



Rabbis of Chicago



Rabbi Chaim David Regensberg

1895-1977



Rav Chaim David Regensberg was born in 1895 in Zambrov, Poland. His father, Rabbi Dov Menachem, was the Zambrover Rav for fifty-one years, until he was publicly murdered by the Nazis in 1941. Through both his parents, Rabbi Regensberg was descended from great Torah luminaries, including the Levush Mordechai, Rav Yom Tov Lipman Chaim HaCohen, the Tosafot Yom Tov, Chacham Tzvi, Knesset Yechezkel, and others. The youngest of the Regensberg siblings, Rabbi Chaim David was known as the “Zambrover Illui.” Thus, at an early age, he left to study in yeshivot in Radin (Chofetz Chaim), Telshe, and Slabodka. At age 20, he received s’micha (Yoreh Yoreh Yadin Yadin) from the Slabodka Rosh HaYeshiva, Rabbi Moshe Mordechai Epstein and from the Lomzer Gaon, Rabbi Yehuda Leib Gordin.

In 1916, Rabbi Regensberg returned to Zambrov and founded a yeshiva, which flourished until the Holocaust. In 1920, he married Masha Gordin, the highly educated daughter of the Lomzer Gaon, from whom he previously had received s’micha. Shortly thereafter, Rabbi Regensberg traveled to Germany to study at the universities of Berlin and Giessen.

On Erev Chanukah 1922, Rabbi Regensberg, his wife, and young daughter, Sarah, arrived in Chicago (his son, Rabbi Aaron, was born nine days later). In 1929, he earned a Masters degree from the University of Chicago and finished all the course work for a PhD in Semitic languages at that university. Rabbi Regensberg helped found the Misrad HaRabonim and began his long career at the Beth Medrash LaTorah, Hebrew Theological College (HTC), beginning as a magid shiur. In 1935, he edited the Sefer Givat Shaul, on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of Rabbi Saul Silber’s presidency at HTC. In 1949 Rabbi Regensberg was appointed as the Dean of Faculty at HTC, and for a number of years in the 1940s, until 1949, Rabbi Regensberg also held the pulpit of the Sha’arei Torah Anshei Maariv Synagogue.

Shortly before the outbreak of World War II, Rabbi Regensberg was a candidate to become the Chief Rabbi of Ireland, the post vacated by Rabbi Yitzhak Herzog, who was then elected Chief Rabbi of Palestine. The war intervened, and negotiations were broken off. In 1959, Rabbi Regensberg also became Rosh HaYeshiva at HTC and held that post, in addition to the post of Dean of Faculty, until his retirement in 1962.

As an active, classic posek, Rabbi Regensberg always gave great consideration to the human condition using his outstanding characteristic of straight-thinking yashrut, a penetrating sense of rightness and unbiased truth in learning and Torah scholarship. He was active in promoting the Chicago Rabbinical Council where he was officially appointed its Chief Rabbi and was its Av Beth Din (as well as that of the Beth Din of the Rabbinical Council of America).

In 1971, Rabbi Regensberg made aliyah and began teaching shiurim at Hechal Shlomo



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and Machon Harry Fishel, in addition to being consulted on a myriad of halachic issues by Americans and Israelis alike. In 1975, his sefer, Mishmeret Chaim, was published by the cRc. This slim volume held only a sliver of the Chiddushei Torah and Halacha L'Ma'aseh of Rabbi Regensberg written and published over the years in journals, such as Ohel Moed, Degel HaTorah, HaPardes, and others.

Rabbi Regensberg passed away on Nisan 9, 5737 (March 28, 1977) in Jerusalem. He was predeceased by his first wife, Masha, in 1958, and his second wife, Chaya (the daughter of Rabbi Chaim Heller), in 1975.

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