

# The Weekly *Farbrengens*



למען ישמעו • פנחס תשע"ז • 418  
EDITOR - RABBI SHIMON HELLINGER

## A UNIQUE IMAGE (II)

### CONTINUING THE TRADITION

At the time when R. Mendel of Rimanov established himself in that city, the Yiddische townsmen had begun dressing in *goyishe* styles. The *tzaddik* fought against this with *mesirus nefesh*, and laid down detailed regulations so that the dress of the Yidden should separate them from the *goyim*. He recorded his rules in the community register, the *pinkas* of the *kehilla*, and promised that those who would abide by them would be *bensched* with all the Torah's *brachos*.

(עטרת מנחם ע' 11)

Taking a walk in a village he was visiting, R. Boruch of Gorlitz, the youngest son of the Divrei Chaim of Tzanz, heard wailing and crying, so he instructed his assistant to find out what was going on. He soon reported that a non-Jewish girl was crying because her father was punishing her.

"Go check why she is being punished," the Rebbe prompted.

Returning to the scene, the assistant learned that the girl was being disciplined for having worn a certain hat. The father was screaming and rebuking: "Such attire, which your mother and grandmother would have never worn, *you will not wear!*"

When the *tzaddik* heard the details, he was very moved and took a lesson from this: If a non-Jew, who has not received the Torah, has such feeling for the importance of preserving his tradition, how much more should Yiddische women and girls, who *have* received the Torah, feel this way and dress in the same spirit as their parents and grandparents did.

(ברכת שלמה ע' ז ערך בגדים)

The *hanhala* of Tomchei Temimim in Lubavitch were very particular about the clothing that the *bochurim* wore. Those lacking the appropriate garb would be given on arrival: a distinctive hat, a long jacket, a large *tallis katan* and a pair of shoes. Years later, the Yiddische image was apparent in their children, who looked different from other boys their age, by their refined clothing and *eidelkeit*.

(רשימו"ד ח"ג ע' רמג, דברי הימים גורקאוו ע' עה)

### BATTLING DECREES

In the year תר"ד (1844), the Russian government passed a decree which forbade the customary Yiddische way of dress, and sought to force the Yidden to change to more modern attire and to cut off their long *peyos*. This was brought about through the intervention of the *maskilim*, who wanted Yidden to assimilate among the *goyim*, but the Yidden responded with unwavering resistance and made every effort to annul the fearful decree.

#### CONSIDER

Is the continuity of traditional yiddische dress similar to goyim who uphold their tradition? Why would traditional yiddische dress require *mesirus nefesh*?

At first, the government offered the option of paying a tax for the Yiddische *levush*, knowing that the Yidden would not change so quickly, and indeed many Yidden chose to pay the tax rather than dress like the *goyim* around them. However, some could not afford to pay.

The *shayle* was asked of all the *gedolei* Yisroel of the time: "What is one obligated to do?" Some *rabbonim* said that every Yid must prepare himself for actual *mesirus nefesh*, for this was an instance of *gzeiras hashmad*, a direct effort to take them away from Yiddishkeit. Others, including the *Tzemach Tzedek*, held that in this case the Yidden were not obligated to give their life, since the intention of the government was merely to have all citizens dress alike. A third group held that although *mesirus nefesh* was not required, one was obligated to do all he could, even paying any sum of money or fleeing to another country.

The police in each town went straight to work, mercilessly beating all those caught transgressing the

decree, and publicly shaming the men and women who were found wearing their Yiddische *levush*. When their efforts were unsuccessful, the police in some cities left the Yidden alone, while in other places they continued harassing them for many years.

(ע"פ היכל הבעש"ט גליון י"ב ועוד)

When the above decree was imposed upon the Yidden in Poland, the Gerer Rebbe, the *Chiddushei HaRim*, paskened that it was necessary to have *mesirus nefesh* for this. As time passed, the police realized that most Yidden were not following the decree, so getting tired of using violence, they became lax in their enforcement. Unable to tolerate this, the *maskilim* reported to the Russian commissioner in charge that some officers were not fulfilling their duties properly, insinuating that this was surely because of bribes that they had received from wealthy chassidim. They added that the best course of action would be to force the Gerer Rebbe to instruct the Yidden to follow the decree, and to stipulate that if he refused, he would be imprisoned.

