

The Abraham Arbesfeld Kollel Yom Rishon

Sunday Morning Learning Program for Men

WWW.KOLLELYOMRISHON.ORG

Rav Aharon Lichtenstein זצ"ל and the Charedi World



Rabbi Shlomo Zuckier
ז' אייר תשע"ח / Sunday, April 22, 2018

Rav Aharon Lichtenstein זצ"ל and the Charedi World

Shlomo Zuckier
ז' אייר ה'תשע"ח
04.22.18

Thoroughly Modern Orthodox

1. R. David Brofsky, written communication, May 21, 2015

While RAL identified (and even envied! As he often said) the centrality of Torah study and observance in the Chareidi world, because, he loved the Torah, RAL espoused every central belief of the MO world. He embraced Zionism, the value of secular knowledge, teaching Torah to women on the highest level, and serving in the army. These are among the central tenets of MO philosophy. He lived fully in the dati leumi world, sent his children to DL institutions (and later University), sent his sons to the army, and unlike other rabbis of his generation, he did not believe in working in one world, and raising one's family in another. His liberal side, his humanism, lead him to be concerned with many international human rights causes, to oppose the Vietnam war (against the view of the Rav), and identify, at least initially, with the "peace camp" in Israel.

RAL didn't feel the need to criticize the Chareidi world- it was clear which aspects he embraced and which he rejected. Only on rare occasions, such as R. Shach's famous "okhlei shfanim" speech 25 years ago, did he feel the need to speak out against Chareidi leadership (wow- what a sicha!). On other hand, he felt that liberal MO leadership threatened the balance of values which he promoted, and therefore for these, and other reasons (as DLK alluded to), he severely criticized Rabbis Greenberg, Hartman, and later Shagar, as well as Dr. Tamar Ross. Aside from other, more personal issues, he truly thought that their views bordered on heresy, and it pained him to see talented students attracted to their institutions and their philosophies.

2. RAL, "Centrist Orthodoxy: A Spiritual Accounting," *By His Light*

Speaking for myself, however, I can emphatically state that my general education has contributed much to my personal development. I know that my understanding of Tanakh would be far shallower in every respect without it. I know that it has greatly enhanced my perception of life in Eretz Yisrael. I know that it has enriched my religious experience. I know that when my father was stricken blind, Milton's profoundly religious sonnet "On His Blindness" and its magnificent conclusion, "They also serve who only stand and wait," stood me in excellent stead. I also know – and this has at times been a most painful discovery – that many of these elements are sadly lacking among the contemners of culture on the Right.

3. RAL, "The Ideology of Hesder," *Tradition 19:3 (1981)*

What I do wish to stress minimally, however, is the point that, for the aspiring talmid hakham, Hesder is at least as legitimate a path as any other. It is, to my mind, a good deal more, but surely not less. The point can be underscored by a brief glance at the relevant proof texts most frequently cited by rigorist critics of Hesder...

[lengthy analysis and critique of several sources used to support Torah scholars skipping army service] There is, then, no halakhic, moral, or philosophic mandate for the blanket exemption of b'nei torah from military service. These categorical claims hav[e] been laid to rest... and their presumed authoritative basis neutralized...

Hesder is, for b'nei Torah, the imperative of the moment. May God grant us a better station.

4. RAL, "If There Is No "Da'at," How Can We Have Leadership?," (trans., Joseph Faith), 2012

To illustrate this, I will relate a story. Many years ago, I travelled to Bnei Brak to console my rabbi and teacher, Rav Yitzchak Hutner zt'l, in his mourning, when his wife had passed away. When I went to see him, I found him sitting alone. We had a private conversation, and this was conducted in a very open and honest fashion, from one heart to another. Rav Hutner told me that one of the *talmidei chachamim* who came to console him, tried to convince him and to 'explain' to him how his wife's passing was 'positive', inasmuch as she was now in the world of truth, a world which is entirely positive and other such nonsense...

It is superfluous to state that saying such things is totally unsuitable. I remember that when Rav Hutner told me this, he raised his voice and he applied the following severe words of the Midrash to that *talmid chacham* (Vayikra Rabba 1):

"Any *talmid chacham* who lacks 'da'at' is worse than a putrid animal carcass!"

