

**Authoritative Responses
To
Common Misconceptions**

**Corrective Responses
To
Various Forums**
Discussing
Beards and Shaving in Halachah

**By
Rabbi Moshe Nisan Wiener**

Author of Sefer
Hadras Ponim Zokon
*Regarding the cutting and growth of the
beard In halachic perspective*



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❧ Preface ❧

ב"ה

In the 1890s, when the trend to shave the beard was gaining popularity in the *Litvish* regions of Lithuania and Russia and beyond (due to various secular influences), the *Chofetz Chaim* zt'l published a booklet titled *Kuntres Tiferes Odom*. In this volume, the Chofetz Chaim systematically and vigorously refuted all the various justifications being advanced to defend removing the beard, and asserted (in his introductory remarks) that "it is a great *mitzvah* for the entire Jewish people to reinforce this observance, and to refrain from trimming the beard even with scissors." [In contradistinction to the common presumption that the accepted *Litvish* practice is to be beardless, the Chofetz Chaim attests in the first chapter of this work that until that time, only "**one in a thousand**" shaved their beards.]

Recently, much discussion has appeared in various widely-publicized forums on the topic of maintaining a beard. Is maintaining a beard a halachic imperative or a Kabbalistic/Chassidic stringency? Many individuals have expressed varied and often conflicting opinions and assumptions regarding this issue (especially regarding the position of *Litvish* and other Gedolim).

Following the precedent of the Chofetz Chaim, this volume, entitled *Authoritative Responses to Common Misconceptions*, presents (in its 25 chapters) various claims and contentions which have been advanced in defense of shaving, and demonstrates that they are often based on erroneous assertions and a misrepresentations of sources.

It is hoped that the publication of this comprehensive volume will provide clarification and alleviate some of the confusion surrounding this issue.

As we approach the month of Elul, when the Thirteen Attributes of Divine Mercy shine forth, now is an appropriate time to highlight the reflection of these thirteen attributes in our physical bodies.

Rabbi Moshe Nisan Wiener

הנה משה בן דוד אבן ומואל ומואל ז"ל יצא
 אחריו הרבה ויהי עפ"י הנה משה ומואל
 ז"ל ומואל אבן ומואל ז"ל יצא
 אחריו הרבה ויהי עפ"י הנה משה ומואל
 ז"ל ומואל אבן ומואל ז"ל יצא

"לענ"ד הוא עושה בכך דבר טוב ומועיל ואולי ע"ז יתבררו ויתלבנו הדברים,

ויהי' בכך הצלה מעון חמור"

(מכתב הגאון רבי שלמה זלמן אויערבאך ז"ל למחבר ספר "הדרת פנים זקן"
נדפס ב'ס' 'הליכות שלמה' ה'ל' תפלה עמ' י"א)

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Chapter 1

GLARING OMISSION I:

What is the position of the non-Chassidic Gedolim regarding maintaining a beard and shaving?

In recent forums titled “Beards and Shaving in Halacha,” presenters struggled to define the Torah position regarding maintaining a beard and shaving.

In all the forum discussion and even in the *marei mekomos* (source references), there was no mention whatsoever of what should probably be the primary source document for this entire discussion, namely, the published statement of the **recognized current Gadol Hador of the non-Chasidic Torah world**, Maran HaGaon Rav Chaim Kanievsky shlita, who succinctly summarized the halachic issues and the opinions of the Litvishe Gedolim related to the growth and cutting of the beard, in his *sefer Orchos Yosher*, chapter 5.

The importance of including this document is further augmented by the fact that the content of much of Rav Chaim Kanievsky’s statement is diametrically opposed to many of the assertions made by presenters in these forums, regarding issues such as the following:

- Is being beardless the valid *mesorah* of the Litvishe community? [Rav Kanievsky writes: “Throughout our history, it has been a disgrace for anyone not to have a beard. It is only in recent generations that some have started to treat this irreverently, having learned this from the non-Jews.”]

- Is there an authoritative halachic source and basis to prohibit cutting the beard with scissors? [Rav Kanievsky quotes the Targum Yonasan (who was a Tana), the Sefer HaChinuch (a Rishon) and the Chofetz Chaim as sources that cutting the beard with scissors is also forbidden.]
- Is there credibility to the opinion that cutting the beard involves the prohibition of *lo yilbash*? (Also, is this position a *chiddush* devised by the Tzemach Tzedek, or is it a position which originated earlier and is ascribed to by Poskim independent of the Tzemach Tzedek?) [Without mentioning the Tzemach Tzedek at all, Rav Kanievsky writes that the Targum Yonasan holds that cutting the beard (even) with scissors is forbidden due to *lo yilbash*.]
- According to the Chofetz Chaim, the Chazon Ish, the Steipler Gaon and Rav Shach, are contemporary electric shaving machines prohibited, having the same halachic status as razors? (Moreover, is this true to the extent that they should not be recommended as a halachically acceptable alternative even to people who are already shaving with razors?) [Rav Kanievsky quotes all of them as ruling that shaving machines have the halachic status of razors.]
- Is the practice of shaving in the Litvishe yeshivos condoned by their own Litvishe Gedolim? [Rav Kanievsky quotes the Chofetz Chaim as writing an entire treatise to disprove all justifications for removing the beard, and quotes the Chazon Ish as writing: “Although this sickness has spread even among Torah scholars, may they be well, the issue has not changed as a result of this, and therefore my soul burns with rage because of this practice.”]
- Is the practice to shave in the Litvishe yeshivos based on Torah-inspired considerations, or just the opposite? [Rav Kanievsky writes that “It is only in recent generations that some have started

to treat this irreverently, having learned this from the non-Jews," and quotes the Chazon Ish as writing: "I find this matter very painful, for it is against the Jewish quality of modesty and is not the Jewish style of dress, rather [Jews] have learned it from the non-Jews during their exile, thereby negating *kedushah*."]

Following is the actual text of the statement of Rav Chaim Kanievsky shlita in his sefer Orchos Yosher, chapter 5, followed by its translation:

כתב הגר"ח קניבסקי שליט"א בספרו "ארחות יושר" (סי' ה' עמ' יט-כ): ה הדרת פנים

בשבת (קנ"ב א') הדרת פנים זקן וגינו בזה את הצדוקי הסריס ואמרו לו ברוך המקום שמנעך מזה ע"ש, ובכל הדורות ה' זה בזיון גדול מי שלא ה' לו זקן ורק בדורות האחרונים התחילו לזלזל בזה כי למדו מהגוים.

ובתרגום יונתן א' שעובר בזה משום לא ילבש גבר שמלת אשה והיינו אפי' אם מספר במספרים וכ"כ החינוך והוסיף שעובר משום ובחוקותיהם לא תלכו והביאו החפץ חיים בספר המצות הקצר (ל"ת קע"ז).

ומרן החזו"א מאד לא היתה דעתו נוחה מזה.

[לא מבעיא בהמכונות גילוח שנוהג היום שכבר כתב החפץ חיים (בלקוטי הלכות מכות כ"א ב' בעין משפט אות ז') שעובר בזה על פאת זקנם לא יגלחו ומרן החזו"א החמיר בזה מאד בכל מיני מכונות גילוח ולא התייר אפי' למכור למי שמגלח בתער להצילו מאיסור תער רק ציוה למכור לגוי וכן אאמו"ר זלה"ה ה' מחמיר בזה מאד ואמר שקרוב מאד שזהו תער ממש ועוברין עליו חמשה לאוין וכ"כ מרן הגרא"מ ש"ך [שליט"א] וז"ל בענין להסתפר הזקן עם מכונת גילוח חשמלי יעוין בס' לקוטי הלכות על מס' מכות לבעל הח"ח בדף י"ד ב' בעין משפט שם שכתב שאסור ואין להקל בזה וגם ידוע שהחזו"א זצוק"ל אסר בכל מכונה עכ"ל.

רק אפי' המסתפרים במשחה שקורין סם ג"כ מאד לא היתה דעתו נוחה מזה].

והחפץ חיים חיבר ספר שלם ע"ז נקרא תפארת אדם וז"ל שם נכון ליזהר שלא לספר הזקן אפי' במספרים כי כתבו המקובלים שבזה עוקר צנורות הקדושה מלמעלה ואבותינו ואבותינו במדינתנו נהגו להחמיר בזה וביותר כהיום שנהגו הרבה מפריצי עמנו בהשחתת התער מצוה רבה לכלל ישראל להתחזק בזה ולא להקטין הזקן אפי' במספרים דהיינו

להראות לפני הכל שהמצות שציותה תורה להצטיין בזה האיש יהודי חביב אצלנו ואין אנו מתביישין בהם ח"ו וכעין זה איתא בברכות י"א משל למה הדבר דומה לאדם שאומרים לו זקנך מגודל אמר להם יהי כנגד המשחיתים ופי' בתוס' רבנו יהודה (וכ"ה בחידושי הרשב"א שם) שהכונה שזה שאלו מפני מה הוא מגודל כ"כ וזה השיבו מפני שנמצא משחיתים אותנו לגמרי ועוברים על לא תשחית וגו' לפיכך הראיתי היפוך עכ"ל.

ובקובץ אגרות ממרן החזו"א (ח"א סי' קצ"ז) ע"ד הסם אם אינו סם המות אינו גם סם חיים ומאד קשה עלי הדבר שאינו ממדת הצניעות ואין זה לבוש ישראל רק למדו מהגוים בגולה ושוללים בזה קדושה, ושם (סי' קצ"ח) כתב מעולם אין דעתי נוחה מגילוח זקן כעין תער בהיותי מורגל באיסורו מדור הקודם והי' הדבר חמור מאד כמו גילוי ראש בחוצות והי' הדבר נחשב כשינוי מלבושיהם לבוש הישראלי ואף שפשטה המחלה גם בין התורנים יחיו לא נשתנה הדבר בשביל זה ולכן נפשי סולדת בענין זה, ואמר מרן ז"ל שכשנכנס אליו אדם שמוריד זקנו או שמגדל בלורית נהי' לו כ"כ לא טוב עד שעומד לו להקיא. ... והשי"ת יזכנו ללכת בצורת ישראל כרצון התורה. [עד כאן דברי הגר"ח קניבסקי שליט"א]

Translation of this statement of

Maran HaGaon Rav Chaim Kanievsky shlita:

The Gemara (Shabbos 152a) states: “Hadrās Ponim — the splendor of the countenance — means a beard.” [With this our Sages ridiculed the Sadducee whose beard could not grow, saying to him, “Blessed is the Omnipresent who has prevented you from having this [a beard]” (refer to the Gemara).]

Throughout our history, it has been a disgrace for anyone not to have a beard. It is only in recent generations that some have started to treat this irreverently, having learned this from the non-Jews.

Targum Yonasan states that one who does this transgresses the prohibition of “A man shall not wear a woman’s dress,” which includes even cutting the beard using scissors. Sefer HaChinuch states the same, adding that one also transgresses the prohibition of “You shall not follow their [non-Jewish] rules.” This is quoted by the Chofetz Chaim in his *Sefer HaMitzvos HaKotzer* (Prohibition 177).

Our teacher the Chazon Ish was highly displeased with this practice. He was not only displeased with the shaving machines used today, about which the Chofetz Chaim already wrote — in *Likkutei Halachos*, Makkos 21b, Ein Mishpat 7 — that one transgresses the prohibition of “They shall not shave the corner of their beard.” The Chazon Ish was very strict about shaving machines of all kinds, and did not permit selling one even to a Jew who shaves with a razor, in order to save him from the prohibition of using a razor. Instead, he instructed [the inquirer] to sell it to a non-Jew.

My father and teacher [Rabbi Yaakov Yisroel Kanievsky, the Steipler Gaon], of blessed memory, was also very strict about this, saying it is very likely that [a shaving machine] is literally considered a razor, so that one transgresses five prohibitions for using it.

Our teacher, the Gaon Rabbi Elazar Menachem M. Shach, writes the same: “Regarding shaving the beard with an electric shaver, refer to *Likkutei Halachos* on tractate Makkos by the Chofetz Chaim, p. 14b in Ein Mishpat there, where he writes that it is forbidden and that one should not be lenient in this. It is also known that the Chazon Ish, of blessed memory, prohibited using any such machine.”

[In addition, the Chazon Ish] was highly displeased even with those who shave using a depilatory cream — called *sam* in Hebrew [chemical].

The Chofetz Chaim wrote an entire work on this subject called *Tiferes Odom*, where he writes: “It is proper to be careful not to cut the beard even with scissors, for the Kabbalists write that thereby one uproots the channels of [the flow of] *kedushah* from Above. Our fathers and ancestors in our country were accustomed to observing this strictly. Especially today, when many of the lawless elements of our nation have the practice of shaving with a razor, it

is a great mitzvah for the entire Jewish people to reinforce this observance and refrain from trimming the beard even with scissors. Thereby we demonstrate to everyone that the commandments the Torah has given us to distinguish a Jew [from a non-Jew] are precious to us, and that we are not ashamed of them, G-d forbid.”

In *Kovetz Igros* (vol. 1, #197) of our teacher, the Chazon Ish, he writes about the *sam* [depilatory cream]: “If it is not a *sam hamovess* [poison], it is not a *sam hachayim* [life-giving potion] either. I find this matter very painful, for it is against the [Jewish] quality of modesty and is not the Jewish style of dress, rather [Jews] have learned it from the non-Jews during their exile, thereby negating *kedushah*.”

In another letter (#198) he writes: “I have never accepted the behavior of those who remove their beards [with scissors] in a way that is similar to [the effect of] a razor [i.e., close-cutting], for I am accustomed to this being prohibited since the previous generations. [The prohibition] was considered to be very severe — like walking in the street with one’s head uncovered — and was considered like changing one’s clothing from the Jewish style of dress. Although this sickness has spread even among Torah scholars, may they be well, the issue has not changed as a result of this, and therefore my soul burns with rage because of this practice.”

He [the Chazon Ish] once said that when someone who removes his beard...comes in to see him, he feels so sick that he almost vomits.

May Hashem Yisborach give us the privilege to maintain the Jewish appearance requirements according to the will [of Hashem in] the Torah.

This concludes the quotation from Rav Chaim Kanievsky shlita.

❧ Chapter 2 ❧

GLARING OMISSION II:

What is the position of the contemporary non-Chassidic Poskim and Roshei Yeshiva concerning all electric shavers?

Much of the discussion (and source material in the *marei mekomos*) in the forums titled “Beards and Shaving in Halacha” revolved around the halachic status of contemporary electric shaving machines.

There is a universally accepted rule in halachah that “*halachah kebasroy*” – the halachah is in accordance with the latter Poskim, since they were aware of the position of earlier authorities, yet ruled differently (see Shulchan Aruch, Choshen Mishpat 25).

In all the oral discussion and even in the posted *marei mekomos* of these segments, however, no mention whatsoever was made of the definitive halachic proclamation by the leading (non-Chasidic) halachic authorities and prominent (non-Chasidic) Roshei Yeshiva of our generation. They unequivocally ruled that all shaving machines which produce a clean-shave [even if only two hairs are removed completely] are categorically forbidden and have the same halachic status as a razor. [This includes all electric shavers currently available.] They continue that it is the obligation of Roshei Yeshiva to enforce this prohibition in their yeshivos.

Following is the text of this halachic ruling, followed by an English translation [it should be noted and underscored that Rav Yosef Sholom

Elyashiv zt'l, *Posek Hador*, refused to sign this Psak Din in its original proposed wording, which indicated a “halachic concern.” He only agreed and signed it once the wording was changed to “a clear prohibition,” (“עד שיתוקן לאיסור 'ודא' ולא בלשון 'חששא'”) as is related in the authoritative collection of Rav Elyashiv's halachic decisions *Ashrei Ha'ish* Y.D. p. 143]:

בס"ד יום ב' לסדר "לא תשחית פאת זקניך" ניסן תשס"ח

פסק דין

הן מודעת לכל דבר פירצת מכונות הגילוח, אשר אסרוהו רבותינו גדולי הדור, מרן החפץ חיים זצ"ל, ומרן החזו"א זצ"ל, וזה אפילו במכונות שבימיהם אשר מאז כבר עברו המכונות שכלולים רבים, וגרועות הרבה יותר. וכן הורו מרן בעל קהלות יעקב זצ"ל ומרן הגרא"מ שך זצ"ל, בשם מרן החזו"א שהיה אוסר בכל מכונה כתער ממש, כי בתוה"ק לא נכתב תער אלא "לא תשחית", וכל גילוח שיש בו השחתה אסור כמבואר במכות כא. וברמב"ם פי"ב מעכו"ם.

ולכן כל המכונות המגלחות למישיעי אפי' רק בשתי שערות, הן בכלל איסור "לא תשחית פאת זקניך". וכמובן דאף על כל ראשי הישיבות הקדושות לעמוד בפרץ ושלא להרשות הכנסת מכונות גילוח היכולות לגלח למישיעי, וא' המקיף וא' הניקף במשמע, ומצוה גדולה ללמוד בספרו של רבינו החפץ חיים זצוק"ל "תפארת אדם" שנוסד על חיזוק שמירת איסור זה, ובו מבאר שכר גודל המקיימה בזה ובבה.

יוסף שלו אלישיב

"יצוין שכשהביאו קול קורא זה קמו רבינו (הגרי"ש אלישיב), והי' כתוב שם שהמכונות גילוח הם ב'חשש' איסור תער, סירב רבינו לחתום ע"ז, עד שיתקן לאיסור 'ודאי' ולא בלשון 'חששא' (כ' אשרי האיש - פסקי מרן הגרי"ש אלישיב - יו"ד ח"א עמ' קמג).

א.י.ל. שטינמן

כאשר דבר איתי מרן ההזון אי"ש זצ"ל בזה הראיתי לו שכבר מרן ההת"ס זי"ע היה פשיטא לי לאיסור כאשר ביארתי בעזה"י בתשובה

שמואל הלוי ואזנר

מיכל יהודה לפקוביץ ניסים קרליץ שמואל אויערבאך

ידחמיאל אונגרישר

ראש ישיבת בית מדרש עליון

מנחם צבי ברליץ

ראש ישיבת רבינו חיים עוזר

משה הלל הירש

ראש ישיבת סלבודקא

עמרם זקס

ראש ישיבת סלבודקא

יששכר מאיר

ראש ישיבת הנגב

יהושע גויבירט

ראש ישיבת חכמת שלמה

אבינועם פוסטבסקי

ראש ישיבת ברכת יצחק

בצלאל פנחסי

ראש ישיבת ברכת אפרים

יגאל רחן

ראש ישיבת אור ישראל

ברוך מרדכי אזרחי

ראש ישיבת עטרת ישראל

ברוך שמואל דויטש

מראשי ישיבת קול תורה

ברוך וייסבקר

ראש ישיבת בית מתתיהו

דוד כהן

ראש ישיבת חברון

דוד מן

ראש ישיבת כנסת חזקיהו

יהודה עדס

ראש ישיבת קול יעקב

אביעזר פילץ

ראש ישיבת תפרח

דב פרוינד

ראש ישיבת אמרי צבי

חיים קניבסקי

נתן צבי פינקל

אברהם ארלנר

מראשי ישיבת קול תורה

צבי דרבקן

ראש ישיבת גרודנא באר יעקב

צבי ויספישי

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שמואל מרקוביץ

ראש ישיבת פוניבז'

ברוך דב פוברסקי

ראש ישיבת פוניבז'

אריה ליב פינקל

ראש ישיבת מיר ברכפלד

דב צבי קרלינשטיין

ראש ישיבת גרודנא

צבי רוטברג

ראש ישיבת בית מאיר

HALACHIC RULING

from the Leading Sages of our Generation

– REGARDING SHAVING THE BEARD –

בס"ד. יום ב' לסדר "לא תשחית פאת זקנך" ניסן תשס"ח.

THE SEVERE BREACH OF HALACHAH INVOLVED IN THE USE OF SHAVING MACHINES is well known to all. Their use was prohibited by our Rabbis, the Gedolim of the [previous] generation, including the Chofetz Chaim and the Chazon Ish. Moreover, this [prohibition applied] even to the shavers of many years ago [when the shavers were far more primitive and did not cut hair as close to the skin as modern shavers]. Today, the shavers have been enhanced [and cut much closer to the skin] and thus the halachic issues involved are far more severe. This was also the halachic ruling of our great teacher, [the Steipler Gaon, R. Yaakov Yisrael Kanievsky] the author of *Kehilas Yaakov*, zt'l, and of our great teacher, R. Elazar M. Shach, zt'l. They would cite the ruling of the Chazon Ish who equated all shaving machines with a razor. For the Torah does not say: "Do not shave with a razor," but rather "Do not destroy the edges of your beard." Any shaving that destroys the beard is forbidden [as a razor], as is evident from Makkos 21a and Rambam, Hilchos Avodas Kochavim, ch. 12.

THEREFORE, USING ANY SHAVER that leaves the face smooth, even if it was used to remove only two hairs, violates the prohibition of "Do not destroy the edges of your beard."

IT IS THUS OBVIOUSLY THE RESPONSIBILITY OF ALL THE ROSHEI YESHIVOS [heads of the yeshivos] to confront this issue and not allow shavers that leave the face smooth to be brought in [to the yeshivos]. This prohibition applies both to the one who shaves and the one who is shaven.

IT IS A GREAT MITZVAH TO STUDY THE *SEFER TIFERES ADAM*, authored by the Chofetz Chaim, zt'l, which focuses on strengthening the observance of this prohibition and explains the reward received in both this world and the next for its practice.

[signed by:]

R' Yosef Sholom Elyashiv

R' Aharon Yehuda Leib Steinman

R' Shmuel Halevi Vosner

When our master the Chazon Ish zt'l discussed this matter with me, I showed him that our master the Chasam Sofer had already so stated [that scissors which cut very close are halachically equivalent to a razor], and it was obvious to him that [shaving machines] are prohibited, as I have explained with G-d's help in a responsum.

R' Michel Yehuda Lefkowitz

R' Chaim Kanievsky

R' Nissim Karelitz

R' Shmuel Auerbach

R' Noson Tzvi Finkel

Yerachmiel Ungarisher

Rosh Yeshivas Beis Medrash Elyon

R' Dovid Mann

Rosh Yeshivas Kneses Chizkiyahu

R' Baruch Mordechai Ezrachi

Rosh Yeshivas Ateres Yisroel

R' Shmuel Markowitz

Rosh Yeshivas Ponovez

R' Avrohom Erlanger

M'Roshei Yeshivas Kol Torah

R' Yehoshua Neubort

Rosh Yeshivas Chachmas Shlomo

R' Menachem Tzvi Berlin

Rosh Yeshivas Rabeinu Chaim Ozer

R' Yehuda Ades

Rosh Yeshivas Kol Yaakov

R' Baruch Shmuel Deutsch

M'Roshei Yeshivas Kol Torah

R' Baruch Dov Povarsky

Rosh Yeshivas Ponovez

R' Tzvi Drevkin

Rosh Yeshivas Grodno Be'er Yaakov

R' Avinoam Postavsky

Rosh Yeshivas Birkas Yitzchok

R' Moshe Hillel Hirsch*Rosh Yeshivas Slabodka***R' Aviezer Philtz***Rosh Yeshivas Tifrach***R' Baruch Weisbecker***Rosh Yeshivas Beis Matisyahu***R' Aryeh Leib Finkel***Rosh Yeshivas Mir Brachfeld***R' Tzvi Weisfish***Rosh Yeshivas Even Yisroel***R' Betzael Pinchasi***Rosh Yeshivas Birkas Efraim***R' Amram Zaks***Rosh Yeshivas Slabodka***R' Dov Freund***Rosh Yeshivas Imrei Tzvi***R' Dovid Cohen***Rosh Yeshivas Chevron***R' Dov Tzvi Karlinstein***Rosh Yeshivas Grodno***R' Gavriel Yosef Levy***Rosh Yeshivas Be'er HaTorah***R' Yigal Rosen***Rosh Yeshivas Ohr Yisroel***R' Yissocher Meyer***Rosh Yeshivas Hanegev***R' Tzvi Rotenberg***Rosh Yeshivas Beis Meir***Which is more severe,****Chilul Shabbos or shaving with an electric shaver?**

The omission of this Psak Din in discussions regarding the halachic status of electric shavers is all the more disconcerting considering the magnitude of the halachic severity involved in their use. Rav Moshe Sternbuch shlita (whose sefarim Moadim U'Zemanim are studied in all the litvishe yeshivos) wrote (in a letter published in the sefer Hadras Ponim Zokon p. 35; see similarly in his Teshuvos V'Hanhagos 1:459 and 5:264):

“Who can dare rule leniently on a Torah question that involves transgressing the issur de'oraysa of shaving the beard for which both the one shaving and the one being shaved are equally liable, amounting to a total of ten sins (if one shaves himself)? Rabbeinu Nissim of Gerona (the Ran) writes that a sin that incorporates several prohibitions is just as severe as

chilul Shabbos (which carries the capital punishment of sekilah). Just imagine, then, the consequences of violating ten prohibitions on a day-to-day basis! Who would want to place himself in such a position? Anyone aware of the severity of this transgression and its punishment will keep far away from these machines.

“I am sure that if we will explain the problems involved, and present the opinions of the outstanding authorities of our time who ruled that shaving machines are prohibited (including the saintly Chofetz Chaim, Chazon Ish, and Rabbi Aharon Kotler, of blessed memory), then anyone with the slightest degree of yiras Shomayim will keep far away from these machines and totally avoid their use.”