At midnight, the chief of police arrested the *Chiddushei HaRim* and brought him to the town hall, where high officials ordered him to issue their instructions to his chassidim. When he refused, and they threatened to shave off his beard, he replied: "Even if you do whatever it is in your power to do, I will not cause others to transgress." Realizing that words alone would not achieve anything, the officials imprisoned him in a cell together with tough criminals. The Rebbe's imprisonment spread like wildfire. Reb Menachem Mendel of Kotzk reassured the chassidim that there was nothing to worry about, for not only would the police not touch the *tzaddik's* beard and *peyos*, but in his *zechus*, the decree would be annulled.

Meanwhile, outside the town hall, tens of thousands of Yidden came to protest, and they were joined by a number of Polish citizens. Soon the commissioner heard about this and was warned that this might trigger a revolt. A delegation of reputable Yidden and some Polish nobles met with him and protested about the treatment being given to a man of such standing. He promised to free the Gerer Rebbe at once, and about a week later, the decree was repealed.

(סיפורי חסידים זוין תורה ע' 356)

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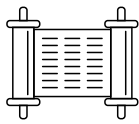
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## DIAPER NEAR SEFORIM

### May I change my baby's diaper in a room with a Chitas?

The Torah says that since Hashem walks among the army camp, soldiers may not expose their bodies or relieve themselves in the camp. Chazal understand that private body parts (*erva*) and excrement must be distanced from holy articles or from one who is reciting holy words.<sup>1</sup> The necessary distance is 4 *amos* (approx. 6 feet) **and** outside the range of vision.<sup>2</sup>

The excrement of a baby who is three months or older is halachically considered something of which holy things may not be in the presence, since such a child can technically eat a *kazayis* (about 1 oz.) of wheat in less than 7 minutes.<sup>3</sup> The excrement of a younger baby doesn't pose a problem, yet it should be distanced whenever possible.<sup>4</sup>

### What about changing a wet diaper?

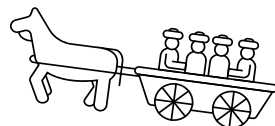
While private parts of small children are not considered *erva* (see previous issue), the Rokeiach, one of the *Baalei Hatosefos*, quotes a custom that children should not walk around undressed near Shabbos candles as it is an embarrassment for the *mitzva* (*bizui mitzva*).<sup>5</sup> While some *poskim* restrict this embarrassment to Shabbos candles which are intended to give off light and should therefore illuminate only good and holy things,<sup>6</sup> the Alter Rebbe seems to apply the requirement for respect to all *mitzva* items.<sup>7</sup> It would follow that although not prohibited, diaper changing should be avoided in front of *seforim* out of respect.

Yet, some contemporary *poskim* argue that there is room to distinguish between walking around undressed and a temporary diaper change. In fact, in the days when Shabbos candles were the only source of light in the home, it is likely that they did change to the light of the candles, and the custom was only not to leave the child undressed for an extended period of time.<sup>8</sup>

If the *seforim* are above ten *tefachim* (31.5 inches/80 cm) off the floor they are halachically in a separate domain and one may change even a dirty diaper.<sup>9</sup> Likewise, a changing table which is that height is considered its own domain and a curtain is considered a complete partition.<sup>10</sup>

In a situation of great inconvenience, one may follow the basic *halacha* and change a dirty diaper in front of *seforim*, as long as there are no *seforim* on the changing station.<sup>11</sup> One should try to place himself as a partition between the diaper and the *seforim*,<sup>12</sup> and one should prefer a bedroom with few *seforim* over a dining room with many *seforim*.<sup>13</sup>

