

The Weekly Farbrenge



למן ישמיינן • בשלוח תשפ"א
EDITOR - RABBI SHIMON HELLINGER

ב"ה

BEING DIFFERENT (II)

DISTINCT FEATURES

The *Midrash* says that the distinct Yiddishe haircut is one of the signs of a Yid, just like *tzitzis* and *bris milah*. In fact, it is forbidden to grow one's hair like non-Jews, for example by cutting certain parts shorter than others.

(שו"ע י"ד ס" קעה, שהש"ר פ"א פ"ט)

During the decree against Yiddishe dress, two officers barged into the home of Reb Hillel Paritcher to cut off his long *peyos*, but he held the *peyos* tightly, and did not allow them to do so. Violently, they withdrew their swords and began hitting his hands and head. His neighbor, a tailor who had a good relationship with the officers, heard his screams and came running to help. He promised the officers gifts and convinced them to leave. Very thankful, Reb Hillel promised the tailor that after 120 years, he would be buried near him.

Many years later, when Reb Hillel passed away, he was buried in the distant city of Kherson. The tailor, growing old, decided to move to the home of one of his children. On his journey there, he stopped in Kherson and stayed at the *hek'desh*, the community hostel, where he suddenly fell ill and passed away. The local *chevra kaddisha*, not knowing who he was, prepared his body and took him to be buried in the section for unknown people. It was in middle of the winter, and due to the fierce snow, they unknowingly buried him next to the grave of Reb Hillel.

Spring arrived, and visitors to the *beis hachayim* were surprised to find an unidentified *kever* right next to the *kever* of the distinguished chossid. After some inquiry, they unearthed the promise made to the tailor -and recognized *HaShem's hashgacha* that had brought Reb Hillel's promise to fruition.

(רישיות דבריהם ח"א ע' רנו)

Regarding his *mesirus nefesh*, Reb Hillel explained that it had come from a handwritten note of the *tzaddik*, Reb Pinchas Koritzer, which he had in his possession. In the note it was written:

The 50th gate of *tumah* is the *goyishe* way of dress (מקיף דבינה דקליפה), and had the Yidden in Mitzrayim fallen prey to it, they would have not been able to be redeemed. Similarly, in the times before *Moshiach*,

there will also be an attempt to make Yidden change their way of dress, and unfortunately they will succeed. Only in the *zechus* of individuals who will have *mesirus nefesh* not to change their dress, will all the Yidden be able to proceed to the *Geula*.

Reb Hillel concluded, "Anyone who would have had this note would have had *mesirus nefesh* for Yiddishe dress."

Reb Hillel himself wrote that for the above-mentioned reason, every Yid should dress differently from the nations, so that *kedusha* should rest upon him.

(מגדל ע"ע ר' ליליאן, פלה הרמן שה"ש ע' יז)

CONSIDER

Are peyos and tzitzis an expression of one's warmth for Torah and mitzvos or do they bring that love?

Why does it require a special kabbalas ol and mesirus nefesh to retain the Yiddishe mode?

OBVIOUSLY DIFFERENT

Chassidim have always been particular that their *peyos* extend beyond the minimum measurement, as an obvious sign of being Yidden. Even when they were ridiculed for this, they remained unfazed.

While living in Russia, the chossid Reb Moshe Vishedsky gave much attention to his children's *chinuch*. When cutting their hair, he would give them a *chassidische* haircut and leave large *peyos*. One of his children once said that he thought that his *peyos* stood out too much when he went outside. His father gently explained that if his *peyos* would not be noticeable, they would no longer be considered *peyos*...

(דברי הימים גורקאו ע' עה, סי' ח' ב' ח' ב' ע' 154)

PROTECTIVE GEAR

The Friederiker Rebbe notes that those Yidden who are particular about their *peyos* and *tzitzis* have a warmth and a love for Torah and *mitzvos*, whereas those who are lax in these matters become cold and apathetic to Torah and *mitzvos*.

