

פרשת וישלח ADMIRING TORAH

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לימוד הדבר תורה לזכות ר' שלום מרדכי הלוי שי' בן רבקה לגאולה קרובה מן המיצר אל המרחב

SHOWING RESPECT

The Tzemach Tzedek once said, "The level of chassidus has gone down," and explained that in the days of the Mitteler Rebbe, when going to Yechidus, first the melamdim and rabbonim would enter, and only then would the baalei-batim come in for yechidus. Now, however, the baalei-batim enter first, since they have important matters to discuss and they are the ones who support the Rabbonim, and only afterwards are the Rabbonim and melamdim brought in for Yechidus.

When the Mashpia Reb Groinem related this story, the talmidim asked him why the Tzemach did not reverse the order of the chassidim's entry to the way it had been in the past, and Reb Groinem explained with a story:

"There was once a Yiddishe villager, who would visit the Rov whenever he would come to the nearby town and ask him all his shailos. During one such visit, he arrived at the Rov's home and found the Rov in a meeting discussing a serious matter. When the meeting ended, the villager presented his shailos, and then asked the Rov if he could know what is the matter of such great concern.

"The Rov explained to him that since it hasn't rained for a while, they were deliberating to impose a day of fasting and davening for the much needed rain, to save them from possible hunger. The villager was surprised, "I have a far simpler solution. I have noticed that 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 the melamdim and rabbonim and sent them ahead. But when the situation has declined and they no longer admire them, rearranging them in the correct order, is like placing the cat near the oven to bring the rain..."

(רשימות דברים ח"א ע' קלז)

The Rambam writes that it is a Mitzvas Aseh to honor those who teach Torah and those who know Torah, for this shows an admiration to Hashem's torah. In Shulchan Aruch it is paskened that one is obligated to respect and stand for a Talmid Chacham, and even more so respect for one's one Rav.

The Frierdiker Rebbe said: Chassidim love and value tremendously those who learn torah, with a inner feeling of appreciation.

(רמב"ם הל' ת"ת פ"ו ה"א, שו"ע יו"ד סי' רמ"ד, סה"מ תשי"ע ע' 90)

A Talmid Chacham must be one who has Yiras Shamayim and is careful in mitzvos. The Alter Rebbe writes that the true meaning of Talmid Chacham is one who is nullified to Hashem and 'receives' (like a student) from חכמה above.

(שו"ע יו"ד סי' רמ"ג ע"ג, תו"א מו"א קיט, ג)

Chazal say, "One 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 is not involved in Torah learning, then his words will be heard like those of a Talmid Chacham."

Rava said, "How foolish are those people that stand up for a Sefer Torah but not for a Talmid Chacham, for in truth the Talmid Chacham is greater."

(שבת כ"ג ע"ב, מכות כ"ב ע"ב)

AVOIDING DISRESPECT

Every Motzoei Shabbos, Reb Hillel Paritcher had the minhag of eating from a chicken that was shechted and prepared that night. Once visiting Kremenchug, he was hosted by Reb Yosef Tumarkin, the Av Beis Din, and the Rebbetzin wanted to have a chicken prepared for him for Motzoei Shabbos. Of the two shochtim in Kremenchug, Reb Hillel preferred to use the Polisher chossid over the Chabad chossid, so Rebbetzin Tumarkin sent someone to him with the chicken. However, by that time he was not home, having already left to go shecht for the following day. The Rebbetzin decided that since she has no choice, and her husband eats from the Chabad chossid's shechita, she would send the chicken to him. Yet when they sat down to eat Melave Malka and were served chicken and soup, Reb Hillel did not eat any of it. Reb Yosef concluded that there must have been some shaila with the chicken and asked his wife what it had been. "There was no shaila. He's probably not eating it because it was shechted by the Chabad chossid."

Reb Yosef then asked Reb Hillel to explain his reasoning, to know if the shochet can be trusted. Reb Hillel told them that though there is nothing wrong with his shechita, he had once heard this shochet embarrass a Talmid Chacham and therefore does not want to eat from his shechita. Reb Yosef asked how this can be corrected if the Talmid Chacham had already passed away. Reb Hillel advised that the shochet should go with ten other men to the Talmid Chacham's kever and ask forgiveness, and then he would begin eating from his shechita.

(רשימות דברים [חדש] עמ' 246)

Reb Yehuda said that Yerushalayim was destroyed only because the Yidden insulted Talmidei Chachomim. Rav said that one who insults a Talmid Chacham has no cure for his punishment. Rabbi Elazar said that one who does not stand up for a Talmid Chacham will forget his Torah and will not live long.

(שבת קי"ט ע"ב, קידושין ל"ג ע"ב)

The chossid Reb Shmuel Nimoitin, the messenger between the Frierdiker Rebbe and the Rogochover Gaon, related the following story: "Before the Frierdiker

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Rebbe came to Leningrad, he sent him to the Rogochover Gaon, the main Rav of the city, to receive permission to come, not wanting to cause him any disrespect. However, other chassidim attempting to be zealous for the Rebbe's honor, apparently said something to the Rogochover to get him to leave the city.

"When the Friediker Rebbe heard about this, he told these chassidim to ask the Rogochover for forgiveness, saying that they were playing with fire. One of the three chassidim did as told, and was forgiven. Of the other two who did not follow the Rebbe's strict instructions, one passed away within the year, and the other who was a 'tamim' in Lubavitch and a great chossid, strayed from the path of Yiddishkeit. Although after ten years he did teshuva, none of his offspring remained frum."

