

# The Weekly *Farbrenge*

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## A UNIQUE IMAGE (II)

### CONTINUING THE TRADITION

At the time when R. Mendel of Rimanov established himself in that city, the Yiddishe 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 Yiddishe 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 Yiddishe 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 גורקאו ע' עה)

### BATTLING DECREES

In the year תר"ד (1844), the Russian government passed a decree which forbade the customary Yiddishe 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 yiddishe dress similar to goyim who uphold their tradition?  
Why would traditional yiddishe dress require *mesirus nefesh*?

At first, the government offered the option of paying a tax for the Yiddishe *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 Yiddishe *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.

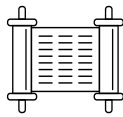
(סיפורי חסידים זוין תורה ע' 356)

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## ISRAELI PRODUCE

### Can I purchase Israeli tomatoes during *shemita*?

During *shemita*, Jews in Eretz Yisroel are obligated to refrain from working their fields and to leave the produce in their fields for all to take. If one transgressed and did not allow public access to his field, this produce is called "*shamur*." If he worked on his field or orchard in a forbidden manner, the produce is termed "*ne'evad*."

Any produce grown during *shemita* (see issue 640 for the timeframes) contains the sanctity of *shevi'is* and must be treated with respect and not discarded. *Rishonim* debate whether *shamur* or *ne'evad* produce is after-the-fact permitted for consumption with adherence to its sanctity—by *shamur*, Rabbeinu Tam prohibits while the Ramban permits; by *ne'evad*, Ramban prohibits while Rambam permits.<sup>1</sup>

But there is another issue. Chazal decreed that "*sefichin*"—"after-growths" or vegetation that grew on their own in a Jewish field during *shemita*—are prohibited. This decree was designed to prevent transgressors from planting vegetables and claiming they grew on their own.<sup>2</sup> This doesn't apply to produce that grows in a gentile's field since he can work during *shemita*.<sup>3</sup> Fruit trees aren't prohibited since a person would not gain immediately from planting such a tree, and already established trees produce fruit without additional effort.<sup>4</sup>

*Rishonim* debate the timeframe for this prohibition. According to R. Shimshon of Shantz (Rash), it only applies to produce that grew primarily during *shemita* (less than a third of the way before *shemita* began). Rambam, however, holds that it applies to any produce harvested during *shemita*.<sup>5</sup>

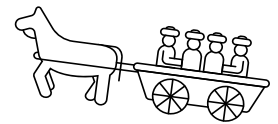
The *halacha* follows the more lenient opinion of Rash, though some Sefardic *poskim* rule *lechatchila* like the Rambam. Even according to the Rash, all produce harvested during *shemita* has the sanctity of *shevi'is*, which necessitates respectable treatment and no discarding of it.

In practice, one may not buy produce that was guarded or worked.<sup>6</sup> Today that *shemita* is *miderabanan*, one may *bedieved* eat fruit of a tree that was grown in transgression of *shemita*.<sup>7</sup> Vegetables, grains and legumes are prohibited regardless due to *sefichin*.

1. רמב"ן ויקרא כ"ה ה', רמב"ן ור"ת יבמות קכ"ב ע"א, רמב"ם שו"ת פאר הדור סי' ט"ו.  
2. ראה תורת כהנים בהר פרשה ג', רמב"ם שמיטה ויובל פ"ד ה"א וה"ב.  
3. רמב"ם פ"ד הכ"ט.  
4. רמב"ם שם ה"ג.  
5. ר"ש שביעית פ"ט מ"א, רמב"ם שם פ"ד ה"יב.  
6. רמב"ם פ"ח ה"ב.  
7. ראה דיני שביעית השלם פכ"ב שתי הדיעות. הפסק שבדיעבד מותר לאכול קיבלתי מהגרמשי"א ע"ה בשמיטה תשע"ה. וראה מעדני ארץ הערות ז'.

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

# Our Heroes



## R. YAAKOV OF SHKLOV

R. Yaakov of Shklov was the son of R. Yosef of Shklov, one of the early Chassidim of the Alter Rebbe. A chossid of the Alter Rebbe and the Mittlerer Rebbe, R. Yaakov was a businessman who was known for his *yiras shamayim* and *avodas hatefilah*.

learn they are freed of their *yetzer hara*, whereas you remain attached to him then as well..."

(בית רבי מהדר"ח ע' 213)

R. Yaakov was once in a dire financial situation, after losing his own money in failed deals, and then losing some more money that he borrowed. When the Alter Rebbe visited Shklov, he went into *yechidus* and cried about his situation.

The Alter Rebbe then began to make a *cheshbon nefesh* about how R. Yaakov was doing *bruchnius*. At that, R. Yaakov began to wail intensely with a cry from the depths of his heart. The Alter Rebbe then told him to go in peace. As he turned to leave, the Alter Rebbe called him back and told him, "With that first crying, you would have remained in sorrow. But from this crying you will stop, and thus you have finished with the first crying too [allowing you to seek a solution]."

(תורת שלום ע' 275, וראה סה"מ תרפ"ב ע' 488)

When the Alter Rebbe visited Shklov, he stayed in R. Yaakov's home. R. Yaakov would *daven* at great length, and even after the Mittlerer Rebbe finished davening, had the *seuda* and recited a *maamar*, he was still davening. When at last he came home, he was embarrassed to show his face, since he has such a guest in his home and yet he didn't show up.

When he came, the Rebbe told him lightheartedly, "The difference between you and others is that most people have a *yetzer hara* in eating and drinking, bad thoughts and vain words, whereas your '*yetzer hara*' is in davening and learning. It turns out that when they *daven* or

## A Moment with The Rebbe



### THINK POSITIVE

The Gerer chossid Reb Avrohom Rotenberg from Bnei Brak is a real estate agent who lived for two years at 777 Eastern Parkway. Since he was across the street from 770, he frequented the *shul*.

He relates:

One Thursday afternoon in 5719 (1959), I received a letter from my brother in Yerushalayim that my father had suffered a major heart attack. I panicked, and immediately wrote a note in to the Rebbe. In my anxiety, I concluded the letter with "I don't know what to think..."

Within an hour I received a response. The Rebbe had circled the last line, and wrote, "That is strange!! The directive of the Rebbeim is well known: 'Think good

and it will be good.' I await good news."

The Rebbe's answer calmed me. Three days later, I spoke with my mother on the phone, and she told me that my father was out of critical condition, since Thursday night.

That day after *mincha*, I approached the Rebbe with the good news. "When did this transpire?" the Rebbe asked.

"Thursday night," I answered.

"And when did you begin to think good?"

"Thursday night," I answered again.

"Nu," the Rebbe said. "There should be no more such situations, but remember to always think well..."

(*Parshios Im HaRebbe*, Vol. 1, Page 242)