(ספר המאמרים תש"ד ע' 122)

In Minsk there once lived two wealthy families which both supported Torah learning by maintaining a *beis Midrash* near their homes. One family stemmed from *chassidische yichus*, whereas the other was from a *veltishe* background. When the time came to marry off their daughters, they both chose fine sons-in-law from respectable families. The *chassidische* son-in-law had an untrimmed beard and dressed in the traditional way, while the *veltishe* son-in-law cut his beard and dressed in a modern fashion.

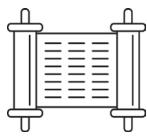
Time went on and both sons-in-law went into business, traveling to Petersburg to strike big deals. The *veltishe* young man was attracted to the malls of Petersburg and the fancy clothing. Looking to make successful deals, he 'needed' to spend time in the restaurants, play cards and befriend the entrepreneurs. The *chassidische* one, however, found his way to the local *chassidische beis midrash*, where they learned *Chassidus* every night and *farbrenged*, and he returned home with the report that Petersburg is a true *chassidische* town...

(הקריה והקדושה ניסן תש"א ע' טו)

The Friederiker Rebbe writes: "In Mitzrayim, the Yidden had *kabbalas ol*, and did not change their names, their way of dress, or their language - the three indicators that distinguish one type of people from another. Using a Yiddishe name, speaking the Yiddishe vernacular, and wearing a beard and *peyos* - these differentiate Yidden as 'a nation that dwells apart.' This prevents people from socializing with freethinking *porkei ol*, and prevents a Yid from visiting certain places. During the harsh times of *golus Mitzrayim*, the Yidden did this without asking 'Why', and by crying out to *HaShem* with *emuna* and with firm *kabbalas ol* in these matters, they merited their *geula*."

(לקוטי דבריהם ח"ג ע' ת"ז)





CHAMISHA ASAR BISHEVAT

What is the significance of the fifteenth day of Shevat?

The Mishna states that the fifteenth of Shevat is the "Rosh Hashana for trees," marking the cutoff date that separates one year's fruits from the next for certain agricultural halachos, including *maaser*, *shemita*, and *orlah*.¹

Over time, Jewish communities adopted a *minhag* to mark Chamisha Asar BiShvat² with joy, even though the day's origin is seemingly technical and halachic. Shulchan Aruch records the practice of treating the day with a festive character, including avoiding fasting and omitting *tachanun*.³

A widespread *minhag* is to eat fruits, with particular emphasis on the *shivas haminim* — grapes, figs, pomegranates, olives, and dates.⁴ The Rebbe also notes the custom of eating carobs, which are associated with miracles.⁵

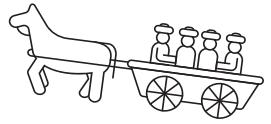
The Rebbe encouraged including a new seasonal fruit, over which the blessing of *Shehecheyanu* is added (prior to *ha'etz*).⁶ Though some recite selections from Tanach and Zohar, the Rebbe writes that he hasn't seen this practiced.⁷

The Rebbe often highlighted lessons we learn from trees, based on the passuk, "for a person is like a tree of the field." We must constantly grow in our Yiddishkeit, and produce "fruit" of good deeds.⁸

The Rebbe explains that this festival is unique because its observance stems from a *minhag* Yisroel — something so lofty it could not be explicitly written in the Torah. Just as fruits provide delight beyond the basic sustenance of bread, Chamisha Asar BiShvat expresses a form of *avodas Hashem* motivated not by obligation, but by joy and love — simply because it gives Hashem pleasure. A Yid should always seek to go beyond the bare minimum in all areas of *avodas Hashem* — not done as a mere routine, but with warmth, enthusiasm, and initiative.⁹