Let us conclude with the response of Rav Chaim Kanievsky shlita when he was asked whether any shaving machine can be “kosher” (published in sefer *Hadras Ponim Zokon*, in the *Miluyim* to 2:1):

החזון איש אסר כל מכונה וכ"כ כל גדולי הדור

”החזון איש אסר כל מכונה וכ”כ כל גדולי הדור”

“The Chazon Ish prohibited every [shaving] machine. *All the Gedolim of our generation ruled similarly.*”

Chapter 3

WAS IT APPROPRIATE TO PUBLISH THE SEFER HADRAS PONIM ZOKON?

Claim:

The appropriateness of the publication of a *sefer* such as *Hadras Ponim Zokon* (regarding the growth and cutting of the beard according to halachah) was questioned.

Response:

The universally recognized *Posek Hador*, HaGaon Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach zt'l, in his letter to the author of *Hadras Ponim Zokon* (first published by Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach's grandchildren in the *sefer Halichos Shlomo on tefillah*), clearly expressed his opinion as to whether *Hadras Ponim Zokon* should be published:

”ולעצם הדבר לענ”ד הוא עושה בכך דבר טוב ומועיל.
ואולי ע”י זה יתבררו ויתלבנו הדברים,
ויהי בכך הצלה מעון חמור”

“In my humble opinion, by publishing this *sefer* you are accomplishing something good and beneficial. Perhaps through this the issues will be elucidated and clarified, thereby saving the Jewish public from a severe transgression.”

In addition to this strong endorsement of Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach zt'l, *Hadras Ponim Zokon* was published with 54 pages of *haskamos* and letters from recognized Gedolim who enthusiastically

encouraged the publication of the *sefer* (and resolutely affirmed the prohibition of electric shavers) – including letters from members of Moetzes Gedolei Hatorah of America of the time of the *Sefer's* publication; and the Roshei Yeshiva of some of the major yeshivos of the time, such as Torah Vodaas, Lakewood and Ponevez.

Among those letters was the *haskamah* of the late Rosh Yeshiva of Bais Medrash Gavoha in Lakewood, HaGaon Rav Schneur Kotler zt'l who was the Rosh Yeshiva of the very same individuals who, in these forums, raised doubts about the appropriateness of publishing the *sefer Hadrash Ponim Zokon*. Rav Schneur Kotler zt'l reiterated his endorsement of *Hadrash Ponim Zokon* in his *haskamah* to another *sefer* by the same author, the *sefer Kvuda Bas Melech*. In that *haskamah*, Rav Schneur zt'l specifically praised the fact that the *sefer* is a comprehensive compilation regarding a single mitzvah and topic (an aspect of the *sefer* with which those in these forums seemed to be uncomfortable).

As an additional example of the opinion of Gedolei Torah in relation to the appropriateness of the publication of the *sefer Hadrash Ponim Zokon*, following are the words of another American Gadol, the Rosh Yeshiva of Torah Vodaas, HaGaon Rav Gedaliah Schorr zt'l, in his *haskama* to the *sefer*:

מתיבתא תורה ודעת

ברוקלין נ. י.

בס"ד

הן בא לפני האברך היקר אוצר תורה וחכמה חו"ב הרב הגאון מוה"ר משה ווינער שליט"א. ובידו חיבור נפלא לברר וללבן הלכות גילוח הזקן -- ובפרט גודל החששות שיש בהשתמשות במכונות גילוח שגדולי דור העבר וגם גדולי דורנו חשו בזה משום לאו דלא תשחית וכו'.

ובאתי בזה כיהודה ועוד לקרא כי כבר אתמחי גברא מגדולי הדור והסכימו בהדפסת ספרו היקר.

וראוי לכל בן תורה ללמוד ספר זה לדעת חומר האיסור וכמה צריכים להיות נזהרים בזה. שכרו רב בזיכוי הרבים לפרוש מאיסורא דאורייתא. יהי ד' עמו ויצליח דרכו. ואמינא לפעלא טבא יישר.

ע"ז באתי עה"ח ביום כ"א כמלו תשל"ח

גדלי' הלוי שארד

With the help of Hashem,

The precious young man, a treasure of Torah and wisdom, sharp and proficient, the rav and gaon, R. Moshe Wiener shlita appeared before me, bringing with him an amazing work, clarifying and elucidating the laws of shaving the beard. In particular, [the work demonstrates] the great concerns that pertain to the use of shaving machines, regarding which the Gedolim of the previous generation as well as of our generation were concerned that the *lav* of *lo sashchis* applies.

I come here [with this *haskamah*] as a mere supplement, for the [above] individual has already been recognized as an expert by the Gedolim of the generation, and they have consented to the publishing of his precious *sefer*. It is fitting for every *ben Torah* to study this *sefer* and become aware of the magnitude of the *issur* and the extent to which one must be careful to avoid it.

[The author's] reward is great, as he is being *mezakeh* the public by separating them from an *issur d'oraysa*, and to this positive activity I say, "May you be strengthened!"

May Hashem be with him and bring success to his path.

I hereby affix my signature
on this day of 21 Marcheshvan, 5738

Gedaliah Halevi Schorr

❧ Chapter 4 ❧

IS RAV CHAIM OZER GRODZINSKI ZT'L A SOURCE TO PERMIT ELECTRIC SHAVERS?

Claim:

It was asserted that **Rav Chaim Ozer Grodzinski zt'l** (the Posek Hador of his generation and Rov of Vilna) permitted electric shaving machines.

Response:

This claim is based on what is quoted in the name of Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach zt'l (in the *sefer Halichos Shlomo* on *tefillah*, p. 11 in a footnote) where it states that Rav Chaim Ozer zt'l disagreed with the Chofetz Chaim zt'l, who prohibited shaving machines. In addition, Rav Moshe Sternbuch shlita wrote in *Teshuvos v'Hanhagos* (vol. 5, section 264) that his (Rav Moshe Sternbuch's) father cited a *limud zechus* in the name of Rav Chaim Ozer zt'l to be lenient regarding shaving machines.

It does not seem that these reports in the name of Rav Chaim Ozer zt'l constitute a valid basis to be lenient regarding electric shavers, for the following reasons:

- 1) These reports are contradicted by firsthand accounts testifying that Rav Chaim Ozer zt'l did not permit shaving machines, as follows:
 - a. Rav Yitzchok Hutner zt'l (Rosh Yeshivas Chaim Berlin and member of the Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah) testified that Rav Chaim Ozer zt'l considered shaving machines prohibited as a “*sofek issur d'oraysa*,” and that Rav Chaim Ozer zt'l

admonished individuals not to use them, and in general encouraged people to grow their beards. (This is recorded in a transcript which was reviewed and approved by Rav Hutner zt'l and published in the *sefer Hadrash Ponim Zokan* [third ed., *miluyim* to Section 2 ch. 1, p. 715].)

- b. The personal barber of Rav Chaim Ozer zt'l for twelve years (who served as the personal barber of several Gedolim) testified that Rav Chaim Ozer zt'l was strictly opposed to the use of shaving machines and that he admonished people not to use shaving machines even under their chin and certainly not on their face. Additionally, Rav Chaim Ozer zt'l emphasized the importance of maintaining a beard and convinced many individuals to grow proper beards.
 - c. Rav Avrohom Osher Zimmerman zt'l (a respected Posek who served as Rov of Cong. Shaarei Tefilah in Brooklyn) wrote that he was part of a delegation that visited Rav Chaim Ozer zt'l in Vilna in 1935-1936 on behalf of Yeshiva Torah Vodaas, to show him the Schick Shaver and ask his halachic opinion about its acceptability. He reported that Rav Chaim Ozer zt'l distinctly did not permit it.
- 2) The very sources themselves of the reports that Rav Chaim Ozer zt'l was lenient expressly emphasized that this cannot be viewed as a basis to permit modern-day shavers. Specifically:
- a. Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach zt'l (ibid.) stated clearly that the shaving machines which existed in the time of Rav Chaim Ozer zt'l did not produce a clean shave (i.e., they did not remove the facial hairs entirely and left stubble). Therefore, he continued, any halachic rulings concerning those machines are not relevant to contemporary shavers and cannot be construed as a basis to

permit modern-day shavers, which remove the beard hairs entirely and produce a clean shave.

- b. Similarly, Rav Moshe Sternbuch shlita (ibid.) wrote that one cannot base a lenient ruling applicable to today's shaving machines on anything said about the halachic status of shaving machines which existed during Rav Chaim Ozer's lifetime. Those machines were not as close-cutting as today's machines, and therefore perhaps even Rav Chaim Ozer zt'l would prohibit today's machines. Furthermore, Rav Sternbuch shlita wrote that even the shavers at the time of Rav Chaim Ozer zt'l should be considered prohibited as a "*chashash issur Torah*." He adds that there might not be a conflict between the various reports about Rav Chaim Ozer's position, since it is possible that the shavers that Rav Chaim Ozer zt'l defended were earlier models, and after they improved and began to produce a closer shave he prohibited them. [It is also worth noting that even Rav Moshe Sternbach's father did not say that Rav Chaim Ozer zt'l expressly permitted shavers, but rather said that Rav Chaim Ozer zt'l gave a *limud zechus*.]
- c. Additionally, Rav Yaakov Kamenetzky zt'l wrote (in a *teshuvah* to his grandson, published in *Emes l'Yaakov*, Yoreh Deah section 181): "As for [any leniency] that has become accepted in past generations, it is a fact that over time there have been many improvements in the machines, and it is possible that, as a result of these improvements, shaving with them has become prohibited [even according to the reasoning offered for that leniency]. Accordingly, in this case, it is difficult to rely on [any] tradition [to be lenient]."

A similar sentiment was expressed in the widely publicized Psak Din of Rav Eliyashiv zt'l (co-signed by 33 Litvishe Gedolei Yisroel, Poskim and Roshei Yeshiva) dated Nissan 5768, which

states: “Moreover, this [prohibition applied] even to the shavers of many years ago [when the shavers were far more primitive and did not cut hair as close to the skin as modern shavers]. Today, the shavers have been enhanced [and cut much closer to the skin] and thus the halachic issues involved are far more severe.”

This Psak Din is quoted in full above, chapter II.

“RATHER CUT OFF MY FINGERS,
BUT DON'T TOUCH MY BEARD”

The Kapischnitzer Rebbe zt'l was one of the most widely respected and beloved Torah leaders of our times*. With the outbreak of the First World War in 1914, the Rebbe fled with his family to Vienna. When Jewish life was shattered by the German occupation of Vienna, the Rebbe was seized and forced to clean the streets to the amusement of the jeering Germans. On one occasion in an attempt to humiliate the Rebbe, the Germans sent one of their officers with a scissors to cut off his beard. The Rebbe promptly stuck out his hand and told the officer, “Rather cut off my fingers, but don't touch my beard.” The German, startled by the Rebbe's courage, miraculously left without carrying out his evil orders.

Heard from the grandson of the Kapischnitzer Rebbe zt'l, who heard it directly from his grandfather. [This incident was recently published in “Heroes of Spirit – 100 Rabbinic Tales of the Holocaust” by Rabbi Dovid Hoffman (Israel Bookshop, 2009), pg. 320].

Throughout Jewish history, Jews were *moser nefesh* not to cut their beards. An entire chapter in sefer *Hadras Ponim Zokon* (Part II, Chapter 14) features documented, amazing incidents regarding Jews of all backgrounds who risked their lives and livelihoods rather than cut their beards -- including under Nazi persecution during World War II and under Communist persecution in Russia.

“Jews would consider the beard .. a sacred article .. as ‘an organ on which the soul depends’.... The possibility of living without a hand or a foot was more acceptable [even to a simple Jew] than the possibility of living without a beard” (*Imrei Simchah*, Vol. I, p. 310).

* The Kapischnitzer Rebbe (R' Avrohom Yehoshua Heschel, 1888-1967), won the respect and the esteem of all the *gedolim* of his era. He was a member of Moetzes Gedolei Torah of Agudas Yisroel and founding member of Chinuch Atzmai. The Ponovezer Rov, R' Yosef Kahanaman zt'l, would often say that from the day the *Chofetz Chaim* was *niftar* he hadn't had a Rebbe until he met the Kapischnitzer Rebbe.

Chapter 5

IS RAV OVADIA YOSEF ZT'L A SOURCE TO PERMIT ELECTRIC SHAVERS?

Claim:

The late Rishon l'Tzion, Rav Ovadia Yosef zt'l, is cited as a source of leniency regarding shaving machines.

Response:

The position of HaGaon Rav Ovadia Yosef zt'l concerning shaving machines evolved over the years.

In a *shiur* delivered on Motzoei Shabbos Nasso 5768 (later published in *Yom l'Yom* issue 1002, dated 25 Cheshvan and in the Sefarim cited below after the Hebrew text), Rav Ovadia Yosef stated categorically that all electric shavers are forbidden and involve a Torah prohibition:

”הנוהגים לגלח את זקנם, יש להעיר להם שהתורה אמרה ולא תשחית פאת זקנך”. לא כתוב בתורה ‘בתער’, אלא כתוב ולא תשחית, כל גילוח שיש בו השחתה הוא אסור. מכונות הגילוח החשמליות המצויות כיום הם משחיתים ממש, עוקרים את השיער משרשו, יש בהם ספק גדול מהתורה שכל אדם שהוא עושה כן, הוא עובר על הלאו של ‘לא תשחית פאת זקנך’, לכן אני מייעץ להם שאל ישיחתו לגמרי את הזקן, לא ישתמשו במכונה חשמלית של גילוח אלא ישתמשו בכל דבר שישאיר מעט שיער, למשל מספרים שלא כעין תער, ואם יעשו כן תבוא עליהם ברכה, זוהי מצוה גדולה. אני רוצה להציג את זה מפני שיש אנשים הרבה לא יודעים, ‘כי לכל העם בשגגה’, משתמשים במכונות גילוח שהיא חשמלית והיא עוקרת ממש את השיער, זה כמו תער, וכבר עמדו על זה גאוני דורנו, ולא מצאו מנוח לדבר הזה, כל אחד ואחד המתגלח, יעשה כל מה שיכול לעשות שישאיר מעט עיקרי השיער, שלא יחתוך כל השיער כי זה אסור, לאו מן התורה, חמשה לאוין, על כל פאה ופאה חייב לאו אחד, לכן כל אחד ואחד עליו להזהר מזה, ולשומעים ונעם ועליהם

תבוא ברכת טוב". [דבריו נדפסו בס' לא תקיפו (אה"ק, תשע"ב) עמוד רי"ז ובס' הנוי והנצח (אה"ק, תשע"ח) עמוד 156].

Rav Ovadia Yosef's own son, the current Sephardic Chief Rabbi Rav Yitzchok Yosef (author of the popular halachah *sefarim Yalkut Yosef*), published a widely disseminated *kriah kedoshah* (reproduced in the *sefer Lo Sakifu*, Holon, 5772, p. 217) quoting his father as maintaining that no Jew should use shaving machines and promising good *shidduchim* to those who grow their beards.

"ראוי ונכון מאד לכל איש מישראל, ובפרט בני הישיבות היקרים שלא לגלח הזקן במכונות גילוח המצויות כיום... ההיתר הנז' הוא קלוש מאד, וקשה לסמוך עליו בשופי, ולכן יש להשתדל במאד לא לסמוך על התרים... ולכן חובה קדושה על כל אחד להיזהר בדבר ולחוש לאיסור תורה, ולנהוג כנזכר ומה' ישאו ברכה... וזכורני בימי צעירותינו, עד כמה מרן אאמו"ר ה' מזהיר... להשאיר את הזקן ולסדרו, והבטיח ברכה לבני הישיבות שלא יגלחו את זקנם שיזכו לדיווג הגון לשם שמים לעבודתו יתברך".

Additionally, in a *teshuvah* published in *Yabia Omer* (vol. 9, Y.D. section 10) Rav Ovadia Yosef concluded that a shaver which does not leave over stubble has the halachic status of a razor.

In the 6/21/04 issue of the Hebrew periodicals *Yahadus* and *HaTenuah*, it was reported that Maran Rav Ovadia Yosef had "radicalized his position" regarding shaving machines and prohibited all of them. In response, an official from the Shas party who did not yet have a beard declared that he would now grow one to comply with Maran Rav Yosef's ruling.

In addition, Maran Rav Yosef's grandson, Rav Ovadia Yosef Tolidano (author of the responsa *Meishiv Mishpat*), wrote a *teshuvah* explaining that according to his grandfather, *heterim* to use shaving machines should no longer be relied upon.

Chapter 6

IS RAV YOSEF ELIYAHU HENKIN ZT'L A SOURCE TO PERMIT ELECTRIC SHAVERS?

Claim:

Rav Yosef Eliyahu Henkin zt'l is also mentioned as a source for permitting electric shavers.

Response:

כתב הגרי"א הענקין זצ"ל
גילוח הזקן:
"אין זה רצון התורה"
ההיתר שעלין סומכים המגלחים זקנם:
"לבני התורה - אין היתר זה מספיק"

See the *sefer Edus l'Yisroel* p. 145, where Rav Yosef Eliyahu Henkin zt'l (referred to by Rav Elyashiv zt'l as the "*Mara d'Asra* of America" — see *Yeshurun* vol. 20, pp. 153f) wrote that although many people rely on halachic leniencies (*heterim*) to shave,¹ there are great Rishonim and Acharonim who vehemently disagreed and prohibited removing the beard (even) with scissors or depilatory cream (sam). “

אף יש איסור אבל, חיוב לענין רק נאמר וגילוח השחתה שדין הסוברים מהראשונים "יש לבד בהשחתה"

¹ The criteria for the leniency regarding which Rav Henkin wrote many people relied upon, are not found in contemporary shavers, as explained in the *sefer Hanoy v'Hanetzach* (Jerusalem, 5778, p. 155).

Rav Henkin then adds that even if a leniency can be found for removing the beard on halachic grounds, to do so violates the Will of Hashem, who ordained the mitzvah of growing the beard to distinguish Jews from non-Jews. Using any means to shave the beard gives one the appearance of a non-Jew and defeats the Torah's reason for this mitzvah.

Although the reasons for mitzvos are not halachically obligating, Rav Henkin continues, it is not the *ratzon hatorah* (the will of Hashem in His Torah) to contravene the Divine reason for mitzvos. (אין זה רצון התורה אם הוא עובר על הטעם)

Hence, Rav Henkin states, any leniencies regarding shaving are meant only for extraordinarily harsh circumstances (*shaas hadchack*) and are not for everyone to rely upon under normal circumstances. (והדין שהוא בניגוד להטעם "הוא רק פתח הצלה בשעת הדחק" [This is especially so nowadays, when it is illegal to discriminate in the workplace against a Jew who grows a beard.]

Rav Henkin concludes that for *b'nei Torah*, and especially for *Rabbonim*, any *heterim* to shave with a scissors-like device or to remove the beard with a depilatory cream are certainly not adequate. (לבני התורה ובפרט לרבנים אין היתר זה מספיק)

Rav Henkin goes on to provide additional halachic reasons why the beard should not be removed with shaving machines or depilatory cream:

Additionally, the peyos and beard serve as a shield to protect us from associating with evil company, because "the cursed does not cleave to the blessed" — namely, to someone with the appearance of a Jew. Chazal have already stated, "Create a fence to safeguard the Torah."

Furthermore, many unlawful people shave with razors and say they used powder. Many simple people don't understand the difference between them, and once permission has been granted to shave with powder, they do not differentiate [and shave with razors].

It is thus troubling that a halachah forum, whose listeners are “b’nei Torah or Rabbonim” not beset with “extraordinarily harsh circumstances,” would mislead its listeners into thinking that Rav Henkin zt’l is a source of leniency for shaving their beards (and disregard Rav Henkin’s insistence that they grow beards).

**“A BEARD IS NOT A MIDAS CHASSIDUS—
IT IS AN IKAR!”**

Rabbi Dov Yaffe zt’l, mashgiach of Yeshivas Knesses Chizkiyahu, relates:

I once asked the Chazon Ish if I should adopt a practice termed *midas chassidus*—not required by law but adhered to by the pious—if it will aggravate my parents.

“To which *midas chassidus* are you referring?” he asked.

“Growing a beard,” I replied.

“Growing a beard is not a *midas chassidus*,” he responded. “It is an *ikar*, a mainstream concept in Judaism. The definition of a *midas chassidus* is a conduct Torah demands only from select individuals of singular piety. A Torah path that everyone must follow, by contrast, is an *ikar*.”

“Why must your parents be pained by your decision?” he then added. “On the contrary, they should be happy!”

Indeed, when I arrived home and my parents saw that I had begun to grow a beard, they were happy with my decision.

Maaseh Ish vol. 3, p. 27

Chapter 7

IS RAV TZVI PESACH FRANK ZT'L A SOURCE TO PERMIT ELECTRIC SHAVERS?

Claim:

Another source quoted as permitting shaving machines is Rav Tzvi Pesach Frank zt'l (Rov of Yerushalayim and author of the responsa *Har Tzvi*).

Response:

What is often not mentioned is that in a later letter (printed in *Shaalos u'Teshuvos Chelkas Yaakov* vol. 3, section 39), Rav Tzvi Pesach Frank wrote regarding electric shavers that “since those who shaved using them emerged clean, with completely smooth skin on which there were no remnants [of hair], this type of shaving is considered to be a razor.” Hence, according to Rav Tzvi Pesach Frank, all modern shavers are prohibited (since “those who shave using them emerge clean, with completely smooth skin”).

There are those who assert that even according to the opinions that prohibit the use of shaving machines, the *issur* may be circumvented if one does not apply pressure and thereby avoids a close shave. The original source of this circumvention is a letter from Rav Tzvi Pesach Frank published in *Shaalos u'Teshuvos Chelkas Yaakov* (vol. 2, section 133). In that letter, Rav Tzvi Pesach Frank clarifies his position regarding shavers and states that he does not permit shavers which give

a close shave, but that the prohibition may be avoided by not pressing when shaving.

It should be noted that many poskim dispute and reject this method of circumvention, as documented in the *sefer Hadrash Ponim Zokon* (Section 2, end of ch. 1), including the *Minchas Yitzchok* (4:113:1), the *Chelkas Yaakov* itself (in a footnote to the same responsa that quotes Rav Tzvi Pesach Frank — vol. 3, section 39), Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, Rav Nissim Karelitz, Rav Srayah Deblitzki and others. Even Rav Ovadia Yosef, who cited this circumvention in *Yabia Omer* vol. 9, later reversed his opinion and adopted the position that it should not be relied upon, as his son, the current Rishon l'Tzion, wrote in his father's name in a halachic decision published in the *sefer Lo Sakifu* (pp. 216ff). The *heter* of avoiding to press is also rejected by Rav Moshe Sternbuch in *Teshuvos v'Hanhagos* (vol. 5, section 264). Moreover, Rav Elyashiv, widely accepted as Posek Hador, also categorically rejected this circumvention and ruled that if even just two hairs are cut close to the skin (which is inevitable even if one does avoid pressing), the shaver may not be used (*Ashrei Ha'Ish*, Y.D. p. 142).

❧ Chapter 8 ❧

IS *SHAALOS U'TESHUVOS TIROSH V'YITZHAR* A VALID SOURCE TO PERMIT ELECTRIC SHAVERS?

Claim:

The *Shaalos u'Teshuvos Tirosh v'Yitzhar* (by Rav Tzvi Yechezkel Michelson Hy"d, a member of the Rabbinic Council of Warsaw and one of the most prominent Rabbis of Poland, who perished in 1942 at age 80 in Treblinka) is cited as a source to permit shaving machines.

Response:

On the contrary: *Shaalos u'Teshuvos Tirosh v'Yitzhar* is a source to prohibit cutting the beard even with scissors or depilatory cream, as Rav Michelson sets forth at length in three responsa (published in section 68 of the *sefer* and dated 5666, 5670 and 5672). In these *teshuvos*, Rav Michelson states that the halachah is in accordance with the *sefer Zekan Avraham* (by Rav Avraham Chaim Danzigerkorn — Warsaw, 1913) which prohibits all forms of cutting the beard. Furthermore, in these *teshuvos* Rav Michelson cites numerous sources and proofs (in support of the *sefer Zekan Avraham*) to demonstrate that the beard should not be cut or removed in any manner. Rav Michelson states further that the lenient ruling in Shulchan Aruch regarding shaving with a close-cutting scissors is not a halachically valid basis to permit shaving.

The *teshuvah* in section 40 of the *sefer* (from the year 5686), noted as a source to permit shaving machines, is not in contradiction to the

aforementioned *teshuvos* in section 68, where Rav Michelson argues vigorously that the beard should not be removed by any means. Rather, the *teshuvah* in section 40 is referring to the question of whether someone who shaves is disqualified as a valid witness to permit an agunah to marry. [By Torah law, a person is disqualified from testifying if he willfully violates something that is recognized among the Jewish nation as a sin prohibited by the Torah and he doesn't repent. However, if it is possible that he sinned accidentally, or out of ignorance because he did not know it was prohibited, then the witness is not disqualified from testifying.] In this *teshuvah*, Rav Michelson writes that the specific witness under discussion should not be disqualified due to the fact that he shaves, since it is possible that the witness was not aware that shaving is prohibited, or alternatively, he may have used a shaving machine that operates like scissors, regarding which there is a lenient ruling in Shulchan Aruch. As long as there is a halachic source that the witness can rely upon, he is not disqualified.

Furthermore, the "machine" referred to in this *teshuvah* cannot possibly be a close-cutting electric shaving machine, since the original electric shavers first went on sale in New York City (not in Poland or Russia) on March 18, 1931, and this *teshuvah* was written in Europe in 1926. This is another reason why it is misleading to cite this *teshuvah* as a source to permit contemporary shavers.

