

הלכות תלמוד תורה • פרק חמישי

Complete Word-for-Word Interlinear • Navy & Gold Edition

CHAPTER PREVIEW

In this chapter, the Rambam brings us to the heart of the sacred bond between a talmid and his rebbe, showing us how the honor and awe we must have for our teacher actually surpasses what we owe our own parents. Since a father brings a person into this world, but a rebbe brings his talmid into the life of the World to Come, the halachah demands that we treat our teacher with the utmost reverence in all practical matters, such as returning lost objects, carrying heavy loads, and redeeming captives.

We will also learn the severe spiritual gravity of treating one's rebbe with disrespect. The Rambam warns us, based on the words of Chazal, that disputing, arguing with, complaining against, or even thinking disparagingly of one's primary rebbe is equivalent to doing so against the Shechinah itself. This chapter sets the boundaries for what constitutes disputing a teacher's authority, particularly regarding establishing a house of study or rendering halachic decisions without permission.

All introductions, summaries, and contextual notes are the editor's commentary and are not part of the original text.

הליא

החובה לכבד ולירא מהרב יותר מאביו

Halacha 1 • The Obligation to Honor and Revere One's Torah Teacher Above One's Father

כָּשֶׁם שֶׁאָדָם מְצִוָּה בְּכָבוֹד אָבִיו וְיִרְאָתוֹ כִּי הוּא חַיֵּב בְּכָבוֹד

in the honor of is obligated he so and his awe his father in the honor of is commanded a person Just as

רָבוֹ וְיִרְאָתוֹ יֵתֵר מֵאָבִיו. שֶׁאָבִיו מְבִיא לְחַיֵּי הָעוֹלָם הַזֶּה וְרָבוֹ

and his teacher this the world to the life of brings him for his father than his father more and his awe his teacher

שֶׁלְמִדּוֹ חֲכָמָה מְבִיא לְחַיֵּי הָעוֹלָם הַבָּא. רָאָה אֲבִדַת אָבִיו

his father the lost object of If he saw the coming the world to the life of brings him wisdom who taught him

וְאֲבִדַת רָבוֹ שֶׁל רָבוֹ קוֹדֶמֶת לְשֶׁל אָבִיו. אָבִיו וְרָבוֹ

and his teacher If his father his father to of takes precedence his teacher of his teacher and the lost object of

נוֹשְׂאִים בְּמִשָּׁא מְנִיחַ אֶת שֶׁל רָבוֹ וְאַחֵר כִּי שֶׁל אָבִיו. אָבִיו

If his father his father of that and after his teacher of — he relieves a burden were carrying

וְרָבוֹ שְׁבוּיִים בְּשִׁבְיָה פוֹדֶה אֶת רָבוֹ וְאַחֵר כִּי פוֹדֶה אֶת אָבִיו.

his father — he redeems that and after his teacher — he redeems in captivity were captives and his teacher

וְאִם הָיָה אָבִיו תִּלְמִיד חָכֵם פוֹדֶה אֶת אָבִיו תַּחְלָה. וְכֵן אִם הָיָה

was if And likewise first his father — he redeems sage a Torah his father was and if

אָבִיו תִּלְמִיד חָכֵם אֵף עַל פִּי שְׂאִינוֹ שְׁקוּל כְּנֶגְדֵּי רָבוֹ מְשִׁיב אֲבִדָּתוֹ

his lost object he returns his teacher against equal that he is not though even sage a Torah his father

וְאַחֵר כִּי מְשִׁיב אֲבִדַת רָבוֹ. וְאִין לָהּ כָּבוֹד גָּדוֹל מִכָּבוֹד

than the honor of greater honor to you And there is not his teacher the lost object of he returns that and after

הָרַב וְלֹא מוֹרָא מִמוֹרָא הָרַב. אָמְרוּ הַכֹּהֲנִים מִשְׁנֵה אֲבוֹת ד' יב

12 4 Avos Mishnah the Sages They said the teacher than the awe of awe and not the teacher

