

The Weekly Farbrengens

MERKAZ ANASH
מרכז אנאש
למען ישמענו • כי תצא תשפ"א • 632
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BEING DIFFERENT (I)

STANDING APART

Moshe Rabbeinu *davened* to HaShem that the Yidden should be distinguished from all the other nations, even during the time of *golus*. This is expressed even in mundane activities, as a Yid stands apart from the nations around him.

(תשא לג, טז, תר"מ ח"ט ע' 337)

The *Midrash* writes that the Yidden were redeemed from Mitzrayim in the merit of keeping themselves separate. They did this by holding onto their Yiddishe names, speaking a Yiddishe language and wearing Yiddishe clothing.

(מדרש לקח טוב פ' כי תבא)

The Torah states clearly, "In the way of their statutes you should not walk." The *Rambam* explains that just as a Yid is different in his *emuna* and observance of Torah and *mitzvos*, so too, HaShem wants us to remain distinct in our dress and hair styles, and in the architecture of the *shuls* we build.

Sefer HaChinuch explains that the purpose of this *mitzva* is to ensure that we distance ourselves and despise the behavior of the *goyim*, even their clothing. The *Shulchan Aruch paskens* that one is not allowed to dress like the other nations or imitate their actions in other areas.

(רמב"ם הל' עבודה זרה פ"א ה"א, ס' החינוך מצוה רס"ב, שו"ע יו"ד ס"י קע"ח ס"א)

The *Midrash* writes that HaShem tells the Yidden, "If you are separate from the nations, then you are mine (and can live a life of *geula* in *Eretz Yisroel*), but if not, you will be delivered into the hands of Nevuchadnetzar, or others like him, and you will go into *golus*."

(ספרא, רש"י סוף פ' קדושים)

A certain *maskil*, seeking to ridicule the *tzaddik* Reb Simcha Bunim of P'shischa, asked, "Did Avraham Avinu also wear a *shtreimel* and silk *kapota*?" Reb Simcha Bunim answered, "Exactly what kind of garments he wore - I do not know, but I do know that he looked to see how the *goyim* were dressed,

and made sure that he dressed differently."

(שיח שרפי קודש)

DIFFERENT IN SPEECH

Throughout all generations, Yidden have had a language of their own and spoke differently from the nations around them. Generally, this was done by intentionally jumbling the local language, and adding many words from *lashon hakodesh*. (In fact some speakers of Yiddish call it not "Yiddish," but "zhargon.")

Some opinions consider speaking like the nations to be part of the Torah's explicit prohibition against following *chukos hagoyim*, the ways of the non-Jews, while the *Talmud Yerushalmi* includes this practice among the decrees that *Chazal* instituted during the days of Hillel and Shammai, to keep Yidden separate..

Some *tzaddikim* have explained that the language of a nation expresses its nature, and speaking that language influences the speaker.

(ירושלמי שבת פ"א ה"ד, סמ"ג ל"ת נ', שם משמואל פ' דברים)

CONSIDER

Is goyishe dress forbidden because it is inappropriate or because of the identity it gives us?

What constitutes goyishe language?

The Rebbe spoke about the importance of speaking Yiddish several times. Once at *yechidus* the Rebbe expressed surprise at the fact that in Russia no Yid would think of speaking in Russian among themselves, while in America it has been considered acceptable even among fluent Yiddish speakers to converse in the *goyishe* language...

(תר"מ תשמ"ח ח"ב ע' 73, יחידות תשכ"ח - מפי השמועה)

Once, during the time of the czarist decree against distinctively Yiddishe dress, the son of the *Tzemach Tzedek*, the Maharil, was walking in Lubavitch dressed in full chassidische *levush*, when he was stopped by a police officer. Attempting to tell him that he had paid the tax, the Maharil, who could not speak Russian, said, "I am one of the rebels." (The Russian words for 'tax' and 'rebels' are somewhat similar.)

The officer laughed and let him go.

(לקו"ס פרלוב ע' קל"ג)

A HOLY CALENDAR

The *mashpia* Reb Volf Greenglass related:

When the Rebbe went to the Frierdiker Rebbe's Ohel for the first time, he looked around at the *matzeivos* of *anash* that surrounded the Ohel. Upon seeing that some of them listed *goyishe* dates, he was very disturbed and expressed his displeasure.