Chapter 9

IS RAV AVROHOM YITZCHOK HAKOHEN KOOK ZT'L A VALID SOURCE TO PERMIT ELECTRIC SHAVERS?

Claim:

Rav Kook's sefer *Shaalos u'Teshuvos Orach Mishpat* (O.C. 128:53) is cited as a source to permit electric shavers.

Response:

This *teshuvah* from Rav Kook is a source to prohibit, not permit, electric shavers.

This is what is stated there:

”גילוח הזקן הוא חטא גדול ועובר על כמה לאוין, עכ”פ המגלחים ע”י המאשינקע ראוי להשאיר קצת עקרי השערות שלא יהי כעין תער וה”ה המגלחים במספריים”

”Shaving the beard is a severe transgression which involves several prohibitions. Those who do shave (whether with a machine or scissors) should be careful to leave over stubble, so that the shave is not in the category of *k’eyn ta’ar*.”

According to that ruling, contemporary electric shavers, which produce a clean shave and do not leave over stubble, would be prohibited.

Furthermore, the “machine” referred to in this *teshuvah* (which records admonitions made by Rav Kook before Pesach each year) cannot possibly be a close-cutting electric shaving machine, since, as stated above, the first electric shavers went on sale in New York City (not in

Poland, Russia or Israel) on March 18, 1931, just a few years before Rav Kook's passing in 1935. This is another reason why it is misleading to cite this *teshuvah* as a source to permit contemporary shavers.

One of the leading disciples of Rav Kook's son (Rav Tzvi Yehuda Kook), and editor of his *sichot*, who is considered today an authority on Rav Kook and a primary spiritual heir (who articulates Rav Kook's position on various issues), is Rav Shlomo Chaim HaKohen Aviner, author of the multi-volume responsa *Shaalos u'Teshuvos She'eilat Shlomo* and Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshiva Ateret Yerushalayim and Rav of Beit El.

In his *She'eilat Shlomo*, Rav Aviner discusses the status of shaving machines in halachah, and arrives at the following conclusion:

"למסקנה: רוב הרבנים אוסרים את מכונות הגילוח. מיעוט הרבנים מתירים במכונות מסוימות או בתנאי שלא יצמיד. אבל יותר טוב ללכת עם זקן ולחסוך אותנו מכל הבעיות... מרן הרב קוק תמה באיגרת אחת איך יכול להיות שיש פה שוחטים שאין להם זקן. הוא היה מזועזע מזה (שו"ת אורח משפט או"ח ס' לד). לכן יותר טוב עם זקן"

"In conclusion: Most Rabbonim forbid using shavers. A small number of Rabbonim allow using certain shavers, or on condition that one does not press down [with the shaver on the skin]. However, it is better to go with a beard and thus avoid all questions.... In a letter, our master Harav Kook expressed his wonder how it was possible for there to be *shochatim* here [in Yerushalayim] without a beard. He was extremely disturbed about this (*Shaalos u'Teshuvos Orach Mishpat*, O.C. section 34). Therefore, it is better to have a beard."

In *Torat HaRav Aviner*, Rav Shlomo Aviner replies to the following query:

"Q: I want to grow a beard but my mother is opposed. What should I do?

His response:

"A: You should grow it, and appease her by telling her that you want to marry a woman who wants a husband with a beard (Ha-Rav Chaim

Kanievsky related that the Chofetz Chaim also gave the same advice, and the mother of the man agreed that he should grow a beard. *Minchat Todah* p. 89).”

“Rav Kook once said to a Torah scholar that he should not round off or fix his beard at all (*Igrot Ha-Re'eiyah* 2, 101).”

In a halachic question-and-answer section on the *Srugim* website that appeared on 2/28/16, Rav Aviner addressed an IDF regulation, according to which permission would only be granted for soldiers to grow a beard if they could prove that they were religious, and produce a signed approval of certain high-ranking officers.

“These are dark days in the IDF,” he said, and he cited a Holocaust-era photo showing Nazi soldiers standing and laughing as they forced a Jewish man to shave the beard of another in the street.

“It doesn’t say anywhere that a non-religious Jew must shave, except in Nazi Germany,” Rav Aviner stated.

“Where is it written that a non-religious Jew must not grow a beard? According to Judaism, everyone should grow a beard. King David sent people to console the king of Ammon for the death of his father. The Ammonites caught them and shaved off half of their beards. King David ordered them to sit on the side until their beards grew back, because they were “very ashamed” (*Shmuel II* 2:5). Of course, half a beard was shameful. Why didn’t they shave off the other half of their beards? The commentators explain that the custom of all the Jews was to grow a beard.

In his famous book *Kiddush Hashem*, Rabbi Shimon Huberband told us how at the beginning of their persecutions, the Germans targeted Jews’ beards, cutting, burning and ripping them out. There was a hunt for Jews with beards in all Polish cities. There were places where a Jew who did not cut his beard was fined a hundred zlotys. He relates that when

the Germans issued an order to all Jews to report to the market to be shaved collectively, a rabbi who was friendly with a German priest convinced the priest to intercede for him, and the priest was consequently reprimanded. The head of the Gestapo issued a ruling that the rabbi could keep his beard in exchange for a hundred lashes. The old rabbi agreed, but in the twentieth lash he collapsed and was hospitalized.

When asked what one should say to a soldier who receives an order to cut his beard, Rav Aviner responded:

“He should not shave his beard, even if he gets a hundred lashes and sits in prison.”

Chapter 10

IS THE CHASAM SOFER'S ZT'L STATEMENT ABOUT THE RAMA OF MI'FANO ZT'L A VALID BASIS TO PERMIT SHAVING THE BEARD?

Claim:

The words of the Chasam Sofer regarding the status of the beard in the name of the great Kabbalist, the Rama of Fano (Rav Menachem Azarya of Fano, Italy, 1548-1620), were mentioned in support of those who adopt a lenient opinion regarding shaving.

Response:

An entire chapter of the *sefer Hadras Ponim Zokon* (Section 3, ch. 4) is dedicated to discussing this issue. Readers are encouraged to consult that source at length.

More recently, someone challenged the Gadol Hador, HaGaon Rav Chaim Kanievsky shlita, stating that this Chasam Sofer is in conflict with what Rav Chaim Kanievsky shlita wrote in his own *sefer, Orchos Yosher* (ch. 5), about the halachic status of shaving.

In response, Rav Chaim Kanievsky replied (as published in his *sefer Shaalos u'Teshuvos HaGrach, teshuvos chadashos*, sec. 398):

“Many have repudiated this [*teshuvah* from the Chasam Sofer].”

”שאלה: מש”כ מרן באורחות יושר סימן הדרת פנים, צ”ע משו”ת חת”ס אור”ח סו”ס קנ”ט. תשובה: רבים הכחישו זה” (ס’ תשובות הגר”ח - תשובות ממרן הגר”ח קניבסקי שליט”א - תשובות חדשות סימן שצח, עמ’ רז).

What follows is how the Minchas Elazar (vol. 2, section 48) responded to this issue:

(Please note that what appears below does not constitute the Minchas Elazar personally disputing the Chasam Sofer. Rather, the Minchas Elazar addresses the fact that the Chasam Sofer cited one of the Gedolei Hador before his time, and brings proof that what the Chasam Sofer wrote represents a factual error. Indeed, in a later *teshuvah* regarding shaving, where the Chasam Sofer clarified and reversed much of what he wrote in the earlier *teshuvah*, the Chasam Sofer no longer mentioned the Rama of Fano.)

THE CONDUCT OF THE SAGE, RAMA OF FANO

I will now mention a second bewildering issue that is raised by the words of the Gaon, the Chasam Sofer. He writes: “Because of them and the masses who followed them, license was granted in all of Italy. All of the sages of [that land] cut their beards. As support, they rely on ^[1] the leader of the Kabbalists, [Rama of Fano,] the author of the text *Asarah Maamaros*,^[2] whose beard was entirely removed without one hair remaining. Testimony to this effect was made by the “Yashar of Candia”^[3] in his text *Eilim*. He would say that, according to the Kabbalists, the Diaspora is not fitting for such conduct.”^{[4]b}

[1] Literally, “hang from a great tree” (cf. Pesachim 112a, *et al*).

[2] Rabbi Menachem Azariah (Rama, רמ”ע) of Pano, Italy (5308 [1548]—5380 [1620]).

[3] An acronym for R. Yosef Shlomo Rofei (the physician) Delmedigo (5351 [1591]—5416 [1655]).

[4] See the discussion of Rama’s statement in the *sefer Hadrass Ponim Zokon* (Section 3 ch. 4, pp. 629ff).

I stood [in shock, overwhelmed] with amazement. For in the *Eilim*, there is no testimony from the Yashar of Candia concerning Rama of Fano. [Instead,] it was the student of the *Yashar* who wrote in the preface of the *Eilim* that the Yashar would cut his beard.

(In his biography there, this practice was justified because he was on close terms with the king and his officers. He served as an expert doctor in their castles for several years. [Hence,] leniency was granted to him, as leniency was granted to the House of Rabban Gamliel to style their hair, because they were on close terms with the rulers,^[5] as stated in the Shulchan Aruch, [Yoreh Deah,] section 178. Moreover, it was only during his youth that he would cut his beard.)

With regard to Rama of Fano, by contrast, nothing of this sort was heard at all. We are forced to say that the pen of the great Gaon erred in [his responsum in] the Chasam Sofer and there was another book that he had in mind, the collection of responsa entitled *Be'er Eisek*.^[6] [There] (in responsum 70), that author writes that Rama of Pan would cut his beard. (For this reason “the well was called *Eisek*, because there was controversy”^[7] with the author [of this collection of responsa] also with regard to ordinary wine^[8] over which he allowed Kiddush to be recited. See the Responsa of *Yaavetz*, vol. 1, responsum 45, and other later scholars, who wrote concerning the subject [in opposition to the opinion of the *Be'er Eisek*]. I also wrote concerning that matter in my work, *Minchas Elazar*, vol. 2, responsum 18.)

[5] See Sotah 49b, *et al.*

[6] A collection of responsa written by R. Shabbetai Baer, published in Venice in 5434 (1674). See the discussion of his position in the *sefer Hadrash Ponim Zokon* (Section 3 ch. 5, pp. 642ff).

[7] Cf. Bereishis 26:20. The *Minchas Elazar* is referring to the verse to make a play on the name of the text, for *eisek* can also mean controversy.

[8] I.e., wine moved by gentiles who are not known to be idolaters. According to Rabbinic decree (Avodah Zarah 36b; Rambam, Hilchos Ma'achalos Assuros 11:3), such wine is forbidden like wine that was actually used as a libation to a false deity.

In response [to the allegation of the *Be'er Eisek* that Rama of Fano would trim his beard], in his collection of responsa, *Divrei Yosef*, section 25, the Gaon R. Yosef Irgaz arose and contradicted the abovementioned testimony, stating that he saw a picture of Rama in which he had a full and flowing beard. Many others have also given similar testimony, contradicting the statements in *Be'er Eisek* and stating that his words should not be relied upon concerning this issue. As such, [R. Avraham Danzigerkorn], the Rav from Warsaw, wrote appropriately that had the Chasam Sofer seen the responsum *Divrei Yosef*, he would have recanted and would not have built a foundation on the words of the *Be'er Eisek* alone, for he was contradicted and refuted by the *Divrei Yosef* who was a world-renowned Gaon in both the revealed realm of Torah Law and its hidden mystic secrets. A limited measure of the praise due him can be seen from the words of the author of the *Yad Malachi*^[9] in his foreword to the responsum *Divrei Yosef* where he elaborates for many pages on the greatness and praise of [that author]. Certainly, if the Gaon Chasam Sofer would have seen [his work], he would have rejected the words of the *Be'er Eisek* because of the words of the *Divrei Yosef*.

This concludes the quotation from the Minchas Elazar.

[9] A handbook of principles of Talmudic analysis written by R. Malachi HaCohen of Italy, published in 5527 (1767).

Chapter 11

DID RAV ELYASHIV ZT'L CONSIDER ELECTRIC SHAVERS TO BE A SOFEK PROHIBITION OR A VADAI?

Claim:

It was stated that according to Rav Yosef Sholom Elyashiv zt'l, Posek Hador, the use of shaving machines involves (only) a “*sofek issur d'oraysa*.”

Response:

This appears to be a misstatement of Rav Elyashiv's position regarding shaving machines.

Rav Elyashiv zt'l wrote in a *teshuvah* published in his *sefer Kovetz Teshuvos* (vol. 1, section 32) that the electric shavers of today are unquestionably infinitely Halachicly worse than those that existed in the time of the Chofetz Chaim and were prohibited by him, because modern machines shave much more closely to the skin, and shaving with them is an “*issur Torah mamosh*” — a definite and absolute Torah prohibition (and not just a “*sofek issur d'oraysa*”).

Moreover, Rav Elyashiv was asked to sign the unequivocal Psak Din of the greatest Poskim of our times stating that shaving machines are the halachic equivalent of a razor, and that “using any shaver that leaves the face smooth, even if it removes only two hairs, violates the prohibition of ‘Do not destroy the edges of your beard.’” Rav Elyashiv zt'l refused to sign the original draft of the Psak Din until its wording was changed to

indicate a *vadai* prohibition, as is related in the authoritative collection of Rav Elyashiv's halachic decisions *Ashrei Ha'ish*, Y.D. p. 143.

יצויין שכשהביאו קול קורא זה קמ' רבינו הגר"ש אלישיב, וה' כתוב שם שהמכונות גילוח הם ב'חשש' איסור תער, סירב רבינו לחתום ע"ז, עד שיתוקן לאיסור 'ודאי' ולא בלשון 'חששא' (ס' אשרי האיש - פסקי מרן הגר"ש אלישיב - יו"ד ח"א עמ' קמג).

Chapter 12

IS THE OPINION OF HAGAON RAV MOSHE FEINSTEIN ZT'L AN ADEQUATE BASIS TO PERMIT ELECTRIC SHAVERS?

Claim:

It was reported that shaving machines are permissible according to the opinion of HaGaon **Rav Moshe Feinstein** zt'l, author of *Igros Moshe*, who was considered to be the *Posek Hador* and *Mara d'Asra* of America.

Response:

A response to that argument was published in the *Ohr Yisroel* (Monsey) Torah journal (vol. 68, p. 382), which includes the handwritten endorsement by HaGaon Rav Chaim Kanievsky shlita of its content (and it is reproduced below as an addendum to this publication).

Following are some of the essential points raised in that article, with some additional clarifications:

- 1: The *Gedolei Hador* during and after the time of the *Igros Moshe* rejected his reported position concerning shaving machines / 2: The halachah is in accordance with the latter *Poskim* / 3: The *Igros Moshe* never recorded the reported *heter* in his *sefarim* / 4: Shavers have become more halachicly problematic since the passing of the *Igros Moshe* / 5: Those who adopt the leniencies of the *Igros Moshe* often do so without halachic sanction / 6: The *Igros Moshe* himself held that Jews should have beards

1:

THE GEDOLEI HADOR DURING AND AFTER THE TIME OF THE IGROS MOSHE
REJECTED HIS REPORTED POSITION CONCERNING SHAVING MACHINES

In the most recently published volume of responsa *Shevet HaLevi* (vol. 11, Y.D. section 198), Rav Shmuel Halevi Vosner zt'l (referred to by many as the Posek Hador) wrote:

“With regard to shaving machines...it was agreed by all the Geonim...that there is no difference between [using] them and [using] a razor... The Gaon R. Moshe Feinstein sought to make a distinction between today’s [shaving machines] and a razor and advanced a theory [in justification].... That theory is not correct and has not been accepted (אינה נכונה ולא נתקבלה) *aynah nechonah v’lo niskablah*).”

[It is important to add that Rav Vosner personally discussed the halachah of shaving machines with Rav Moshe Feinstein during a face-to-face meeting between these two Gedolim which took place in 1978, during a visit by Rav Vosner to New York (on behalf of Vaad Mishmeres Stam). For further reflections by Rav Vosner regarding this visit with Rav Moshe Feinstein and their exchange regarding shaving machines, see Rav Vosner’s revealing letter dated 9 Nissan, 5738, published in *Hadras Ponim Zokon* (third ed., *miluyim* to Section 2 ch. 1, p. 729).]

In addition, in the 5778 issue of Agudas Yisroel of America’s *Am HaTorah* journal (5:9), Rav Pesach Eliyahu Falk (Rov in Gateshead and author of responsa *Machzeh Eliyahu* and many other halachic works) testified that he personally heard from Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach zt'l how he rejected the reported reasoning of Rav Moshe Feinstein zt'l to be lenient regarding electric shavers.

Indeed, many Poskim wrote clearly that one may not rely on the Igros Moshe regarding shaving machines. The Poskim include the Steipler

Gaon in *Orchos Rabbeinu* vol. 1, Hosafos Chadashos p. 38.; Rav Elyashiv; the Debretziner Rov, author of *Shaalos u'Teshuvos Be'er Moshe*, in his letter published in *Hadras Ponim Zokon* p. 22 (where he writes that he does not believe Rav Moshe Feinstein zt'l ever issued such a *heter*); and Rav Moshe Sternbuch (in *Teshuvos v'Hanhagos*, vol. 5, section 264).

See also the public letter of Rav Elchonon Halpern zt'l (*nossi* of His'achdus Kehillas Hachareidim in England) dated 15 Kislev 5764, where he wrote:

"אליכם אישים אקרא, זה זמנים טובא במשמע, על המכשלה הגדולה שנפרצה גם בין יודעי-ספר, ההשתמשות לגלוח שערות הזקן ע"י מכונות חשמליות, שעיווערס בלע"ז, שהמתבונן בספר "הדרת פנים זקן" לה"ר משה ווינער הי"ו מנויארק, שיצא לאור עולם זה יותר מעשרים שנה, יראה וידע וישכיל, שעוברים באיסורי ולאוי דאורייתא. ושקר ענו בנו בשם גדול או גדולים, שישנן מכונות כאלו, שמותרות להתגלח על ידיהן, יסכר פי דוברי שקר. בכך נא ונא חוסו עליכם, ותפסיקו מלהשתמש בשום מכונה המעבירה כל השער.

"גם אל הנשים-צדקניות אני פונה לבא לעזרת ד' בגיבורים, גבורתה של תורה, להשפיע על בעליהן לתקן הפירצה הנוראה, ויקויים הכתוב בשייר השירים, הראיני את מראיך השמיעיני את קולך, כי קולך ערב ומראיך נאוה, ששמיעת קול תפלתנו במרום תלוי בראיית פנינו, ושכרכם הטוב תהיה שלימה מעם ד' מן השמים, ולשומעים יונעם ותבוא עליכם ברכת טוב."

"Although it has been repeated in the name of one or more Gedolim that there are certain shavers that may be used, this is not true; may the mouths of those who speak falsehood be shut! I therefore request of you to please have mercy upon yourselves and discontinue using any shaver that removes all the hairs of the beard."

2:

THE HALACHAH IS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE LATTER POSKIM

There is a universally accepted rule in halachah that "*halachah kebasroy*" — the halachah is in accordance with the latter Poskim (see

Shulchan Aruch, Choshen Mishpat 25). Reproduced above, chapter 2, please find the unequivocal Psak Din of the greatest Poskim of our times stating that shaving machines are the halachic equivalent of a razor and that “using any shaver that leaves the face smooth, even if it removes only a minimal two hairs, violates the prohibition of ‘Do not destroy the edges of your beard.’” In other words, there is no such thing as a “kosher shaver,” since all contemporary shavers (including those some call “kosher”) leave the face smooth.

The Psak Din explains that this was the opinion of the Chofetz Chaim, the Chazon Ish, the Steipler Gaon and Rav Schach, and it was signed by our leading Gedolim, including Rav Elyashiv zt'l (who, as mentioned there, refused to sign the Psak Din until its wording was changed to indicate a clear prohibition), Rav Aharon L. Steinman zt'l, Rav Shmuel Halevi Wosner zt'l, Rav Michel Y. Lefkowitz zt'l, Rav Nissim Karelitz shlita, Rav Chaim Kanievisky shlita, Rav Shmuel Auerbach zt'l, Rav Nosson Tzvi Finkel zt'l, and another twenty-six (26) of the most prominent Litvishe Roshei Yeshiva of our times. All these Gedolim were aware of Rav Moshe Feinstein's zt'l position regarding electric shavers — and rejected it.

Included among those who disputed the *heter* of the Igros Moshe were his own contemporary Gedolei Hador in America, including Rav Aharon Kotler zt'l,¹ Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky zt'l and others (colleagues

1 Another high-profile example of a leniency of the Igros Moshe which was vehemently rejected by Rav Aharon Kotler, and regarding which the yeshivish communities follow Rav Aharon Kotler (and not the Igros Moshe), is the **height of the mechitzah in shuls** (see, for example, Igros Moshe O.C. 1:39; O.C. 2:43; Y.D. 2:109). How ardently Rav Aharon Kotler opposed the leniency of the Igros Moshe is evident from the following incident: “In the late fifties, while driving, the Rosh Yeshiva [R' Aharon Kotler zt'l] inadvertently pushed open the car door and fell out, resulting in a fracture of his arm. ‘Chipesh Umotzo’ – he searched and found and said afterwards that he believes he should have gone further to oppose the prevailing lenient practice (albeit authorized by a great Poseik) regarding the height of a Shul's Mechitza, and hence the punishment” (*A Living Mishnas Rav Aharon*, p. 440).

in the Moetzes Gedolei Torah of Agudas Yisroel), as will be discussed below (in chapters 13 and 20).

See also *Shaalos u'Teshuvos Minchas Yitzchok* (vol. 4, section 113) where the Minchas Yitzchok, one of the greatest Poskim of our times, wrote:

“I searched the works of the great Acharonim in the hope of finding a halachic basis to defend the practice of allowing [the use of electric shavers], but not only did I not find a source to be lenient, on the contrary — I found that they all agree to be stringent [and prohibit shaving machines].”

3:

THE IGROS MOSHE NEVER RECORDED THE REPORTED *HETER* IN HIS *SEFARIM*

Rav Moshe Feinstein zt'l never committed his *heter* regarding shaving machines to writing. There are various versions why Rav Moshe Feinstein zt'l permitted shaving machines and which machines he permitted. Hence the following question must be asked: Regarding which other Torah prohibition would an observant Jew base his behavior on oral

Another example is **Cholov Yisroel**. Here also, Rav Aharon Kotler was stringent and dismissed the well-known *heter* of the Igros Moshe (as is documented in the authoritative biography of Rav Aharon Kotler *Aish HaTorah* by Rav Aharon Sorosky, acclaimed biographer of many Gedolim, vol. 2, p. 287). It is often ignored that the Igros Moshe himself wrote that his leniency to consume milk under government (but not Jewish) supervision was intended only in situations which constitute *sha'as hadchak*, and not for convenience or to prevent minimal monetary loss (see Igros Moshe Y.D. 4:5). Nowadays, Litvishe yeshivos fervently discourage their students from consuming dairy products which are not genuine Cholov Yisroel (although technically permitted according to the Igros Moshe). My Menahel and Rebbe in Yeshivas Ner Israel (Baltimore), Rav Yosef Tendler zt'l, related that when he moved to Baltimore with his young family, there was no Cholov Yisroel available in the area. Despite the hardships involved, Rav Aharon Kotler instructed him to use only full-fledged Cholov Yisroel (despite the fact that Rav Tendler originated from the Igros Moshe's community in the lower East Side of Manhattan). Thus, for many years he imported Cholov Yisroel to Baltimore. Eventually Rav Tendler was the one who established full-fledged Cholov Yisroel in the Baltimore area.

accounts of the opinion of one Gadol (no matter how great he might be) when it is in conflict with the written rulings of the greatest Poskim of our times? This is especially so considering that the prohibition of removing the beard is as severe as (or more severe than) *chilul Shabbos* (as explained by Rav Moshe Sternbuch in several *teshuvos* – see above at the end of chapter 2).

4:

SHAVERS HAVE BECOME MORE HALACHICLY PROBLEMATIC SINCE THE PASSING OF THE IGROS MOSHE

It is over three decades since the passing of Rav Moshe Feinstein zt'l, and shaving machines have since changed and improved. Accordingly, there is no way of knowing with certainty whether or not his reported *heter* applies to contemporary shavers, especially since we have no written record of why Rav Moshe Feinstein zt'l permitted certain machines. Indeed, Rav Moshe Feinstein's zt'l son, Rav Dovid Feinstein shlita, stated that even according to his father's *heter*, "there is no widely available shaver that can be purchased and used as is" (*The Laws of Pesach: A Digest* by Rav Blumenkrantz zt'l, 5771 ed., p. 421). Similarly, *Yated Ne'eman* (Hebrew) (5769, issue 10) quotes Rav Moshe Feinstein zt'l's son Rav Reuven Feinstein shlita as saying that currently there are no shavers which would meet his father's requirements for a *heter*. It is also apparent from Igros Moshe E.H. 2:12 that the shaving machines Rav Moshe Feinstein zt'l was familiar with did not produce a close shave, since he writes there that it is obvious to onlookers whether one shaved with a razor or with a shaving machine. Contemporary shavers, in contrast, shave as close as a razor and it is not obvious to onlookers whether a razor or shaver was used.

5:

THOSE WHO ADOPT THE LENIENCIES OF THE IGROS MOSHE
OFTEN DO SO WITHOUT HALACHIC SANCTION

Rav Yisroel Salanter zt'l wrote (in the introduction to the *sefer Ohr HaYom*) that one cannot accept the leniencies of even the greatest Gadol b'Yisroel unless one also accepts his stringencies (he wrote this even regarding a Gadol of the stature of the Vilna Gaon zt'l).