9. ע"פ פסקי הסיידור סוף דיני תפילין.  
10. ראה שו"ע"ר סי' ט"ו ד-ד שמצד דיני ביוון מספיק כסיו אחר. וראה סיידור ושוע"ר סי' כ"ה סי"ח.  
11. והטעם: (א) ברמ"ע מפאנו סי' ל"ט כ שמונת הלולך שרק טוב לכסותו (וראה שו"ע"ר סי' כ"ה סי"ח). אמנם יש להעיר שבסיידור רבינו סוף הל' תפילין כ' שצריך לכסות התפילין (וראה בה"ל סי' מ"ג סי"ה). אך בשעת הצורך נראה דיש מקום להקל בצירוף (ב) הדיון האם יש קדושה בספרים בזמנינו (ראה שו"ע"ר פאת השדה מערכת ד' כלל ל"ח) וכן (ג) יש פוסקים שכל"ל שכיסוי הספר נחשב כסיו (בד"ע"ק י"ד סי' רפ"ה סק"ו נסתפק בזה, וראה כה"ח א"ח סי' מ' סק"ד בשם החס"ל"א שהקיל).  
12. נאמר מרדכי (שו"ת הרב מ. א. ג. אלה"ה) ח"א סי' י"ד.  
13. ולהעיר מהמובא בשו"ע"ר סי' מ"ג סי"ו.



## REB YEHOSHUA EIZIK BARUCH

Reb Yehoshua Eizik Baruch was born in Zhitomer in 5650 (1890), and learned in Lubavitch for many years. After his marriage he served as the *mashpia* for *Anash* in the city of Kovno. He was admired by the whole city, and even those that were not chassidim attended his *farbrengens*. Later on he was appointed by the Frierdiker Rebbe to be the *mashpia* in Tomchei Temimim of Vilna. He was killed in the Kovno Ghetto on Shabbos, Tes Cheshvan 5702 (1941).

Reb Yehoshua Eizik was an extremely sincere person. When he received a letter from the Rebbe, he was overjoyed to the point that if he met someone in the street, even a non-chossid, he would dance with him. He would study the Rebbe's letter many times, analyzing each word like a Gemara. Once, the Frierdiker Rebbe wrote him a letter and at the end requested him to give regards to *Anash*. Afterwards, he gave regards

from the Rebbe to any *Anash* member he met. If he wasn't sure if he already gave that person regards, he would give them regards a second time.

One year on Rosh Hashana, the Frierdiker Rebbe requested that extra Tehilim should be recited, suggesting the *kapitlach* 20, 22 and 69. Reb Yehoshua Eizik didn't hear about this until after Rosh Hashana. That Yud Tes Kislev during the *farbrengen*, he banged on the table and said the *kapitlach* of Tehilim, proclaiming that it was also Rosh Hashana.

Before he was murdered he called everyone together and instructed them to prepare for the *mitzva* of *kidush Hashem*. Before the wicked ones took him away, they confiscated all his belongings. He saw this as a favor, since then he did not have to carry on Shabbos...

## A Moment with The Rebbe



### SEIZE FREE TIME

Reb Mendel Horowitz of Baltimore, MD relates:

On *mivtzoyim* in Paris on Rue Kade Street in 5736 (1976), I met an elderly man by the name of Mr. Binyomin Miller sitting outside the Adas Yereim *shul*. He called me over, and related the following:

"I encountered the Rebbe during his stay in Paris, and I told him my name. The Rebbe told me, 'Binyomin is the name of *Klal Yisroel*. The *possuk* says 'Binyomin ze'ev yitrof,' which means that Binyomin shall pounce and devour his prey. A *Yid* must pounce on

his free time, and seize it for learning.

"If you have time for a *blat* Gemara: good. If not, learn a *perek mishnayos* or at least a *parsha* Chumash. If that is also not possible, recite a *kapitel* Tehilim. But the time must be seized!"

Mr. Miller concluded his story on a personal note. "The Rebbe's words vitalized me. Indeed, the order he said accurately describes my life story: I used to be able to learn Gemara, I moved to *mishnayos*, and later to Chumash. Now, with my poor eyesight, I simply recite Tehillim by heart."

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