(מהרמ"ז גרינגלאס ע"ה)

The wealthy baron Reb Shimon Rothschild wished to fulfill the *mitzva* of writing a *sefer* Torah, and wanted it to be written by a *talmid chacham* and *yerei Shamayim*. He heard of a *sofer* from Russia who met his criteria and had him brought over to Germany, where he lived. Under Reb Shimon's careful watch, the *sofer* began writing, and received payment in increments, enabling him to send funds home for his family's support.

Finally, as the *sefer* Torah neared completion, Reb Shimon asked the *sofer* how much he still owed him. The *sofer* took out his notebook, where he had listed the payments according to the secular months. Seeing this, Reb Shimon was filled with anger: "You calculate according to the secular months?! Someone like you should follow either the Yiddishe months, or the *parshiyos*!"

He gave him the rest of the payment and sent him home... together with the *sefer* Torah.

(סיפורים למעשה ח"א ע' קלח)

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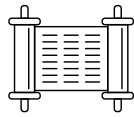


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FORBIDDEN TOUCH

Is one obligated to seek out a male doctor for a male and a female doctor for a female?

The posuk cautions that we are prohibited to even "come close" to forbidden relations, which includes both touch and speech.1 The Rambam holds that the prohibition is min hatorah, while Ramban holds it is miderabanan.2 Since it is related (abizraihu) with forbidden relations, one is obligated to sacrifice their life rather than transgress.3

What about touch that isn't affectionate?

Poskim discuss whether one may visit a doctor of the opposite gender. Some hold that it's subject to the above machlokes on the origin of the prohibition, and the Rambam who holds it is min hatorah would not allow it.4

The Shach, however, argues that the prohibition only applies to friendly touch (chiba), but technical unaffectionate touching by a doctor was never included in the issur. Thus, a doctor or nurse may treat and assist a patient of the opposite gender when there is none of the same gender available.5

Contemporary poskim emphasize that it's not a blanket heter and it applies only when no doctor of the same gender who is as qualified and experienced is available. One must ascertain that the doctor is moral, and a nurse of the same gender should make any private examinations. Obviously, precaution must be taken to observe the laws of yichud and tznius at all times.6

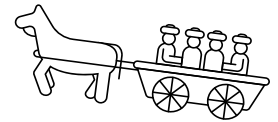
The Rebbe adds that, when possible, a female doctor is preferable for a woman — in addition to tznius considerations — because a woman understands the nature of another woman better than a man does.7

Shaking the hand of the opposite gender is absolutely prohibited no matter the need.8 Even touching a part of the hand or while wearing gloves is forbidden.9 Although it may seem like just a cordial act, it is incomparable to a doctor's technical handling of a patient's body, and even a regular handshake implies some warmth and connection.

Holding the hand of a young girl to cross the street is allowed, provided that she younger than 7 years old.10 If a woman falls, one should certainly help her up as needed.

1. ויקרא י"ח ו'. סנהדרין דף ע"ה ע"א, ר"ן ע"ז דף ט' ע"א ד"ה בכל, וראה ש"ך י"ד סי' קנ"ז סק"י, שו"ת אג"מ אה"ע ח"ד סי' ט'.
2. ראה רמב"ם הל' איסורי ביאה פכ"א ה"א, ורמב"ן בהשגותיו לטה"מ ל"ח ע"ג.
3. ראה תורת האדם לרמב"ן ענין הסכנה, שערי חשודה לרבנו יונה ג קלו, ועוד. וראה לבוש יו"ד סי' קצ"ה ס"ז. קריינא דאיגרותא א. נח.
4. ב"י יו"ד סו"ס קצ"ה ד"ה וכתב עוד, ולבוש יו"ד סי' קצ"ה ס"ז. וכן נפסק בשו"ע יו"ד סי' קצ"ה ס"ז. וראה אג"ק מ' ד'תתנ"ד.
5. ראה נשמי"א מהדו"ת אבה"ע סי' כ"א סק"ג.
6. ראה שיעורי שבה"ל גדה ע' 274, שו"ת שבה"ל ח"ג סי' קפ"ו וחד"ו סי' קס"ו, שו"ת משנה"ח ח"ז סי' רל"ג, שו"ת מנח"י ח"ז סי' ע"ז, ועוד.
7. ראה שלחן מנחם ח"ה ע' רמ"ח (ממכתב כ"ג טבת תשמ"ח). אבל ראה גם אג"ק ח"ד ע' ק'.
8. אג"מ ח"א אור"ח סי' כ"ח.
9. ספר חסידים סי' תתר"צ (שם מדבר ביד נכרית) וראה מקור חסד שם סק"ב שסב"ל שבישראלית מותר, וראה נט"ג יחוד פנ"ב הע"ב שגם בישראל, וראה שו"ת ישכיל עבדי ח"ד אבן העזר ח"ב, ויש שהתירו לפ"ז לעזור לקנה לחצות הרחוב ע"י נגיעה רק בבגדיה.
10. נט"ג יחוד פנ"ב סי' ג' והע"ה.

