

The Weekly Farbrengens



567 • במדבר תש"פ • למען ישמעו
EDITOR - RABBI SHIMON HELLINGER

SHAVUOS

AN AUSPICIOUS DAY

What happens when two *tzaddikim* and *mekubalim* of the stature of Reb Shlomo Alkabetz and Rav Yosef Caro spend the awesome night of Shavuos together?

The answer is recorded in a 16th-century manuscript written by R. Shlomo Alkabetz: "The *Beis Yosef* and I decided to stay awake on the night of Shavuos and read passages of the Torah. [These passages are the basis of what later became the *Tikkun Leil Shavuos*.] After *chatzos*, as we reached the section of *Mishnayos*, a sweet voice was heard aloud from the mouth of the *Beis Yosef*. We all fell on our faces from sheer fright. The voice grew ever louder, until even the neighbors were able hear it, though they were unable to understand it. The voice, having been created by the *Mishna* we had learnt, told us of the pain suffered by the *Shechina* [in exile], and the great impact our learning this night had, silencing all the *Malochim* and piercing all the heavens. It then spoke of our great *zechus* of staying awake this night, and the greater effect it would have had with a *minyan*. The voice then encouraged us to continue learning throughout the night, not wasting even a moment. Finally, the *Shechina* instructed us to stand up and say *Boruch Shem...* aloud, as is done on Yom Kippur.

We wept profusely, from the joy of our experience and for the pain of the *Shechina*. "When we met three other *chachomim* in the *mikve* the next morning, we related to them what had happened that night. They were understandably distressed, and we resolved to gather again on the second night, this time with a *minyan*.

"That night, because of our joy at having a *minyan*, the voice of the *Shechina* began speaking as soon as we started reading the *Aseres HaDibros* of *Devarim*. The voice praised our attainment, told us of the *ruchnius'dike* fire surrounding the house, and then directed us to say *Boruch Shem*. As the time of *chatzos* drew near, the *Shechina* spoke again and told us that for hundreds of years no such accomplishment had been attained."

The Shaloh HaKadosh copied this story from the manuscript of Reb Shlomo Alkabetz and concluded: "It is apparent in his writing that there was much more that he was not allowed to reveal. From this story we must learn how important it is to conduct ourselves with a special *kedusha* on this night."

(של"ה הקדוש מס' שבועות נר מצוה ה')

The Friediker Rebbe said:

Shavuos is an *eis ratzon*, when *HaShem* confuses the one who accuses Yidden, just as He confuses him during the sounding of the *shofar* on Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur.

Shavuos is an opportune time to make every effort to improve one's Torah learning and *avoda* in *yiras shamayim*, and to strive to do *teshuvah* concerning one's Torah study, without Satan's interference.

(היום יום, ג' ד' סיון)

CONSIDER

What brought the revelation of the *Shechina* in the *beis medrash* of the *Beis Yosef*: their learning or the auspicious night?

What should one do to receive the revelation of *Matan Torah*?

RECEIVING THE TORAH

The Friediker Rebbe said: Every year on Shavuos, the same revelation of *HaShem* that was revealed at the time of *matan Torah* is revealed anew, and a Yid who at this time arouses himself to establish set times for studying Torah is successful in his *avoda*.

(ס"ה קי"ז הי"ח ע' 116, תש"ג ע' 129)

"Once," related the Rebbe Maharash, "on the first night of Shavuos, I went to say *Gut Yom-Tov* to my great-uncle Reb Chaim Avraham, son of the Alter Rebbe. I found him sitting with his hands covering his tear-stained face. I asked him why he was crying on *Yom-Tov*. He explained that the Baal Shem Tov said that when one prepares himself properly during *Sefiras HaOmer*, he is found worthy on Shavuos of being admitted to the Fiftieth Gate of *kedusha* - "and I can't feel it," concluded Reb Chaim Avraham."

The Rebbe Maharash concluded, "My great uncle Reb Chaim Avraham was then seventy seven years old and

was completely removed from all worldly matters. Yet on the night of Shavuos, he wept for the revelation of the Fiftieth Gate. This left me with a deep impression."

(ספר התולדות אדמו"ר מהר"ש ע' 73)

The eminent chossid, Reb Aizik Homiler, recalled that once before Shavuos, a number of chassidim discussed what they should ask of *HaShem* on the night of Shavuos. They decided to ask the Mitteler Rebbe, and assumed that he would surely speak of the study and understanding of *primiyus haTorah*.

Instead, he shared his own wish: "I would wish to have the fiery flame of *matan Torah*."