The Igros Moshe himself advanced a similar concept in O.C. 2:60, where he posits that one may conduct oneself according to the Vilna Gaon in cases where he is a minority opinion only if one adheres to all of the Vilna Gaon's halachic rulings, both stringent and lenient.

Do all those who shave their beards, relying on Rav Moshe Feinstein zt'l's reported heter (where he is clearly a minority opinion disputed by the great Poskim of the previous and current generations), also follow all of Rav Moshe Feinstein zt'l's numerous chumros (stringencies)?

Examples include:

- ☞ Using a Shabbos clock (the Igros Moshe [O.C. 4:60] rules that one may not set a timer before Shabbos in order to cause a *melachah* to be performed on Shabbos).
- ☞ Listening to music (the Igros Moshe [O.C. 1:166; Y.D. 1:173; Y.D. 2:111 and 142] concludes that all instrumental music is forbidden, and that a *ba'al nefesh* should avoid listening to any form of singing).
- ☞ Carrying on Shabbos in communities in large metropolitan areas where *eiruv* have been established (the Igros Moshe disputes the validity of *eiruv* in neighborhoods such as Williamsburg [O.C. 1:138 and 140; Y.D. 3:161], Manhattan

[O.C. 1:139; O.C. 4:89; Y.D. 3:161], Flatbush [O.C. 4:87-88; O.C. 5:28-29; Y.D. 3:161], Borough Park [O.C. 5:28-29 and 89; Y.D. 3:161] and Detroit [O.C. 5:29]).

- ☞ Wearing a *tallis katan* made out of a material other than wool (the Igros Moshe [O.C. 1:2; 2:1; 3:1; 3:52] advocates wearing a woolen *tallis katan*, and states that he himself did so even in the heat of summer. According to Igros Moshe, O.C. 2:1, wearing a talis koton made of synthetic fabric would present the following problems: 1) non-fulfillment of the mitzvah, 2) uttering a blessing in vain, 3) carrying on Shabbos).
- ☞ Eating veal (the Igros Moshe [EH 4:92:2] rules that a ba'al nefesh should refrain from consuming veal).
- ☞ Shaking hands with a woman (Igros Moshe O.C. I:113 and EH 4:32:9 state that shaking hands with a woman “is clearly forbidden;” “is certainly clearly forbidden.” See also EH 1:56 where the conclusion is that practically speaking it is difficult to rely on any leniency).
- ☞ Attending sports stadiums and theaters (Igros Moshe Y.D. 4:11:1 rules that going to sports stadiums and theaters is forbidden due to the prohibitions of *Moshav Leitzim*, *Bitul Torah* and promiscuity [but not due to *Chukos Goyim*]).
(There are additional examples as well.)

6:

THE IGROS MOSHE HIMSELF HELD THAT JEWS SHOULD NOT SHAVE

See also *Meged Givos Olam* (vol. 1, p. 96) where Rav Shurkin writes that he heard that **the reason why Rav Moshe did not want to write this *teshuvah* permitting shaving machines in Igros Moshe is because while (according to the Igros Moshe) it is technically permitted to shave, the**

tzurah of a Yid is with a beard. If Rav Moshe Feinstein zt'l did not publish his opinion regarding this matter for this reason (because the proper appearance of a Jew is with a beard, and publication of such a *heter* would encourage people to shave), then why do people who respect Rav Moshe Feinstein zt'l publicize what Rav Moshe Feinstein zt'l deliberately did not want publicized? Moreover, if Rav Moshe Feinstein zt'l is of the opinion that "the *tzurah* of a Yid is with a beard" (to the extent that he would not write a *teshuvah* stating that shaving is technically permitted, out of concern that it would embolden people to remove their beards), why don't these forums (which purport to represent Rav Moshe Feinstein zt'l's position) advocate that listeners grow their beards, in accordance with Rav Moshe Feinstein zt'l's viewpoint?

[This attestation why Rav Moshe Feinstein zt'l did not publish his *heter* regarding shaving machines is also recorded in the popular publication *Daf Yomi Digest*, a daily resource for thousands of Daf Yomi learners worldwide, compiled by the Ruben Shas Kollel and published by Chicago Center for Torah & Chesed, under the leadership of HaRav Yehoshua Eichenstein shlita and HaRav Pinchas Eichenstein shlita, Rosh Kollel. In their issue on Nazir *daf* 40, the following is documented as clarification of Rav Moshe Feinstein zt'l's position:

"It is well known that Rav Moshe Feinstein, zt'l, did permit the use of certain electric shavers. Someone once approached him and asked why he didn't write a *teshuvah* outlining the parameters of which shavers are permitted and which are not. 'After all, your *teshuvos* cover every subject under the sun!'" Rav Moshe explained, 'Although I permit this practice halachically, I don't want to write a *teshuvah* formally permitting this since the proper way is for a Jew to have a beard. Although this is not halachically prohibited, a Jew ought to grow a beard!'"

Chapter 13

IS IT ACCURATE TO SAY THAT ONLY THE ISRAELI GEDOLIM PROHIBITED ELECTRIC SHAVERS BUT NOT THE AMERICAN GEDOLIM?

Claim:

It is implied that only the Gedolim of Eretz Yisroel prohibit shaving machines, but not the Gedolim of America.

Response:

1) This assertion is disputed and refuted by what was *written* by a Gadol Hador in America, the contemporary of Rav Moshe Feinstein zt'l, namely, Rav Yaakov Kamenetzky zt'l (who was certainly familiar with Rav Moshe Feinstein's position regarding shaving with electric shavers). In his *sefer Emes l'Yaakov* on Shulchan Aruch (Y.D. 181), Rav Yaakov Kamenetzky zt'l wrote (to his grandson) that there is no *mesorah* from the Rabbonim in America that can be relied upon to permit the use of electric shavers. To quote Rav Yaakov Kamenetzky zt'l:

“Regarding [the prohibition of using] machines to shave [the beard], this is not just a *chumra* [halachic strictness] but a substantive [halachic] issue.... In fact, I do not know whether the great Torah authorities (Gedolim) of America [ever] explicitly permitted them; it is possible that they kept silent because no one asked them [their opinion], and they avoided the issue, knowing that their words would not be heeded.... It

is difficult to rely upon [any] tradition (*mesorah*) [to be lenient].”

As is well known, Rav Moshe Feinstein zt'l greatly respected the halachic decisions of Rav Yaakov Kamenetzky zt'l.

Furthermore, in a letter dated 6 Shevat 5774, Rav Yaakov's son, Rav Noson Kamenetzky, wrote to Rav Hillel Dovid Litwack of Flatbush (author of many *sefarim*): “I hereby attest that my father [Rav Yaakov Kamenetzky] never, ever permitted shaving machines.”

2) Furthermore, regarding the aforementioned American *mesorah*, the other Gadol in America (of similar stature to Rav Moshe Feinstein zt'l and Rav Yaakov Kamenetzky zt'l) was Rav Aharon Kotler zt'l. According to the testimony of Rav Aharon Kotler's zt'l major *talmidim* (such as Rav Moshe Heinemann, Rav Eliya Ber Wachtfogel, Rav Yechiel Perr, and others in letters published in the *sefer Hadrass Ponim Zokon* Section 2, ch. 1), Rav Aharon Kotler ruled that electric shavers are absolutely prohibited. In fact, Rav Aharon Kotler zt'l told Rav Menachem Perr zt'l that he may not give electric shavers to his non-religious congregants to use instead of razors (see the *sefer Hadrass Ponim Zokon* Section 2, ch. 1. This is also related in a letter written by his son, Rav Yechiel Perr shlita, Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshiva Derech Ayson in Far Rockaway, printed in the *miluyim* to the *sefer Hadrass Ponim Zokon*).

Additionally, Rav Aharon Kotler's zt'l grandson, Rav Malkiel Kotler shlita, along with the other Roshei Yeshiva of Lakewood, wrote a public letter (which was posted on the Beth Medrash Gavoha bulletin board) attesting that Rav Aharon Kotler zt'l considered electric shavers to be prohibited.

[For additional documentation regarding Rav Aharon Kotler's zt'l position regarding shaving, see below chapter 20. See above, chapter 12,

footnote 2, regarding other examples where Rav Aharon Kotler zt'l disputed Halachic positions of the Igros Moshe.]

3) The “first American Gadol,” Rav Gedaliah Schorr zt'l, Rosh Yeshiva of Torah Vodaas [this expression calling Rav Schorr the “first American Gadol” was coined by Rav Aharon Kotler zt'l], prohibited shaving machines (although he was certainly aware of the Igros Moshe’s opinion regarding this issue).

In his *haskamah* to the *sefer Hadrash Ponim Zokan*, Rav Gedaliah Schorr called the *sefer* a “*chibur nifla*” and “*sefer yakar*.” He continued to write that the Gedolim of both previous generations and our generation were concerned that the use of shaving machines involves a Torah prohibition, and that all *b'nei Torah* should learn the *sefer* so they will avoid a severe Torah prohibition.

4) Another American Gadol, Rav Yitzchok Hutner zt'l (Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshiva Chaim Berlin), attested that Rav Chaim Ozer Grodzinski zt'l (Rov of Vilna, author of *Achiezer* and Posek Hador of his generation) considered the shaving machines of his time to constitute a “*sofek issur d'oraysa*” [when there is a doubt about a fact where a Torah prohibition applies, halacha requires that the strict position regarding the rule be taken] (quoted in *Sefer Hadrash Ponim Zokan, miluyim* to Section 2 ch. 1, p. 715; see there for corroborating testimony from Rav Chaim Ozer’s personal barber), as discussed above in chapter 3 of this work.

Similarly, Rav Avrohom Asher Zimmerman zt'l (who served as a Rov in Borough Park and was a prominent Posek in the Yeshiva world) testified in a letter (published in *Hadrash Ponim Zokan*, third ed., *miluyim* to Section 2 ch. 1, p. 717) that when he was in Vilna in 1935-1936, he showed a Schick Shaver to Rav Chaim Ozer on behalf of Yeshiva Torah Vodaas, and Rav Chaim Ozer would not permit it.

Regarding rumors that Rav Chaim Ozer zt'l permitted the use of shavers, see *Halichos Shlomo (tefilah, 2:7, note 24)* where Rav Shlomo Zalman

Auerbach zt'l ruled that one cannot rely on that rumor, as well as on any *heter* granted by any Rov for any shaving machine of past generations, since those machines did not cut the facial hair as close to the skin and did not produce as clean of a shave as contemporary shavers do (as already discussed above, chapter 4).

See further in *Halichos Shlomo* (ibid.) where a letter from Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach zt'l to the author of the *sefer Hadras Ponim Zokon* is quoted, stating: "In my humble opinion, by publishing this *sefer* you are accomplishing something positive and beneficial. Perhaps through this *sefer* the issues will be elucidated and clarified, thereby saving the Jewish public from a severe transgression."

Chapter 14

IS IT ACCURATE TO SAY THAT THE TZEMACH TZEDEK ZT'L HALACHICALLY PROHIBITED ONLY TOTAL REMOVAL OF THE BEARD BUT NOT TRIMMING?

Claim:

It was stated that the opinion of the Tzemach Tzedek (Y.D. 93) is that the halachic prohibitions involved in removing the beard apply only to shaving the beard entirely, but not to trimming the beard.

Response:

This is a gross misrepresentation of the position of the Tzemach Tzedek. The Tzemach Tzedek writes in his *teshuvah* that shortening/trimming the beard is also forbidden, for various halachic considerations which he discusses. In the words of the Tzemach Tzedek himself:

”וא”כ במספרים כעין תער ודאי אסור אך העיקר דאף שלא כעין תער אסור”

See also *S'dei Chemed* (*klalim*, Lamed, par. 116), who writes (in reference to a Rov who was lenient regarding shaving):

”אומר אני שאם ה' למראה עיניו כל מה שהאריך הגאון צמח צדק בתשובה הנ”ל ה' חוזר בו מסברתו וה' אוסר אף במספרים שלא כעין תער” (שדי חמד כללים מע' הלמ”ד כלל קט”ז)

“If he [the lenient Rov] would have seen all that the Gaon the Tzemach Tzedek wrote in his lengthy *teshuvah*, he would have retracted his

opinion in this matter and would have prohibited even trimming the beard.”

The *S'dei Chemed's* concluding words regarding this matter are quoted below, chapter 21.



FOLLOWING ARE CLEAR STATEMENTS BY THE LAST THREE LUBAVITCHER REBBES ZT'L REGARDING THE POSITION OF THE TZEMACH TZEDEK ON TRIMMING THE BEARD:

THE REBBE RASHAB ZT'L:

מודעה רבה

לאחב"י מאמינים בני מאמינים, היות כאשר נמצאים רבים המקילין לעצמן להשחית¹ פאת זקנם במספרים ותולים א"ע במה שהובא בשו"ע ואומרים שעושים זאת עפ"י דין דשו"ע, עלינו החיוב להודיע ברבים **כי טועים המה** כי איסור גמור הוא מדאורייתא כמו שהוכיחו ובררו הרבה גאונים קדמאי ובתראי שעוברים בזה על כמה לאווין וכמו שהוכיח כ"ק אדמו"ר נבג"מ הצ"צ וגם הגאון החכם חזקי' דיא מודינא בשד"ח מביא כמה גאונים ובראשם הגאון בעל מעשה רוקח, וגם הגאון חיד"א בספרו הגדול ברכי יוסף החליט לאיסור חמור... וכאו"א מחויב להודיע לאנשי ביתו האיסור החמור הזה למען לא יה' שורש שיצמח ממנו פרה ראש ולענה מב"ב וכל הדברים אשר כתבנו שבוע העברה ידעו שכל הדברים אמורים עפ"י דת תוה"ק ומי שיעבור ע"ז ידע שעון הזה תלוי בראשו, והשומע לדברינו אלה יתברך בברכה מרובה בכט"ס. אגרות קודש אדמו"ר מוהרש"ב ח"ב ע' תתקכז ושו"ת תורת שלום סימן מה

1 Although the word "להשחית" in general implies total removal of the facial hair (and not just trimming), we find however that the Rebbe Rashab uses this term to refer to (even minimal) trimming of the beard. See his Igros Kodesh (vol. 1, # 118):

“גם כאשר שמעתי שיש בין כוללינו צעירים המשחיתים זקנם ר"ל, גם עליהם (ו"ל על הנוגעים בזקנם בהשחתה כל שהוא, וכ"ש במספרים שלא כעין תער) תחול תוקף הגזירה הזאת, לבלי ליתן להם (להעובר לבדו) מן הכולל.”
 “Also, I have heard that among [the beneficiaries of] our Colel [the Colel Chabad communal fund in the Holy Land] are young men who cut their beards, may the Merciful One save us. Therefore, the full force of this directive — not to give them support from the Colel — applies to them too, namely, to those who touch [cut] their beards even slightly, (“הנוגעים בזקנם בהשחתה כל שהוא”) and how much more so to those who trim their beards using scissors.”

Important Announcement

To our Jewish brethren, “believers, and children of believers”:

There are many who are lenient and cut their beards with scissors, basing it on what is quoted in Shulchan Aruch, and declaring that they are acting in accordance with the halachah as stated in Shulchan Aruch .

It is our obligation to announce publicly that they are in error, for this is absolutely prohibited (*issur gomur*) according to Torah law (*mid'oraysa*), as many of the earlier and later Torah giants (*Rishonim* and *Acharonim*) have proven and clarified that those who do so transgress several Torah prohibitions (*kama lavin*) [here the Rebbe Rashab cites source references, including the *teshuvah* of the Tzemach Tzedek]....

Everyone is obligated to inform his family members of this severe prohibition (*issur chomur*) so that a root of [spiritual] decay will not grow from his family. Everyone should be aware that all that we wrote was stated in accordance with the dictate of our holy Torah, and whoever transgresses this should know that the sin is upon his head. Whoever listens to these words shall be blessed with abundant blessings, with all good forever.

*Igros Kodesh of the Rebbe Rashab, vol. 2, p. 927,
and Shaalos u'Teshuvos Toras Sholom, section 45*

THE REBBE RAYATZ ZT'L:

תספורות הזקן...אפילו נגיעה במספרים...להשוות שערות זקנו וליפותם...בענין זה האריך כ"ק אאזמו"ר הצדיק הגאון זצוקללה"ה בספרו צמח צדק...ולפי דעתו הקדושה והרחבה, ההלכה והקבלה מתאימות לאיסור...רבינו העלה...דאין זה (הושטת היד בנגיעת הזקן) חומרא ע"פ הקבלה, אלא דהלכה היא...כ"ק אאזמו"ר הגאון הצדיק אסרו, והי' לו מסירת נפש ע"ז...הוא מרא דאתרא בכל מדינתנו ופוסק אחרון לכל המדינות...

כן הוסכם ונתקבל בכל קצוי ארצינו דאסור לקצוץ שערות הזקן, אפילו לנגוע במספרים בשערה אסור, וקבלו זה עליהם כל בית ישראל בחומר קדוש וגם אנשים הפשוטים שאין

להם חלק בידיעה...החפצים בקיום נפשם מתרחקים מזה בכל האפשרי ומתחזקים לאסור איסור זה על נפשם...ובשמעם שיש איזהו מקומן מתיירן, מתחלחלים, נעשים חולי הנפש לילך אחר הקל ח"ו...

נראה הנסיון היומי בכל עת שאחד בא להקל לעצמו, הוא מפני התאוה, אך מוצא איזו [שיטת] מיקל למען היות לו לכסות עינים, ואין כאן לא מיקל ולא חולק, אלא תאוות הלב...הוא איסור עולמי שאין לו התרה. תשובת כ"ק אדמו"ר מוהרי"צ נ"ע, נדפסה בקובץ יגדיל תורה נ.י. סיון-תמוז ה'תשמ"ג סס"א

Concerning cutting the beard...even with regard to trimming with scissors...even in order to straighten the hair of one's beard and style them...my holy grandfather, the Tzaddik and Gaon, of blessed memory, discussed this at length in his work, *Tzemach Tzedek*. According to his holy and expansive view, Halachah and Kabbalah coincide in this case in that it is forbidden. He holds...that trimming the beard even slightly is not merely a kabbalistic stringency, but a matter forbidden by halachah. My grandfather, the Gaon and Tzaddik, forbade it, and he had self-sacrifice regarding this issue. He is the supreme halachic authority in our entire country, and the final halachic decisor for all countries....

It has been agreed and accepted in all corners of our land that it is forbidden to cut the hairs of one's beard; it is even forbidden to trim the hair with scissors. The entire house of Israel have accepted this upon themselves with an attitude of holy severity. Even simple folk with no advanced knowledge...but who desire to preserve their souls take all measures to distance themselves from this, and are firm in considering this to be forbidden. When they hear that there are places where people are lenient, they are horrified; they regard those people as being spiritually ill for following such a leniency, G-d forbid...

Daily experience has shown that whenever someone wishes to adopt a leniency, it actually stems from his passions. He finds some lenient opinion as a pretext, but in reality it has nothing to do with a lenient or dissenting opinion; it is the lust of the heart.

[Trimming the beard] is a permanent, irrevocable prohibition.

*Responsum of the Rebbe Rayatz,
printed in Kovetz Yagdil Torah,
New York, Sivan-Tammuz 5743, sec. 61*

THE LATE LUBAVITCHER REBBE ZT'L:

בנוגע לענין גידול הזקן... לדעת אדמו"ר הצמח צדק וכו"כ פוסקים לפניו וגם לאחריו, הוא איסור ברור מן התורה, כמבואר בשו"ת שלו, ובהוספה עליהם - בפסקי דינים שלו. ועיין ג"כ בדרכי תשובה על היו"ד. ובשו"ת מנחת אלעזר ח"ב סמ"ח. וקבץ כמה דיעות בהנ"ל ובארוכה הן ע"פ נגלה והן ע"פ פנימיות התורה בספר עמודי ארזים להרב מרגלית שי' מירושלים עיה"ק ת"ו, שהעתיק דברים נפלאים וגם מבהילים בנוגע לגידול הזקן ולהפכו. - ושם גם מכתב הגאון הרגצובי (הר"י רוזין) שזהו איסור גמור. (לקוטי שיחות ח"ב ע' 206; אג"ק חכ"ב ע' תצ)

“With regard to growing the beard...according to the Rebbe the Tzemach Tzedek and many halachic authorities who preceded him and followed him, [cutting the beard] involves a clear Scriptural prohibition, as he explains in his responsa and with further elaboration in his *Piskei Dinim*. See also *Darchei Teshuvah* to Yoreh Deah and the collection of responsa, *Minchas Elazar*, vol. 2, sec. 48. Several perspectives — according to both the revealed dimension of Torah and its inner, mystical dimension — are comprehensively collected in the *sefer Amudei Arazim* (Jerusalem), by R. Margolis. He cites wondrous and awe-inspiring points both with regard to growing the beard and its opposite. He also includes a letter from the Rogatchover *Gaon* (R. Yosef Rosen) which states that this [cutting the beard with scissors] is an outright prohibition (*issur gomur*).”

Likkutei Sichos, vol. 12, p. 206; *Igros Kodesh*, vol. 22, p. 490

See also *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 7, p. 325, where it states that even slightly trimming the beard to straighten it is included in the Tzemach Tzedek's ruling:

לכתבו אודות גידול הזקן שיש מציעים "לישר" אותו. אינו ברור מה כוונתו בתיבת לישר. - ולדעתי ע"פ כתבו - אין מקום לגזוז אפילו בכדי לישר, כי - אם בהנוגע למנהג טוב שנהגו כמה פעמים וזמן צריך להתבונן איך להפסיק בהנהגתו - עאכ"כ בכגון דא שאדמו"ר הצמח צדק פוסק שזהו לא מנהג טוב, כי אם חיוב. (לקוטי שיחות ח"צ ע' 325; אגרות קודש ח"כ ע' קפב)

It should also be emphasized that the position of the Tzemach Tzedek that the prohibition of *lo yilbash* applies to cutting the beard is not a *chiddush* of the Tzemach Tzedek, but rather has sources in Rishonim and Acharonim before and after the Tzemach Tzedek, as documented in the *sefer Hadras Ponim Zokon* (Section 2, ch. 3) and discussed at length below, chapter 21.

Chapter 15

IS IT TRUE THAT THE CHASAM SOFER DISCOUNTED THE KABBALISTIC BASIS TO PROHIBIT SHAVING THE BEARD?

Claim:

Regarding the opinion of the Mekubalim who prohibit shaving the beard, the Chasam Sofer (Orach Chaim 159) is quoted as having written that “אין לי עסק בנסתרות” (“I have no involvement with such mystical matters”).

Response:

The issue of whether the opinion of the Mekubalim regarding shaving the beard has practical halachic implications is discussed at length in the *sefer Hadras Ponim Zokon*, Section 3, ch. 2, where it is demonstrated at length that in this instance the position of Kabbalah is halachically authoritative.

In addition to what is explained in that chapter, it appears that the Chasam Sofer reversed his approach to this matter in a later *teshuvah*, published in *Shaalos u'Teshuvos Chasam Sofer Hachadashos* sec. 30, where he wrote:

שו"ת חתם סופר החדשות סי' ל': "אך המקובלים ע"פ סתרי תורה החמירו מאד אפילו ליגע בשער אחד, ואומרים כי המה נגד י"ג תקוני דיקנא עילאה י"ג מדות...ואמנם שומר נפשו ירחיק מהכיעור וקדוש יאמר לו"

It is also clear from this latter *teshuvah* that the entire question (of whether according to the Chasam Sofer halachah prohibits removing

the beard) is limited to trimming the beard. Hence, it is erroneous to quote this *teshuvah* of the Chasam Sofer as a source to permit electric shavers!

On the contrary, there is another *teshuvah* from the Chasam Sofer (O.H. 154) which is cited by the Poskim as a primary source to prohibit all electric shavers (see responsa *Minchas Yitzchok* 4:113 and other sources, referenced in the *sefer Hadrash Ponim Zokan* in the *Mavo*, pp. 7 and 14, and in Section 2 ch. 1 at length).

See also the letter from one of the contemporary authorities on the Chasam Sofer, Rav Yissochor Dov Goldstein z'l (who served as Rov of Chug Chasam Sofer and authored *Likkutei Haaros al Shaalos u'Teshuvos Chasam Sofer* and other *sefarim*), published in *Hadrash Ponim Zokan*, third ed., p. 677:

"יש לתמוה על המביאים ראי' מדברי החת"ס אלו להתיר מספרים כעין תער כפי שהביא מע"כ נ"י בעמ' ריג (אני לא ראיתי עדיין מי שכתב כן) איך טחו עיניהם מראות שהחת"ס עצמו בתוך דבריו כתב "ואי משום מספרים כעין תער זה חשש רחוק" - הרי מפורש בדבריו שזה אסור אלא שאין לחוש שיבוא לידי כך, ואין ספק שכל הנתלים בדברי החת"ס בזה מקלם יגיד להם".

Chapter 16

WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE BEARD ACCORDING TO KABBALAH?

Claim:

There are those who grapple with defining the significance of the beard according to Kabbalah, struggling to understand why the Mekubalim (as cited by the halachic authorities published alongside the Shulchan Aruch, referred to as *nosei klei haShulchan Aruch*) state that cutting the beard in any manner (and even pulling out one hair) is an *issur chomur meod*.

