

THE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH FOLLOWS THIS SEFER  
 ALL THEIR PRIESTS WEAR LONG BEARDS

בעזרת

ס פ ר

# זקן ישראל כהלכתו

בענין גילוח וגידול הזקן

(חלק א)

הספר הזה אשר אני מגיש לפניכם היום הוא ריכוז מכל ספרי הפוסקים חרשים גם ישנים מראשון שבראשונים עד אחרון שבאחרונים, (בפרט מס' הנרמ"ח, הדרת פנים - זקן) אשר צלל במים אדירים והעלה פנינים יקרים במקצוע הלזו לא הניח מקום להתגדר, העמיק והרחיב ביד ר' הטובה עליו, ואשרי חלקו. תמצית כל הנשנה בדבריהם בענין גילוח שער הזקן בין ע"י תער, בין במספריים, ובין בסם, ושאר אופני גילוח.

כל איסורים וצדדי חומר שנאמרו בנטילת הזקן, הן גוף האיסור של כל תשחית, והן איסורים חיצוניים כמו, לא ילבש גבר, ובחוקותיהם לא תלכו, איסור, מראית עין, מקור מנהג הגילוח, וחילוקי מנהגים בארצות שונות, ושאר ענינים המקיפים מקצוע הלזו, ועוד. הכל מסודר בסדר יפה ונעלה בלשון צח וקל כרי שירון הקורא בו, ובשעה קלה ירכוש המעיין בקיאות גדולה במקצוע גילוח הזקן המסובכת מאוד בספרי הפוסקים.

הו"ל בחמלת ה' עלי בזכות אבותי ורבותי הק' ז"ע

## הק' שלום יודא גראס

רב רקהל, מגן שאול ד' האלמין ור"מ כשיבה וכולל, בית ישעיהו  
 מכון להודאה בשחישות ובדיקות

בעהמח"ס: אפית המצות השלם (י' חלקים): גידולי יהודה (על הלכות ציצית); שו"ת זבחו ובחי צדק (על הלכות שו"ב); חינוך ישראל סבא (מדרין לחינוך הבנים והבנות); מדרין לצניעות; מונות שלום (על הל' מוזה); מנחת שלום (הדרכה לכשרות); מנחת יהודה, (על חומר איסור, חלב עכו"ם, וסימילאק); נפש ישעיהו (על מאכלות אסורות, הי"ח); קדושת ישראל (על הלכות יהודא); ושי"ס.

בלאמור הרהיג הצ' מוהר"ר ישעיהו זאב גראס זצ"ל נכד השרף מסטרעליסק. ר' יעקב קאפול חסיד, ט"ו. בית תני"ט, רש"י, ולמעלה בקודש עד דוד המלך עה"ש.

- ברוקלין, יצ"ו • שנת תש"ט -  
 - ההכנסה מוקרשת לטובת הישיבה והכולל -

כתב  
 י"ו  
 פ"ה  
 ר' שלום  
 קראס  
 ע"י

ספר זקן ישראל חסידות

REFUSED BY THE "JEWISH PRESS"!

Recently featured in the "Jewish Press", were two lengthy articles entitled "Using a Shaving Machine or a Razor" (June 7) and "Wearing a Beard and the Use of a Shaving Machine" (June 15). Both were written by Editor Rabbi Sholom Klass.

Confusion and consternation amongst "Jewish Press" readers were the aftermath of these articles. Even cursory study reveals them to be abounding in unfortunate errors, misconceptions, misquotations, and deletions, which have quite serious halochic implications. The theme of these articles also seems to infringe on the authority of some of our most prominent Torah Sages.

After the release of each article, many individuals (including the undersigned) forwarded "Letters to the Editor" to the "Jewish Press". In these correspondences, Rabbi Klass was made aware of the fallacies in the articles. He was requested to correct them for the public's benefit. To our dismay, not only did the "Jewish Press" refuse to print these letters, and thereby rectify the errors of the first article, but - more appalling, in Rabbi Klass' second article the original errors were multiplied manifold both qualitatively and quantitatively.