1. ראה ר"ה ב ע"א במשנה (לשיטת ב"ה) ובגמ' שם.
2. הביטו ש תנש"א ח"א ע' 300.
3. ראה ודו"מ תנש"ז ח"ב ע' 425.
4. ראה ודו"מ תנש"ז ח"ב ע' 121.
5. ראה ודו"מ תנש"ז ח"ב ע' 235.
6. רואה מ"א ס"י קל"א ס"ז' תקע"ב.
7. ש"ע א"ר"ב ס"י קל"א ס"ז' תקע"ב.
8. רואה מ"א ס"י תקל"ג ס"ק א.
9. רואה מ"א ס"י קל"א ס"ק טז. השלמה
לש"ז מרתה ציפא אסתר בת ר' שלום דובער ע"ה

Our Heroes



R. SHLOMO CHAIM KUTAIN

R. Shlomo Chaim Kutain (d. 5688), a chossid of the Rebbe Rashab, served as the shochet and mohel in Lubavitch. As a full-time resident of Lubavitch, he was very close to the Rebbe Rashab, and to the Frierdiker Rebbe in his youth. Continuing the family tradition of his father and grandfather before him, R. Shlomo Chaim was an expert shochet, and taught *shechita* to many of the *temimim* in Lubavitch, and the Frierdiker Rebbe himself.

Chaim to be the shochet, though he instructed him to marry first. Until he was eighteen years old, an older shochet would be there as well, but the main shochet was the young Shlomo Chaim.

(רשימות היום ע' שננו)

R. Yisroel Jacobson recalls his experience learning *shechita* from R. Shlomo Chaim:

In Lubavitch, the practice was for many bochurim to learn *shechita*. It seems that this was one of missions of Tomchei Temimim, to produce G-d fearing shochtim. Many of these bochurim were the *ovdim*, who would daven at great length, and would come to him at around 3 pm after lunch.

Back then, the pace of life was slower especially in the small towns, people didn't have ambitions to move ahead, and everything took time. For this reason, the bochurim learned *shechita* for two or three years before becoming a shochet.

(זכרנו לבני ישראל ע' 9)

R. Shlomo Chaim's grandfather, R. Tzvi Hirsh was the shochet in Lubavitch during the Tzemach Tzedek's lifetime. When he reached seventy years of age, the Tzemach Tzedek called for him and said, "Hirshel, people are saying things about you" [that he had unsteady hands and should discontinue *shechita*]. "Rebbe," he replied, "If you tell me to put the knife down, I will."

The Rebbe, knowing that R. Tzvi Hirsh would refrain from shechting if he felt weak, did not require him to stop, yet he called for a water test. A cup of water was brought, and R. Tzvi Hirsh held it perfectly steady, like a young man.

(ליקוטי סיפוריים פרלוב ע' קכח)

When he was still a young bochur of fifteen, the Rebbe Maharash chose Shlomo

R. Shlomo Chaim would say, "Do you know why the shechita knife is called a 'chafaf'?" Since it makes the switch (*chiluf*) between 'life' and 'death' (a kosher or unkosher animal).

(ליקוטי סיפוריים פרלוב ע' רכח)

A Moment with The Rebbe

לזכר נשמת מרת חלה לאה בת ר' שמישון הכהן ע"ה



THE POWER OF LEARNING RAMBAM

The legendary Shliach to California, Reb Shmuel Dovid Raichik, once asked the rebbe in Yechidus for a bracha for a certain individual who was in need of a salvation.

"This Yid needs a real *mofes*!" Reb Shmuel Dovid implored.

"Tell him to learn Rambam," the Rebbe said. "Because Rambam is the acronym of 'Revos Mofsei Be'eretz Mitzroyim.'"

"Can I publicize this?" Reb Shmuel Dovid asked the Rebbe.

"Yes, you can," the Rebbe responded.

Indeed, since then Reb Shmuel Dovid repeated this directive, and saw *yeshuos* by Yidden.

(*Kfar Chabad Magazine*, Issue 1939, p. 25)

עלילוי נשמת מרת מוסיא בת ר' אברם ישע' ע"ה שטראקס

נפטרה כ"ה אדר תשפ"ד