

The Weekly Farbrengens



למען ישמעו • בהעלותך תשפ"ב • 675
EDITOR - RABBI SHIMON HELLINGER

THE BEAUTY OF MODESTY (IV)

THE FINAL TEST

The Alter Rebbe once interrupted himself in the middle of a *maamar* (with an unrelated remark) and said with his typical *dveikus* and tune:

"Rivka took Esav's clothing and dressed Yaakov," how does it happen that Yaakov wears *goyishe* clothing? The answer is that Yaakov foresaw that a time would come when Yidden would have to wear *goyishe* clothing, and he feared it would affect them (so Yaakov wanted to correct that by wearing that clothing) ... but it didn't help and it affected them."

(קוב' מפ'י חסידים' אות קעד)

One day the Rebbe Maharash summoned a number of *yungeleit* to his room and delivered a *maamar*. It was not a special date, so no one understood why this had happened.

Some time later it all became clear. The Rebbe had heard that in Paris a new – and very immodest – fashion was about to be launched, and due to his delivery of the *maamar*, that plan had been aborted.

(ליקוטי סיפורי התועודיות ע' 299)

OVERCOMING THE CHALLENGE

Reb Mordechai (Mottel) Levin was the educational director of the Beis Rivkah Seminary in Kfar Chabad. Once, at *yechidus*, the Rebbe urged him to impress upon the students the particular importance of modest dress.

The Rebbe explained that since in the world at large this virtue is so widely neglected, when a girl "conquers herself" and dresses in a modest manner, this is evidence of her level of *yiras Shamayim*. The Rebbe directed Reb Mottel to consult with a famous educational authority in Bnei Brak in order to receive advice on how to cope with this educational challenge.

(בת מלך פנימה ע' 19)

Reb Uriel Tzimmer and his wife belonged to a Hungarian Jewish community when he was drawn to the Rebbe. The women in the shul where Mrs. Tzimmer davened all wore *sheitlach*, and would

tease her for wearing a *tichel*, as is the Hungarian custom. This was happening to the extent that she felt unpleasant in shul on Yom Kippur, despite the holiness of the day. When Yom Kippur was over she told her husband that she wanted to switch to a *sheitl*, because both Lubavitchers and the members of her shul wear it, and she can't stand their mockery. Reb Uriel couldn't resist her, and they concluded they'd consult the Rebbe and follow his recommendation.

CONSIDER

Why did the Rebbe encourage Mrs. Tzimmer to keep her tradition of tznius?

Is dressing in modern fashion an inherent problem or is it a sign of something deeper?

They immediately traveled to 770 and submitted their question through the secretariat. They received a call the next day from Rabbi Chadakov and he informed them that the Rebbe wished to respond orally, not in writing. When they entered, the Rebbe explained to them that he was answering directly in order to minimize aggravation, since he intended to recommend that Mrs. Tzimmer keep to her good custom, since they could use more *brachos* of children, health, and livelihood, and the Zohar in Naso teaches us how much *brachos* depend on the care taken with a woman's hair. It is therefore worth keeping to the *chumra* for the extra *brachos*. Hearing this directly from the Rebbe helped Mrs. Tzimmer deal with the pressure.

(משבחי רבי ע' 61)

THE UNDERLYING MESSAGE

In a letter to a school principal in *Eretz Yisroel*, the Rebbe writes: The manner in which a teacher

dresses is extremely important, even in the lower grades – especially in light of the story that occurred in the times of the *Tzemach Tzedek*, when a *shochet* was removed from his post because he wore galoshes. Surely, there is no prohibition against wearing galoshes; however, since at the time they were worn only by *goyim*, they served as an external manifestation of what was transpiring inside.

(אגרות קודש ח"ט ע' 216)

The Frierdiker Rebbe once related: Frankfurt, although it had previously been inhabited by freethinking *maskilim*, was later populated by *frum* Yidden whose *yiras Shamayim* was legendary throughout Germany. All this came about in the *zechus* of three women who were firm in their resolve to wear a *sheitl*, to observe the *halachos* of the home, and to provide their children with a proper *chinuch*. This had an effect on the menfolk, and on other women as well, that it eventually changed the entire community of Frankfurt for the better.

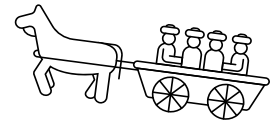
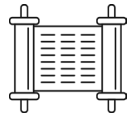
(תור"מ ח"ב ע' 188)

Rabbi Shmuel Chefer, head of the Beis Rivkah Seminary in Kfar Chabad, once shared some sharp words that he had heard at *yechidus*.

"The Rebbe raised the subject of short dresses and skirts that were fashionable at the time and expressed himself in strong terms. He asked me to assemble the students and their mothers and to address this subject, but I was not to tell them that I was speaking on behalf of the Rebbe. The reason: If they knew that, and nevertheless (*chalila!*) disobeyed, 'I would have to distance them from my presence.' Those were his words.

"Finally, the Rebbe said that he had been told that 'the *goy* in Paris' was about to launch the opposite style – long dresses and skirts – and he added: '*Och un vei* ("What a pitiful situation it would be!") if the girls would now change their style of dress to match the new fashion only because 'the *goy* in Paris' so decided, and not because of what is written in the *Shulchan Aruch*...'"

(בת מלך פנימה ע' 21)



VIEWING PICTURES OF WOMEN

May a man gaze at a woman's status photo?

It is forbidden for a man to look at a woman who isn't *tznius*, including the hair of a married woman's hair.¹ Halacha rules that one may not look at women as they are washing clothing at the river, since their arms or legs are often exposed. If a man passes a woman in such a state, he must look away.² For davening or reciting words of Torah, one must *l'chatchila* face a different direction, though *bdieved* it is sufficient to close ones eyes (see issue 417).³

When a woman is *tznius*, Shulchan Aruch rules that a man may not focus on her beauty.⁴ Separately, couples may not show any form of closeness in the presence of others.⁵

What about photographs or images on a screen?