"מוֹרָא רַבָּךְ כְּמוֹרָא שָׁמַיִם". לְפִיכָךְ אָמְרוּ כָּל הַחוֹלֵק עַל רַבּוֹ

his teacher against who disputes Anyone they said Therefore Heaven is like the awe of your teacher The awe of

כַּחוֹלֵק עַל הַשְׂכִּינָה שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר בַּמִּדְבָּר כו ט "בְּהִצָּתָם עַל

against when they contended 9 26 Numbers as it is said the Divine Presence against is like one who disputes

ה'". וְכָל הַעוֹשֶׂה מְרִיבָה עִם רַבּוֹ כְּעוֹשֶׂה מְרִיבָה עִם

with a quarrel is like one who makes his teacher with a quarrel who makes And anyone Hashem

הַשְׂכִּינָה שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר בַּמִּדְבָּר כ יג "אֲשֶׁר רַבּוֹ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת ה'

Hashem — Yisrael the children of quarreled which 13 20 Numbers as it is said the Divine Presence

וַיִּקְדָּשׁ בָּם". וְכָל הַמִּתְרַעֵם עַל רַבּוֹ כְּמִתְרַעֵם עַל

against is like one who his teacher against who complains And anyone through them and He was sanctified complains

ה' שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר שְׁמוֹת טז ח "לֹא עָלִינוּ תִּלְנֹתֶיכֶם כִּי עַל ה'". וְכָל

And anyone Hashem against but are your complaints against us Not 8 16 Exodus as it is said Hashem

הַמְהַרְהֵר אַחֵר רַבּוֹ כְּאִלּוּ מְהַרְהֵר אַחֵר שְׂכִינָה שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר בַּמִּדְבָּר

Numbers as it is said the Divine Presence after he harbors doubts is as if his teacher after who harbors doubts

כֹּא ה' "וַיִּדְבֹּר הָעָם בְּאַלְהֵים וּבַמֹּשֶׁה":

and against Moshe against God the people And spoke 5 21

This halacha establishes that the honor and awe due to one's primary Torah teacher exceed that of one's father, because a father brings a child into this world while a teacher brings them into the World to Come.

ה'י ב

הַנְּהִיגָת הַתִּלְמִיד בְּפָנֵי רַבּוֹ וְאִסּוּר הוֹרָאָה

Halacha 2 · The Prohibition of Establishing a House of Study and Ruling Halacha in One's Teacher's Presence

אֵיזֶהוּ חוֹלֵק עַל רַבּוֹ. זֶה שְׁקוּבֵעַ לוֹ מִדֶּרֶשׁ וְיוֹשֵׁב

and sits a house of study for himself is one who establishes this his teacher against one who disputes Who is

וְדוֹרֵשׁ וּמְלַמֵּד שְׁלֹא בְּרִשּׁוֹת רַבּוֹ וְרַבּוֹ קַיָּם וְאֵף עַל פִּי

though and even is alive and his teacher his teacher with the permission of not and teaches and expounds

שֶׁרַבּוֹ בְּמִדִּינָה אַחֶרֶת. וְאִסּוּר לְאָדָם לְהוֹרֹת בְּפָנֵי רַבּוֹ

his teacher in the presence of to rule for a person and it is forbidden another is in a country his teacher

לְעוֹלָם. וְכָל הַמוֹרָה הַלָּכָה בְּפָנֵי רַבּוֹ חֵיב מִיתָה:

death is liable to his teacher in the presence of halacha who rules and anyone forever

This halacha defines what constitutes disputing one's teacher and outlines the strict prohibition against rendering halachic decisions in a teacher's presence or without his permission.