Response:

IT IS UNIVERSALLY ACCEPTED THAT THE BEARD POSSESSES INTENSE SANCTITY

The awesome kedushah (holiness) of the beard is universally recognized and accepted (also by the greatest Litvishe Gedolim), to the extent that the Chofetz Chaim attested that the hairs of the beard have the holiness of an article associated with a mitzvah, similar to a Torah scroll, *mezuzah* or *tefillin*. The Chofetz Chaim writes: “I remember how, when a Jewish man used to take an oath, he would swear by the *payos* [corners] of his head and by his beard” (*Kuntres Tiferes Odom*). [See Shavuos 38b where it is explained that certain oaths must be taken while holding a sacred article such as a Torah scroll, or, in certain situations, *tefillin*. To simulate such a circumstance, in certain situations an oath was taken while holding one’s beard, for it was also considered a sacred article.]

Furthermore, there is an equivalence between the hairs of the beard and remnants of holy texts (*sheimos*), and the Steipler Gaon would put aside the hairs of his beard that fell off, placing them in a designated place on his bookshelves. He would not place them in books. Afterwards, he would send them to the cemetery in a bag together with the remnants of holy texts (*sheimos*) (*Orchos Rabbeinu*, p. 200).

EVERYONE ACKNOWLEDGES AND REFERS TO THE BEARD WITH THE TERM
“THE IMAGE OF G-D (TZELEM ELOKIM)”

בנוגע לענין גידול הזקן, הרי פשוט הוא לכל הדיעות שיש ענין בזה, וכל החילוקי דיעות הם, האם יש להתיר כשמוכרחים כביכול בהאמור, ואם זהו איסור דרבנן או דאורייתא, אבל, כנ"ל, פשוט הוא בנגלה דתורה וביחוד וביתר שאת בפנימיות התורה, אשר בתקוני-דיקנא, (כפי שהם נקראים בזהר ובספרי הקבלה, המקובלים בכל תוקף תורה שבע"פ על כ"א מבנ"י) קדושה נעלית ביותר וביותר, ומדתו של הקב"ה מדה כנגד מדה, מדת (תקו"ד של) האדם (התחתון) תמשיך במדה זו מלמעלה כביכול. ובודאי מילתא היא, אשר כולי עלמא מודים וקורים להנ"ל "צלם אלקים".

“With regard to maintaining a full beard: It is obvious that, according to all opinions, there is positive religious significance to such an act. The differences of opinion [among the Rabbis] involve only whether leniency can be granted due to perceived duress, and whether the prohibition is Scriptural or Rabbinic. It is, however, obvious according to the revealed dimension of Torah — and to an even greater degree according to the Torah’s inner, mystic dimension — that the *tikkunei dikna* (as they are referred to by the Zohar and the texts of Kabbalah which are accepted with the full authority of the Oral Torah [and obligate] every member of the Jewish community) possess an exceedingly great degree of holiness. [The manner in which] the Holy One, blessed be He, [relates to man] is measure for measure. Man’s measure ([letting] his *tikkunei dikna* [grow]) will draw down the corresponding quality [of holiness and blessing] from Above, as it were. It is certainly significant that everyone acknowledges

and refers to [the beard] with the term “the image of G-d (*tzelem Elokim*).”

(*Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 7, p. 206; *Igros Kodesh*, vol. 22, p. 490)

THE BEARD IS THE IKAR OF JUDAISM

It is therefore explained in *Likkutei Halachos – Breslov* that **the beard is the *ikar* of Yahadus**.

עיקר הדת ישראל ועיקר היהדות תלוי בזקן ופאות... כל שערות הזקן הם צנורות עליונים וגבוהים ונוראים מאד... שמשם נמשך כל חכמת התורה הקדושה והמצוות שעל ידם משיגין אלקותו ית'... ואין מי שיכול לשער ולתפוס בדעתו עוצם מעלת קדושת הזקן הקדוש, וכן להיפך אין לשער ח"ו עונש המשחית ומרים יד ומקלקל קדושה גבוה כזו... כי עוקר עצמו ונפשו מאלקי ישראל ואין לו חלק בתורת משה, אוי לנפשם כי גמלו להם רע... עי"ז עוקר עצמו לגמרי ממלכות דקדושה... מהשגת ואמונת ישראל, ואין לו חלק בהש"ת ובתורתו הקדושה ובעמו ישראל הקדוש. לקוטי הלכות - ברסלב, חיו"ד הלכות גלוח

The fundamental dimensions (עיקר) of the Jewish faith and of Judaism are dependent on the beard and the peyos.... All of the hairs of the beard are lofty, sublime, and awesome channels of [Divine] energy.... From them are drawn down the entire wisdom of the holy Torah and the mitzvos through which it is possible to appreciate G-dliness.... It is impossible for anyone to appreciate and comprehend the awesome holiness of the holy beard. Conversely, it is impossible to appreciate the terrible punishment of one who lifts his hand and destroys this holiness...for he uproots himself and his soul from the G-d of Israel. He does not have a portion in the Torah of Moses. Woe to the souls [of these people] for they have brought evil upon themselves.... In this way, they uproot themselves entirely from the kingdom of holiness...from the comprehension and faith of Israel. He does not have a portion in G-d, His holy Torah, and in His holy nation of Israel.

Likkutei Halachos, Breslov, Yoreh Deah, Hilchos Giluach

**CAN SOMEONE WHO CUTS HIS BEARD
HAVE SUCCESS IN THEIR TORAH STUDY?**

The B'nei Yisaschar clearly articulates the holiness and significance of the beard in his sefer Agra d'Chala (Parshas Ki Sisa):

"שם, לוחות אבן, כל מי שאינו משים לחייו כאבן הזו אינו זוכה לתורה עכ"ל. הנה האבן הוא דומם והוא עומד תמיד במקומו בלי שינוי, משא"כ צומח גוזזין וקוצרין אותו וחוזר וצומח. והנה הלחיים הם צומחין פאות הראש והזקן, והנה הזקן מרמז לדיקנא קדישא י"ג מדות של רחמים כנודע, וכנגדן התורה נדרשת ב"ג מדות. והנה המשים לחייו כאבן היינו שינהג בו מנהג האבן הדומם שאין גוזזים אותו, יש בו הכנה לקבלת התורה הניתנה למורשה לכל ישראל, וכל בר ישראל מסוגל לה אם ירדוף אחרי', משא"כ מי שנוהג בו מנהג הצומח לגוזזו ולקוצרו, הנה בודאי לא יזכה לתורה בשום אופן, כיון שאין בו הארה לי"ג מדות של רחמים מאין יה' בו הכנה לי"ג מדות שהתורה נדרשת". (הגה"ק בעל בני יששכר בספרו אגרא דכלה פ' תשא ד"ה מדרש פ' מא [וע"ע בספרו בני יששכר מאמרי חודש אלול מאמר ב' סק"ב: "והנה כ"ז הוא מקובל בידינו מחכמי האמת עד מפי משה מפי הגבורה").

The Midrash states: "Why were the *luchos* made of stone? To teach us that one who does not treat his cheeks as stone will not merit to acquire Torah."

What is the meaning of this statement?

A stone is an inanimate object; it remains in its place perpetually, without change. A plant, by contrast, is cut and harvested, after which it grows once more.

Now, a person's cheeks produce the hairs of the *payos* and beard. As is known, the beard alludes to the Supernal Beard, which include the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy. The Torah is likewise expounded upon by means of thirteen rules [which flow from the beard].

"One who treats his cheeks as stone" refers to a person who acts with his cheeks [i.e., his beard] as he would act with an inanimate stone, which is not cut. Such a person is prepared to receive the Torah, which is given as an inheritance to all Jews and is within the reach of every Jew if he will pursue it.

However, if someone acts with his cheeks [i.e., his beard] as he would act with vegetation by cutting it and trimming it, there is certainly no way for him to merit to acquire Torah. Since he is lacking the radiance of the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy, how can he be equipped to utilize the thirteen rules with which the Torah is expounded?

Agra d'Chala (Parshas Ki Sisa), from Rav Tzvi Elimelech of Dinov, author of Bnei Yisaschar (where he writes in Maamar Chodesh Elul: "All this we have by tradition... [generation after generation] all the way back to Moshe, who received it from the Almighty")

THE CHOFETZ CHAIM:

ONE SHOULD FEAR AND TREMBLE

AT THE THOUGHT OF CUTTING THE BEARD

Accordingly, the Chofetz Chaim wrote regarding the damages and blemishes brought about in the spiritual realms by removing one's beard:

"A person must always remember that with each and every sin, not only does he harm himself, but he creates blemishes above, in the spiritual realms. How astonishing it is that for some momentary fleeting pleasure in this world, a person would be willing to cause devastation and blemish in the holy worlds.

"Certainly, this applies with regard to the matter at hand, for it is explained in the holy Zohar and the texts of the Kabbalists that [trimming the beard] causes a great blemish above.

"The matter can be understood from the fact that [the beard] represents the essential image of man established by G-d. A person's image reflects the holiness of his soul, as it is written: "He made man in the image of G-d." Therefore, a person who

has the brazenness to commit this severe and bitter sin should fear and tremble. If one sinned, he should rush to repent. He should not look at his foolish comrades whose yetzer [hara] overpowered their intellect.”

Chofetz Chaim, Kuntres Tiferes Odom, ch. 10

“AN ACCUSER CANNOT BECOME A DEFENDER.”

CAN CUTTING ONE’S BEARD COEXIST

WITH THE THIRTEEN ATTRIBUTES OF MERCY?

The following are quotations from the sacred texts Ahavas Yonason (Haftoras Vayikra) and Yaaros D’vash (Vol. I, pp. 73a; 97a; Vol. II, p. 37a), by the great Gaon and universally accepted Posek, Rabbi Yonason Eibeshutz (1690-1764), author of the classic halachic texts K’raisi U’fleisi and Urim ViTumim. “Those who analyze and study the Tumim in depth should also analyze carefully [Rabbi Yonason’s] words in Yaaros D’vash. For it is all one Torah” (Amudei Arazim, p. 51).

- “The thirteen points of the beard parallel the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy. Those who trim their beards with scissors damage the Thirteen Attributes....”
- “An accuser cannot become a defender.” Woe to the fools! Why would they give up [their portion in this] world and the world [to come] for such foolishness....”
- “I am amazed how they could be so bold to proclaim the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy during these days, calling out “HaShem, HaShem,” which parallel the two pei’os and how much more so, with regard to the other thirteen attributes that are paralleled by the beard....”
- “If a Jew grows his beard in a befitting manner, [G-d looks upon him] with a merciful countenance and He overlooks His

attributes [of judgment].... By contrast, one who shaves his beard arouses a countenance of....”

- “Anyone who has a beard appears in the likeness of G-d.... And, by destroying his beard, this fool and wanton hearted person lost his image of G-d....”
- “The beard is the sign of the covenant for Israel.”

“When we carry on our bodies the thirteen points of the beard according to His mitzvos, we arouse the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy above.... We have received all of this through tradition [generation after generation] from the sages of true wisdom in a chain extending all the way back to Moshe [Rabeinu] who heard this from the Almighty” (B’nei Yisaschar, Maamar Chodesh Elul).

Chapter 17

WHAT IS THE MESORAH OF THE LITVISHE TORAH COMMUNITY REGARDING MAINTAINING A BEARD AND SHAVING?

Claim:

It was implied that the *mesorah* of the Litvishe communities is to be beardless.

Response:

In contrast to this assertion, the Chofetz Chaim zt'l attests (in his *Kuntres Tiferes Odom*, ch. 1) that (in his home country of Lita) only "one in a thousand" did not have a beard.

Similarly, Rav Chaim Kanievsky shlita attests in his *sefer Orchos Yosher* (ch. 5):

"Throughout our history, it has been a disgrace for anyone not to have a beard. It is only in recent generations that some have started to treat this irreverently, having learned this from the non-Jews..."

Similarly, the Chazon Ish zt'l wrote in *Kovetz Igros* (vol. 1, #197) [regarding *sam*, depilatory cream]: "If it is not a *sam hamoves* [poison], it is certainly not a *sam hachayim* [lifegiving potion]. This matter is very difficult for me to bear, for it runs contrary to the [Jewish] quality of modesty and it is not the Jewish style of dress. Instead, [the Jews] have learned it from the non-Jews during their exile, thereby negating

holiness.” And in *Kovetz Igros* (vol. 1, #198) [concerning removing the beard with depilatory cream and close-cutting scissors]: “Although this sickness has spread even among Torah scholars, may they be well, the issue has not changed as a result, and therefore my soul burns with rage because of this practice’.... [The Chazon Ish] once said that when someone who removes his beard...comes in to see him, he feels so sick that he almost vomits.”

Similarly, Rav Aharon Kotler zt'l stated (as quoted in the second volume of the *sefer Aish HaTorah* [p. 265], an authoritative biography of Rav Aharon Kotler [authored by Rav Aharon Sorosky shlita, acclaimed biographer of many Gedolim]):

“Growing a beard is a *malbush yehudi*, the traditional appearance of a Jew and the way our fathers and forefathers all conducted themselves. Hence, the beard falls under the halachic mandate to uphold the traditional practices of our people (“Do not abandon the Torah of your mother” [see *Pesachim* 50b]).”

כתוב בספר 'אש התורה' (מאת הרב אהרן סורסקי) ח"ב ע' רסה (בשם אחד מוטיקי תלמידי הגר"א קוטלר זצ"ל בליקווד, ת"ח מופלג ומרביץ תורה):

"בחור מן הישיבה שגידל זקן, שטח לפניו [היינו לפני רבינו הגר"א קוטלר זצ"ל] באחד הימים את עגמת נפשו, באשר הוריו מתנגדים לכך בצורה נחרצת, ודורשים ממנו שיגלח את שערו זקנו. אמר לו רבינו: לגדל הזקן הוא מלבוש יהודי, כה נהגו אבותינו ואבות אבותינו. ומכיון שמדובר ב"אל תיטוש תורת אמן" אינך מחויב לציית להם."

WHY BOCHURIM IN LITVISHE YESHIVOS SHAVED THEIR BEARDS

As for the reason why bochurim in Litvishe Yeshivos shaved their beards, see *Visions of the Rov: Highlights from the Life and Times of Moreinu Hagaon Harav Rav Avrohom Kalmanowitz* zt'l (published by the Mirrer Yeshiva), where we find (ch. 1, p. 28) Rav Kalmanowitz's testimony in this matter. Rav Kalmanowitz is quoted there as saying that

the reason the bochurim in Slabodka removed their beards was (not for reasons of *yiras Shomayim* that should be emulated, but just the opposite:) because “Western influences had infiltrated the Yeshivos of that time, making...beardless faces the norm.” Rav Kalmanowitz therefore refused to shave, and the Roshei Yeshiva and his friends respected him for it.

When the bochurim in Slabodka started shaving, the Rosh Yeshiva, **Rav Moshe Mordechai Epstein** zt'l (author of the *Levush Mordechai*), wanted them to keep their beards, but the bochurim did not listen to him (as recorded in *Shaalos U'Teshuvos Pe'as Sodcha*, sec. 101). Furthermore, the Slabodka Rosh Yeshiva wrote very sharply in his introduction to *Levush Mordechai* (on Bava Kamma):

“Every Jew should reflect on this [that a raven forsakes its children since they do not appear like it] and have mercy on his children only when they walk in the paths of Hashem, through which they are similar in their appearance to their parents, keeping Shabbos and growing a beard. However, [he should] not [display mercy] to those who are not at all similar in their appearance to the Jewish people, for they have become distant and have garbed themselves in a different style, desecrating Shabbos and disdaining the sacred.... Their appearance is not similar to the Jewish people, for they have removed the *tzelem Elokim* [Divine image, a reference to the beard] from themselves.”

Regarding the Telz (Telshe) Yeshiva, it is recorded that

“...when the disease of cutting the beard spread among students of the [Litvishe] Yeshivos, the well-known Gaon, **Rabbi Eliezer Gordon** [Rov and Rosh Yeshiva of Telz], of blessed memory, adopted the most stringent measures [to stop it]. When he saw that they persisted in their defiance, he

mobilized the Geonim of that time — the venerable Rabbi Y. Dovid Friedman [Rov of Pinsk-Karlin], the venerable Rabbi Eliyahu Chaim Meisel [Rov of Lodz, Poland], and the mighty Geonim Rabbi Chaim HaLevi [Soloveitchik, Rov of Brisk], and Rabbi Chaim Ozer [Grodzenski, Rov of Vilna], of blessed memory. He demanded that they place a prohibition on Rabbonim against granting [students who cut their beards] Rabbinic ordination [*semichah*], on Shochtim against teaching them the skill of ritual slaughtering [*shechitah*], and on Jewish communities against employing them in any religious position” (*Kovetz Yagdil Torah* 7:5).

[It is important to note that this entire discussion regarding the practice of the Litvishe bochurim in pre-war Europe has no relevance nor is it comparable to the way most frum people shave today, namely, using an electric shaver, which, in the words of Rav Chaim Kanievsky shlita, has been prohibited by “all the Gedolei Hador.”]

The following response by **Rav Aharon Leib Shteinman**, zt”l to the “argument” that the students of the Litvishe Yeshivos of yesteryear used to shave their beards, was recently publicized:

ואומר רבינו: “כי מה שנהגו פעם בשיבות לגלח, כי לא היה ידוע האיסור” (פרי חיים ממרן הרב שטיינמן שליט”א, שופר ארגון להפצת יהדות, צוות שופר גנזי המלך, כו תמוז תשע”ב).

“The reason it was once common for yeshiva bochurim to shave is because the *issur* involved was not widely known.”



Regarding the prevalence of beards amongst the students of the Chofetz Chaim’s yeshiva in Radin and the Chofetz Chaim’s reaction, see below, chapter 18.

❧ Chapter 18 ❧

ARE ELECTRIC SHAVERS REALLY FORBIDDEN ACCORDING TO THE CHOFETZ CHAIM ZT'L?

Claim 1:

It was stated that the Chofetz Chaim prohibited the use of shaving machines, and as a source his *Likkutei Halachos* on Makkos perek 3 was cited, but it was implied that perhaps the Chofetz Chaim did not really forbid shavers.

Claim 2:

Also, it is known that the bachurim in the Radin Yeshiva (the Yeshiva of the Chofetz Chaim) shaved their beards (implying that the Chofetz Chaim did not object to this practice.)

Response to Claim 1:

1) This assertion — that the Chofetz Chaim in *Likkutei Halachos* is referring to a non-relevant type of shaving machine, and is not a source to prohibit today's electric shavers — *flagrantly conflicts the explicit stance of our greatest Gedolim (including those who lived during the time of the Chofetz Chaim and were personally familiar with the shavers used at that time).*

For example:

- Rav Yosef Sholom Elyashiv zt'l, Posek Hador, wrote in a *teshuvah* published in his *sefer Kovetz Teshuvos* (vol. 1, sec.

32) that the electric shavers of today are unquestionably infinitely worse than those that existed in the time of the Chofetz Chaim and were prohibited by him, because modern machines shave much more closely to the skin, and shaving with them is an “*issur Torah mamosh*” — a definite and absolute Torah prohibition.

- Rav Chaim Kanievsky shlita wrote in the name of his father, the Steipler Gaon zt'l: “It has already been publicized that the Chofetz Chaim zt'l in *Likkutei Halachos* on Makkos prohibited even manual (non-electric) shaving machines; how much more so are today's electric shavers forbidden since they are more advanced.”

- Additionally, Rav Shach zt'l wrote (*Michtavim U'Maamarim* 3:75):

“To the questioner, may he be well: Concerning shaving the beard with electric shaving machines — see the *sefer Likkutei Halachos* on tractate Makkos (by the Chofetz Chaim), p. 14b (*Ein Mishpat* op. cit.), where he writes that it is prohibited, and one may not be lenient in this matter. It is also well-known that the Chazon Ish zt'l ruled that the use of all shaving machines is forbidden. This is my response, (signed) Elazar Menachem M. Shach.”

- See also *Shaalos u'Teshuvos Minchas Yitzchok* (vol. 4, sec. 113, and again in vol. 7, sec. 63): “Electric shaving machines are much more severe [than the machines forbidden by the Chofetz Chaim], as is well known.”
- Another Posek Hador, Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach zt'l, likewise considered today's shavers incomparably more halachically severe than the machines forbidden by the

Chofetz Chaim zt'l, as recorded in the *sefer Halichos Shlomo (tefillah, 2:7, note 24)*.

- Similarly, the Debretziner Rov writes in *Shaalos u'Teshuvos Be'er Moshe* (vol. 7, Kuntres Electric 2:18) that today's shaving machines are "one hundred percent more halachically severe than the machines referred to by the Chofetz Chaim."
- See also the widely publicized Psak Din (dated Nissan 5768) signed by the greatest halachic authorities of our time (including Rav Elyashiv zt'l, Rav Aharon L. Steinman zt'l, Rav Shmuel Halevi Vosner zt'l, Rav Michel Y. Lefkowitz zt'l, Rav Nissim Karelitz shlita, Rav Chaim Kanievsky shlita, Rav Shmuel Auerbach zt'l, Rav Nosson Tzvi Finkel zt'l and other Gedolim) and quoted above, chapter 2:

"The severe breach of halachah involved in the use of shaving machines is well known to all. Their use was prohibited by our Rabbis, the Gedolim of the [previous] generation, including the Chofetz Chaim and the Chazon Ish. Moreover, this [prohibition applied] even to the shavers of many years ago [when the shavers were far more primitive and did not cut hair as close to the skin as modern shavers]. Today, shavers have been enhanced [and cut much closer to the skin] and thus the halachic issues involved are far more severe."

- Additionally, Rav Dovid Leibowitz zt'l, (grand-nephew and student of the Chofetz Chaim zt'l and founder of the Yeshivas Chofetz Chaim in New York), retracted his *heter* to use shaving machines after he saw the Chofetz Chaim zt'l's ruling in *Likkutei Halachos* (as was attested to by his

son and successor as Rosh Yeshiva, Rav Henoch Leibowitz zt'l, in his letter dated Motzei Shabbos Vayeshev 5752, published in *Kuntres Tiferes Odom*, p. 23).

- To further clarify the position of the Chofetz Chaim zt'l on this issue, it is worth reviewing the testimony of the Chofetz Chaim's grandson, Rav Gershon Zaks zt'l, Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshivas Chofetz Chaim in Suffern, New York. This testimony is cited by HaGaon Rav Moshe Sternbuch, shlita, in *Teshuvos V'Hanhagos*, Vol. 5, Section 264, and is quoted verbatim in *Hadras Ponim Zokon*, p. 18:

“The approach of my grandfather, the Chofetz Chaim zt'l, was that everyone should grow his beard, as explained at length in *Kuntres Tiferes Odom* at the conclusion of his text *Nidchei Yisrael*. In particular, that *tzaddik* [the Chofetz Chaim zt'l] suffered great pain and felt great anguish because of those who used shavers. This refers even to shavers that operate by hand, as existed in his day, which would not trim as close to the flesh as the electric razors used today. In his text *Likkutei Halachos* to tractate Makkos (ch. 3, Ein Mishpat, sec. 7), he concludes: ‘A person who guards his soul should distance himself very far from this.’ His intent was not that this is a mere stringency, but that it is required by law, applicable to every Jew, without distinction.”

- Rav Chaim Kanievsky shlita was recently shown a similar attempted distortion of the position of the Chofetz Chaim zt'l regarding the halachic status of shaving machines (published in a footnote by the editor of *Shaalos u'Teshuvos Gevuros Eliyahu* vol. 2, note 420). In response, he instructed his son-

in-law, Rav Yitzchok Kolodetsky, to issue the following clarification, in a letter dated 9 Nissan 5777:

”מו”ח הגאון שר התורה רבי חיים קניבסקי שליט”א אמר שמרנא החפץ חיים זיע”א אסר להתגלח בכל סוגי המכונות, בלי שום חילוק...ולהשומעים יונעם ותבוא עליהם ברכת טוב.”

“My father-in-law, the gaon and master of Torah, Rabbi Chaim Kanievsky shlita, stated that our master the Chofetz Chaim zy”a **forbade using all types of shaving machines to shave the beard, without any differentiation whatsoever....** May those who abide by the above be blessed with good.”

Response to Claim 2:

1) Rav Naftoli Trop zt”l served as the Rosh Yeshiva of the Chofetz Chaim’s Yeshiva in Radin from 1903 until his passing in 1928. In the introduction to *Chidushei HaGranat* published in more recent editions, we find the following account (p. 8, note 21): “The Yeshiva in Radin was founded by the Chofetz Chaim... Most of the students in Radin (and similarly those of Navardok) *did not shave their beards* due to the objection of the Chofetz Chaim to this practice.”

2) If bachurim in Radin shaved their beards in later years, it was absolutely without the consent and contrary to the position of the Chofetz Chaim, as his son wrote in his biography of the Chofetz Chaim (published in *Kol Kisvei Chofetz Chaim*):

“Year after year my father admonished [people] regarding shaving the beard, both orally, in writing and in his publications, but hardly anyone listened to him.”

This reality regarding the Chofetz Chaim’s vehement objection to shaving is documented further in the aforementioned quotation from Rav Gershon Zaks zt”l, the grandson of the Chofetz Chaim zt”l, which continues:

“I heard the following story in this regard from my revered father, the gaon, R. Menachem Yosef Zaks, son-in-law of the Chofetz Chaim and the Rosh Yeshivah of Yeshivas Chofetz Chaim, Radin, which shows the extent the matter caused anguish to the Chofetz Chaim, zt'l.