Rav Hutner added in his thunderous voice: "Did you hear this? 'Any *talmid chacham* who lacks 'da'at'". Consider this - we are not discussing an ignoramus who lacks 'da'at', but rather specifically a *talmid chacham*. A *talmid chacham*, who has 'filled his belly' with Talmud and the responsa literature, who is an expert in the 'Ketot HaChoshen' and 'Netivot HaMishpat'. But if he lacks 'da'at', which can direct and guide him so that he will act with understanding towards others, and interact with them in a civil fashion, he is worse than a putrid animal carcass.

Had I not heard these incisive comments with my own ears from my rabbi and teacher, I would be fearful of voicing such sentiments of my own accord. So, without getting too involved in the question of the correct balance between 'da'at', 'wisdom' and 'understanding', in this context it will suffice for us to note that one can certainly conclude from this midrashic teaching that 'da'at' is not bestowed from on high, as a free gift which is passed automatically into man's hands, even if he is a supreme *talmid chacham*. 'Da'at' does not necessarily accompany knowledge and analytical skill, and is not necessarily bound up with them like fire is with hemp fibres...

Indeed, *talmidei chachamim* such as R. Shlomo Zalman are not commonly found. To our great distress, many of those who propound 'Da'at Torah' nowadays are lacking 'da'at' in numerous fields... Ironically, in the era of earlier *gedolei yisrael*, when their 'da'at' really was 'Da'at Torah', and their loyal flocks adhered to their views, 'Da'at Torah' itself had not yet become an obligatory doctrine... This has not been the case, however, in later generations. It is specifically in the later generations, when the concept of *Da'at Torah* has become more deeply entrenched, when many *gedolim* have chosen a different path, which is many ways the exact opposite of that which preceded it. This is not mere coincidence, and is rather a reflection of a fundamentally different approach, both in its social and education aspects. Many of the *gedolim* in our day advocate a distorted educational and social approach, under the framework of which *talmidei chachamim* build up tall walls around themselves, doors which are bolted shut, in order that heaven forbid nothing which is occurring in the outside world should penetrate, and drip into the walls of the study hall. This is the reality in which tremendous *talmidei chachamim* who are totally detached from reality are raised. After decades of total detachment, he is drawn out from hiding, and becomes a 'gadol', a leader and guide...

This issue is connected, of course, to the larger question of leadership. How can a leader encourage his entire community to have large families, when the children are literally suffering from hunger? It is the leaders - not those who are led - who have brought about the situation in which children will not receive an education that will make it possible for them to earn an honourable living. It has reached the extent that if nothing changes, their grandchildren will still be knocking on our grandchildren's doors for help...

5. R. Nati Helfgot, “Letter,” March 2007

In oral comments Rav Lichtenstein made in 1984 at a melaveh malkah he was even sharper. Asked about this general topic he pithily replied: “There are two approaches to the humanity of the Avot, that of Rav Aharon Kotler and that of Hazal!” He further went on to bemoan that the Hareidi perspective ultimately turns the Avot and Imahot into “ossified figures of petrified tzidkus.”

6. RAL, “Hands Across the Ocean: A Review of Rabbi Aharon Feldman’s *The Eye of the Storm*,” *Jewish Action*, Spring 2010

If I may intrude a personal vein, Rabbi Feldman’s persona arouses in me latent but very warm memories. We were classmates during 1942-1943 in the shiur of Rabbi Yaakov Bobrovsky, zt”l, at Talmudical Academy of Baltimore– I, a spindly nine year-old immigrant of limited social skills and of dubious acculturation; he, a bit older, firmly entrenched in both a home of Lithuanian rabbinic stock and in his native American milieu. We were both eager, and bright; he, beyond that, to me, a tower of strength. He befriended me and invited me frequently to his home. I still fondly recall the chilling warmth of joint sledding in Druid Hill Park on Sunday afternoons. As my family moved to Chicago after a year, the friendship gradually dissipated. There was virtually no further contact of note—not even when, some years later, we both found our tents simultaneously pitched under the aegis of *mori verabbi*, Rabbi Yitzchak Hutner, zt”l, at Chaim Berlin. But the memory and the appreciation linger... The targets of the critique are first and foremost, Zionism, feminism and, to a lesser extent, aspects of Chabad, with sectarian denominations such as the Reform and Conservative movements omitted, deemed as unworthy of serious discussion. For our purposes, I shall focus on the first two as the most prominent.