ה'י ג

הָיָה בֵּינוּ וּבֵין רַבּוֹ שְׁנַיִם עָשָׂר מֵיל וְשָׁאֵל לוֹ אָדָם דְּבַר הַלָּכָה

halacha a matter of a person him and asked mil ten twelve his teacher and between him If there was

מִתֵּר לְהָשִׁיב. וּלְהַפְרִישׁ מִן הָאִסּוּר אֶפְלוּ בְּפָנָיו רַבּוֹ מִתֵּר

it is permitted his teacher in the presence of even the prohibition from and to separate to answer it is permitted

לְהוֹרוֹת. כִּיצַד. כְּגוֹן שֶׁרָאָה אָדָם עוֹשֶׂה דְּבַר הָאִסּוּר מִפְּנֵי שְׂלֹא

not because that is forbidden a thing doing a person that he saw For example How so to rule

יָדַע בְּאִסּוּרוֹ אוֹ מִפְּנֵי רָשָׁעוֹ יֵשׁ לוֹ לְהַפְרִישׁוֹ וְלֹאמַר לוֹ דְּבַר זֶה

this thing to him and to say to separate him to him there is his wickedness because of or of its prohibition he knew

אִסּוּר וְאֶפְלוּ בְּפָנָיו רַבּוֹ וְאֵף עַל פִּי שְׂלֹא נָתַן לוֹ רַבּוֹ

his teacher to him gave not though and even his teacher in the presence of and even is forbidden

רְשׁוֹת. שְׁכָל מְקוֹם שִׁישׁ חֲלוּל הַשֵּׁם אֵין חוֹלְקִין כְּבוֹד לְרַבּוֹ.

to the teacher honor divide we do not the Name desecration of that there is place for any permission

בְּמָה דְּבָרִים אֲמוּרִים. בְּדָבָר שֶׁנִּקְרָה מִקְרָה. אֲבָל לְקַבֵּעַ עֲצָמוֹ

himself to establish but by chance that happened regarding a matter are said words In what

לְהוֹרָאָה וְלִישֵׁב וּלְהוֹרוֹת לְכָל שׂוֹאֵל אֶפְלוּ הוּא בְּסוֹף הָעוֹלָם וּרַבּוֹ

and his teacher the world is at the end of he even if who ask for all and to rule and to sit for ruling

בְּסוֹף הָעוֹלָם אִסּוּר לוֹ לְהוֹרוֹת עַד שְׁיָמוּת רַבּוֹ אֵלֶּא אִם כֵּן נָטַל

he took unless his teacher that dies until to rule for him it is forbidden the world is at the end of

רְשׁוֹת מִרַּבּוֹ. וְלֹא כָּל מִי שְׁמִית רַבּוֹ מִתֵּר לוֹ לִישֵׁב וּלְהוֹרוֹת

and to rule to sit to him is permitted his teacher whose died one every And not from his teacher permission

בְּתוֹרָה. אֵלֶּא אִם כֵּן הָיָה תַּלְמִיד שֶׁהִגִּיעַ לְהוֹרָאָה:

the level of ruling who reached a student he was unless in the Torah

This halacha delineates when a student may answer halachic questions, prevent transgressions in his teacher's presence, and the restrictions on establishing oneself as a public halachic authority.

הליך

האסור להורות הלכה למי שלא הגיע לקה ורחיב על מי שהגיע

Halacha 4 · The Prohibition of Rendering Halachic Decisions Prematurely and the Obligation of Worthy Sages to Teach

וְכָל תַּלְמִיד שֶׁלֹּא הִגִּיעַ לְהוֹרָאָה וּמוֹרָה הָרִי זֶה רָשָׁע

is wicked this one behold and renders halachic decisions to render halachic decisions has reached who not student And any

שׁוֹטָה וְגַם הָרוּחַ. וְעָלָיו נֶאֱמַר מִשְׁלֵי ז' כו "כִּי רַבִּים חֲלָלִים

corpses many for 26 7 Mishlei it is said and upon him of spirit and arrogant foolish

הַפִּילָה" וְגו'. וְכֵן חָכָם שֶׁהִגִּיעַ לְהוֹרָאָה וְאֵינוֹ

and does not to render halachic decisions who has reached a sage And likewise etc. she has cast down

מוֹרָה הַרִי זֶה מוֹנֵעַ תּוֹרָה וְנוֹתֵן מַכְשׁוֹלוֹת לְפָנֵי הָעוֹרִים

the blind before stumbling blocks and places Torah withholds this one behold render halachic decisions

