

The Weekly Farbrengens



למען ישמענו • תולדות תשפ"ו • 854
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A UNIQUE IMAGE (II)

CONTINUING THE TRADITION

At the time when R. Mendel of Riminov 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' 2 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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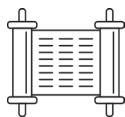


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BATIM PESHUTOS

What are acceptable tefillin to give someone on mitzvot?

The possuk says, *l'zikaron bein einecha*, “a reminder between your eyes.” Chazal derive from the singular term “reminder” that the four compartments of the head-tefillin must be made of a single piece of leather.¹ (This primarily refers to the *ketzitz* box component. When it comes to the base, the *titura* and *maavarta*, it was customary in the past for it to be fashioned separately, though it is currently made with the same piece of hide in *gassos tefillin*.²)

There are lower-quality *batim* on the market, referred to as *peshutos* (“plain” or “simple”), which are made by gluing together individual pieces of thin parchment. *Poskim* rule that if the pieces are sewn together, they are considered as one piece.³ Some apply this also to pieces glued together, while others don’t allow glue.⁴ The Alter Rebbe includes the permissibility of glue in parentheses, possibly implying that there’s some doubt.⁵

The Alter Rebbe adds that, nevertheless, it is proper to make them of literally one piece of leather. This is accomplished through an intricate process of fitting a piece of soft calf-hide into the hollows of a mold and leaving it to dry.⁶

A level up from the regular *peshutos* are *peshutos mehudaros*. The *bayis* is formed from a single piece of parchment, which is cut in specific places and then glued together to become a box. Additional leather is then added to strengthen the form.

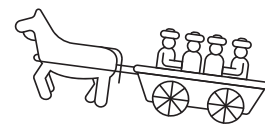
Peshutos are generally not recommended since they are very fragile and don’t hold up. Sweat can cause them to lose their shape, and certainly any bang they sustain. Additionally, there are unscrupulous *batim* makers who don’t sew the upper *ketzitz* box to the base.

Standard *tefillin dakos* differ from *peshutos*. A single sheet of thin parchment is stretched over a “frame” made of pressed pieces of leather, with the outer overlay being actually one piece of parchment. *Gasos tefillin*, which only became available in the past century, are considerably more durable.

1. גמ' מנחות ל"ד ע"ב. שו"ע או"ח.
2. ס"ל ס"ח. שו"ע ר"ש ס"ח.
3. ראה משנ"ב ס"ק ר"א. וראה ביה"ל שם ד"ה שישים.
4. ראה חת"ס או"ח ס"ה' שמחמיר.
5. שו"ע ר"ש בחזק"ג. וראה חקרי הלכות ח"ה נ"ב.
6. שו"ע ר"ש. וראה ביה"ל בסוף ד"ה מעור אחד.

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

Our Heroes



REB YECHIEL HALPERIN

Reb Yechiel Halperin, also known as Yechiel “*der Chazan*,” possessed a beautifully sweet voice and served as the *chazan* for the *Yomim Noroim* for the Rebbe Rashab in Lubavitch and later on for the Frierdiker Rebbe. He was also known as Reb Yechiel der Meshulach, as he was a fundraiser for Tomchei Temimim in its first years.

As a young man Reb Yechiel worked in Charkov. While Reb Yechiel’s grandfather was a chossid of the Alter Rebbe, Reb Yechiel grew up lacking a real *chassidische chinuch*. Once, the chossid Reb Bere Volf Kozevnikov of Yaketrinislav visited Charkov, where he spoke about the *chassidim*’s way of life. Reb Yechiel was immediately inspired and traveled immediately to Lubavitch. He arrived shortly after the passing of the Rebbe Maharash and remained in Lubavitch for close to a year. He later moved to Moscow and served as the *chazan* of a large *shul*. Soon after, the Rebbe Rashab visited Moscow and Reb Yechiel assisted him during his stay. It

was during that visit that the Rebbe Rashab taught him the *nusach* of many parts of the *davening* for the *Yomim Noroim*.

(ס"ה"ש"ת ע' 25)

The Frierdiker Rebbe writes: “...there were about forty *bochurim* learning in Tomchei Temimim, and I received letters from the cities in which Reb Yechiel fundraised for the *yeshiva* saying that Reb Yechiel said there were about four-hundred *talmidim*! I wrote to Reb Yechiel asking him why he’s exaggerating ten times more than the truth. He responded to me that he is not exaggerating, because he does not say there are four-hundred *bochurim*, rather there are four-hundred *talmidim*. Being that every *talmid* uses all of his ten *kochos* for Torah and *avodah*, there are four-hundred *talmidim*. When I wrote this to my father [the Rebbe Rashab], he replied, ‘Indeed so, one must use all of his ten *kochos* in order for his learning to be done properly.’”

(אג"ק אדריי"צ ח"ו ע' מו)

A Moment with The Rebbe

לזכר נשמת מרת חוה לאה בת ר' שמשון הכהן ע"ה



FIND YOUR MASHPIA

Reb Yossel Mochkin relates:

When I was an older *bochur* in *yeshiva*, I was approached by the *hanhala* and was told firmly that they were concerned that I was behaving inappropriately, and I should find another *yeshiva*. I was devastated. Besides the accusation being unfounded, I was also disturbed that a *yeshiva* could function like that.

I wrote to the Rebbe a three-page letter, pouring out my emotions, and I handed it to the Rebbe in *yechidus*. The Rebbe took the letter, read it carefully, made some marks with a pencil, and then told me this:

“The Rebbe Rashab initially designed

Tomchei Temimim with two *mashpiim* or more, so that the various personality types amongst *bochurim* can connect with different *mashpiim*.

“You should communicate with one of them, and Hashem should help you find the right one. But don’t jump from one to another...”

The Rebbe then concluded that my job is to sit and learn *Nigleh* and *Chassidus* with *hasmodo*. “Put your *sechel* on the side, forget about your past. Since you learn in a *chassidische yeshiva*, a chossid does with *kabbolas ol*. Your *inyan* is to do, and if you will do, there will be good tidings...”

(As told by Reb Yossel)

לעילוי נשמת

מרת מוסיא בת ר' אברהם ישעי' ע"ה שטראקס

נפטרה כ"ה אדר תשפ"ד