“In the latter years of the Chofetz Chaim’s life, his hearing was severely compromised. Therefore, his practice was to stand next to the reader’s platform in order to fulfill his obligation to hear the Torah reading. Nevertheless, on several occasions, he suddenly moved away from the platform in the midst of the Torah reading.

“When my revered father asked him the reason for his conduct, the Chofetz Chaim answered that he cannot bear the fact that an aliyah is being given to a person who does not have a beard. Therefore he refrains from hearing the Torah reading, because of his anguish.

“From that time on, my father, zt”l, and my uncle, zt”l, ordained that on the days when the Chofetz Chaim would come to hear the reading of the Torah, an aliyah would not be given to a person who cut his beard.”

3) In fact, the Chofetz Chaim wrote an entire sefer called “*Kuntres Tiferes Odom*” in which he vigorously refuted all the justifications used for shaving (e.g., to help find a shidduch, to help find a job, to improve one’s appearance, and so on), and he sharply declared (as well as providing a thorough explanation) that these justifications were against the Torah.

4) The first page of the Chofetz Chaim’s “*Kuntres Tiferes Odom*” provide us with additional information about the position of the Chofetz Chaim regarding shaving the beard. The following are the (translated) words of the Chofetz Chaim himself:

“Especially today when many of the unrestrained elements of our nation shave with a razor, it is a great mitzvah for the entire Jewish people to [counterbalance these acts and] reinforce their own observance, *refraining from trimming the beard even with scissors*. This will demonstrate to all that the commandments the Torah has given us to distinguish a Jewish man [from a non-Jew] are precious to us and we are not ashamed of them, G-d forbid.”]

5) Moreover, in his sefer *Machne Yisroel*, a handbook for Jewish soldiers in the Russian army (in which the Chofetz Chaim strove to be as lenient as possible, as explained in the introduction to the sefer), the Chofetz Chaim writes (Chapter 13) that Jewish soldiers should not cut their beards even if they are persecuted or suffer “major” monetary damages as a result. If a soldier cannot withstand the severe torment and persecution, then and only then should he “shorten” (trim) his beard with scissors. If the Chofetz Chaim ruled in this manner for soldiers in the anti-Semitic Russian army(!), what justification can anyone have to shave today?!



Regarding prevalence of beards amongst the students in other Litvishe Yeshivos and the position of their Roshei Yeshiva, see above, chapter 17.

❧ Chapter 19 ❧

DID THE SON-IN-LAW OF THE CHOFETZ CHAIM WRITE THAT SHAVING MACHINES ARE PERMISSIBLE?

Claim:

It was stated that Rav Aharon Kohen, the son-in-law of the Chofetz Chaim, writes in *Chesed L'Avraham* (on the last page of the *sefer*) that his father-in-law, the Chofetz Chaim (shlita) [zt'l] permitted shaving with “*machinka*.” It was asserted that this proves that the Chofetz Chaim permitted the use of electric shavers for shaving one’s beard, as attested to by his son-in-law the great *tzaddik* Rav Aharon Kohen.

Response:

- 1) The *sefer Chesed L'Avraham* was published in 1920, long before electric shavers were invented (electric shavers were first introduced to the market in the 1930s). Thus, this *sefer* cannot be referring to or be a source to permit electric shavers.
- 2) The instrument referred to in this *sefer* as a “*machinka*” is defined in the *sefer* (in Hebrew) as a “*misperes*,” a hair-cutting clipper the *sefer* describes as “*misparayim*” (scissors), not a shaver which delivers a smooth shave. In addition, Rav Aharon Kohen references the Chofetz Chaim’s *Tiferes Odom*, and not his *Likkutei Halachos* (where he discusses shaving machines).

- 3) The quotation from this *sefer* was taken out of context. The *sefer* is discussing what Rav Aharon Kohen zt'l told two young men in response to their fathers' concern that they would become estranged from Yiddishkeit upon relocating to America. Rav Aharon Kohen advised them to retain the observance of at least five mitzvos, without which they would be lost to Klal Yisroel. The five mitzvos were the following: Shabbos, *tefillin*, *taharas hamishpachah*, not shaving and *kashrus*.

It is thus incongruous and nonsensical to suggest that *Bnei Torah* should derive a practical halachic leniency from the guidance provided to these young men, who were in danger of being lost to assimilation and required the minimal observance of these five mitzvos to remain connected to Hashem.

- 4) The forums also neglected to mention another critical point mentioned in this *sefer*. Rav Aharon Kohen told these young men that even cutting the beard with scissors is against "*daas ruach Chachomim*" and the *heter* to use scissors or depilatory is limited to those who would otherwise shave with a razor. Do the B'nei Torah who follow these halacha forums adhere to "*daas ruach Chachomim*"?!

❧ Chapter 20 ❧

WHAT WAS THE POSITION OF RAV AHARON KOTLER ZT'L CONCERNING SHAVING AND ELECTRIC SHAVERS?

Claim:

Rav Aharon Kotler's zt'l (founder of Lakewood's Beth Medrash Govoha and of the Lakewood Torah community and leader of the Litvish Torah community) opinion that electric shavers are prohibited – was questioned.

Response:

In the authoritative biography of Rav Aharon Kotler, the two volume *sefer Aish HaTorah* (by the acclaimed biographer of many Gedolim, Rav Aharon Sorosky shlita), it is related (vol. 2, p. 265):

A bochur in Lakewood allowed his beard to grow. One day, he shared his anguish with Rav Aharon Kotler over the fact that his parents were vehemently opposed to his having a beard and were demanding that he shave the beard off. Rav Aharon Kotler responded that growing a beard is the *malbush yehudi*, the traditional appearance of a Jew and the way our forefathers in all generations conducted themselves. Hence, the beard falls under the halachic mandate to uphold the traditional practices of our people (“Do not abandon the Torah of your mother” – see Pesachim 50b). “Accordingly, you are not obligated to obey

your parents' demand to remove your beard," Rav Aharon Kotler concluded.

In his scholarly footnotes (ibid.), Rav Sorosky points out that this incident is referring to maintaining a beard in general. Regarding removing the beard specifically with shaving machines, Rav Sorosky notes that Rav Aharon Kotler considered them to be forbidden halachically. He further cites *Shaalos u'Teshuvos Minchas Yitzchok* (vol. 4, sec. 113) where there is a lengthy discussion explaining why shaving machines are prohibited, and that this was (also) the opinion of Rav Aharon Kotler, who was concerned that the use of electric shavers involved an *issur d'oraysa*.

In a letter dated Parshas Re'eh, 5736, Rav Moshe Heinemann shlita, a foremost disciple of Rav Aharon Kotler, confirms the accuracy of what is written in *Shaalos u'Teshuvos Minchas Yitzchok*, and adds that since the Chofetz Chaim prohibited even the (non-electric) shaving machines in his time (in his *sefer Likkutei Halachos* on Makkos perek 3 in *Ein Mishpat*), Rav Aharon Kotler was of the opinion that shavers are forbidden to use.

Rav Eli Dov Wachtfogel shlita (Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshiva Gedolah Zichron Moshe of South Fallsburg, and son of the founding Mashgiach of Lakewood, Rav Nosson Wachtfogel zt'l, who led the Yeshiva along with Rav Aharon Kotler) wrote in a letter dated 24 Nissan 5752 (published in the third edition of the *sefer Hadrus Ponim Zokon*, p. 717):

"באתי בזה לאשר מה שדברנו כשנפגשנו לפני פרוס החג אודות מכונת גילוח שזוכרני כשבאתי לפני מרן הגאון הגר"א קוטלר זצ"ל ושאלתי בפי אם אפשר להקל להשתמש במכונה הנ"ל . . . וענה לי בשום אופן לא!
ושאלתי אותו אם זה חומרא ואמר שזהו מעיקר הדין.

בכבוד ובהוקרה כיאות,
אליהו דב וכטפויגל"

מכתבו מיום ב' כ"ד ניסן ה'תשנ"ב

I hereby confirm our conversation (when we met before Yom Tov) regarding shaving machines. I recall that I asked the following question to our Rebbe, the Gaon Rav Aharon Kotler, zt'l: "Is it permissible to use a shaving machine?" He [Rav Aharon Kotler] answered: "under no circumstances [may one use a shaving machine]!" I asked him if it is a *chumra*. He replied that "this [the prohibition] is strictly prohibited by halachah (*mei'ikar hadin*)."

Another prominent *talmid* of R' Aharon Kotler is Rav Yechiel Yitzchok Perr shlita (Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshivas Derech Ayson of Far Rockaway). Rav Perr relates in a letter (published in the *sefer Hadrass Ponim Zokon*, Section 2, ch. 1): "The bottom line is that even at the end of his life, [HaGaon Rav Aharon Kotler zt'l] was [still] of the opinion that electric shavers should not be used."

In another letter (dated 20 Sivan 5768, published in the new *Kuntress Miluyim* to the *sefer Hadrass Ponim Zokon*, p. 29) Rav Perr explains that Rav Aharon Kotler was of the opinion that shaving machines are the halachic equivalent of razors, since the Torah does not mention "razor" regarding shaving the beard. Rather, one is liable for shaving with any device which both cuts and removes the hair totally (accomplishing both *giluach* and *hashchasah*). Just as a razor both cuts and totally removes facial hair, electric shavers similarly both cut and totally remove the facial hair. Hence, they have the same status in halachah.

In that letter, Rav Perr adds that his father (Rav Menachem M. Perr zt'l, who served as Rov in South Ozone Park, Queens), had wanted to distribute shaving machines to his congregants to use instead of razors, to save them from the transgression of shaving with a razor. However, he was told by Rav Aharon Kotler that he was not accomplishing anything by doing so, since shaving machines have the same halachic status as razors.

Similarly, the son of Rav Yaakov Weisberg z'l recently related:

My father, Rav Yaakov Weisberg, was the founder of American P'eylim and administrative dean of Beth Medrash Govoha in Lakewood. He built the Yeshiva together with his Rebbe, Rav Aharon Kotler. In the late 40s/early 50s, my father negotiated with the Zionist immigration officials who were forcing the Sephardic immigrants to shave off their beards with razors (claiming it was for sanitary reasons) to supply them with shavers instead. They agreed if he would supply the shavers. My father needed to raise money to buy 1000 shavers and went around to the gedolim for a letter of support. R' Isser Zalman Meltzer zt'l (who my father was very close with), the Chazon Ish and the Brisker Rov (I think there were others but I forgot) all refused because they said they were not convinced that a shaver was better than a razor. Even his Rebbe R' Aharon Kotler zt'l refused to help him for this reason.

Recently, the current Roshei Yeshiva of Lakewood (all from the family of Rav Aharon Kotler) issued a letter (which was publicized on the official bulletin board of Beth Medrash Govoha – BMG) stating that Rav Aharon Kotler considered shaving machines to be prohibited and urging the bochurim not to use them.

Rav Shlomo Miller shlita (Rosh Kollel in Toronto and Lakewood and Rosh Beis Din in both Toronto and of the Va'ad Harabonim of Lakewood) has also asserted that his rebbe, Rav Aharon Kotler, forbade the use of all shaving machines, and Rav Miller notes that therefore, none of his own five sons ever used them. Additionally, Rav Shmuel Felder shlita, a senior posek of BMG in Lakewood, has decried the use of all shaving machines in public *shiurim* in Lakewood.

Rabbi Aaron Rakeffet-Rothkoff, a Rosh Yeshiva at Yeshivas Rabeinu Yitzchok Elchonon's (RIETS) Gruss Kollel in Yerushalayim, and prolific

author and historian, was a bochur in Lakewood in the 1950s (before he transferred to RIETS). In a recent *shiur* (posted in www.yutorah.org), Rabbi Rakeffet-Rothkoff related that when he arrived in Lakewood in the early days of the Lakewood Yeshiva, he found bochurim standing guard on the dormitory steps to alert the students upstairs if R' Aharon Kotler was approaching. When he asked the guards what the students were doing that R' Aharon Kotler would disapprove of, the guards told him that the students upstairs were shaving with electric shavers, which, according to Rav Aharon Kotler, were forbidden to use.

Rav Moshe Sternbuch shlita (author of *Moadim u'Zemanim* and *Teshuvos v'Hanhagos* and Rosh Av Beis Din in Yerushalayim) wrote in a letter (dated Motzoei Yom Kippur 5738) and published in the *sefer Hadras Ponim Zokon* (p. 35):

Anyone aware of the severity of this transgression and its punishment will keep far away from these machines. I am sure that if we will explain the problems involved, and present the opinions of the outstanding authorities of our time who ruled that shaving machines are prohibited (including the saintly Chofetz Chaim, Chazon Ish and the Gaon Rabbi Aharon Kotler, of blessed memory), then anyone with the slightest degree of *yiras Shamayim* will keep far away from these machines and totally avoid their use.

As to why Rav Aharon Kotler did not publicly protest the use of shaving machines, perhaps we can gain insight from a halachic responsa written by a Gadol Hador who was his colleague in leading Klal Yisroel for many years, HaGaon Rav Yaakov Kamenetzky zt'l. In a *teshuvah* published in the *sefer Emes l'Yaakov* (Cleveland, 5760, Yoreh Deah 181), Rav Yaakov Kamenetzky wrote:

Regarding [the prohibition of using] machines for shaving [the beard], this is not just a *chumra* [halachic stringency] but a

substantive [halachic] issue.... In fact, I do not know whether the great Torah authorities (Gedolim) of America [ever] explicitly permitted them; it is possible that they kept silent because no one asked them [their opinion], and they avoided the issue, knowing that their words would not be heeded. As for [any leniency] that has become accepted in past generations, it is a fact that over time there have been many improvements in the machines, and it is possible that, as a result of these improvements, shaving with them has become prohibited [even according to the reasoning offered for that leniency]. Accordingly, in this case, it is difficult to rely on [any] tradition [to be lenient].... Indeed, this is how [Rabbonim] should rule, that it is not just a halachic stringency, and if a young man wishes to be scrupulous and avoid using any shaving machine, his parents should not object to this and say that [their son] is just trying to find [superfluous] halachic stringencies.

*For additional examples of halachic issues
where Rav Aharon Kotler zt'l
disputed the positions of Rav Moshe Feinstein zt'l,
see above, Chapter 12, footnote 1.*

❧ Chapter 21 ❧

THE TZEMACH TZEDEK WRITES THAT THE
TRANSGRESSION OF *LO YILBASH* IS RELEVANT TO
CUTTING THE BEARD. IS HIS POSITION ACCEPTED
OR REJECTED BY THE POSKIM?

Claim:

In the *mareh mekomos* to the halachah forums entitled *Shavers and Beards*, a comment was made regarding the position of the Tzemach Tzedek to prohibit shaving and trimming the beard (also) because of *lo yilbash*, as follows: “If you look at our *mareh mekomos*, you will see a number of Acharonim who were similarly mystified at the logic of the great Tzemach Tzedek. Which is why the Shulchan Aruch as well as the vast majority of Acharonim disagree with him.”

Response:

The sources which dispute the Tzemach Tzedek’s position regarding the relevance of *lo yilbash* to shaving and trimming the beard all operated on the premise that this concept was originated by the Tzemach Tzedek.

THIS PREMISE, HOWEVER, IS ERRONEOUS.

The reality is that there are sources in Rishonim and Acharonim (and even from a Tanna), who preceded the Tzemach Tzedek, that state that *lo yilbash* is applicable to the removal of the beard, just as the Tzemach

Tzedek posits (and some even cite the same Talmudic basis as the Tzemach Tzedek).

These Rishonim and Acharonim were unknown to those who argued against the Tzemach Tzedek, as is evident from the fact that those who argue against the Tzemach Tzedek **make no mention whatsoever** of the earlier sources which are aligned with the Tzemach Tzedek's position.

It is thus unlikely that those who argue against the Tzemach Tzedek would reject his position if they knew that it was shared by Rishonim and Acharonim who preceded the Tzemach Tzedek.

[In truth, the Tzemach Tzedek himself was apparently unaware of the Rishonim and Acharonim who preceded him and wrote that *lo yilbash* applies to shaving, for he makes no mention of them either.]

The earliest source which expressly associated *lo yilbash* with shaving is **Targum Yonasan** (by the Tanna Rabi Yonasan ben Uziel), cited by our own generation's Gadol Hador, Rav Chaim Kanievsky shlita, in his *sefer Orchos Yosher* (ch. 5):

ובתרגום יונתן אי' שעובר בזה משום לא ילבש גבר שמלת אשה והיינו אפי' אם מספר במספרים וכ"כ החינוך והוסף שעובר משום ובחוקותיהם לא תלכו והביאו החפץ חיים בספר המצות הקצר (ל"ת קע"ז). ומרן החזו"א מאד לא היתה דעתו נוחה מזה.

Targum Yonasan states that one who does this transgresses the prohibition of "A man shall not wear a woman's dress," which includes **even cutting the beard with scissors**. *Sefer Hachinuch* states the same, adding that one also transgresses the prohibition of "You shall not follow their [non-Jewish] practices." This is quoted by the Chofetz Chaim in his *Sefer HaMitzvos HaKotzer* (Prohibition 177).

[Allow it to be noted that:

- The Targum Yonasan was a Tanna — Rabi Yonoson ben Uziel.

- For an in-depth analysis regarding the Targum Yonasan as a basis to prohibit removing the beard due to *lo yilbash*, see the *sefer Hadrash Ponim Zokon* Section 1, pp. 33-37.
- The Tzemach Tzedek makes no mention of this Targum Yonasan in his entire lengthy *teshuvah*.
- Rav Chaim Kanievsky shlita makes no mention of the Tzemach Tzedek, thus underscoring that the connection between *lo yilbash* and the beard is not based only on the Tzemach Tzedek.

RISHONIM WHO STATE EXPRESSLY THAT *LO YILBASH*
APPLIES TO SHAVING INCLUDE:

- The Ravan (grandfather of the Rosh, in his *sefer Maamar Haskel* — quoted in *Hadrash Ponim Zokon* Section 1, p. 67);
- Sefer Hamanhig (quoted in *Hadrash Ponim Zokon* p. 105);
- Shiblei HaLeKet (2:41 — quoted in *Hadrash Ponim Zokon* p. 117. Also see the new edition of Shiblei Haleket, where the publisher notes in footnote 3 that the Shiblei Haleket is a support for what the Tzemach Tzedek wrote centuries later);

וּרְאָה גַּם לְהַמְהִיר שֶׁל הַמַּהְדִּיר הַחֲדָשָׁה דִּס' שְׁבִלִי הַלֵּקֶט חֵלֶק שְׁנֵי סִימָן מֵא
הָעֵרָה 3: "בְּתִשׁוּבַת צִמַּח צְדָק יֵשׁ מִשּׁוּם לֹא יִלְבַּשׁ מְדֹאֲרִייתָא...וּמִסִּיק שִׁישׁ בְּזָה
דִּין דְּאֲוִרִייתָא, וּוְדֵאִי שִׁשִּׁיטַת רַבִּינוּ [הַשְּׁבִלִי הַלֵּקֶט] שֶׁלִּפְנֵינוּ הִיא יְסוּד חִזְק
לְשִׁיטָתוֹ"

- Rabbeinu Chaim Paltiel (quoted in *Hadrash Ponim Zokon*, third ed., p. 672);
- Rabbeinu Asher from Lunil (quoted in *Hadrash Ponim Zokon* p. 673).
- Others demonstrate that this was also the position of the Rashba (see *Klei Chemda* Parshas Ki Tetzei sec. 7 and other sources, quoted in *Hadrash Ponim Zokon* Section 1, pp. 115-116).

ACHARONIM (BEFORE THE TIME OF THE TZEMACH TZEDEK) WHO WRITE THAT *LO YILBASH* APPLIES TO THE BEARD INCLUDE MAJOR POSKIM SUCH AS:

- The Chacham Tzvi (quoted in *Hadras Ponim Zokon* Section 1, p. 171);
- his son Rav Yaakov Emden (quoted in *Hadras Ponim Zokon* Section 1, p. 185); and
- the Chasam Sofer (in *Shaalos u'Teshuvos Chasam Sofer Hachadashos* sec. 30. [In that *teshuvah*, the Chasam Sofer (who in this *teshuvah* also states that *chukos goyim* does apply to shaving, reversing his position from what he had written previously) states that both *lo yilbash* and *chukos goyim* would not apply in a beardless society. (However, this lenient position is disputed by many Poskim — see *Hadras Ponim Zokon* Section 2, ch. 4 fn. 4, and ch. 3 fn. 24 at length. This is also addressed by Rav Moshe Sternbuch shlita, who wrote in *Teshuvos v'Hanhagos* vol. 5 sec. 264 that the Vilna Gaon holds that *lo yilbash* applies even under such circumstances.)]

After the time of the Tzemach Tzedek, there were also great Poskim who were not “mystified” by his position and who (despite the *heter* codified in Shulchan Aruch) clearly indicated that those who remove their beards are transgressing (also) *lo yilbash*.

They include none other than the **Chofetz Chaim** himself, who (without making any mention of the Tzemach Tzedek, yet citing one of the same proofs as the Tzemach Tzedek) wrote in his *sefer Tiferes Odom* (ch. 6):

One must know that even if on the surface, [merely] styling the beard does not appear to involve a transgression, in truth, it is included in the commandment: “A man should not wear a garment of a woman.” For adorning oneself was permitted only to women.... Proof of this concept is in Shabbos 92b, which

states that even picking gray hairs from dark ones is forbidden because he is endeavoring to enhance his appearance and look younger. Rambam's view is that this obligates one for lashes; see Beis Yosef, Yoreh Deah, sec. 182. Moreover, by doing so, he incites the *yetzer hara* to [tempt] him.

An entire chapter is dedicated to this topic in the *sefer Hadras Ponim Zokon* (Section 2, ch. 3) where many other later Poskim are quoted, including a *teshuvah* from the **Rogatchover Gaon**, considered by many as one of the greatest Geonim in the past several centuries, who explains at length (also without mentioning the Tzemach Tzedek) that *lo yilbash* applies to the beard, and concludes:

ספר שו"ת צפנת פענח (ח"ד סימן רנח):

"לענין איסור לספר הזקן במספרים... באמת הארכתי דודאי אסור מן התורה, רק אינו לוקה...ודאי הוי איסור תורה...יהיו נזהרים מאוד שלא יספרו הזקן כי זה איסור גמור...לא יוסיפו עוד לעשות כו".

Concerning the prohibition of cutting the beard with scissors...in truth, I have explained at length that it is certainly a Biblical prohibition, just that lashes are not administered.... It is definitely a Biblical prohibition.... You should be very careful not to trim the beard, for this is an absolute prohibition.... You should desist from doing so.

Shaalos u'Teshuvos Tzafnas Paneach, vol. 4, sec. 258

See also *Shaalos u'Teshuvos Minchas Elazar* (vol. 2, sec. 48):

"ומ"ש הכותבים המשיגים (בסי' קל"ב ובסי' קמ"ח בוילקט יוסף) ע"ד הצמח צדק (החדשות) וכ' שבדאי אינו לדינא דאל"כ היו מביאים דבריו הבאה"ט וכו' והחכמת אדם. הנה מה אעשה כי לא ידע עם מי הוא מדבר שהוא הצ"צ להגה"צ מליבאוויטש צ"ל קרוב לדורנו (שר התורה רבן של ישראל, נכדו ותלמידו של הגה"ק הרב בעל התניא צ"ל) ואיך שייך להחכ"א והקודמים להביא דבריו, וגם בגוף הדבר מגשש (המשיג) כעור בצהרים נגד מאור השמש דברי הצ"צ הנז' שכ' עליו שבענין לא ילבש גבר בודאי דבריו נובעים מתרגום יונתן וכו' וע"ז השיג ובאמת לא כ' שם בצ"צ מדברי התרגום יונתן כלל רק האריך בכל פרט ופרט בגוף ההלכה דלא ילבש גבר ולא ראה כלל התשו' סי' צ"ג בצ"צ הנז' המחזקת שמונה דפים גדולים ומלאים על כל גדותיהם בעומק ההלכה באיסור תספורת הזקן עיי"ש".

In Vayelaket Yosef, sec. 132 and sec. 148, the writers who dispute [the obligation to grow a beard] write concerning the Tzemach Tzedek that his words are certainly not accepted as law, for otherwise they would be cited by the *Baer Heitev* and the *Chochmas Adam*.

What can I do if the writer does not know the text about which he is writing? We are discussing the Tzemach Tzedek authored close to our time by the Gaon of Lubavitch (the princely master of Torah, leader of the Jewish people, grandson and student of the holy Gaon, the author of the Tanya). How is it possible that the *Chochmas Adam* and other writers of previous eras would cite his works?

With regard to the matter itself [in taking issue with the Tzemach Tzedek], that writer “feels his way around like a blind man at noon” facing “the light of the sun,” the Tzemach Tzedek. For he writes that [the Tzemach Tzedek’s] words certainly stem from the interpretation given by the Targum Yonasan to the verse: “A man should not wear the garment of a woman,” and bases his disputation on that. The Tzemach Tzedek, however, does not mention the Targum Yonasan at all. Instead, he elaborates on every detail of the prohibition against a man adorning himself as a woman does. [That writer] certainly did not see responsum 93 of the Tzemach Tzedek, which contains eight large pages overflowing with profound halachic explanations regarding the prohibition of cutting the beard.

