכות ר' שלום מרדכי הלוי שי' בן רבקה

A MOMENT WITH THE REBBE

DO ALL YOU CAN

It began like every other *sicha*, elaborating on the uniqueness of the day, and the lessons we may take from it. Suddenly the Rebbe's tone rose. The Rebbe began to speak with pain:



"How is it that the *chassidim* find it an option to remain in *golus*. After all the work the Rebbe has done, everyone is still apathetic. *Ad mosai* is said out of ritual, without any true feeling. We are still in *galus* – and more importantly – the personal *galus* in *avodas Hashem*. Perhaps ten persistent people, with guidance, will actually bring the *geulah*."

Here the rebbe turned to the *chassidim* and pleaded: "I have done all I can, now you do all you can to bring *moshiach* now!"

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