

# The Weekly Farbrengens



MERKAZ ANASH  
מרכז אנאש

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EDITOR - RABBI SHIMON HELLINGER

## THE BEAUTY OF MODESTY (III)

### TODAY'S URGENT CHALLENGE

Reb Uriel Zimmer had a *yechidus* with the Rebbe in Tamuz תשכ"א (1961), and he inquired about the Rebbe's much sought after opinion on the upcoming elections in Eretz Yisroel. The Rebbe replied that he didn't wish to reveal his opinion about it yet, and went on at some length. The Rebbe mentioned a number of times during this conversation that action must be taken in the area of *tznius*, and he said: "This isn't just election season but *tznius* season!"

(היכל מנחם ח"א ע' רב)

Rabbi Shneur Zalman Gafni relates:

Before traveling to the Rebbe for Tishrei תש"ל (1969), my wife asked me to discuss with the Rebbe a *tznius* gathering which had taken place in Bnei Brak. The gathering was headed by the Rov, HaRav Yaakov Landau, and my wife was one of the organizers. I had many things to discuss with the Rebbe, but I added a few words about it at the end of my note.

I was surprised when the Rebbe replied in short to all the other issues, and began speaking about this subject at length. The Rebbe was very agitated: "Now the style has become to wear clothing that reaches the ground. That's the brainstorm of some crazy *goy* in Paris! Should Yiddish women be taking cues from some *goy* in Paris?! Is that how it ought to be?!"

"Today's immoral people have contrived to make tight clothing the fashion. It accentuates the body and arouses men's desires. Long and tight clothing is the idea of these immoral people.

The Rebbe continued with specific directives:

"The knees must be covered while sitting, and this isn't always the case when women sit. Women's clothing must therefore extend at least 10 centimeters beneath the knees to ensure they remain covered. I'm not deciding the length, that's the Rabbonim's job. I'm simply stating the minimum. And may whoever adds beyond that be blessed.

"This isn't to say that women shouldn't dress well, but the clothing must be appropriate. Those designing the clothing are trying to make it inappropriate in the first place. The correct approach is to create nice, respectable clothing, but not too long or too tight."

The Rebbe praised HaRav Landau for arranging the gathering, but said that my wife should privately discuss *tznius* with other women, since this is more effective. The Rebbe concluded that this is a critical issue, since *tznius* is the wall protecting *klal Yisroel*, and more must be done, and the more the better.

(ס' הצניע לכת)

no quality or means that makes her attractive and admired other than being immodest is embarrassing herself."

(כפ"ח גליון 673 עמוד 11)

In תשמ"א (1981), Rabbi Moshe Nissan Wiener published *Kevuda Bas Melech*, which includes all the detailed *dinim* and halachic views concerning *tznius*. In his words:

"Throughout all the stages of its preparation, I constantly updated the Rebbe and asked for directives. The Rebbe was deeply involved, even giving specific instructions about the layout of the *sefer*, and encouraged me to complete it speedily.

"In response to my comment that people had argued that it is forbidden to wear a *sheitl*, because it, too, can be showy and immodest, the Rebbe replied that although like other garments the *sheitl* must of course be modest, *pritzus* of the woman's natural hair is even worse.

"With the approach of Kislev, תשמ"א (1981), when the *sefer* was ready for press, I submitted it to the Rebbe, and I received his handwritten reply: 'Urgent. As I have written repeatedly, every passing day on which this *sefer* could have been read and studied is a regrettable loss. You should therefore actively see to it that it is actually printed and bound, and the sooner the better.' And to spur me on, the Rebbe enclosed a hundred dollars!

"The Rebbe added orally: "When I wrote 'the sooner the better' (in the original: *shaa achas kodem*, which literally means '*preferably one hour earlier*'), that doesn't mean a week earlier or a month earlier, but sixty minutes. Today is still a whole day... And don't allow yourself to be fazed by those of 'the other side' who are looking for strange ways and means of preventing this *sefer* from being published."