From the Gemara in Sanhedrin it is clear that even pictures of non-*tznius* women cause inappropriate thoughts and lead to sin. Thus, it is forbidden for men to look at non-*tznius* photos.⁶

Moreover, Chazal say that "one may not gaze at color clothing of a woman he knows," even if they aren't currently on her, since it will lead to thinking about the wearer.⁷ Many contemporary *poskim* write that gazing at a photograph of a person is no less than looking at clothing by itself.⁸

After Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka's passing, a booklet was published featuring a black-and-white photo of her on its cover. The Rebbe then explained that Chazal's prohibition is contingent on three conditions: (1) Gaze – not a mere glance, (2) it is colored, and (3) one knows this woman. If these conditions aren't present – especially when none of them are present – the prohibition doesn't apply. While there could be a *midas Chassidus* to refrain from including it, in this case, the photo adds in the positive "*hachai yiten el libo*" which overrides.⁹

In conclusion, posting or looking at a non-*tznius* photo is prohibited. If it is *tznius*, it is halachically permissible to look at it if at least one of the three conditions are absent. Still, *midas Chassidus* would still be not to gaze at it unless there is spiritual benefit in doing so.

1. שו"ע אורח סי' ע"ה ס"א וס"ד.
2. ראה גמ' ורשב"ם בבב"ב נ"ז ע"ב.
3. ראה שו"ע סי' כ"ה ס"א.
4. רבינו יונה אגה"ת אות י"ח. עט"ז
5. אה"ע סי' כ"א ס"א. ובנוגע קרובי
6. משפחה שמותר ראה שו"ע שם סי'
7. כ"א ס"ז, משנ"ב אורח סי' רכ"ה ס"א,
8. אום אני חומה הוגש"ש ס"ק ק"י.
9. ראה דרכי משה אה"ע שם אות ג.

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

R. YAAKOV KEIDANER

R. Yaakov Keidaner was originally from Keidan, Lithuania, and later lived in Vilkomir, Russia. A *talmid* of the famous Volzhiner Yeshivah during the leadership of its founder R. Chaim Volozhiner, R. Yaakov became a chossid of the Mittlerer Rebbe and the Tzemach Tzedek. After the Tzemach Tzedek's passing, he moved to Eretz Yisrael and lived in Chevron.

R. Yaakov wrote *Sipurim Noraim*, a collection of stories about the *gedolei hachasidus*, and was the first to publish stories about our Rebbeim. He was also the first chossid to write a *biur* on Tanya. Another important work by R. Yaakov is *Metzoref Haavodah - Vikucha Rabba*, an imaginary dialogue between a chossid and a misnaged covering the central arguments for and against Chassidus.

The Frieddiker Rebbe related how during his engagement, his father, the Rebbe Rashab, instructed him to read *Sipurim Noraim* on the Baal Shem Tov until the Tzemach Tzedek, saying that "on R. Yaakov Keidaner you can rely."

(רשימת הימון ע' 387)

R. Yaakov relates:

During my stay in the yeshiva of Volozhin, I spent a Shabbos at the table of the *gaon* R. Chaim, along with the prominent members of the yeshivah. A discussion developed about the level of rabbinic leadership amongst the Chassidim, which turned into a conversation about the Rebbe's character. These are the

words I heard from R. Chaim's holy mouth:

"As to the greatness in Torah study," he said, "there's simply nothing to discuss; I know well that his scholarship is beyond estimation. However, this I will tell you; His wisdom is literally like that of a *malach* of Hashem; and with his wisdom, he could be the leader of our generation, for Yidden across all of the lands."

By my life, that's exactly what I heard from his holy mouth, even though he was known to be a great opponent to the ways of Chassidus, as is evident from his respected work *Nefesh HaChaim*.

From Volozhin, I made the trek to Lubavitch, to the Rebbe. My journey took me through Borisov, where I found the distinguished chossid, Rabbi Yosef, the nephew of the *gaon* R. Chaim. He recounted to me that when he first had the desire to join the Chassidic community, he did not know which way to go, whether to the Rebbe of Lechovitch, or to the Alter Rebbe in Liadi. So, he asked his holy uncle, R. Chaim, since he knew that he was well acquainted with both of them.

"My son, if you truly wanted to listen to my advice," the *gaon* R. Chaim answered, "then I would have wanted to tell you to desist from this path altogether. However, I am aware that you won't agree to such advice. Therefore, it's my firm wish that you attach yourself to the Rebbe and *gaon* of Liadi. You want to find a healer to heal your soul's afflictions, and I know that when it comes to healing the soul, he is truly an expert physician."

(סיפורים נוראים ע' 112)

A Moment with The Rebbe



SUMMER VACATION

The Rebbe's displeasure with the closure of yeshivos and chadorim during the summer is well known.

One year, as summer approached, the Rebbe expressed his discontent in a handwritten note to the father of a *bochur* studying in New York:

"...and now, as the month of Tammuz begins, the 'vacation' time approaches; when the time of the *bochurim*, and their entire character as *bochurim*, are ruined..."

In a 5716 (1966) *yechidus*, the Rebbe

shared his view on *yeshiva* vacation with the administrator of Tomchei Temimim in Eretz Yisroel, Reb Efraim Wolf:

"If it would be just nine days, which would include two *Shabbasos* and Tisha B'Av in the middle, it wouldn't be that terrible.

"As a rule, try to give as little break as possible, and make sure that on Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur the *bochurim* are at *yeshiva*."

(Teshura 3 Tammuz 5766; Halperin Teshura, Tammuz 5762)