(ס"ה תש"ה ע' 108)

Recollecting his experience of Shavuos in תרמ"ה (1885), when he was a child of five, the Friediker Rebbe once said:

"On *erev* Shavuos, our *melamed* told us how Moshe Rabbeinu led the Yidden to *matan Torah*. He then called to us, '*Kinderlach!* Come with me and I will take you to *matan Torah*.' He took all thirty of us to Reb Binyomin's *beis medrash* and told us that the next morning, the first day of Shavuos, we should wake up an hour earlier than usual and come to this *beis medrash* for *kabbalas haTorah*.

"On Shavuos morning I awoke at seven o'clock and prepared to go there. My mother [*Rebbetzin* Shterna Sara] wanted me to eat something before leaving, but I insisted that I wouldn't eat before *matan Torah*. I set out to the *beis midrash*, where I found all of my classmates, and after *davening* our *melamed* took us all on a walk."

(ס"ה תש"ה ע' 100)

It was the custom of the Friediker Rebbe, and also of the Rebbe, to wish all Yidden the *brocho* of *kabbalas haTorah besimcha uvipnimiyus* - that we receive the Torah with joy, and that it permeate us.

The Rebbe explained this dual blessing as follows: Appreciating that we are *HaShem's* holy nation and that we are able to connect to Him via the Torah and its *mitzvos*, we are joyful - and this joy will enable us to be permeated by the Torah and not regard it (*chas veshalom*) as a burden.

(לקי"ש ח"ח ע' 292)



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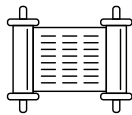
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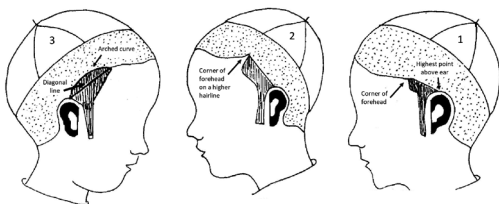


KOSHER HAIRCUTS

I am giving haircuts for Yom Tov. How much hair must I leave for the *peyos*?

It is prohibited *min haTorah* for males to round off the corners of their head, referring to removing the hair of the temples (sideburns). Explanations include that it resembles the practice of idolaters and that it follows the ways of gentiles, though others say that the reason is not known and does not affect the *halacha*.¹

The area of the *peyos* is the hair below an imaginary line drawn diagonally from the upper "corner" of the forehead to the highest point in the round hairline above the ear [figure 1].² (For someone with a raised hairline, that "corner" is slightly higher and the area is larger [figure 2]. Some *poskim* maintain that all people should treat that area as *peyos* even if one's actual hairline is lower.) The custom is to leave an extra arch of a finger width above this line as a precaution [figure 3]. This area extends downwards according to some until the top of the cheek bone, and according to others until the bottom of the ear, under which the beard begins.³



Poskim dispute whether only shaving is prohibited or even cutting it close to the skin with scissors, and Shulchan Aruch writes to be stringent.⁴ Thus, the hair in this area should be left long enough to "fold over," which is approximately a 1/4 inch. This can be accomplished by using a #2 clipper or higher.⁵

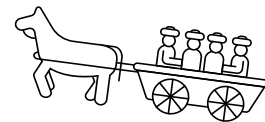
What about pulling out individual hairs? While some *Rishonim* say that leaving a width of 40 hairs in the area of the *peyos* suffices,⁶ others hold that removing or plucking even two hairs is a transgression, and Shulchan Aruch rules like the stringent opinion.⁷ One must therefore not cut any hair in the *peyos* area with less than a #2 clipper, and when trimming around the ear with scissors, care must be taken not to trim any hairs shorter than a 1/4 inch.

Although the minimum length of the *peyos* hairs is a 1/4 inch, the *minhag* is to leave thicker and longer *peyos*. It is also a beautification of the *mitzva* for them to be noticeably longer than the rest of the hair, as an obvious sign of being a *Yid*.⁸

Some communities don't trim their *peyos* at all or leave them very long,⁹ however *minhag* Chabad is to cut the *peyos* at the bottom of the ear, and men with beards trim them so that they don't mingle with the beard hairs, since the *peyos* and the beard have two separate sources in *kedusha*.¹⁰ (Some address this by putting the *peyos* behind the ear.¹¹)