In addition to all the above input and encouragement, I was privileged in that the Rebbe devoted precious time to editing the Foreword.

(בת מלך פנימה פרק א')

### CONSIDER

*What is the problem with modern styles: that they are immodest or that they are dictated by the fashion industry?*

*Why must a sheitl be modest?*

### "EXTREMELY IMPORTANT"

Here is a handwritten response of the Rebbe to Nshei Ubnos Chabad's question about which theme to choose for their convention:

"Urgent

"It's obvious that anything done about *tznius* is extremely important. And by all means possible. Including turning (discreetly to the fashion designers and) to the women's clothing stores. Especially in light of the fact that some complain that it's hard to find modest clothing in the stores.

"It's important to stress, in an appropriate way, that a woman or girl who "declares" that she has



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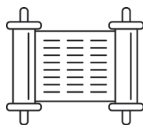
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## TEFILLIN SHEL YAD PLACEMENT

Where is the correct place for tefillin on the arm?

Chazal teach us that the *tefillin shel yad* are placed on the bulging flesh of the upper arm, in the section called the *kibores* (bicep). The Torah instructs us to "Place Hashem's words on your heart," and the *kibores* sits directly opposite the heart, at chest level.<sup>1</sup> For this reason, the *bayis* must also be tilted slightly inward, so that, when the arm hangs naturally, the *bayis* points to the heart.<sup>2</sup>

Even within the bulge, Shulchan Aruch and Alter Rebbe rule that the tefillin must sit on the lower half of the bone running from the armpit to the elbow. The Gra holds that the entire bulge is acceptable, even above the bone's half-point, but this is a *da'as yachid*.<sup>3</sup>

Within the bone's lower half, the tefillin must sit on the *kibores* itself (the bulge of muscle), not near the inner elbow. Though the exact distance varies based on the individual's build and where his bulge tapers down, it generally means leaving 2-4 cm above the inner elbow.<sup>4</sup> (The sleeve must be rolled up sufficiently to accomplish this.)

Measuring from the armpit to the inner elbow, most adults come in at 18-20 cm, making the lower half 9-10 cm. Standard Lubavitch *batim* have a footprint of 7-8 cm (including the *titura* and *maavarta*), leaving very little leeway to clear the lower limit. On a bar mitzvah bochur with a smaller arm, it would appear to be an issue.

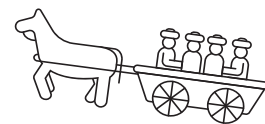
Some suggest getting smaller *shel yad bayis* for bar mitzvah bochurim, prioritizing halachic placement over the *hiddur* of large *batim*<sup>5</sup> (especially since the *hiddur* seems specific to the *shel rosh*). The *bayis* could be made narrower while keeping the regular height.

Others understand that the measurement runs from the outer elbow to where the arm meets the shoulder bone (identified by feeling the shoulder while rotating the straightened arm). They point to the Alter Rebbe's description "between the elbow and the shoulder."<sup>6</sup> When measuring the inside of the arm, it is necessary to raise the arm to include the space hidden under the arm. Measuring this way yields a larger upper arm and puts the halfway mark higher. Adults average 30-32 cm, and bar mitzvah bochurim average around 24 cm, with smaller ones measuring 20-22 cm. Even a 20 cm arm has a lower half of 10 cm, leaving room for a standard *bayis* of 7-8 cm plus 2 cm of clearance above the elbow.

The entire *titura* and *maavarta* must fit within the acceptable zone, though some suggest the *maavarta* alone can extend higher when there's no other option.<sup>7</sup> For smaller arms, the *titura* and *maavarta* can be made thinner to fit better.

