About Hasiduth and Opposition to It

Comment:


Re: 3. This by no means describes the reality of 19th and early 20th century Europe. Most chassidish courts were fighting, and Chabad was not considered "outsiders" any more than many other groups. The biggest outsiders were Breslovers, who were put in Cherem and bullied by most groups (especially in the large domain of Chernobyl dynasties). Kotzk comes right after.

Re: 4. Again, not really. At the time of the Vilna and Brody cherems the leader of Lithuanian chassidim was still Menachem Mendel of Vitebsk. The cherem mentions practices of Tolker and Karliner chassidim. The GRA was very well informed of Chassidish believes and practices (way beyond Tanya and Chabad). Did the Noda B'yehuda ordered the public burning of Toldot Yaakov Yosef in Prague because of Chabad?

Re: 5. Are you really saying that LM is less controversial than the Tanya? Don't forget that R’Nachman was put in cherem by many chassidic admorim (forget the litvaks) and that his practices were out even by the wild chassidic standards (i.e. confession of sins to the Rebbe, followed by absolution etc.).

Response:

1. I cannot engage in a discussion of the history of Hasiduth in general at this time – and not because it is not a worthy and legitimate subject. I simply do not have the time.

2. It is an objective and self-evident fact that Lubavitch-Habad is unique: a) of all Hasidic sects, only Lubavitch-Habad proclaimed, during his lifetime, that their rebbe was the Mashiah (all objective evidence to the contrary); b) only L-H could possibly have the gall to continue making this outrageous claim many years after his passing; c) only L-H proclaim “Long live Our Master” etc. 16.5 years after his death, because to them he was not human and cannot be dead (which should remind you of something); d) only L-H would publish their rebbe's claim that davening to their rebbe, dead or alive, is
permissible and proper and does not constitute praying to a separate entity because “the [Lubavitcher] rebbe is simply an extension of Hashem”. His words, not mine.

3. Regarding Liqute MoHaRan: just as with any other “ism” within Tora Judaism, you can take it or leave it. It is my view that one should take, and benefit from, some of the teachings therein, because they are extremely insightful and beneficial; and leave, and not be bamboozled by, other teachings which are problematic and pernicious. As for discerning between the two, one needs to find a great Hakham to steer one in the right direction.

4. Regarding why the Nodh’a BiY’hudha (R. Yehezqel Segal Landau) ordered the public burning of the book entitled ‘Toldoth Ya’aqov Yoseph’ (the first Hasidic work to be published) – I do not claim to know for certain. It is true that there are some problematic statements in that work. It is also true that many suspected at that time, and not without reason, that the new movement was, or would evolve into, a repeat performance of the Shabthai Ssvi debacle and heresy. This was also clearly in the back of the minds of the Gr’a and other Hakhamim who placed Hasidhim in herem. In point of fact, this suspicion materialized and manifested itself only in the case of Lubavitch-Habad, a fact that today is plain for all to see.

Rabbi David Bar-Hayim