The brunt of the attack is borne by Zionism, and, understandably so, inasmuch as, on the one hand, it is described as “the most successful of all modern movements” (p. 2), and yet, on the other hand, it is perceived as wholly devoid of Jewish significance or commitment. Hence, the reality of its status as nevertheless “enjoying the unstinting support of the vast majority of religious Jewry” (p. 3) seems enigmatic. This anomaly is both befuddling and threatening, as it raises the specter of mass apostasy and the prospect of resultant retribution, variously described in Tanach. Hence, we are told that in order to ward off potential calamity, it was essential to reject the Zionist ethos in toto. “It is out of love for the Jewish People that I found it necessary to expose the vacuity of Zionist ideology” (p. 3).

And yet, I remain befuddled. Let me state flatly and clearly, that, on this front as on several others, I share Rabbi Feldman’s vision and his priorities. Fundamentally, we grew up with similar values and have both retained and intensified our commitment to Torah values and their place within personal and communal life. Still—or perhaps, therefore—I ask: At one end of the spectrum, is it indeed desirable— or even possible—to engage in a foray of utter denial of Jewish worth to what the Zionist enterprise, albeit regarded as a monolithic behemoth, hath wrought? Must we, may we, be so radically judgmental as we deplore certain lapses in religious motivation and result? Is the reclamation of Eretz Yisrael, accompanied by gradual progress towards *rov yoshvehah alehah*, Jewishly neutral? Can we blandly overlook the infant country’s commitment to *kelitah*, arguably the most monumental initiative of post-Biblical *chesed*, as if only atheists and Christians valued caritas?

As we might have anticipated, the sharp discussion proceeds apace—passionately expressed and cogently written, with the message that, whatever may govern competitive sports, here a gender handicap is out of the question— clear and implicit. Regrettably, however, the critique itself while generally on the mark and impressive, does not always meet the relevant standards. Surprisingly, some flaws are particularly problematic in the context of halachic discourse in two respects—that of general theory and that of detailed application.

Transcending the Charedi-Modern Divide

7. Letters: Rav Aharon Lichtenstein Remembers Rav Hutner, *Jewish Action*, Summer 2002

Rav Matis Greenblatt's sensitive and illuminating portrait ("Rabbi Yitzchak Hutner: The Vision Before His Eyes," Summer 2001) of our mutual *rebbe*, served both the *Rosh Yeshiva* (as we all called him) and the readers of *Jewish Action* well. On the one hand, it has enlarged the spiritual bounds of a public to whom he was, unfortunately, insufficiently known, and parts of which were distanced by his presumed *Chareidi* identity—as if his capacious soul could be so neatly categorized! On the other hand, it has deservedly enhanced his reputation as both a masterful *gadol* and a preeminent educator.

8. RAL, "A Portrait of Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach ל"צז," *Jewish Action*, Fall 1995,

Rav Shlomo Zalman was, in effect, the Israeli Reb Moshe Feinstein ל"צז. This equation does some injustice to each, as it ignores particular qualities that energized and enriched their lives and beings. and yet it related, surprisingly, to major elements regarding role, status, personality, and perspective that were critical to their positions as *gedolim* of our generation. Both were Roshei Yeshiva for decades, and yet were preeminent as untitled *poskim*. Both fused humility and authority, and both sought, by precept and example - by what they did and what they refrained from doing - to promote harmony and diminish confrontation. In the specific area of *psak*, each dealt with the cutting edge of modern issues, particularly as regards medicine and technology; and each approached *she'eylot* animated by sensitivity to human concerns as well as fidelity to Halakhah. Finally, while both were deeply rooted in the haredi world throughout, they maintained genuine rapport with the full range of the Torah community.

9. RAL, "Take Rav Soloveitchik at Full Depth," *The Forward*, March 12, 1999

Finally, the shallowest cut of all is the attempt to pigeonhole the Rav within the confines of a current narrow "camp." At the recent Edah conference, a paper decrying right-wing revisionism concerning the Rav was widely circulated. Surely, however, left-wing revisionism – in the form of convenient conjectural hypotheses regarding what would have been his position with regard to certain current flashpoints – is no less deplorable. Had the Rav been compelled to choose between what Ms. Kessler describes as the "fervently Orthodox yeshiva world" and its denigrators, there is not a shadow of a doubt as to what his decision would have been. The point is, however, that he did not want to make that choice, and he did not need to make it. He sought, as we should, the best of the Torah world and the best of modernity. For decades, sui generis sage that he was, the Rav bestrode American Orthodoxy like a colossus, transcending many of its internal fissures. Let us not now inter him in a Procrustean sarcophagus.