The Posek Hador, Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, seems also to have not been “mystified” by the position of the Tzemach Tzedek, as was attested to by his grandchildren in the *sefer Halichos Shlomo*:

"היתה דעתו כי הראוי והנכון לגדל הזקן...מלבד שהעיר איך מחמירים בכל הדברים ואילו בזה אין חוששין למש"כ הצמח צדק (ליובאוויטש, חיו"ד סי' צ"ג) דאית בי' משום לא ילבש" (כ"כ נכדיו בשמו בס' הליכות שלמה, הלכות תפלה, ירות"ו, תש"ס, עמ' יב)

In our times, the late Gadol Hador, **Rav Shteinman**, also accepted that shaving may be prohibited based on *lo yilbash*, and stated:

"ממ"נ לא טוב, אם מגלח במכונה הרי יש חשש לאו דאורייתא וגם אם מגלח עם משחה זה לא חלק, היות ויש אומרים שיש בזה משום: 'לא ילבש'" (פרי חיים ממרן הרב שטיינמן, שופר ארגון להפצת יהדות, צוות שופר גנזי המלך, כו תמוז תשע"ב)

"Any method you use to shave your beard will be problematic," Maran HaRav Shteinman replied. "Using an electric shaver may involve an *issur d'oraysa*. Even using shaving cream is not clearly acceptable, as some say this involves the *issur* of *lo yilbash*."

[It should also be noted that some of the sources which argue against the Tzemach Tzedek apparently never saw his *teshuvah* itself, and simply expressed disagreement with the concept of *lo yilbash* applying to the beard, without having seen the basis of the Tzemach Tzedek's reasoning. An example of this is the Igros Moshe, who makes no mention of the content of the Tzemach Tzedek's *teshuvah*, and even advances an argument against the Tzemach Tzedek which is responded to by the Tzemach Tzedek himself. It is also of significance that the *Seridei Eish* (vol. 2 section 81) quoted in the forum's *Mareh Mekomos* concludes by admitting that his arguments against the Tzemach Tzedek may be refuted, and that he is merely trying to find a *zechus* for those who remove their beards, and that those who are strict in accordance with the Tzemach Tzedek should be blessed. Again, it is unlikely they would have taken the position they did if they would have been aware of the many Rishonim and Acharonim mentioned above.]

To conclude, the ***Sdei Chemed*** was a Sephardi who normally ruled like the *Mechaber* in Shulchan Aruch, and who surveyed and compiled the literature of the Poskim concerning this issue, and was certainly qualified

to know whether the majority agreed or disagreed with the Tzemach Tzedek. Yet, in his Rabbinic encyclopdia, *Sdei Chemed*, he wrote):

שד"ח מע' הלמ"ד כלל קטז (בנוגע לדברי גאון א' שפסק להקל בגילוח הזקן שלא ע"י תער): "אך במה שכתב להוכיח ההיתר מדברי הפוסקים אשר מילא כפו מהם כמו שיראה המעיין בדב"ק, אומר אני שאם ה' למראה עיניו כל מה שהאריך הגאון צ"צ בתשובה הנ"ל - ה' חוזר בו מסברתו וה' אוסר אף במספריים שלא כעין תער".

If [the authority who ruled leniently] had seen the lengthy exposition by the Tzemach Tzedek in the abovementioned responsum, he would have retracted his opinion regarding this issue and would have ruled that even [trimming the beard with] scissors that are not close-cutting is forbidden....

One who sees or hears of [Jews cutting their beards] should raise his voice in rebuke like a shofar. He should not hesitate, despairing that his reprimand will not be heeded, because the disease of this transgression is widespread. Heaven forbid to say this. The Jews are holy. If they are rebuked, they will accept it with love. Even if he can save one Jewish soul from this sinful practice, it is considered as if he saved an entire world. I attest to the fact that one of the great rabbis of our generation speaks unceasingly [about this matter], tastefully rebuking [others]. He has turned many back from [this] sin. May G-d enable us to bring merit to people at large and generate favor for our Creator”

(Rav Chaim Chizkiya Medini, *Sdei Chemed*, klalim, lamed, sec. 116).

P.S. It is troubling that in the *marei mekomos* of a halacha forum, an article from the rabbinical journal V'Yelaket Yosef is reproduced without including the articles which were published in the same journal which were rejoinders to the article featured in the *marei mekomos*. A multi-year dispute about the issue of shaving was published in this journal in the early 1900s, and to be fair, both sides should have been presented.

TRIMMING A BEARD TO ATTRACT A SHIDDUCH?*

—The Opinion of the Chofetz Chaim ז"ל and the Chazon Ish ז"ל—

"If one lets his beard grow...one can certainly expect that *Hashem* will provide him with a fitting marriage partner, an intelligent and G-d-fearing woman, who will be a helpmate during his life (as our Sages say: 'If one has merit, she will help him'), and they will be privileged to raise a generation of upright children in whom he can rejoice as they sit around his table...his marriage should be pleasant, that *Hashem* should provide them with their livelihood, that they should be privileged to have upright children, and that he should experience a good life with the wife whom *Hashem* has designated for him...

"On the other hand, if one does not place his trust in *Hashem* and he turns from the path of the commandment, surely *Hashem* will not desire to treat him well. Instead of the love and favor he hopes to gain by trimming his beard, eventually it will turn, G-d forbid, to bitterness and poison through lack of livelihood and other prevalent causes, because *Hashem*'s blessing will not rest between them. Sometimes it will come to the point where he has to wander far away to find his livelihood, and then, what benefit does one have from this [temporary] joy? In fact, all this is explained in the holy Torah sources, that by standing firm to fulfill *Hashem*'s commandment, one is privileged to raise a generation of upright children".

[The Chofetz Chaim, ז"ל in his work, *Kuntres Tiferes Odom*, chapter 1]**

* At greater length, see sefer *Hadras Ponim Zokon*, part II, ch. 16 ("Difficulties Due to Finding a Match and Marital Harmony").

** See the introduction to this same work, where the Chofetz Chaim writes: "It is an important duty for the Jewish people to stand firm on this and not to trim one's beard even with scissors". Later, in chapter 11, the Chofetz Chaim states: "to summarize all that has been written in this work: The means to discern whether someone has yiras shomayim (in determining whether to marry them or for any other reason) -- is whether he has a beard".

THE OPINION OF THE CHAZON ISH ז"ל

A certain *talmid chacham* wanted to arrange a *shidduch* for his daughter with a *bochur* who sported a long beard. However, he was concerned that his daughter wouldn't agree to marry such a *bochur*, so he asked the *bochur* to trim his beard.

The *bochur* approached the Chazon Ish and asked him if he should agree.

The Chazon Ish did not consent.

"If marrying a person with a full beard is such an issue for the young lady," he added, "it is a sign that she is not a fitting match. She may yet be a fitting match some time in the future, but presently she is not."

"When approached with a prospective match, it's good to have a way of measuring what type of girl she is. If she agrees to marry someone with a full beard, it's already a positive sign."

Of course, the *bochur* followed his advice and did not consent to trim his beard.

Despite this, the young lady agreed to the *shidduch*.

Maaseh Ish vol. 3, p. 27

Chapter 22

SHAVING THE BEARD:

A PREPARATION FOR ROSH HASHANAH?!

Claim:

The Tur (Orach Chaim 581) quotes a cryptic Midrash, describing the grooming practices that are observed on Erev Rosh Hashanah.

Over the years, some have claimed that shaving the beard can be defended based on this Midrashic passage.

Response:

Following is the Midrashic passage (Yerushalmi, Rosh Hashanah 1:3), quoted by the Tur (Orach Chaim 581) describing the attitude that should be had on Erev Rosh Hashanah: “Typically, a person preparing for judgment gets dressed in black, grows his beard, and does not cut his nails, because he does not know what the outcome will be. The Jewish people, however, do not do so: they put on their finery, shave their beards, cut their nails, and eat and rejoice on Rosh Hashanah, because they know Hashem will perform a miracle [and judge them compassionately].”

Over the years, some have claimed that shaving the beard can be defended based on this passage.

Over the ages, numerous sefarim have discussed this matter, offering a wide range of approaches to rigorously and conclusively refute this claim.

What follows is a brief synopsis of eleven such responses (these responses are presented in sefer **Hadras Ponim Zokon** section III chapter 3 and published recently in a separate, 30 page booklet, entitled **A Textual Analysis of Talmudic Statements concerning Grooming Practices on the Eve of Rosh Hashana** – see there at length for full detail and documentation):

1. There is overwhelming evidence that the correct text of this passage is (not “shave their beards,” but rather) “cut their hair.” This is how the text appears in other Midrashic sources, as well as in numerous works both of Rishonim preceding the Tur and Acharonim following the Tur. Furthermore, this is how the Tur himself quotes this passage in his own *Kitzur Piskei HaRosh*. Moreover, the Vilna Gaon, considered one of the most authoritative decisors in areas where texts of Chazal have various readings, states that the correct text here is “cut their hair.”
2. Even if the correct text would be as quoted in the Tur (“shave their beards”), it would not have an impact on practical halachic practice, since there is a well-known principle that we do not derive halachos from Aggadah, the homiletical section of the Torah. No practical application can therefore be deduced from this passage.
3. Many sources emphasize that the Talmud Yerushalmi is replete with errors that crept in over the ages (as a result of the fact that it was not as widely studied as the Talmud Bavli).
4. The Chasam Sofer writes that until the eleventh century, it was uncommon even for Ashkenazic Jews to cut their beards. [It was only during the Crusades, when hordes of Christian mobs murdered any Jew in their path, that a dispensation was granted by certain authorities to allow merchants who traveled the highways and were in grave danger—and no one else—to disguise their Jewish appearance by removing their beards.] Hence, it is impossible that during the Talmudic era, it was customary—as the Yerushalmi seems to indicate—for Jews to shave

their beards on Erev Rosh Hashanah. We must therefore say that the version of the Yerushalmi as quoted in the Tur is erroneous.

5. Many Biblical and Talmudic sources indicate that shaving the beard is a sign of disgrace or mourning, not a method of beautifying oneself, as the above version of the Yerushalmi seems to imply. This fact further demonstrates that the text as it appears in the Tur is inaccurate.

6. Many Poskim are of the opinion that even shaving with scissors is forbidden *min hatorah*. If the version of this passage as quoted in the Tur is correct, how could they all have overlooked a clear Yerushalmi that allows it?

7. According to this version, the Yerushalmi only mentions shaving the beard, and not cutting the hair. Letting the hair grow unkempt is certainly unsightly and a sign of mourning. Why doesn't the Yerushalmi make any mention of cutting the hair? It must be that the correct text is indeed "cut their hair."

8. The Tur prefaces his quote from the Yerushalmi with the words, "We wash ourselves and take haircuts on Erev Rosh Hashanah, based on the following Midrashic passage..." Similarly, he concludes the quote by saying, "It is therefore customary to take haircuts and wear clean clothing on Erev Rosh Hashanah." He makes no mention of shaving the beard, further demonstrating that the text of the passage as published between the Tur's opening and concluding sections is distorted.

9. Interestingly, the Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 581) omits this Midrashic passage.

10. All opinions agree that the Torah considers the proper appearance of a Jew to be with a beard, and sources discuss at length the great holiness found in the hairs of the beard. Hence, cutting the beard is certainly not a recommended preparation for Rosh Hashanah!

11. The prohibition of shaving is limited to the five payos - locations on the face, and during Biblical and Talmudic times, it was customary by some to remove facial hair from the parts of the face not included in the prohibition of shaving. The Yerushalmi is thus referring to shaving the parts of the beard not included in the Biblical prohibition. [Nowadays, however, we do not know which parts of the face are not included in the prohibition, and it is therefore forbidden to shave any part of the beard.] This is the resolution offered by the *Tzemach Tzedek* (whose birthday is on Erev Rosh Hashanah).

❧ Chapter 23 ❧

SHOULD ELECTRIC SHAVERS BE GIVEN TO THOSE WHO REMOVE THEIR BEARD WITH RAZORS?

Claim:

In the July 20th, 2016/Parsha Balak issue of *Inyan Hamodia Weekly Magazine*, the cover story “Torah Learning At Any Age: A Look at Senior Learning Programs” included the following quotation which was highlighted with a photo and caption on page 25, regarding the wonderfully worthy and successful “Torah Outreach Program” in North Miami Beach: “Rabbi B. quietly encourages shemiras hamitzvos, when he feels that it will be well received. For example, several men have given up shaving with a razor, due to Rabbi B.’s teachings. He makes a deal with them: You give me your razor, and I will give you an electric shaver.”

Is this the proper Torah approach?

Response:

Historically, there were two other similar attempts of Torah outreach programs to encourage those who shaved with razors to instead use electric shavers, which were rejected to by the Gedolei Hador of the time.

The first involved P’eylim. As related previously in chapter 20, when P’eylim negotiated with the Zionist immigration officials who were forcing the Sephardic immigrants to shave off their beards with razors

(claiming it was for sanitary reasons) to supply them with shavers instead, R' Isser Zalman Meltzer zt'l, the Chazon Ish zt'l, the Brisker Rov zt'l and R' Aharon Kotler zt'l refused to support this effort, saying that they were not convinced that a shaver was better than a razor.

Yet another incident in which Rav Aharon Kotler forcefully articulated his position rejecting the appropriateness of giving shaving machines to those who shave with a razor is documented above, chapter 20.

The second incident occurred in the 1970s and was initiated by an organization called Hasa'ad Haruchani (the "Central Movement for Inculcating Faith & Mitzvos"), which was founded in Israel after the Six Day War to provide religious articles to the many post-war Ba'alei Teshuva.

After this organization merited that the *Gedolei Hador* signed a public appeal endorsing its activities and calling for financial support of its efforts, Hasa'ad Haruchani expanded its programming by offering electric shavers to those who were shaving with razors.

When this became known, the Steipler Gaon zt'l and Rav Shach zt'l protested and directed that their names be removed from any document supporting the organization unless and until the distribution of shaving machines was discontinued. Please find attached herewith a copy of a 25 Elul 5736 letter from the founder and director of Hasa'ad Haruchani, Rav Mordechai Chashin, in which he enclosed a letter from today's Gadol Hador, Rav Chaim Kanievsky shlita, relating in the name of his father, the Steipler Gaon zt'l and Rav Shach zt'l that both the Chofetz Chaim zt'l and Chazon Ish zt'l considered shaving machines the halachic equivalent of a razor -- to the extent that the Chazon Ish ruled that electric shavers may not be given to those who shave with a razor, to use instead of a razor. These Gedolim required that it be publicized that Hasa'ad Haruchani would no longer distribute electric shavers as a condition of their continued endorsement.

Following are facsimiles of these historic letters from Hasa'ad Haruchni and kisvei yad from Rav Chaim Kanievsky shlita, followed by English translation:



הסעד הרוחני ירושלים **HASA'AD HARUCHANI Jerusalem** התנועה המרכזית להחדרת אור האמונה ועזרה לקיום המצות **Central Movement for Inculcating Faith & Mitzvos**

רחוב סטראוס 14, ירושלים • ת.ד. 6163 • טלפון 02-227711
 14 Strauss St., Jerusalem, Israel, P.O.B. 6163, Tel. 02-227711

כ"ה אלול תשל"ז

ירושלים

לכבוד

ידידנו הרה"ג אוצר התורה והמעלות
 כש"ת מוהר"ר משה ווינער שליט"א
 נאד-וואדמער נ.י.

שלומים מרובים וכל טוב סלה,

הננו לאשר קבלת מכתבו יקרתו המלא יראת שמים וחיבת
 הקודש ומתיחס לחשיבות גידולו של הזקן והזמר איסור העברתו
 לאור ההלכה.

הדבר רצוי מאד, וביחוד לאור הצורך לחזק ולבסס יתדות
 מורשת דורות לבלי לסטות מהמסילה שלנו מאז מעמד הר סיני
 וכל מנהגי אבותינו נוחי נפש אשר הורה הם ובפרט בענין
 גילוח הזקן ע"י מכונה שלפי דברי הרבנים הגאונים מאורי
 ישראל שליט"א יש בזה חשש איסור דאורייתא.

בחפץ לב אנו מצרפים בזה מכתבו של הגאון הרב חיים
 קנייבסקי שליט"א בנו של גאון דורנו הגר"י קנייבסקי שליט"א.

"הסעד הרוחני" עושה גדולות ונצורות להשיב לב אהים תועים
 לצור מחפבתם. אנו נותנים במסגרת עבודתנו תשמישי קדושה לבעלי
 חשבה וכו'. מיום שבאה ההוראה "בשם חזון אלש שאין לסמוך שום
 מכונה גילוח למי שמגלה בתער" אנו מקפידים על זה גם לגבי בעלי
 חשבה שנהנו מקודם לגילוח. התער, ובהדאי שצרכנים לחזק את העניין
 ולגדור גדר שנפרץ לדאבוננו.

אנו מאחלים לכם שתצליחו בכל אשר תנסו מתוך הרחבת חדעת.

בכבוד רב ובדבך בחיבה וחתימה טובה

הרב מרדכי חשינ' זצ"ל

Hasa'ad Haruchani

Jerusalem

Central Movement for Inculcating Faith and Mitzvos

14 Strauss Street, Jerusalem, Israel, POB 6163, Tel. 02-227711

Yerushalayim, 25 Elul, 5737

To our colleague, the *rav* and *ga'on*, a treasure of Torah and talents,
R. Moshe Wiener *shlit'a* [author of *sefer Hadrash Ponim Zokon*]
North Woodmere, N.Y.

[With blessings of] much peace and everything good forever,

We are in receipt of your letter, filled with *yiras shamayim* and affection for that which is holy, in which you address the significance of growing a beard and the magnitude of the *issur* to remove it according to halacha.

[Your words] are very appropriate, especially in light of the need to strengthen and bolster Judaism, our heritage for generations, without deviating from the path that has been ours since when we stood at Har Sinai. [This includes] all the *minhagim* of our fathers, may their souls rest [in peace], which have the status of Torah. This is particularly the case regarding the subject of shaving the beard with a machine, as according to the statements of the rabbonim and *ge'onim*, the luminaries of Yisroel, *shlit'a*, this entails a concern for an *issur de'oraysa*.

We willingly attach herewith a letter from the *ga'on* R. Chaim Kanievsky, *shlit'a*, son of the *ga'on* of our generation, R. Yaakov Kanievsky, *shlit'a*.

HaSa'ad Haruchni has achieved great accomplishments in returning the hearts of our lost brethren to their roots. As part of our work, we supply *baalei teshuvah* with items that serve mitzvah-related purposes.

From the day an instruction was made known in the name of the Chazon Ish that one should not sell a shaving machine to an individual who shaves with a razor, we are careful to fulfill this also with *baalei*

teshuvah who have previously been accustomed to shaving with razors. This matter must certainly be strengthened, and we must repair this breach that has, unfortunately, become common.

We convey our wishes that you should succeed wherever you turn, accompanied by *harchovas hada'as*.

Respectfully, and with blessings for a *kesivah vachasimah tovah*,

R. Mordechai Chashin, chairman

LETTER FROM MARAN HAGAON RAV CHAIM KANIEVSKY SHLITA
TO RABBI CHASHIN

דברי

בדבר הנדבך מכתב חתום ג' י"א

מכתב חתום מורדכי חשין איננו נותן אזהרות והוראות
אלא כי להשתדל להקדים ולעשות דבר החשוב וצריך
להקדים לו יבוא כמין למצינו דבר החשוב
למנוח אע"פ שיש מנהגים קצתם ואיננו נותנים
דבר מנוח

כן צריך דקדוק ואוספת אל התורה להזהר
למנוח לכל קדוש אל יבוא שיהא אע"פ ויח
מנהגים קצתם נחלקים דבר חתום ג' י"א
לדבר אפי"ן דאוספת אל

ואנחנו דור ואנחנו דהצורה דבר חתום
למנוח אל יבוא חתום קדוש

With the help of Hashem

To the honorable R. Mordechai Chashin, *shlit'a*

Since my father and teacher, [R. Yaakov Kanievsky,] *shlit'a*, is not accustomed to issuing halachic rulings, he has told me to write the known [ruling that has been repeated] in the name of the Chazon Ish *zatza'l*.

It is known here that my father testifies in the name of the Chazon Ish that one should notsell any shaving machine [even] to one who shaves with a razor.

Additionally, I have fulfilled your request and added on the notice in shul that since you have resolved to discontinue providing additional shaving machines [to *baalei teshuvah*], I have been asked in the name of our teachers, *shlit'a*, to request [the public] to assist you with your organization.

I [will conclude by] asking for your wellbeing and blessing you with success in all your activities, which you perform *leshem shamayim*.

[Signed] Chaim Kanievsky

HALACHIC RULING FROM RAV ELOZOR MENACHEM MAN SHACH

השובה להלכה

מהגאון האדיר מוה"ר מנחם אליעזר שך שליט"א

בענין חספורה הזקן עם מכונה גילוח חשמלי.

יעיין בספר לקוטי הלכות על מס' מבוה לבעל החפץ חיים

בדף יד ע"ב בעין משפט שם שכתב שאסור ואין להקל בזה

וגם ידוע שהחזון איש זצוק"ל אוסר בכל מכונה.

ממני

מנחם מן שך

To the questioner, may he be well:

Concerning shaving the beard with electric shaving machines -- see the

sefer *Likutei Halachos* on tractate *Makos* (by the *Chofetz Chaim*), p. 14b (*Eyn Mishpot* op. cit.) where he writes that it is prohibited, and one may not be lenient in this matter.

It is also well-known that the *Chazon Ish* ז"ל ruled that the use of all shaving machines is forbidden.

This is my response,

[Signed] *Elozor Menachem M. Shach*

PUBLIC LETTER FROM MARAN HAGAON RAV CHAIM KANIEVSKY SHLITA

ק צ צ ה "

תבקשת מאמנה שליט"א לפרסם היות שרצפס
מאוסז התקרא סדצ רוחע קריאה מודעצ אצטור
למי ואמור' חתם למ ולכן אחרי הקל קורא כותב
האוסז דכלל סדצ רוחע לעצמה לבוא מחלק מכונת גילוח
ועתקשת לפרסם לעצמם לא התיר את מכונת גילוח
לאדברה קריק מאוד לזהו תצר ממל ואורין אלו דחמה
לאוין אכר עפרסם להחפץ תייס צצל ליקטי הלבית גל
אבות אסור אפילו את מכונת גילוח לא יד [לאו חלעל]
התקרא נול ופסל וקו לא זמנע שהוא הנהג משוכלל
יותם ודודאי עצם הסבין נקצ דדער (הו"ו) יתר ממל
לכהו תצר הואיר דתורה

שוב תבקשת מכונתה לק שליט"א לפרסם גם דשמו
שמעולם לא התיר חו' המכונת גילוח וחתמתי לקול קורא
הכל לא הי' יודע כלל למעט דמכונת גילוח

ח"ץ ק'נסקי

With the help of Hashem,

I have been asked by my father and teacher [R. Yaakov Yisroel Kanievsky zt”l, the Steipler Gaon], may he live and be well, to publicize the following:

An organization by the name of *Sa’ad Ruchni* [‘spiritual assistance’] has published an appeal from various Rabbonim, [exhorting the public] to assist them, and my father and teacher affixed his signature there as well. After [the text of] the appeal, the organization writes that included in the spiritual assistance they offer is the distribution of shaving machines.

I have been asked to publicize that [my father] has never permitted the use of shaving machines. On the contrary, it is very possible that such a shaving machine is [in the same category as] an actual razor, and one transgresses five negative prohibitions when using it.

It has already been publicized that the Chofetz Chaim *zatza’l*, in his *Lekutei Halachos* on Makkos, prohibits even manual (non-electric) shaving machines; how much more so are today’s electric shaving machines forbidden, since they are much more advanced. It is certain that the blade itself touches the skin; as such, it is [in the same category as] an actual razor, and it is the razor the Torah is referring to.

I have also been asked by R. Shach to publicize in his name as well that he has never permitted the use of shaving machines, *chas veshalom*. When he signed the above-mentioned appeal, he was entirely unaware that [the organization] deals with shaving machines.

Chaim Kanievsky

[Signed] Chaim Kanievsky

Chapter 24

ARE CONCERNS FOR “GA’AVAH” AND “YUHARA” VALID REASONS TO SHAVE THE BEARD?

Claim:

There are many cases in halakha where one is discouraged from adopting a stringency because it appears to be an expression of ‘religious haughtiness’ (ייהרא). Some assert that this applies to growing a beard.

Response:

No less an authority than the *Chasam Sofer* zt”l presents the position of Torah repudiating this concern:

הטענה שע”י הסרת הזקן ימנעו מגאווה - אין לך מום גדול מזה

ע”פ (האזינו לב, ה) “שחת לו לא בניו מומם” ביאר מרן החתם סופר על פי מ”ש ה”אבן עזרא” (קדושים יט, כז), שלפיכך הגדירה תורה את הסרת הזקן כ”השחתה” (”לא תשחית את פאת זקנך”), מפני שהזקן הוא תפארת פניו של אדם, וגלוחו הריהו השחתת הפאר.

וזהו שאמר הכתוב: “שחת לו” - הללו שמשחיתים את פאת זקנם, “לא בניו” - מוכיחים הם על ידי כך כי אינם בניו של הקב”ה, כי משליכים הם את היופי והפאר אשר העניק להם, וכאילו אין אביהם שבשמים חשוב כלל בעיניהם [בלשון החת”ס שם: “אמנם נאסר לנו כל זה משום שאנו בני אל חי וכתוב ישראל אשר בך אתפאר ולא יתכן לבן להשליך פאר אביו מעליו”].