וְעָלָיו נֶאֱמַר מִשְׁלֵי ז' כו "וְעֲצָמִים כָּל הֶרְגִּיהָ". אֵלֹהֵי הַתְּלָמִידִים הַקְּטָנִים

the small the students These her slain are all and mighty 26 7 Mishlei it is said and upon him

שֶׁלֹּא הִרְבּוּ תּוֹרָה כְּרָאוּי וְהֵם מִבְּקָשִׁים לְהַתְגַּדֵּל בְּפָנֵי עַמִּי

the common before to make themselves seek and they as is proper Torah have increased who not great

הָאָרֶץ וּבֵין אַנְשֵׁי עִירָם וְקוֹפְצִין וְיוֹשְׁבֵין בְּרֹאשׁ לְדִין וְלַהּוֹרוֹת

and to render halachic to judge at the head and sit and jump their city the people of and among people decisions

בִּישְׂרָאֵל הֵם הַמְּרַבִּים הַמַּחְלֵקֶת וְהֵם הַמַּחְרִיבִים אֶת הָעוֹלָם

the world — are those who destroy and they the dispute are those who increase they in Israel

וְהַמְּכַבִּין נֶרָה שֶׁל תּוֹרָה וְהַמְּחַבְּלִים כָּרֶם ה' צְבָאוֹת. עֲלֵיהֶם

upon them of Hosts Hashem the vineyard of and those who ruin Torah of the lamp and those who extinguish

אָמַר שְׁלֹמֹה בְּחֻכְמָתוֹ שִׁיר הַשִּׁירִים ב טו "אֶחָזוּ לָנוּ שׁוֹעָלִים שׁוֹעָלִים

foxes foxes for us Seize 15 2 HaShirim Shir in his wisdom Shlomo said

קְטָנִים מְחַבְּלִים כְּרָמִים:

vineyards that ruin little

This halacha warns unqualified students against rendering halachic rulings, while admonishing qualified sages who withhold their knowledge from the community.

ה' ה

אָסוּר קְרִיאַת הָרֵב בְּשֵׁמוֹ וְנִתְּנַת שְׁלוֹם לוֹ

Halacha 5 · The Prohibition of Calling One's Teacher by Name and the Proper Way to Greet Him

וְאָסוּר לוֹ לְתַלְמִיד לְקְרוֹת לְרַבּוֹ בְּשֵׁמוֹ וְאֶפְלוּ שֶׁלֹּא בְּפָנָיו. וְהוּא

and this in his presence not and even by his name his teacher to call for a student for him And it is forbidden

שִׁיְהִיָּה הַשֵּׁם פְּלִאִי שְׁכָל הַשּׁוֹמֵעַ יָדַע שֶׁהוּא פְּלוֹנִי. וְלֹא יִזְכִּיר שְׁמוֹ

his name shall he mention and not so-and-so that he is will know who hear that all unusual the name that it is

בְּפָנָיו וְאֶפְלוּ לְקְרוֹת לְאַחֲרִים שְׁשֵׁמָם כְּשֵׁם רַבּוֹ כְּדָרָךְ

in the manner his teacher is like the name of whose name others to call and even in his presence

שֶׁעוֹשֶׂה בְּשֵׁם אָבִיו. אֲלֵא יִשְׁנֶה אֶת שְׁמָם אֶפְלוּ לְאַחַר מוֹתָם.

their death after even their name — he shall change rather his father with the name of that he does

וְלֹא יִתֵּן שְׁלוֹם לְרַבּוֹ אוֹ יַחְזִיר לוֹ שְׁלוֹם כְּדָרָךְ שְׁנוֹתָנִים לְרַעִים

to friends that they give in the manner greeting to him return or to his teacher greeting shall he give and not

וּמַחְזִירִים זֶה לָזֶה. אֲלֵא שׁוּחָה לְפָנָיו וְאָמַר לוֹ בְּרֹאָה וְכָבוֹד שְׁלוֹם

peace and respect with awe to him and says before him he bows rather to that one this one and return

עָלֶיךָ רַבִּי. וְאִם נָתַן לוֹ רַבּוֹ שְׁלוֹם יִחְזִיר לוֹ שְׁלוֹם עָלֶיךָ
be upon you peace to him he shall return greeting his teacher to him gave and if my teacher be upon you
רַבִּי וּמוֹרִי:
and my master my teacher

This halacha outlines the laws of reverence a student must show toward his teacher, including the prohibition of calling him by name and the respectful manner of greeting him.

