

The Gaon of Vilna, the Ḥatam Sofer, and the Ḥazon Ish: Minhag and the Crisis of Modernity

By: BENJAMIN BROWN

*Translated from the original Hebrew by Btzalel E. Shandelman
in close collaboration with the author.*+*

We have seen that from the 1930's to the 1950's at least, the position of the Ḥazon Ish remained consistent and unyielding: A *minhag* has no

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+ *Devarim Vehoraot* = R. Meir Greiniman, *Kuntres Devarim Vehoraot Mimaran ZLLHH*, at the end of his book *Imrei Yosher*, Bnei Brak 1973.

Dinim Vehanbagot = R. Meir Greiniman, *Liklut Dinim Vehanbagot Mimaran Haḥazon Ish ZLLHH*, Bnei Brak 1996.

Ḥazon Ish = R. Avraham Yesha'yahu Karelitz, *Ḥazon Ish* [on talmudic tractates and sections of the *Shulḥan 'Arukh*], Bnei Brak 1994.

Kovetz Igrot = R. Avraham Yesha'yahu Karelitz (R. Shmuel Greiniman, ed), *Kovetz Igrot Maran Ḥabazon Ish ZLLHH* (1-3), Bnei Brak 1990.

Orhot Ish = R. Shemaryahu Greiniman, *Orhot Ish—Peninim Ugenazim*, 1st edition, Jerusalem 1989.

Teshuvot Ukbtavim = R. Avraham Yesha'yahu Karelitz (R. Meir Greiniman, ed.), *Teshuvot Ukbtavim Mimaran Ḥabazon Ish (Orah Ḥayim, Zera'im, Kodashim)*, Bnei Brak 1991.

Benjamin Brown is Professor of Jewish Thought at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and a researcher at the Israel Democracy Institute. His main focus is Orthodox Judaism, which he studies in a variety of aspects: Jewish Law (*Halakhal*), Ḥasidism, the Musar Movement, and Ḥaredi ideology (*Hashkafah*). He has published many articles on these topics, and his book *The Ḥazon Ish: Halakhist, Believer and Leader of the Ḥaredi Revolution* (2011), from which this article is excerpted, analyzes the chief “founding father” of the Israeli Ḥaredi community.

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