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



REB YAAKOV MORDECHAI BEZPALOV

Reb Yaakov Mordechai Bezpavlov was one of the great chassidim of the Rebbe Maharash and the Rebbe Rashab, and was one of the three people who received semicha from the Rebbe Maharash. For over 35 years, he served as the Rov of Poltava in Russia. Before the Rebbe Rashab accepted the nesius, he was his chavrusa and very close friend. He was known to serve Hashem in the way of "merirus" (remorse). He passed away on the 30th of Tishrei, תרע"ו (1915).

who sent fourth a comforting hand, a helping hand, the hand of a true and beloved friend. His words were loyal, his speech was pure, and they were not wrapped in the mist of honor and praise, which is the custom in such cases. He spoke of everything with open eyes and pure faith. He did not 'climb valleys or ascend mountains,' rather he went round the point of truth again and again, and with this, he found calmness and comfort to his soul."

The Frieddiker Rebbe records, what he heard from his father, about the comfort Reb Yaakov Mordechai gave him after the passing of the Rebbe Maharash:

The Frieddiker Rebbe describes a farbrengen at the sheva brachos of Reb Yaakov Mordechai:

"It is only a good friend who is capable of putting a person on his feet, saving him from going down into the pit of sorrow and anguish, and raising him to broad light that would not have been fathomable in the beginning. [My father] spoke about his friends and beloved ones and counted them out one by one, speaking of their greatness.

"... In middle of it all, [Reb Yaakov Mordechai] began to cry bitterly, to the degree that all those present were astounded. They asked him to stop crying, but to no avail... Everyone began dancing, all besides Reb Yaakov Mordechai, who leaned his head on his hands and cried. When they poured cups to say l'chaim, he stopped crying and began to say in a tearful voice, "The Rebbe [Maharash] told me, 'When there is a Rebbe, there are chassidim, but chassidim who do and work.' When a chossid is not a chossid, he makes his Rebbe no more a Rebbe. The Alter Rebbe was a Rebbe, and he made chasidim, and the chassidim, being that they were chassidim and "people of deed" with avoda sheb'leiv, they strengthened their Rebbe..."

"He said that the one person with whom he found comfort after the passing of his father, with whatever is possible to be comforted after such a terrible and shocking calamity, was only his friend from his youth, his beloved friend Reb Yaakov Mordechai. He was the first one

A Moment with The Rebbe



THE REASON FOR A BEARD

Several months before the chassuna of Reb Y.S., the Rebbe sent notification that he would agree to serve as mesader kiddushin (officiator at the wedding ceremony), on the condition that the kalla's father begins to grow his beard.

Respectfully, he replied to the Rebbe, "When the Rebbe commands one to do something, I obey."

The kalla's father agreed, and indeed the Rebbe served as mesader kiddushin.

The Rebbe responded with surprise. "Is it I who requires you to grow a beard?! It is the Shulchan Aruch which requires you to grow a beard!" (Igros Kodesh - Miluyim, Adar 5760)

When the kalla's father entered into the customary yechidus before the chasuna, his beard had already recognizably begun to grow. The Rebbe turned to him and said, "I hope you do not resent that I wanted you to grow a beard."

In another instance, the Rebbe said to someone, "It would be a wonderful thing for you to grow a beard... not because I want you to, but rather because Hashem wants to you." (Mekadesh Yisroel, page 248)