ה'ל'ו

הַנְּהִיגַת הַתַּלְמִיד בְּפָנֵי רַבּוֹ וּמוֹרָא רַבּוֹ

Halacha 6 · The Proper Conduct of a Student in the Presence of His Teacher

וְכֵן לֹא יִחְלֹץ תְּפִלָּתוֹ לְפָנֵי רַבּוֹ. וְלֹא יִסֵּב אֶלָּא יוֹשֵׁב
he sits unless he should recline and not his teacher before his tefillin he should remove not And so
כְּיוֹשֵׁב לְפָנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ. וְלֹא יִתְפַּלֵּל לֹא לְפָנֵי רַבּוֹ וְלֹא לְאַחֵר רַבּוֹ
his teacher behind and not his teacher before not he should pray and not the king before like one who sits
וְלֹא בְּצַד רַבּוֹ. וְאִין צָרִיךְ לוֹמַר שְׂאֲסוּר לוֹ לְהֵלֵךְ בְּצִדּוֹ.
at his side to walk for him that it is forbidden to say need and there is no his teacher at the side of and not
אֶלָּא יִתְרַחֵק לְאַחֵר רַבּוֹ וְלֹא יִהְיֶה מְכוּן כִּנְגַד אַחֲרָיו וְאַחֵר
and after behind him directly aligned should he be and not his teacher behind he should distance rather himself
כֹּךְ יִתְפַּלֵּל. וְלֹא יִכְנס עִם רַבּוֹ בַּמִּרְחָץ. וְלֹא יֵשֵׁב בְּמָקוֹם
in the place of he should sit and not into the bathhouse his teacher with he should enter and not he should pray that
רַבּוֹ. וְלֹא יִכְרִיעַ דְּבָרָיו בְּפָנָיו. וְלֹא יִסְתֵּר אֶת דְּבָרָיו.
his words — he should contradict and not in his presence his words he should decide and not his teacher against
וְלֹא יֵשֵׁב לְפָנָיו עַד שִׂיאֵמֶר לוֹ שֶׁב. וְלֹא יַעֲמֵד מִלְּפָנָיו עַד
until from before him he should stand up and not sit to him that he says until before him he should sit and not
שִׂיאֵמֶר לוֹ עֲמַד אוֹ עַד שִׂיטֵל רְשׁוּת לַעֲמַד. וְכִשְׂיִפְטֵר מִרַּבּוֹ לֹא
not from his teacher and when he departs to stand permission that he takes until or stand to him that he says
יִחְזֹר לוֹ לְאַחֲרָיו אֶלָּא נִרְתַּע לְאַחֲרָיו וּפָנָיו כִּנְגַד פָּנָיו:
his face facing and his face backwards he backs away rather to him his back he should turn

This halacha outlines the strict laws of respect and awe a student must show in the presence of his Torah teacher, comparing the teacher's honor to that of a king.

ה'ל'ז

עֲמִידָה מִפְּנֵי רַבּוֹ וְהַקְבֵּלַת פָּנָיו בְּרִגְלֵי

Halacha 7 · Standing Before One's Teacher and Greeting Him on the Festival

וְחֵיב לַעֲמֹד מִפְּנֵי רַבּוֹ מִשִּׁירָאָנוּ מִרְחוֹק מְלֵא עֵינָיו עַד
until his eyes the fullness of from afar from when he sees him his teacher before to stand And is obligated
שִׂיתַּפְסָה מִמֶּנּוּ וְלֹא יִרְאֶה קוֹמָתוֹ וְאַחֵר כֹּךְ יֵשֵׁב. וְחֵיב אָדָם לְהַקְבִּיל
to greet a person and is obligated he may sit so and after his stature he sees and not from him he is hidden

פְּנֵי רַבּוֹ בְּרֵגְלֵי:

on the festival his teacher the face of

This halacha outlines the requirement to stand in respect of one's Torah teacher and the obligation to visit them during the three pilgrimage festivals.