As for the Mishnah Berurah's caution against "large" tefillin that often sit outside the acceptable zone,<sup>8</sup> he was referring to tefillin larger than today's. Indeed, the Mishnah Berurah himself writes that the appropriate size for the *bayis* (including the *titura* and *maavarta*) is between 2-4 fingerbreadths wide.<sup>9</sup>

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



## REB BARUCH FRIEDMAN

Reb Baruch Friedman was born in Poland and came to learn in Tomchei Tmimim in Lubavitch. There he was known as "Baruch Polisher." As an older *bochur* he served as *mashpia* of *Chassidus* in Charkov. In 5681 (1921), after World War I, he returned to Poland and was appointed as *mashpia* in Warsaw, then in Lodz, and eventually in Otvotzk. During the first two years of World War II he was in the Ghetto of Radom where he continued to serve as *mashpia*. From there he was taken to Treblinka and was killed *al kidush Hashem* during the month of Elul 5702 (1942).

Reb Baruch was a great *maskil* in *Chassidus*. The Rebbe Rashab said about him, "Baruch Polisher understands a *vort Chassidus*." When he would sit and learn, nothing was able to divert his attention. Even when three of his children were sitting on him—one pulling his beard, another

pulling his hair and the third sitting on his shoulders—he wouldn't get distracted. He demanded the same level of concentration from the *bochurim*, and would often say during *farbrengens*, "You should bury yourself in *Chassidus*."

(לקוטי סיפורי התועדויות - רמ"ז גרינגלאס עמוד 34)

Reb Baruch once said, "It is known the importance of saying words of Torah when walking in the street. However, this is only for someone who is not able to think deeply. Someone who is capable should *think deeply* while walking in the street, the reason being that one merely saying words of Torah can be simultaneously thinking of other things, possibly worldly. Not the case when one is thinking deeply into Torah, for then one's mind is fully occupied and there is no room for other thoughts."

(לקוטי סיפורי התועדויות - רמ"ז גרינגלאס עמוד 35)

## A Moment with The Rebbe



## THE WORDS OF DAVENING

Born to a Karliner family, R' Avrohom Blesofsky escaped Russia on his own at age seventeen to avoid the draft. Arriving in America, he maintained his chassidische dress and minhagim, despite pressure from relatives.

R' Avrohom would frequently daven in 770 and became close to the Rebbe. As a chazzan, he kept with the Karliner custom to sing the entire davening in his booming voice at the top of his lungs.

Once, some chassidim complained to the Rebbe about his loud davening, which was different than the still and contemplative way Chabad chassidim were accustomed to daven.

"When he davens, you can hear every word," the Rebbe replied.

(As told by his grandson R' Avraham Ber Blesofsky - Lift Magazine, Issue 8, p. 27)

1. דברים י"א י"ח. מנחת לז ע"א-ע"ב.
2. שו"ע או"ח סי' כז ס"א. שו"ע"ר שם ס"ב. וראה נטעי גבריאל בר מצוה פמ"ה הע' ז ע"פ פסקי הרי"א ז"ל הל' תפילין שרק מעט יטה שצריך להניחם על פני הקיבורת ולא בצידו.
3. שו"ע שם. ביאור הגר"א שם, הובא במשנ"ב שם ס"ד.
4. מגן אברהם שם ס"ב. שו"ע"ר שם ס"ב ובפסקי הסיידור. וראה נטעי גבריאל בר מצוה פמ"ה הע"ב ("כמה אצבעות יש מן העלניבויגן עד בשר התפוח. אין זה שיה לכל נפש").
5. ולהעיר מאג"ק ח"ג ע' רנא שהידוק השל ראש יש דין קדימה על ההידור של אצבעיים.
6. תשובת הרב הלל פשוונער ע"ה שנדפס בקובץ דירת מלך רב גל' צד ע' 27 ואילך. הרב י"י בלינוב בקובץ התקשרות גל' תשסד. הרב יעקב סנגאוי שם גל' תשע. נתיבים בשדה השליחות ח"ב ע' 30 הע' 22.
7. ראה תשובת הרב הלל פשוונער ע"ה שם.
8. משנ"ב סי' כז ס"ד.
9. ביה"ל סי' לב ד"ה אורך ורוחב. ולהעיר מהליכות שלמה פ"ד סכ"ז שאין לשנות עשיית התפילין לקטנים יותר שאין לחדש חומרות יותר מדורות שלפנינו.