

## **Gathering to Protect Kedusha of the Home**

**In a special gathering on Wednesday night, Rabbis Yosef Yitzchak Ofen and Shmuel Bluming addressed a crowd of close to 100 Anash on strengthening themselves in matters of holiness**

Anash from a variety of age groups came upon special notice to hear some inspiration and direction on this vital subject.

Rabbi Ofen, the senior Mashpia in Yeshivas Toras Emes - Yerushalayim, Mashpia of Lubavitch Kehilla in Ramot and teacher in a girl's seminary in Tzfas, began his talk by speaking of the importance of kedusha and its effect on the entire home.

He spoke of how Lubavitch was always known for its stringencies in mitzvos, and the same should apply to Tznius. He spoke of how the internet is one of the **primary causes** of the youth veering off the path of Yiddishkeit, and must be controlled. We must protect ourselves and our families from the internet by using the right filters, and emphasized that someone that does not need the internet should better not have it at all, but those that need it (for business etc.) should make sure to protect themselves and their families.

Similarly, books and magazines with inappropriate content must not be brought into the home.

He then proceeded to talk of the Tznius Challenge that our community is facing. "It is my opinion that most, if not all, of those who are lacking in this area, are lacking in the knowledge of the halachos and the extreme importance of the matter," and told a personal story to this effect that occurred while teaching in seminary. He encouraged the men to learn the issues well and share them with their families.

Finally, he emphasized the need for this campaign to begin from the 'people', and others who see will

want to join. He connected this with the Hayom Yom of the day (4 Tammuz) where the Rebbe writes that one person can when applying himself, can make an impact in a large city, and told of the three women who with their behavior transformed the city of Frankfurt. "In my opinion this is clearly something that needs to be fixed to bring Moshiach."

Rabbi Ofen concluded that we must remember that 'all beginnings are difficult' and any change must happen slowly.

Rabbi Shmuel Bluming, a renowned Moreh Hora'ah in the community and Maggid Shiur in Oholei Torah, strengthened that which Rabbi Ofen said, adding additional insight. He noted that the internet can be harmful even for those looking at "kosher" things, making a person anxious and uneasy.

After the program, many remained to ask questions to the Rabbis and discussed ideas among themselves. Other suggestions were brought up by those attending, such as: making sure to walk in the street with hats and jackets (as was always the custom of chassidim) and the printing of a booklet with the many sichos and letters of the Rebbe on the subject of Tznius.

The crowd accepted the three suggestions of Rabbi Ofen – to protect themselves from the internet, refrain from inappropriate reading material and to influence those close to them in matters of Tznius, and everyone left inspired, looking forward to further such evenings.

# Protecting the Kedusha of the Home

From a talk by **Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Ofen**  
to Anash of Crown Heights - 4 Tammuz 5770

In today's Hayom Yom the Rebbe writes: "One single Chassid or student who devotes his heart, mind and soul to Torah and to bolstering Torah, affects wonders in a large city, in all that city's affairs – in a manner that transcends the natural order, by the merit of our Avos." The Rebbe invested himself with his heart and soul in Crown Heights; we are assured that any activity to strengthen the holiness in this neighborhood will be granted with boundless success.

Unfortunately, the low standards of Tznius in our community today are a strong deterrent to Hafotzas Hamayanos. Someone related to me, how he overheard on a plane, two Chassidim from other circles suggesting that a Lubavitcher nearby wouldn't mind sitting between two women. The person, who overheard this, told me that he wanted to bury himself from shame. It is irrelevant whether it was true or not, the image we are projecting must be altered. [Similarly a Non-Jew who once visited Crown Heights, having heard about the modesty of chassidim was baffled at the way people dress here.]

Lubavitcher Chassidim were always known for being extra careful in the observance of Mitzvos: Kashrus, Shabbos etc. For some reason, the Halachos of Tznius are being neglected. These are not Hiddurim or stringencies, but clear Halachos in Shulchan Aruch, no different than Kashrus and Shabbos. There are clear Halachos that govern when the husband may recite Shema or Kiddush in the presence of his wife (see Shulchan Aruch Alter Rebbe siman 75).

A Lubavitcher Chassid is only someone who follows the Halachos in Shulchan Aruch. The fact that there are some who consider themselves "Shpitz Chabad" but don't follow these Halachos does not change this fact.

Once an individual who considered himself "Shpitz Chabad", was not allowed to be Chazzan in the Tzemach Tzedek Shul in Yerusholayim, because he removed his beard. He was extremely offended, and it was later discovered that it had been a clear directive of the Rebbe.