ה'יח

כְּבוֹד הָרַב וְהַשְׁמוּשׁ בּוֹ

Halacha 8 · Honoring One's Teacher and the Services a Student Performs for Him

אֵין חוֹלְקִין כְּבוֹד לְתַלְמִיד רַבּוֹ אֶלָּא אִם כֵּן דֶּרֶךְ
it is the way of · unless his teacher in the presence of to a student honor accord We do not
רַבּוֹ לְחַלֵּק לוֹ כְּבוֹד. וְכָל הַמְּלָאכוֹת שֶׁהָעֶבֶד עוֹשֶׂה לְרַבּוֹ תַּלְמִיד
a student for his master does that a servant the tasks And all honor him to accord his teacher
עוֹשֶׂה לְרַבּוֹ. וְאִם הָיָה בְּמָקוֹם שֶׁאֵין מְפִירִין אוֹתוֹ וְלֹא הָיוּ לוֹ
to him were and not him know where they do not in a place he was And if for his teacher does
תַּפְּלִין וְחָשׂ שָׁמָּה יֹאמְרוּ עָבֵד הוּא אֵינוֹ נוֹעֵל לוֹ מִנְעָלוֹ וְאֵינוֹ
and he does not his shoe for him put on he does not he is a servant they will say lest and he feared tefillin
חוֹלְצוֹ. וְכָל הַמוֹנֵעַ תַּלְמִידוֹ מִלְּשָׁמְשׁוֹ מוֹנֵעַ מִמֶּנּוּ חֶסֶד וּפֹרֶק מִמֶּנּוּ
from him and removes kindness from him prevents from serving him his student who prevents And anyone remove it
יִרְאֵת שָׁמַיִם. וְכָל תַּלְמִיד שֶׁמִּזְלִזֵּל דְּבַר מִכָּל כְּבוֹד רַבּוֹ גּוֹרֵם
causes his teacher the honor of of any of a matter who treats lightly student And any Heaven fear of
לְשִׁכְנָה שֶׁתִּסְתַּלַּק מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל:
from Israel to depart the Divine Presence

This halacha outlines the requirement for a student to serve his teacher like a servant, with exceptions to avoid being mistaken for a Canaanite slave, and warns of the spiritual severity of withholding service or disrespecting a teacher.

ה'יט

כְּבוֹד רַבּוֹ הַמְּבָהֵק וְתַלְמִיד חֵבֵר וְדִינֵי קְרִיעָה עֲלֵיהֶם

Halacha 9 · The Honor Due to an Outstanding Teacher, a Student-Colleague, and the Laws of Rending Garments Upon Their Passing

רָאָה רַבּוֹ עוֹבֵר עַל דְּבָרֵי תּוֹרָה אוֹמֵר לוֹ לְמַדְתָּנוּ רַבְּנוּ כֹּה
thus our teacher you taught us to him he should say Torah the words of against transgressing his teacher If he saw
וְכֹה. וְכָל זְמַן שֶׁמִּזְכִּיר שְׁמוֹעָה בְּפָנָיו אוֹמֵר לוֹ כֹּה לְמַדְתָּנוּ
you taught us thus to him he should say in his presence a teaching that he mentions time and any and thus
רַבְּנוּ. וְאֵל יֹאמֵר דְּבַר שְׁלֹא שָׁמַע מִרַבּוֹ עַד שִׁזְכִּיר שֵׁם
the name of that he mentions until from his teacher he heard that not a matter say and let him not our teacher
אוֹמְרוֹ. וּכְשִׁימוֹת רַבּוֹ קוֹרֵעַ כָּל בְּגָדָיו עַד שֶׁהוּא מְגַלֶּה אֶת לְבוֹ
his heart — reveals that he until his garments all he rends his teacher and when dies its author
וְאֵינוֹ מְאַחָה לְעוֹלָם. בְּמָה דְּבָרִים אֲמוּרִים בְּרַבּוֹ מְבָהֵק
outstanding regarding his teacher are these said words in what forever mend them and he does not
שֶׁלָּמַד מִמֶּנּוּ רַב חֻכְמָתוֹ. אֲבָל אִם לֹא לָמַד מִמֶּנּוּ רַב
the majority of from him he learned not if but his wisdom the majority of from him whom he learned

