

And they declared the lineage according to their families, according to their father's households. (1:18)

The *Yalkut* relates, when the Jewish People received the Torah, the nations of the world were filled with envy. They wondered what was it about the Jews that catalyzed Hashem's closeness to them?

[Perhaps it was not the actual Torah that we received which concerned them. They really had no desire for the Torah with its demands and restrictions. They envied the relationship we had with Hashem. They refused to accept the notion that it was a two-way street. When we accept Hashem's *mitzvos*, we establish a relationship during which we move closer to Hashem. The obtuseness of the nations of the world prevents them from seeing the truth.] Hashem responded to the nations, "The Jews presented Me with their *sefer yuchsin*, detailed book of their pedigree (in which they trace their lineage to the Patriarchs). Where is your *sefer yuchsin*?" The obvious question is: What does *yichus*, pedigree, have to do with receiving the Torah? Should one whose pedigree is far from illustrious be distanced from the Torah?

The *Arugas HaBosem* (Patriarch of Chust, Tzelem and Pupa *Chassidic* dynasties) distinguishes between *sifrei Kodesh*, sacred books, based upon the Torah, and *sefarim chitzonim*, secular books, by secular authors that are as distant from Torah thought as night is from day. The focus of Torah thought is the ability to penetrate and plumb the profundities of early commentators' writings, to develop and enhance our understanding of the Oral and Written Law. Indeed, if one were to innovate a Torah thought that was not consistent with precedent in *Chazal*, it will be categorically rejected. Whatever novellae one innovates, must have its foundation in *Chazal*. Everything that is written or taught is always for the purpose of illuminating the words, concepts and ideas posed by earlier Torah teachers. Thus, the *Mishnah* attempts to interpret the Torah; the *Gemorah* explains the *Mishnah*; the *Rishonim* comment and explain *Chazal*; they are followed by the *acharonim*, *poskim*, all the way to our present Torah teachers, who shed light on earlier commentaries. When they come up against an exegesis which they are unable to explain, they say, "I do not understand." The purpose of our *rebbeim* is to clarify and explain the past. As such, we maintain a deep-rooted reverence for them.

The gentile writers, as well as students of their secular literature, attempt to find fault and demean their predecessor's novellae. Indeed, he who refutes his predecessors is praised for his seminal work. This is the idea behind the presentation of their *yichus*. We are proud of our past, seeking to build our future upon its foundations. Thus, the Torah becomes stronger and more extensive. The gentiles, who have no respect for their past, who view pedigree with disdain, have no place in our Torah. Let them go elsewhere to satisfy their misguided way of life.