The main cause for the lack of Tznius is the ignorance of the subject; people think it is only a Hiddur etc. They don't know that these are clear Halachos in Shulchan Aruch. We must educate people and point out these Halachos, because most people want to do what is right,

they just need to be taught. I was once teaching these Halachos to Seminary girls, and they were bothered that they hadn't been taught these Halachos earlier. Sometimes all that is needed is just a reminder. (Someone related how his relative who was once careful about Tznius, began to become lax, when he pointed this out to her, she said "I thought no-one cares anymore about how I dress, no-one ever told me anything.") Everyone must know that

people care about how they dress, and it bothers them about how this is affecting our neighborhood.

Rabbi Chodakov writes in his book "Hachinuch V'hamchanech" (translated in "The Educator's Handbook" P. 45): "A young girl must be given to understand that behavior unbecoming the modesty of the daughters of Israel will place her in the way of temptation, and that sooner or later she will find herself in a situation over which she has no control. Our Sages were thinking specifically of this when they stated, (Succah, 26a): 'The breach invites the thief.' However, these problems originate in early childhood, when proper attention was not paid to this subject and the proper attitudes inculcated. **When a student behaves immodestly – she becomes a provocation to the**

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**onlooker, and there is no telling where things may lead. Whatever the cause, with her remains the responsibility for what ensues, even if nothing could have been further from her mind. When discussing modesty, this concept – ‘causing the multitude to stray’ – should be thoroughly explored.”** It should be noted, that it is well known that many of the ideas that Rabbi Chodakov articulated, actually originate from the Rebbe.

The Rebbe also instructed the Mosdos in Eretz Yisroel, to institute the same standards and guidelines as enforced in Beis Yaakov.

Another cause for the damage in the Chinuch of our children is the widespread use of the internet. The Rebbe was very outspoken against television, internet is even worse than television. There are filters that can be used for those that must have internet in their homes. Even Non-Jews understand the dangers of the internet. The Nisyonos of our time are very difficult as we approach the coming of Moshiach, we must be strong; this is the Mesirus Nefesh required of us today.

[There is one letter from the Rebbe, where the Rebbe actually gives his own clear directive in a matter of Halacha. It is printed in Likutei Sichos Vol. 18 P. 447, a free translation of the letter follows: “In connection with the question that many have asked me concerning the length of the clothes, my opinion is well known, that the equal standard for all people (the daughters of Israel) and in all times is that the knees must be covered even while sitting. The aforementioned is equal standard for everyone and the very least. However, being that there are places where this is not enough, because in matters of Tznius etc. besides the boundaries of Tznius which are unchangeable anywhere, there are also details depending on the custom of the place – understandably to be more stringent – the Rov must direct exactly how to act. In addition, and this is also important to note, that the obligation to be stringent according to the circumstances of the place, is

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not just a Chumra, but it might very well be a prohibition from the Torah.”]

The key for all blessings is through Tznius, as it says clearly in the Torah (Dvrim 23, 15) “Since Hashem, your G-d, is accompanying your camp, to save you and to place your enemies before you, your camp should be holy. Then He will not see any immorality in you and turn away from you.” The Rebbe always mentioned the Zohar which states that all brachos come about through careful covering of the hair (and vice versa). It is well known that Kimchis merited to have seven sons who were Kohanim Gedolim through her scrupulous care

that even the walls of her house should not see her hair, (it should be noted that there are Halachos that pertain to men as well, how to be Tznius in private). When the mother is careful in Tznius this directly affects the Chinuch of her children.

Another thing that must be avoided is magazines with immodesty in image or content. They should not enter the home, as this affects the spiritual wellbeing of the entire household.

Clothes that cover according to Shulchan Aruch may still not be considered Tznius, e.g. tight clothes.

All laws of Tznius apply to young girls as well, beginning from the age of three.

Everyone must get involved to strengthen the standards of Tznius in our community. The Rebbe often mentioned that in Frankfurt three women began wearing a Sheitel, and this changed the entire city. Change sometimes comes slowly, but we must do our part. Especially the young people have the power to change the tide, this is our Shlichus. We must cause that the Rebbe’s neighborhood should not be a disgrace, G-d forbid, to the Rebbe’s holy name. We must make the Rebbe feel comfortable in our homes and on our streets, and we can then greet Moshiach in a state of holiness and purity.