10. RAL, "My Education and Aspirations: Autobiographical Reflections of Rav Aharon Lichtenstein, ז"ל"

Chaim Berlin was, of course, a *Charedi* yeshiva. R. Ahron, however, would not have described himself as part of the *Charedi* world. He had a sense, as did the Rav, ז"ל, that he transcended those categories, and I wish I could transcend them, too; but it's become more and more difficult to transcend categories. When I was your age, contact between the *yeshivot* on both sides of the fence was much more common than it is today. So, I look back with joy and gratification, a sense of indebtedness and gratitude, to the years I spent at Chaim Berlin. But I would not categorize its contribution to my development in terms of "getting to know the *Charedi* world." Through my mother, particularly, I had the good fortune to be able to know some of its best exemplars, such as Rav Ya'akov Kamenetsky – who, to me, was an ideal. I knew the *Charedi* world anyway; what I gained in my years at Chaim Berlin was my exposure to the two *rebbeim* whom I mentioned, and some friends who remain close to me to this day.

11. Tovah Lichtenstein, “Countering Counter-History: Reconsidering Rav Aharon’s Road not Taken,” *The Lehrhaus*, March 23, 2017

I presented [at the Jewish Center] a very different understanding of the implications of Rav Aharon’s move to Yeshivat Har Etzion for the American Torah community. I claimed then, and reiterate now, that Rav Aharon’s influence on the American Orthodox community, be it called Centrist or Modern, was *because* he had moved to Israel. He and his Yeshiva sought out and attracted the best and brightest of American young men—and, eventually, young women—to partake of his Torah at Yeshivat Har Etzion and at Migdal Oz. His students were not limited to those who might have chosen to study at Yeshiva University. He was not limited by the particular institutional structure of Yeshiva University, its dynamics and complexity. He distanced himself from the American scene as he immersed himself completely in the task of building an institution that had as its motto not Torah and Madda but Torah and army service. This combination of involvement in a Jewish polity while single-mindedly pursuing Torah learning and values had a far reach and attracted those who would later study in a variety of educational settings. These young people returned to their homes and it is they who saw Rav Aharon as their “gadol.” The very fact that Rabbi Eleff embarked on his counter-history journey affirms Rav Aharon’s broad influence.

Mutual Respect: “Do We Have to Choose?”

12. Shlomo Zuckier and R. Shalom Carmy, “An Introductory Biographical Sketch of R. Aharon Lichtenstein,” *Tradition* 47:4 (2015), pp. 14-15

R. Lichtenstein has, from time to time, taken positions on urgent public issues and has presented general perspectives on occasional matters. Invariably when he has lifted his voice, it has not been to cheerlead for those with whom he finds himself in agreement. Rather he has repeatedly called into question one-sided, often popular opinions... When R. Elazar Shach publicly attacked secular Zionism, and labor Zionism in particular, during an Israeli cabinet crisis, it was to readers of the secular *Maariv* that R. Lichtenstein explained that his world was that of R. Shach and Ponevezh, and that he differed from his Haredi confreres primarily insofar as he insists on recognizing and celebrating the accomplishments of secular Zionism. Where others are tempted to magnify the gap between Religious Zionism and the Haredi community, R. Lichtenstein here went out of his way to define it narrowly.

13. RAL, “Centrist Orthodoxy: A Spiritual Accounting,” *By His Light*

Let us begin with the examination of the light. What are the hallmarks of so-called Centrist Orthodoxy, and in what respect does it differ from its Rightist critics? Broadly speaking, of course, our common purpose is identical: universally—“*le-takken olam be-malkhut Shad-dai*, to mend the world under divine sovereignty;” nationally—to realize our destiny as a “*mamlechet kohanim ve-goi kadosh*, kingdom of priests and a holy nation;” personally—to prepare for the tripartite examination described in the gemara (Shabbat 31a): “Did you deal faithfully? Did you set fixed times for Torah study? Did you anticipate redemption?” It is important that we bear this community of purpose very much in mind. When all is said and done, we should recognize and realize that what we share with the Rightist community far, far outweighs whatever divides us—although, in the nature of things, the focus within the community is upon the divisive element.