חֲכָמָתוֹ הָרִי זֶה תִּלְמִיד חֵבֵר וְאִינוּ חֵיב בְּכַבּוּדוֹ בְּכָל אֱלֹו הַדְּבָרִים.
things these in all in his honor obligated and he is not colleague is a student this behold his wisdom
אָבֵל עוֹמֵד מִלְּפָנָיו וְקוֹרֵעַ עָלָיו כְּשֵׁם שֶׁהוּא קוֹרֵעַ עַל כָּל הַמֵּתִים שֶׁהוּא
whom he the dead all over rends that he just as over him and rends before him he stands but
מִתְאַבֵּל עֲלֵיהֶם. אֲפֹלוּ לֹא לָמַד מִמֶּנּוּ אֲלָא דְּבַר אֶחָד בֵּין קָטָן בֵּין
whether small whether one a matter except from him he learned not even if over them mourns
גָּדוֹל עוֹמֵד מִלְּפָנָיו וְקוֹרֵעַ עָלָיו:
over him and rends before him he stands great

This halacha outlines the respect a student must show his teacher when correcting him, quoting teachings, and mourning his passing, distinguishing between an outstanding teacher and a student-colleague.

הל"י

הַנְּהִיגָת תִּלְמִיד חֵכֶם בְּפָנֵי מִי שֶׁגָּדוֹל מִמֶּנּוּ בְּחֻמָּה

Halacha 10 · The Proper Conduct of a Torah Scholar in the Presence of a Greater Sage

וְכָל תִּלְמִיד חֵכֶם שֹׁדְעוֹתָיו מְכֻוֹנוֹת אִינוּ מְדַבֵּר בְּפָנֵי מִי
whoever in the presence of speak does not are proper whose character traits wise disciple And every
שֶׁהוּא גָּדוֹל מִמֶּנּוּ בְּחֻמָּה אַף עַל פִּי שֶׁלֹא לָמַד מִמֶּנּוּ כָּלוּם:
anything from him he learned that not though · even in wisdom than him is greater that he

This halacha teaches that a student with refined character traits must show respect by not speaking before someone who is greater than him in wisdom, even if he has not personally learned from him.

הל"י

מַחִילַת הָרֵב עַל כְּבוֹדוֹ וְחוֹבַת הַתִּלְמִיד

Halacha 11 · A Teacher Forgoing His Honor and the Student's Remaining Obligation

הָרֵב הַמְּבַהֵק שֶׁרָצָה לְמַחֵל עַל כְּבוֹדוֹ בְּכָל הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּו אוּ בְּאַחַד
in one or these the matters in all his honor on to forgo who desired the outstanding The teacher
מֵהֶן לְכָל תִּלְמִידָיו אוּ לְאַחַד מֵהֶן הִרְשׁוֹת בִּידוֹ. וְאַף עַל פִּי שֶׁמָּחַל
he forgave though · and even is in his hand the permission of them to one or his students to all of them
חֵיב הַתִּלְמִיד לְהַדְרֹו וְאַפִּלוּ בְּשָׁעָה שֶׁמָּחַל:
that he forgave at the time and even to glorify him the student obligated is

This halacha teaches that while an outstanding Torah teacher has the authority to forgo the honor due to him, the student must still show him respect even when the teacher waives it.