Painful as it is, we are faced with no other choice but to publicly expose the perversion of halochic literature and apparent disregard for our G'dolim found in these articles. Silence in the face of inaccuracies with regard to such grave issues can be misconstrued as "benign neglect", or even "acquiescence", chaliloh.

Rejected by the "Jewish Press", we were fortunate to find this, a more considerate publication, outstanding in its concern and dedication to the communal good.

It is not our intention or purpose to utilize this announcement to present a personal view on the issue of shaving machines. Not by any means. We shall simply review the same halochic literature which was misrepresented by Rabbi Klass, in an effort to protect an unwitting public from being misled.

Let us quote Rabbi Klass and contrast his words with the facts, amply supported by documentation and source reference:

RABBI KLASS: Today the majority of religious Jews use shaving machines and it is permitted under all circumstances...it is prohibited to declare it an issur...just as it is not allowed to permit that which is prohibited so is it not allowed to prohibit that which is permitted.

FACT: Only one week previous to the publication of this column by Rabbi Klass, the "Jewish Press" printed an unequivocal statement on the subject of shaving machines issued by the venerable Ponovezher Hosh Yeshiva, Rabbi Elozor Menachem M. Shach, Shlita. Rav Shach, in response to inquiries, replied simply and directly. He quoted the saintly Chofetz Chaim (sefer "Likutei Halachos") who wrote that "it is prohibited, and one may not be lenient in this matter". [Note: In the biography of the Chofetz Chaim written by his own son, it is related (p. 1) that the Chofetz Chaim often exclaimed that in published works he only included laws which are a must for every Jew. "Holy minhagim" or "extra chassidus" the Chofetz Chaim would never impose on another, wrote his son.] In conclusion, Rav Shach wrote "It is also well known that the Chazon Ish ruled that the use of all shaving machines is forbidden."

The Chofetz Chaim and Chazon Ish are considered the greatest Torah luminaries of our age. Their halochic authority has been accepted by the entire Klal Yisroel. Who in our times would dare dismiss their ruling?

Moreover, the Chofetz Chaim and Chazon Ish are far from being alone in considering the shaving machine to be halochically equivalent with a razor. As the present Chief Rabbi of Jerusalem, Rabbi I. J. Weiss, Shlita, writes in his own extensive responsa about shaving machines (Minchas Yitzchok 4:113): "I searched through the works of our greatest halochic authorities in hope of disclosing some justification for the widespread custom to be lenient in the use of shaving machines, only to find that they are all in agreement that shaving machines are forbidden." The Chief Rabbi is quick to point out that the Chofetz Chaim banned even the hand clippers used in his day, although they did not give as close a shave as our electric shavers.

The brother-in-law of the Chazon Ish, the famous Steipler Gaon, Shlita, bears witness that the Chazon Ish was even opposed to giving shaving machines to Jews who would otherwise use a razor. Rabbi Weiss lists other Poskim who opposed their use, including the reknowned Rav Aharon Kotler. The greatest Torah Sages of our times, representing all major Jewish communities, are in unison in proscribing shaving machines. Tens of the most distinguished Gaonim of our generation write so in their approbations to sefer Hadras Fonim-Zokon (an 800 page encyclopedic work on the cutting and growth of the beard in halochic perspective). Many similar prohibitive opinions are cited in this sefer, (part II, chapter I) such as the illustrious Rav Chaim Ozer of Vilna (as related by his student, Rav Yitzchok Hutner); the Rogatchover Gaon; Rav Frank, former Chief Rabbi of Jerusalem; among many others.

Yet, in spite of the ruling of all these, our most prominent halochic authorities, Rabbi Klass had the audacity to proclaim in a newspaper that the very shaving machines which they prohibited are "permitted under all circumstances"; and even went so far as to write that he who bans them has "prohibited that which is permitted", and "it is prohibited to declare it an issur"!!! To disgrace our G'dolei Yisroel in this manner is arrogance of the highest order and a gross deception of the

public who are unaware that these Torah giants ruled the use of shaving machines to be a grave transgression.