I sometimes have the feeling that, with regard to perceiving that community, we are often somewhat remiss. Ernst Simon, a professor of education at the Hebrew University, once remarked with reference to the dilemma of a religious professor in Jerusalem (remember, this was years ago), that “The people you can talk to, you can’t daven with, and the people with whom you can daven, you can’t talk.” For *benei Torah*, of course, the shared universe of Talmudic discourse, of *havayot de-Abbaye ve-Rava*,

serves as a great cementing force. But even amongst *benei Torah*, many in our camp no doubt find it easier to talk, perhaps even to work, with an intelligent secular colleague than with a Karliner chassid, forgetting that the pleasantries attendant upon passing the time of day cannot compare with a shared vision of eternity. Surely we need to recognize, and the point can hardly be overemphasized, that our basic affinity is with those—past, present or future—to whom *tzelem E-lokim*, *malkhut Shamayim* and *avodat Hashem* (the divine image, divine sovereignty, and the service of God) are the basic categories of human existence.

Nevertheless, important differences clearly do exist, and these relate to substance as well as to style, to strategy no less than to tactics. While an abstract eschatological vision may be common, its specific content may vary, and quite significantly so. While the ideal of “a holy nation” animates us all, its definition is far from agreed...

If pressed to define the primary area of difference between the various Torah communities, I presume we would get different replies depending upon whether the question were posed in the Diaspora or in Eretz Yisrael. In Galut, the litmus test probably still is the attitude to secular culture; in Eretz Yisrael, the attitude towards the state. Both are, however, clearly major issues in both places, and I would like to deal seriatim with each and then to analyze their common denominator...

I am generally opposed to positing a single mold as the sole model for *avodat Hashem*, and I submit that, were it up to me, one could receive rabbinic ordination from Yeshivat Rabbeinu Yitzchak Elchanan even if, like R. Akiva Eiger, he did not have a B.A...

Psychological sensitivity in those circles is grossly deficient. Just recall, if you attended the funeral of a great rabbi, how abstract, repetitive and inane the eulogies were. When R. Aharon Kotler zt”l passed away, there was what was considered at that time a huge funeral downtown. There was a long row of eulogizers—*rashei yeshiva* and rabbis—but the only person who began to give an insight into the fire which animated that giant was Irving Bunim, a layman. When one’s psychological sensitivity is lacking, the result is that much of Torah—whole *parashiyyot* and personalities in Chumash—are simply misread, in the sense of *gilui panim ba-Torah she-lo ke-halakha* (false interpretation of Torah), with a marvelous tradition of midrashim often distorted beyond recognition...

Second, with regard to areas of practical Halakha, there are differences over how far and how fast one should push in order to arrive at a kind of foolproof practice. How high should the “fence around the Torah” be raised, even when raising it too high has an impact on other values, and even when raising it disregards the impact which it has upon the standing of the *kehilla*, the basic (and if it is basic, it is in some sense centrist) community as it has existed from generation to generation? The mentality which is totally immersed in certain specifics may often lack the spiritual energy to involve itself in other areas and might not give these considerations sufficient weight. Minutiae are, of course, critical to halakhic thought and experience, and the adherence to standards in their implementation is an essential ingredient of any form of serious Torah commitment. But these need to be viewed, and, within certain limits, defined, with reference to general spiritual and axiological factors...

Having quoted myself previously with regard to the question of culture, I will refer you now to another article I wrote, dealing with the topic of attitudes towards Zionism within the American Orthodox community. In dealing with the differences between the adherents of and opponents to Zionism within the Torah world, I focused upon several major factors: conceptually, the extent to which man—and all of society collectively—should participate in the historical process; how partial successes or partial developments—half-way houses, if you will—were to be evaluated; how one perceived the specific reality of political Zionism; and to what extent was one ready and willing to work with secularists. All of these, I think, are significant factors in drawing lines between the pros and the cons.

But I think that in our context, another element may be added: in general, to what extent is one interested in the political order, the polis, and specifically, how much significance (if any) does one attach to the issue of Jewish sovereignty in Eretz Yisrael?...

Thus, the key issue distinguishing our approach from that of our colleagues on the Right is the question of whether to adopt an attitude of “everything is in Torah,” or to append, balance and round out. With respect to this issue, I think that we stand on solid ground. We have a position which need not be viewed as being the sole position, nor even be regarded historically as the majority position, but surely it is a sound, solid and legitimate position. I believe, therefore, that the problem confronting Centrist Orthodoxy today is not, or ought not to be, primarily ideological... Our question, then, is: How well and how faithfully do we, as a community, walk by it? Our problem is not on the conceptual level, but rather on that of implementation, both operational and experiential...