הל"י

חֵיב הָרֵב לְכַבֵּד אֶת תִּלְמִידָיו וּלְקַרְבָּם

Halacha 12 · The Obligation of a Teacher to Honor and Love His Students

כְּשֵׁם שֶׁהַתִּלְמִידִים חֵיבִין בְּכַבּוּד הָרֵב כִּי הָרֵב צָרִיךְ לְכַבֵּד אֶת
— to honor needs the teacher so the teacher in the honor of are obligated that the students Just as
תִּלְמִידָיו וּלְקַרְבָּן. כִּי אָמְרוּ חֲכָמִים מִשְׁנֵה אֲבוֹת ד' יב "יְהִי כְבוֹד
the honor of Let be 12 4 Avos Mishnah the Sages said so and to draw them close his students

תִּלְמִידָהּ חָבִיב עָלֶיהָ כְּשָׁלָהּ. וְצָרֶיהָ אָדָם לְהִזָּהֵר בְּתִלְמִידָיו וּלְאַהֲבָם

and to love them with his students to be careful a person and needs as your own to you dear your student

שֶׁהֵם הַבָּנִים הַמְהִנִּים לָעוֹלָם הַזֶּה וְלָעוֹלָם הַבָּא:

the coming and to the world this to the world who bring pleasure are the sons for they

This halacha outlines the reciprocal duty of honor between a teacher and his students, comparing the students to beloved children.

הל"ג

מַעֲלַת הַתִּלְמִידִים וְהַשְׁפָּעָתָם עַל חֻכְמַת הָרֶבֶךְ

Halacha 13 · The Greatness of Students and Their Influence on the Wisdom of Their Teacher

הַתִּלְמִידִים מוֹסִיפִין חֻכְמַת הָרֶבֶךְ וּמְרַחֲבִין לְבוֹ. אָמְרוּ חֲכָמִים הָרַבָּה

Much the Sages said his heart and broaden the teacher the wisdom of increase The students

חֻכְמָה לְמִדָּתִי מִרְבוֹתִי וְיוֹתֵר מִחֲבֵרֵי וּמִתִּלְמִידֵי יוֹתֵר מִכָּלָם.

than all of them more and from my students from my colleagues and more from my teachers I learned wisdom

וּכְשֶׁם שֶׁעֵץ קָטָן מִדְּלִיק אֶת הַגָּדוֹל כֹּךָ תִּלְמִיד קָטָן מְחַדֵּד הָרֶבֶךְ עַד

until the teacher sharpens small a student so the large — ignites small a piece of wood And just as

שִׁיּוּצִיא מִמֶּנּוּ בְּשִׂאלוֹתָיו חֻכְמָה מְפָאָרָה:

glorious wisdom with his questions from him he brings out

This halacha explains how students sharpen their teacher's mind and increase his wisdom through their questions.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

The chapter begins by establishing that a person's primary rebbe—from whom he learned the majority of his Torah wisdom—demands a level of honor and awe that exceeds even that of his father, which manifests in giving the rebbe priority in returning lost items, relieving burdens, and redemption from captivity, unless the father is also a Torah sage. The Rambam then details how any rebellion, controversy, criticism, or complaint against one's rebbe is viewed as a direct rebellion against Hashem. Finally, the halachah defines 'disputing one's teacher' as establishing a house of study to teach and render halachic decisions without receiving explicit permission from one's primary rebbe, whereas a student who is also a colleague is not bound by these same strictures.

The Rambam teaches us a fundamental truth about our connection to Torah: a person's relationship with their rebbe is not just a matter of social respect or academic appreciation. It is the very channel through which we connect to the Shechinah. When we treat our rebbe with the utmost awe, standing before him as we would before a king and guarding our speech in his presence, we are training our souls in yiras Shamayim.

This is why the Sages warn so severely against disputing or complaining about one's rebbe. It is not about protecting the teacher's ego; it is about preserving the purity of the chain of mesorah. If we allow ourselves to treat our teachers like peers, arguing with them or acting with familiarity, we break the vessel that carries the light of the Torah into our lives. True growth in Torah requires us to bend our minds and hearts to those who came before us.

Today, make a conscious effort to elevate how you speak about or interact with your rebbe or a local talmid chacham. When mentioning their name, do not just say it casually; add a title of respect like 'Rabbi' or 'my teacher,' and consciously remind yourself that through their wisdom, you are being brought closer to Hashem.