ואם סבורים הם שעל ידי הסרת תפארתם ימנעו מגאווה, הנחשבת למום (כמאחז”ל מגילה כט, א: “כל המתגאה הוא בעל מום” - וא”כ יחשב זה המשחית זקנו כענוותן ויהי תם ולא בעל מום) - אומרת אפוא התורה: “מומם” - אדרבה, בעצם השחתת פאת הזקן הופכים הם לבעל מום [בלשון החת”ס שם: “ואין לך מום גדול מזה שמראה שאינו בנו של הקב”ה. וזהו שיחת לו, זקנו ופאת ראשו, לא בניו, והוא מומם, ולא תמימותם, כ”א

מומם כנ"ל"] (פנקס קדשו עה"ת בפ' האזינו בשנת תקי"ף לפ"ק - נעתק בס' דרשות חת"ם סופר בהערת המהדיר לדרוש לח' תמוז בדף שד, ב במהדורת הרב יוסף נפתלי שטערן, תרפ"ט) [ואף שהזכיר שם "השחתת הזקן בתער", פשוט שטעמו ונימוקו - הסרת ה"פאר" - שייך גם בהסרת הזקן ע"י סם או מכונת גילוח, שמשחיתים עי"ז ה"תפארת פניו של אדם" ממש כמו תער, וזיל בתר טעמא, וק"ל].

A synopsis of this statement of the Chasam Sofer zt'l:

The verse states, "שחת לו לא בניו מומם" (*Devarim* 32:5). The Chasam Sofer zt'l explains this verse as follows:

The opening words, "*shiches lo*—destruction is his," refers to one who cuts his beard. Doing so is called "destruction"; as the Ibn Ezra explains (*Vayikra* 19:27), this is because the beard brings beauty to one's visage, and removing it destroys that beauty. Therefore, "*lo banav*—they are not His sons," because they are disregarding and rejecting the beauty Hashem has given them, as if they are not His sons.

The Gemara states (*Megilah* 29a) that haughtiness is viewed as a blemish. One might therefore consider removing his beard, presuming that by doing so he will avoid haughtiness and be complete. The verse therefore continues, "*mumam*—their blemish": to the contrary; not only will he not become complete, by doing so he will be blemished, as there is no greater blemish than displaying that one is not the son of Hashem.

More recently, the Chazon Ish zt'l articulated his rejection of the concept that beard removal should be encouraged based on "Yuhara":

וראה ספר התולדות של חזון איש (פאר הדור עמ' ר"נ): "פגשה ... בין אחד מגדולי בעלי המוסר, המשגיח המפורסם של ישיבת מיר, רבי ירוחם זצ"ל.. התנהגותם הכללית של בחורי ישיבת ליטא .. שמספרים את זקנם .. והחזון איש הגיב על כך, שאין כל תשובה ממשית .. וכל התירוצים והאמתלאות שמשיבים עליהם אינם אלא ישוב דוחק ואין להם על מה שיסמוכו". ובס' קובץ אגרות החזון איש ח"א סי' קצח (בענין מכונת גילוח): "ואף שפשטה המחלה גם בין התורנים [=הבני תורה] יחיו, לא נשתנה הדבר בשביל זה, ולכן נפשי סולדת בענין זה", עכ"ל מרן החזון איש שם.

The famous *mashgiach* of Yeshivas Mir, Rav Yerucham Levovitz zt'l, once met with the Chazon Ish. Their discussion included and focused on why the *bochurim* in the Litvishe yeshivos shaved their beards. The Chazon Ish replied that no substantive justification exists for doing so, and all the excuses given for this conduct are faulty and have no reliable basis (*Pe'er Hador* p. 250). Similarly, the Chazon Ish wrote in a letter (*Kovetz Igros* I:198): “Although this sickness has spread even among *bnei Torah*, the matter has not changed as a result, and my soul seethes from this.”

For further study regarding this issue, please see Hadrass Ponim Zokan section II chapter 19

To conclude with the following statement from the late Gadol Hador, Rav Aharon Yehuda Leib Shteinman zt'l:

וכנגד הטענה שיש אומרים דהוי כ"יוהרא" שמחשיב את עצמו כמושלם... אמר רבינו בהזדמנות "דבכל זאת עדיף שיגדל זקן וזה שומר קצת על האדם ברוחניות". (פרי חיים ממרן הרב שטיינמן, שופר ארגון להפצת יהדות, צוות שופר גנזי המלך, כו תמוז תשעב).

Some claim that growing a beard demonstrates arrogance (“Yuhara”), as if he thinks he is perfect.

“It is still better to grow a beard,” Maran HaRav Shteinman once commented. **“This will protect a person spiritually to a certain extent.”**

❧ Chapter 25 ❧

WHAT IS THE POSITION OF THE GEDOLIM OF THE SEPHARDIM REGARDING THE BEARD AND SHAVING?

Claim:

Some assert that the Gedolim of the Sephardim do not consider maintaining a beard to be a Torah requirement.

Response:

Following are statements of the greatest Gedolim of the Sephardim regarding the beard and shaving:

RAV CHAYIM YOSEF DAVID AZULAI, THE CHIDAH

“According to the true wisdom (i.e., the teachings of *Kabalah*), it is an absolute prohibition to shape one’s beard in any fashion” (*Birchei Yosef, Yoreh De’ah*, sec. 181).

RAV YOSEF CHAYIM OF BAGHDAD, AUTHOR OF THE BEN ISH CHAI

“Do not raise your hand to the beard to remove its hair, neither with scissors, nor with depilatory cream... It is forbidden to pull out even one hair. It is forbidden regardless of the method involved” (*Torah Lishmah*, responsum 215, by Rav Yosef Chayim of Baghdad,¹ author of the *Ben Ish Chai*).²

¹ See a clarification of his position in *Sefer Hadrash Panim Zokan*, p. 258 ff. and in *Hosafah 2*, os 21, and *Hosafah 5*.

² The *Ben Ish Chai* held the beard so dear that he even counseled against rolling it or folding it to

RAV CHAYIM CHIZKIYA MEDINI,
COMPILER OF THE S'DEI CHEMED

“If [the authority who ruled leniently] had seen the lengthy exposition by the *Tzemach Tzedek* in the abovementioned responsum, he would have retracted his opinion regarding this issue and would rule that even [trimming the beard with] scissors that are not close-cutting is forbidden....

“One who sees or hears of [Jews cutting their beards] should raise his voice in rebuke like a *shofar*. He should not hesitate, despairing that his reprimand will be heeded, because the disease of this transgression is widespread. Heaven forbid to say this. The Jews are holy. If they are rebuked, they will accept it with love. Even if even one can save one Jewish soul from this sinful practice, it is considered as if he saved an entire world. I attest to the fact that one of the great rabbis of our generation speaks unceasingly [about this matter], tastefully rebuking [others]. He has “turned many back from [this] sin.

“May G-d enable us to bring merit to people at large and generate favor for our Creator” (Rav Chayim Chizkiya Medini, *S'dei Chemed*, *Klalim*, *Lamed*, sec. 116).

RAV YAAKOV CHAYIM SOFER,
AUTHOR OF THE KAF HACHAYIM

“Several times, I was warned [from Above] — both in Babylonia and in Jerusalem — not to pull out the hair from my beard” (*Kuntreis*

make it appear shorter than it actually is, as he writes: “There are people whom G-d created with a long beard and they attempt different clever methods to change this good gift which they were granted by G-d. They seek to make their beards appear short by lifting up the hairs. Although they are careful not to cut them, heaven forbid. Nevertheless, they are not acting properly. Instead, they should leave it as is and rejoice in their portion” (R. Yosef Chayim in his text, *Torah Lishmah*, sec. 447. See a similar comment in the text *Meor Yisrael* (the biography of the Baba Sali), p. 90, which quotes him as saying: “It is not appropriate that something intended to be a person’s glory should be a source of embarrassment.” He instructed the person not to continue folding his beard. See also *Sefer Hadras Panim Zokon*, sec. II, ch. 12, addendum 1, which addresses this subject.

HaChalomos, sec. 17, by Rav Yaakov Chayim Sofer, author of the *Kaf HaChayim*).³

“The *Ari zal* was very stringent with regard to touching and handling one’s beard, even during the week, lest one pull out a hair. He maintained that pulling out a hair from any portion of the beard constituted a very severe prohibition, because the hairs of the beard represent the channels of Divine influence, as explained in *Shaar HaMitzvos*, *Parshas Kedoshim*. Certainly, this applies on *Shabbos* when there is an additional prohibition” (Rav Yaakov Chayim Sofer, *Kaf HaChayim*, sec. 203:127).

RAV SHLOMOH ELIEZER ALFUNDARI
THE SABA KADISHA

“With his ruling forbidding removing the beard with a cream or with close-cutting scissors, our holy teacher pronounced that all authorities who permitted such leniencies erred.... He would not grant permission to Rabbinical students who had removed their beards to cross the threshold of his home.... He said that they cause him anguish and that he cannot look at their faces. He would not reply to them, even with regard to the words of the Torah.... He would not allow a Jew who removed his beard — even with cream — to be included in his *minyán*.... During his final illness, indeed, on the very last night before he was summoned to the Higher Academy, our teacher was involved that entire night in the study of the prohibition against removing the beard with a cream or with close-cutting scissors” (the statement of the students of Rav Shlomoh Eliezer Alfundari, the author of the collection of responsa,

³ “If a voice from heaven was raised concerning this, how much more so [should there be an outcry] regarding the shaving of the entire beard” (the note of his grandson, R. Yaakov Chayim Sofer, as recorded in *Sefer Hadras Panim Zokon*, *Hosafah* 2, os 1).

Saba Kadisha, as recorded by his students in the text *Amudei Arazim*, p. 52ff.; *Journey to Jerusalem* (Mesorah Publications 2009), p. 176; 221.⁴

**RAV YISRAEL ABUCHATZIRA,
THE BABA SALI**

“One who guards his beard is like one who guards the *bris*. To touch [i.e., trim the beard], even [only] with scissors, is forbidden. Those precise in observance would not even touch the hairs of the beard lest a hair fall out. He related that he personally did not have a beard until he was 40 and he prayed and cried that his beard would grow. Within seven days, it did” (Rav Yisrael Abuchatzira, the Baba Sali, as recorded in *Sefer Hadras Panim Zokon*, p. 41).⁵

*

“*Baba Sali* always had a favorable approach to those who did not touch their beards.... He was very disturbed by the removal of the beard... He saw the beard as “the image of G-d” which should not be removed.... He would frequently say that a person who resolves to leave his beard intact will have half his sins forgiven.... Once a young man came to him and told him that he wished to let his beard grow because he had heard about the promise that half his sins would be forgiven, but his wife was opposed. *Baba Sali* replied that he should tell his wife that half her sins will also be forgiven if she allows him to grow his beard” (*Meor Yisrael*, pp. 88-90).

4 The sage Rav Shlomoh Eliezer Alfundari would refuse to parley words of Torah with the students of the Chebron Yeshivah, because they would remove their beards. He would say (referring to *Song of Songs* 2:14): “‘Show me your countenance’ (i.e., with a beard, as desired by the Torah) and then ‘let me hear your voice.’”

He differed with the ruling of the *Beis Yosef* regarding removing hair without a razor, stating bluntly, “Here, the master, erred,” and he would rule that although one is not liable for lashes for removing the beard in such a manner, it is forbidden to do so (the collection of responsa entitled *Peas HaSadeh*, responsum 111).

5 See further clarification of his position in *Sefer Hadras Panim Zokon*, Vol. I, p. 699ff.

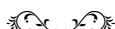
ADDITIONAL CHALLENGES FOR FURTHER STUDY

Claim:

Is the ruling of the *Shulchan Aruch* (Y.D. section 181:10) a basis to permit cutting the beard with scissors?

Response:

See sefer *Hadras Ponim Zokon* section 3 chapter 1 at length, where fourteen (14) approaches are presented to resolve this concern.



Claim:

Is there halachic validity to the position of the *Zohar* and *Kabbalah* which consider pulling out or cutting even one hair of the beard to be an “*Issur Chamor Meod*” (a very severe prohibition)?

Response:

See sefer *Hadras Ponim Zokon* section 3 chapter 2 at length, where six (6) approaches are presented to resolve this concern.



Claim:

Are the comments of *Rashi* (*Kereisos* 5b) and *Ramah* (*Horayos* 12a) regarding the beard of *Aharon HaKohen* valid sources to permit cutting the beard?

Response:

See sefer *Hadras Ponim Zokon* section 3 chapter 4 footnote 188 at length, where fourteen (14) approaches are presented to resolve this concern.



Claim:

Is *Teshuvos HaRashba* volume one section 407 (regarding grooming restrictions of a *Nazir*) a source to permit cutting the beard with scissors?

Response:

See sefer *Hadras Ponim Zokon* section 2 chapter 2 footnote 36 where resolutions to this concern are presented.



Resolutions to numerous additional concerns are presented throughout the sefer Hadras Ponim Zokon – see there at length

וראה מ"ש מרן החת"ס בתשובה הנדפסה בשלהי חידושיו לכתובות, לחכם גדול אחד, בזה"ל: "ואלפי קושיות מתגוללים כעת בעו"ה בבתי מדרשות בכל יום, כי לקוצר שכלנו אין אתנו יודע עד מה". - ואם בזמנו כך, כ"ש וק"ו בזמנינו אנו, ועאכו"כ שמשום איזה קושיות אין להתיר דבר שכבר הורה בו זקן לאיסור, ודי בזה.

❧ Addendum ❧

ע"ד סמכות שיטת ה"אגרות משה" זצ"ל בענין מכוונות גילוח

מכתב תשובה זו ה' למראה עיניו של
מרן הגאון רבי חיים קניבסקי שליט"א
וזה לשון תגובתו:

יפה כותב

"יפה כתבת"

Rabbi Moshe Wiener
3001 West 37th Street
Brooklyn, NY 11224-1479

משה ניסן ווינער
מח"ס: • הדרת פנים זקן
• כבודה בת מלך

בס"ד. יום ראשון לסדר "והייתם נקיים מה' ומישראל", תש"ע
בתגובה על הופעת הס' "תספורת הזקן במספריים וסם" (ניו יארק, ה'תש"ע), קבלתי
מכתב "כרטיס" (בהעלם שם מחברו) בזה"ל:

"בס"ד. כבוד הרב ווינער נ"י, למה אתה משמיט כסדר דעתו של פוסק
הדור הגר"מ פיינשטיין זצ"ל שהתיר. האם אין בזה עיוות."

והנה במענה על דבריו [למען היות נקיים מה' ומישראל, ולזכות את הרבים]:

(א) "ידיו לעבד שיהא כרבו" (ע"פ ברכות נח, ב). והלא הגר"מ פיינשטיין זצ"ל עצמו לא
העלה ההיתר שלו על הכתב ובדוקא, וטעמו ונימוקו עמו. וכמו שהעיד הרב מיכל זלמן
שורקין שליט"א בספרו מגד גבעות עולם, עמ' צו: "שמה שהגר"מ [פיינשטיין] זצ"ל לא
רצה לכתוב תשובה באגרות משה להתיר את השימוש במכוונות גילוח, הוא מטעם שהי'

סובר שהגם שאין כאן לאו של השחתה, מ"מ צורת היהודי הוא רק בזקן!" ומה אכן נעני אבתרי?

ב) בספר הנזכר ("תספורת הזקן במספריים וסם") לא השמיט דעת הגר"מ פיינשטיין זצ"ל. ואדרבה, האריך בעמ' 6 להביא דברי גדולי דורנו (כולל הגאון ה"סטייפלער" זצ"ל, הגאון בעל שו"ת באר משה זצ"ל, ולבח"ל - הגרי"ש אלישיב [שליט"א], הגאון בעל שו"ת שבט הלוי [שליט"א], הגר"מ שטרנבוך שליט"א ועוד) אודות "דעת גדול אחד להתיר". ורק היות שיש מהנ"ל שהביעו דעתם בחריפות וכו' נגד ההיתר שאומרים בשם הגר"מ פיינשטיין זצ"ל - הנה "כבוד וכו' הסתר דבר" (ע"פ משלי כה, ב), ולכן שמו של הגר"מ פיינשטיין זצ"ל לא נזכר בפירוש בספר הנ"ל. [ויש להעיר שגם גדולי הרבנים הנ"ל לא הזכירו דעת הגר"מ פיינשטיין זצ"ל בזה בספריהם (חוץ מהגר"מ שטרנבוך שליט"א) - כ"א רק במכתבים וכו'].]

ג) לא עלינו תלונותיכם, כ"א על כל גדולי הפוסקים שהאריכו בספריהם אודות דין מכונות גילוח - ולא מצאו לנכון להזכיר שיטתו להקל של הגר"מ פיינשטיין זצ"ל (אולי מטעם שההיתר שאומרים בשמו - הוא בעצמו לא כתבו בכתב בתשובותיו בשו"ת אגרות משה, וכו"ל). וכן מצינו בשו"ת מנחת יצחק (ח"ד סקי"ג סקכ"ה) שכתב "וחזיתי בספרים של גדולי האחרונים בתקוה למצוא סמך למנהג העולם להקל, אבל לא רק **שלא מצאתי היתר**, אלא כתבו בפירוש להחמיר" - ולא הזכיר כלל דעתו הידוע של הגר"מ פיינשטיין זצ"ל. וכן בשו"ת שבט הלוי (ח"י חיו"ד סקל"ו, ובעוד כו"כ מתשובותיו) העיד שכתבו "כו"כ גדולי הדורות **באין חולק** שזה תער ממש" - ושיטת הגר"מ פיינשטיין זצ"ל לא הזכיר כלל. וגם בתשובתו של הגרי"ש אלישיב [שליט"א] בנדו"ד (קובץ תשובות סל"ב) לא נזכר שיש שיטת הגר"מ פיינשטיין זצ"ל המיקל בנדון. גם הגר"ח קניבסקי שליט"א שהאריך נגד גילוח הזקן במספריים, בסם ובמכונות גילוח בספרו אורחות יושר ס"ה - ולא הזכיר בשם הגר"מ פיינשטיין זצ"ל להקל. ואדרבה - במכתבו הנדפס בס' הנ"ל (עמ' 4) כתב הגר"ח קניבסקי שליט"א "החזון איש אסר כל מכונה וכו"כ **כל גדולי הדור**" - ולא מצא לנכון להזכיר שיש יוצא מהכלל בשם הגר"מ פיינשטיין זצ"ל. וכן בפסק דין (מחודש ניסן, תשס"ח) שחתמו עליו גדולי דורנו [שליט"א] (כולל הגרי"ש אלישיב, הגרא"ל שטיינמן, הגר"ש הלוי ואזנר, הגרמ"י לפקוביץ, הגר"נ קרליץ, הגר"ח קניבסקי, הגר"ש אויערבאך, הגר"ר נתן צבי פינקל ועוד יותר מעשרים ראשי ישיבות) אודות "פירצת מכונות הגילוח, אשר **אסרוהו רבותינו גדולי הדור**" - ולא הזכירו דעת הגר"מ פיינשטיין זצ"ל כלל.

[ויש להעיר גם מתשובת הגאון רבי יעקב קמנצקי זצ"ל (שבדאי ה' ידוע לו שיטת הגר"מ פיינשטיין זצ"ל בנדון) בספרו אמת ליעקב (על ד"ח שו"ע - יו"ד סקפ"א ס"י - התשובה נכתבה לא' מנכדיו שליט"א): "ע"ד המכונה גילוח, אין זו חומרא בעלמא. . . **ובאמת לא אדע אם גדולי אמריקא התיירו להדיא, ויתכן ששתקו מפני שלא שאלום, והיו כמעלימים בידעם שלא יתקבלו דבריהם**".]

ונסיים מעניינא דיומא שי"ל שמבואר בחז"ל שכבר בזמן חורבן בית מקדשנו מסרו נפשם ע"ז, עי' יפה ענף לאיכ"ר ה, ה: "אולי גזר כי יגלחו שערם ולא ימצאו להם פאת ראש וזקן

והמה לא שמעו בקולו והקשו עורף ולז"א על צוארנו נרדפנו". [ולא הסירו זקנם ע"י מספריים כעין תער או ע"י סם].

בכבוד ובהוקרה,

משה ניסן ווינער

נ.ב. בכללות ענין הסתמכות על גדול הדור המיקל לעומת רוב פוסקים המחמירים, יש להעיר מדברי הגאון רבי ישראל סאלאנטער זצ"ל (בהקדמת ס' אור היום בענין בין השמשות - ווילנא, תרס"א), שאפילו את"ל שיש לאחוז כשיטת גדול הדור המיקל "נגד כל הפוסקים האחרים לפי שהוא ראוי לדחות את כולם" (ע"ש שכוונתו על שיטת הגר"א בענין בין השמשות), הנה מ"מ - "מי שאוחז את קולותיו מחוייב לאחוז [גם] את חומרותיו". [ועי' אג"מ או"ח ח"ב סימן ס שאין לנהוג כמו הגר"א כשהוא נגד רוב הראשונים אלא מי שנוהג כמותו בכל דבר].

הוספה לאחר זמן: לאחרונה י"ל שו"ת שבט הלוי חי"א ושם בחיו"ד סי' קצח: "בענין מכונת גילוח . . הנה מוסכם בפי כל גאוני עולם מאז . . אין בינו לבין תער הנקרא תער ולא כלום . . וגם הגאון איגרות משה שרצה להקל במכונה דעכשיו . . המציא סברא . . וסברא זו אינה נכונה ולא נתקבלה". "וכן לא קבלוהו הרבה גדולי עולם ... וכן שמעתי בעצמי מהגאון ר' שלמה זלמן אויערבאך זצ"ל שתמה מאוד על שהוצע הצד הזה" (הרה"ג ר' פסח אליהו פאלק, מח"ס שו"ת מחזה אליהו, בקובץ "עם התורה" מהדורא ה' חוברת ט' תשע"ח - י"ל ע"י צעירי אגודת ישראל ארה"ב).

Epilogue

WHY DOES

MAME ROCHEL CRY?

Originally, when our Matriarch Rochel visited her children in exile, she saw them adorned with the *Tzelem Elokim* [the image of G-d — the beard], which is the *Toar Yisroel* [that enables one to be recognized as a Jew]. She did not fear, because she knew that there was hope for their redemption. In the present era, however, due to our numerous sins, we have descended from the level of “Yisroel,” the *Tzelem Elokim* has departed from us.... [since many have] cut off their beards....

Now, when Rochel comes to visit her children in exile, she doesn't recognize them at all, she suffers anguish and gives up hope ... This is the meaning of the verse, “A voice is heard on high... Rochel is weeping for her children; she refuses to be comforted for her children, for they are not.” She doesn't recognize us at all. It is as if we were not her children, for we lack her appearance.

Kehilas Yaakov,
by HaGaon Rav Shlomo Kluger,
Aseres Yemei Teshuva, pp. 306-607.

“רחל מבכה על בני” - למה?

“אך נראה, דהנה רחל [אמנו] כשבאה לגלות לפקוד את בני, בדורות הראשונים שהיתה מוצאת אותם בצלם אלקים [=הזקן] ותואר ישראל, לא היתה מתייראת, כי ידעה דיש תקוה לגאלם, אך בעו"ה בימים הללו ירדנו ממעלת ישראל להיות לנו צלם אלקים וסר מאתנו הצלם .. גדועי זקן .. כשבאה רחל לגלות ואינה מכירה אותם כלל, אז היא מצטערת ומתייאשת ח"ו מן התקוה .. וזהו שאמר קול ברמה נשמע וכו' רחל מבכה על בני' מאנה להנחם על בני' כי איננו, כי אינה מכרת אותנו כלל, כאילו לא היינו בני' כלל, כי אין להם תואר שלה.”*

(הגאון רבי שלמה קלוגר זצ"ל
בספרו “קהלת יעקב”, עש"ת, ע' שו-שז)

* ראה עד"ז בסידור הגאון רבי יעקב עמדין - היעב"ץ זצ"ל (שער שלכת, חלק המצרי): “ולכשיבוא רועה נאמן [- משיח צדקנו] שיכיר עדרו, ומי מכלל את יום בואו האדון אשר אנו מבקשים, ובמה יודעו איפוא אלה האנשים, אשר הסירו הדרת פניהם להיות כנשים” (הו"ד בס' “הדרת פנים-זקן” בסיומא דספרא, עמ' נתקלט).

In Loving Memory of our Mother
Liba Chaya bas Dovid z”l

(Lenke March-Chesney)

Niftar Tes Vav Teves, 5775

Daughter of her esteemed parents,
R’ Dovid and Rudya March z”l
of Budapest, Hungary.

Our mother's love of family was exemplary.

During the holocaust, she repeatedly risked her life
to save family and neighbors from death and starvation.

She was a teacher of courage, love, perseverance, and
respect throughout all the years we were privileged to
have her in our lives.

She is deeply missed.

והקיצו ורננו שוכני עפר

Beloved mother of
Dovid Chesney and Esther Chesney-Lemberger

לעילוי נשמת

מו"ד משנות נעודי שהתמסר באופן מופלא לחנך אותי
ולהדריבני בדרך טובים (יחד עם שאר תלמידיו המדובים)

ה"ה הוו"ח אי"א נו"נ רב פעלים לה' ולתורתו וכו'

ר' חיים נחום ב"ר אריה ע"ה מכניק

ולזכות משפחתו הנעלה

מסר נפשו ונפשות בני ביתו

לכתך אחרי במדבר בארץ לא זדועה

וזכה להקים את דברי התורה הזאת

ורבים השיב מעון

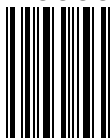
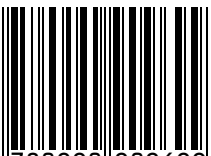
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תנצב"ה

המחבר

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