1. ויקרא י"ט, כ"ו. רמב"ם הל' עכו"ם פ"ב הל' א', וראה טור ו"ב" ו"ח י"ד סי' קפ"א.
2. וראה מנהג הארז"ל בס' טעמי המצוות פרשת קדושים ז' פאת הראש והזקן וראה נט"ג תגלחת ילדים פ"ו הל' א' איך שביאר כוונתו.
3. ראה השיטות בחי' צ"צ על משניות מכות פ"ג מ"ה. וראה ב"י סי' קפ"א, שו"ע שם ס"ט, שו"ת אמרי יושר ח"ב סי' קפ"ג אות ב'.
4. רמב"ם הל' ע"ז פ"ב הל' מתייר מספריים, רא"ש מס' מכות פ"ג סי' ב' אוסר (בשונה מזקן), שו"ע י"ד סי' קפ"א ס"ג וש"ך סק"ב.
5. ראה רמב"ם גזירות פ"ה הל' א', שו"ת מלמד להועיל ח"ב י"ד סי' ס"ד. ולהעיר משיטת הביה"ל א"ח סי' רנ"א מצריד
להשאיר קצת מן הקצות לכל הפחות.
6. ראה רמב"ם שם פ"ב הל' ה', וראה טור שם שגרס ברמב"ם ד'.
7. ראה סמ"ג הובא בב"י סי' קפ"א, שו"ע שם ס"ט וזכר רוחב מקום זה לא תגע בו יד".
8. ראה שו"ת תורה לשמה סי' שפט. ולהעיר מיש"ש ליבמות פ"ב סי' יח, וראה מנהג חסדי חב"ד בדברי הימים גורקאו על ע"ה, סיפוח חב"ד ח"ב ע" 154.
9. ראה נט"ג תגלחת ילדים סוף פ"ו ובהערות שם.
10. טעמי המצוות פרשת קדושים ז' פאת הראש והזקן, אג"ק ח"ב ע"י.
11. אבל ראה דרכי חיים ושולם סי' תת"פ, אג"ק שם, עמודי ארזים להרא"ז מרגליות דף נ"א, משנה ח"ז סע' קכ"א.

לע"נ מרת ציפא אסתר בת ר' שלום דובער ע"ה



REB CHAIM DOVID LEIN

Reb Chaim Dovid was the middle son of Reb Moshe Leib Lein, and a grandson of the famous chossid of the Alter Rebbe, Reb Peretz Chein. He was born around the year 5610 (1850). After his *chasuna* he was a *yoshev* by the Rebbe Maharash in Lubavitch, as was the custom in those days. Eventually he took on the job of *shochet* and *bodek* in the city of Nevel, a task he continued to hold even in his old age, as he had very steady hands. As can be seen in the letters written to him, the Frierdiker Rebbe held him in very high esteem. He passed away in Nevel in the year 5699 (1939).

Reb Chaim Dovid once related two instructions he had personally received from the Rebbe Maharash:

- (1) To understand a *maamar* *Chassidus* one needs to learn it at least three times. To apply it in *avoda*, one needs to learn the *maamar* at least thirty times.
- (2) A *shochet's* mind has to be utterly clear and focused. Therefore, since he *shechted*

on Fridays, he was to forgo the custom of *chassidim* to remain awake on Thursday night, making it up on *motzai Shabbos*. To strengthen his mind's clarity further he should add three hours of sleep on Friday and Sunday nights.

(אוצר החסידים אה"ק ע' 310)

Late one winter Friday night amidst a snowstorm, knocking was heard on the door of a *chossid's* home in Nevel. This was during the time when the NKVD would often make searches or arrests during the night, so the *chossid* opened the door with a pounding heart. He relaxed when he saw Reb Chaim Dovid standing in front of him in the cold, begging to come in. Reb Chaim Dovid explained, "I was in middle of learning a *maamar* of the Rebbe Maharash when the candle went out and I could not continue. I walked outside and saw the light was still burning in your home, so please let me finish the *maamar* here."

(תשורה אבני חן ע' 43)

A Moment with The Rebbe



NOT THE ONLY ONE

"My family and I have been trying to become Lubavitcher *chassidim* for the past eight years," a person wrote to the Rebbe. He continued his letter in a despondent tone, by describing in detail the many materialistic challenges that he was facing and asked the Rebbe for direction.

The Rebbe responded in his holy handwriting:

"Actually, you have already

become a Lubavitcher *chossid*, long ago.

"However, you have become the kind of Lubavitcher *chossid* that still has many questions, and not the kind that has few questions.

"You are also one of those Lubavitcher *chassidim* who consider their difficulties in this physical world as unique to them, as if no one else has them."

(Teshurah Gordon, Sivan 5769)