

generation, but the leader of generations. But it is possible that there is a dispute. One person says that this rabbi is the "Gadol Ha-Dor," while another says that another rabbi is the "Gadol Ha-Dor." Surely some thought that the Rambam was the "Gadol Ha-Dor" and others thought that Rabbenu Tam was the "Gadol Ha-Dor." It is even possible that each is the leading rabbi in a different sense. The Gerrer Rebbe said that there is no need to find out which holiday is most important. On Pesach, Pesach is the most important. On Shavuot, Shavuot. On Sukkot, Sukkot/ Each holiday, when it falls is the most important one. So too here, it is possible that there are different types of leading Rabbis of the generation. Nonetheless, the students of the Satmar Rebbe consider him the "Gadol Ha-Dor," and others do not agree. Thus, one is not obligated to greet him as the "Gadol Ha-Dor."

Question: It is forbidden to greet him?

Answer: Why would it be forbidden? Some say that if Yitzchak Rabin was a "Rodef" (literally a "pursuer" – who one is permitted to kill in order to save the pursued) then the Satmar Rebbe is all the more so a "Rodef" on account of his virulent anti-Zionist views. We reject this position, since according to all halachic opinions, Rabin was not a "Rodef" and thus neither is the Satmar Rebbe. It is certainly not forbidden to greet him.

The question of a rabbi who ridicules and insults the State of Israel, others Rabbis, etc. is a very sensitive topic. On the one hand, the transgression of a Torah scholar who shames other Torah scholars is very severe. On the other hand, we need to give the Rabbi as much benefit of the doubt as possible. For example, there was a "Gadol Ha-Dor" of the previous generation who shamed all of the other Rabbis. Rav Shlomo Yosef Zevin said about him: He is insane – he is not normal. This was giving him the benefit of the doubt. There are also Torah scholars who have extremely harsh styles of speaking.

They refer to everyone as apostates, heretics, etc. Explaining that this is someone's style of speaking is also a type of giving the benefit of the doubt. We are not saying that this is proper, but are trying to see others in the best possible light.

In any event, quite simply, it is extremely important to honor all Torah scholars. One should not shame them, even if there is a harsh communal dispute. The Gemara in Sanhedrin (99a) explains that one great Rabbi, Rabbi Hillel (not Hillel the Elder who was a contemporary of Shammai), said that the Messiah would not come. This is certainly a severe statement. Everyone is waiting for and anticipating the Messiah, yet in his opinion: "No – there is no Messiah." Rav Yosef said to him: "May Hashem pardon his error" (as explained by Rashi). We clearly see that despite the severe nature of Rabbi Hillel's comments, Rav Yosef did not shame him. Based on this, there is a Teshuvah of the Radvaz (4:187) that even a great Rabbi who has expressed himself heretically should not be ridiculed even though one should argue with all forcefulness against his ideas. Maran Ha-Rav Kook explained this law based on the Jerusalem Talmud, which compares disgracing a Torah scholar to a structure of stones: that is, if one stone is shaken, the entire structure is shaken (Jerusalem Talmud, Sanhedrin 10:1). Thus, one who scorns a Torah scholar knocks over the entire building of the Torah in Israel (see "Perek Tzibbur" by Maran Ha-Rav Avraham Yitzhak Ha-Cohain Kook, Ma'amrei Ha-Re'eiyah 55). Scorning Torah scholars is similar to sitting on a powder keg; we do not know when it will blow up and who will be injured. Shaming Torah scholars cannot be controlled and we do not know where it will end. If someone disgraces one Torah scholar, he disgraces them all.

We saw this with our own eyes: Rav Yoel Teitelbaum, the first Satmar Rebbe, made extremely harsh statements. Our Rabbi, Rav Tzvi Yehudah Ha-Cohain

Kook, never scorned or denigrated him even though their stances were diametrically opposed. Our Rabbi once heard a severe ruling in the name of the Satmar Rebbe, and all he said was: "This is not correct." Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah also admonished students who expressed a lack of respect towards the Satmar Rebbe, and would not allow them to continue to speak. Once Ha-Gaon Rav Moshe Feinstein issued a ruling that in pressing situations it is permissible to be lenient in a regarding the height of a mechitzah between men and women in a shul,. The Satmar Rebbe came out against him. Our Rabbi said: "It is known that our paths are separate and different, but in this issue he (the Satmar Rebbe) is correct." Even though they were polar opposites regarding the Redemption of Israel and Klal Yisrael, our Rabbi never said one negative word against him.



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