(הצפנת פענח במשנת הרבי עמ"ס"א, הרוגוצ'ובי עמ' 221)

The Mishna says that an apikores does not merit הבא עולם. The Gemara explains who is an apikores: one who insults a Talmid Chacham; one who insults his friend in front of a Talmid Chacham (also disrespectful); one who says, "What benefit do the Tamidei Chachomim bring? All their learning is only for themselves!" and does not recognize that the worlds depends upon the learning of torah; or one who says "What benefit are the Chachomim to us? All that they pasken is clearly written in the torah," and does not recognize the knowledge involved in paskening the shailah.

Rabbeinu Yona explains why even one who is not especially disrespectful is also considered an apikores, because his lack of respect shows that he is lacking an appreciation for Hashem's torah.

The Gemara relates that Rav Papa once inadvertently referred to some Chachomim as "Those Rabbanim..." (instead of "Our Rebbes in that city") and then fasted as a kapara.

(סנהדרין ז' ע"א וצ"ט ע"ב ואילך, שערי תשובה ח"ג פ' קנה)

DEFENDING THEIR HONOR

The Baal Shem Tov once saw a Yid being mechalel shabbos, and he was shocked that he had seen such a thing, being that everything a person sees exists within himself to a degree. He then remembered that he had once heard someone degrading a Talmid Chacham and was silent, and Chazal say that a Talmid Chacham is called "Shabbos."

(רשימות דברים ח"ג ע' כה)

When the Russian government wanted to decree that all Rabbonim must learn Russian, a meeting of Rabbonim and maskilim was held in Petersburg, which the Rebbe Rashab and Reb Cham Brisker took part in. During Reb Chaim's speech, some maskilim began to ridicule what he was saying. The Rebbe Rashab wrote something on a note and handed it to the chossid Reb Mendel Chein, and left. After the speech, they opened the note to find out why the Rebbe had left, and saw that the Rebbe had written that he could not take part in a meeting where the words of ישראל are ridiculed. Hearing this, all the Rabbonim stood up and left as well.

(קדושת הדיבור ח"ג ע' 128)

The Ohr Hachayim Hakadosh, the tzaddik Reb Chaim ben Atar, had a custom to distribute meat to the poor Talmidei Chachomim in honor of Shabbos. One week a plague broke out amongst the cattle, and as a result, all the shechted animals were found to be traife. Only the calf that was shechted for the Tzaddik was kosher. When one of the wealthy men in the city heard about this,

he rushed to Reb Chaim's house, hoping to get some meat in honor of Shabbos. He offered an enormous price for a piece, yet was told, "This is not a butcher shop, and the meat is reserved for the poor Talmidei Chachomim."

While they were speaking, one of Reb Chaim's customers walked in. Upset, the rich man exclaimed, "Eh... You call this a Talmid Chacham?!" Reb Chaim ignored his comment and gave the customer his portion. The rich man realized the futility of his endeavor, so he left in anger. That night, the Ohr Hachayim Hakadosh had a dream in which he was told from shamayim that since he had not protested against the embarrassment of a Talmid Chacham, he would have to go into golus for a full year. Immediately, Reb Chaim packed his few belongings and set out on his long arduous journey, traveling from one place to another, making sure not to sleep two nights in the same place. He often went to sleep hungry, yet he accepted his pain with love and davened to Hashem to forgive him for his sin.

On Erev Shabbos Parshas Bechukosai, the Tzaddik found himself on the outskirts of a city. He sat down on a stone to rest his weak body and reflected on the first possuk of the parshah, תלכו אִם בחוקותי. As he continued walking in dveikus towards the city, he was מחדש (conceived) forty two explanations on this possuk. When he reached the shul, the shamash invited him for Shabbos. At the conclusion of the Friday night seudah, the shamash told his guest of the city's minhag to visit the seuda at the Rov's house, and together they went, joining the throngs already gathered, waiting to hear the Rov's Divrei Torah.

The Rov sat in a dveikus, and after a few moments, he awoke and began saying fourteen explanations on the possuk תלכו אִם בחוקותי, and concluded, "These peirushim I have just heard in shamayim, in the name of the holy tzaddik Reb Chaim Ben Atar." "Reb Chaim ben Atar!" the unknown guest called out. All eyes turned to see who had the chutzpa to dishonor the Ohr Hachayim, but the shamash, feeling responsible for his guest, requested them to leave the poor man alone. Shabbos day, the Rav expounded on a second set of fourteen peirushim, saying that he had heard these in shamayim in the name of the holy tzaddik Reb Chaim Ben Atar, the same scenario repeated itself. Again the guest screamed out, "Reb Chaim Ben Atar!" heightening the irritation of the townspeople. Before seudas shlishis, the shamash warned his guest to behave properly. When the scene repeated itself a third time, Reb Chaim was locked in a room to be kept until befitting measures would be decided upon.

That night, a strong storm swept through the city, and the townspeople frantically rushed to the Rov to find out its cause. The Rov was told from shamayim that on Shabbos gehinom closes and it reopens on Motzei Shabbos when the Ohr Hachayim Hakadosh makes Havdala. Being that the tzaddik cannot make havdala, for he is currently locked in a room, a great uproar is ensuing above, causing such a harrowing storm below. Upon hearing this, the townspeople immediately released their holy guest from his confinement. Reb Chayim understood that his Teshuva had been accepted in shamayim and thus returned back to his hometown.

(תולדות אור החיים)

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