Centrist Orthodoxy, specifically, can be powerful only when the concern for Torah remains passionate and profound, but is then supplemented by other elements. It can succeed when we can honestly state, by analogy with Byron’s statement (in “Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage”), “I love not man the less, but nature more,” that, in comparison to others, we love not Torah less, but *derekh erez*—in the full, rich sense of that term—more. It is precisely here, I am afraid, that our *cheshbon ha-nefesh* begins. How much of our Centrism indeed derives from dialectical tension, and how much from tepid indifference? Is our commitment to *talmud Torah* truly as deep as that of the Right, but only modified in practice by the need to pursue other values? Do our students devote as much time and effort to *talmud Torah*, minus only that needed to acquire culture or build a state? Comparisons aside, let us deal with specific educational issues: What has all the time wasted on television, the inordinate vacations, a system of religious public schools in Israel which shuts down at one or two in the afternoon, to do with culture or Zionism? Cannot one acquire both, in schools geared to the hilt for maximal Torah achievement? On the contrary, success in *talmud Torah* on the part of those who maintain a multiple vision requires greater tenacity, more devotion and more diligence, than among devotees of the monochromatic, who speak, in a phrase much beloved by the Right, of producing only *shemen zayit zakh*, the purest olive oil. But does that exist? The children in Centrist summer camps today do not waste away their summers because they are busy mastering Bach or Euclid. They generally abstain from Torah study because their parents, or the community out of which they spring, do not consider *talmud Torah*, perhaps Judaism in general, as that important. So long as this is the case, we are indeed in serious trouble. The challenge which confronts us is how to build a community which is passionately committed to Torah, but understands the need for *gereira*...

I submit that, on a competitive basis, we might do better in the area of learning than in the area of prayer. I knew a man who was identified as an Orthodox rabbi but, ideologically, was essentially Conservative. Someone once asked him, “Why don’t you identify with the Conservatives?” His response was, “How can I go to the Conservatives? They don’t cry at Ne’ila” (the final prayer on Yom Kippur). Let us ask ourselves: Does our Centrist community cry sufficiently at Ne’ila? It is only by instilling this kind of passion that we can avoid the lapse of Centrism into mere compromise...

Granted that, our challenge is to see to it that indeed we maintain our position with depth and gusto. Given our constituency, of course, we cannot instill many of our students with the optimal level of love of Torah; we know from where they come. But, within our overall community, and surely within its leadership, such a level should exist. Woe unto us, if the only choice lies between tepid compromise and arrogant *kana’ut*.

A couple of years after we moved to Yerushalayim, I was once walking with my family in the Beit Yisrael neighborhood, where R. Isser Zalman Meltzer used to live. For the most part, it consists of narrow alleys. We came to a corner, and found a merchant stuck there with his car. The question came up as to how to help him; it was a clear case of *perika u-te’ina* (helping one load or unload his burden). There were some youngsters there from the neighborhood, who judging by their looks were probably ten or eleven years old. They saw that this merchant was not wearing a kippa. So they began a whole pilpul, based on the gemara in Pesachim (113b), about whether they should help him or not. They said, “If he walks around bareheaded, presumably he doesn’t separate *terumot u-ma’asrot*, so he is suspect

of eating and selling untithed produce. . .” I wrote R. Soloveitchik a letter at that time, and told him of the incident. I ended with the comment, “Children of that age from our camp would not have known the gemara, but they would have helped him.” My feeling then was: Why, Ribbono shel Olam, must this be our choice? Can’t we find children who would have helped him and still know the gemara? Do we have to choose? I hope not; I believe not. If forced to choose, however, I would have no doubts where my loyalties lie: I prefer that they know less gemara, but help him.

Did the Charedi World Accept Rav Lichtenstein?

14. Shira Schmidt, Rav Aharon Lichtenstein and the Charedim, Torah Musings, May 20, 2015

“I am very partial to Rav Lichtenstein’s approach,” said the Lelov hassid to me at the funeral of Rav Aharon Lichtenstein z”l a month ago. “Rav Lichtenstein deals with abstractions, in addition to focusing on the text,” he further elucidated. There were quite a few hassidim (to judge by their sartorial taste) at the funeral. In addition, someone whose garb bespoke a haredi Litvishe affiliation responded, when I asked what his connection was with Rav Lichtenstein, “What we appreciate in his shiurim is that rather than trying to be ‘sparkling’ with fireworks, there is yashrus, a straightforward approach that speaks to us.”

They were not the only haredim among the ten thousand, mostly national religious and modern Orthodox, who attended the levaya of Rav Aharon Lichtenstein, z”l. Rav Lichtenstein is one of those rabbis who are esteemed by people from many different sectors of Jewry.

15. Ner Israel Kollel, May 8, 2016