It is simply ludicrous to say that these most eminent scholars of our people were unaware of the arguments mentioned by Rabbi Klass in his articles (and the prevalent custom to shave) when they issued their decisions.

RABBI KLASS: In the Gemara in Makkos 21a, "our Rabbis taught...which is the kind of shaving which involves destruction? You must say it is that which is done by the use of a razor." Thus we see that the Gemara is specific in regards to a razor.

FACT: Quite to the contrary! This Gemora (as explained by Rishonim) states that any instrument whose function can be described as "shaving which involves destruction" [Note: "Destruction" here means not leaving over the minimum measure of each hair, as defined by Poskim] is prohibited. Not just razors. Nowhere in scripture is the issur limited to razors alone. The Gemora specifies razors simply because in Talmudic times they were the only example of an instrument which both "cut" and "destroyed" the beard hairs. Shaving machines of today also accomplish the same. They are therefore halochically identical with razors. To put it bluntly, the very Gemora construed by Rabbi Klass to be a source of leniency is in reality just the opposite! Indeed, many of the previously mentioned authorities cite this very Gemora as a major basis to prohibit shaving machines. For a total treatment of this topic, see responsa: Nodah B'Yehuda (2, Y.D., 81); Chasam Sofer (S.C. 154); Minchas Mitzchok (loc. cit.); Chelkas Yaakov (3:39); and at length in Hadras Fonim-Zokon (pp. 1-18, 343-358).

RABBI KLASS: When we use a razor we have the violation of "Serita" and "Gedidah", tearing and cutting, and Shmuel said "one who cuts himself with a razor is liable one of these two accounts"...Some Gaonim apply the prohibition of shaving with a razor to the prohibition of cutting one's face...The Shulchan Oruch, Yoreh Deah 181, explains that only by using a razor blade are we in danger of cutting our skin, but not with scissors.

FACT: Sheer nonsense! There is no source in any halochic work for these explanations of the issur - including the Shulchan Oruch misquoted by Rabbi Klass. According to Rabbi Klass' understanding, the Torah should have prohibited shaving anyplace on the face - not just the five "peyos". The saying of Shmuel also suffered a mistranslation by Rabbi Klass. The Talmud uses the word for "instrument", not "razor",

RABBI KLASS: The Abarbanel offers an explanation that it was a feminine custom to shave with a razor.(!!) Therefore, a man shouldn't do so (Vayikra 19:27).

FACT: No such Abarbanel! The Abarbanel wrote that the Torah forbade the shaving of the beard since "one who shaves resembles women, who don't have beards" (Vayikra 19:27). According to this Abarbanel, any method of ~~SHAVING WHICH LEAVES~~ <sup>A MAN WITHOUT A</sup> beard - SUCH AS depilatory powder and close cutting clippers - are improper. (see sources cited in Hadras Ponim-Zokon pp 139-140). Also, the Ibn Ezra referred to by Rabbi Klass writes that the Torah exhorted against shaving the beard because "the beard was created to enhance the beauty of men's appearance", and therefore it should not be removed by any means. (see Ibid pp 66-67). This section of the Ibn Ezra was deleted by Rabbi Klass!

RABBI KLASS: A shaving machine is compared to a scissor, as the Yoreh Deah (Ibid 181:10) describes it, "scissors which are similar to a razor are permitted".

FACT: False! Shaving machines are compared to razors, not scissors, as we documented previously. The scissors that the Talmud and Yoreh Deah label as exempt from liability leave over a noticeable measure of each beard hair (see Ran on Rif to Makkos loc. cit.; Rashi loc. cit.; Rosh to Nozir 40b; and sources cited in Hadras Ponim-Zokon pp 580-582). Shaving machines do not. (Read any of the advertisements or literature of shaving machine companies. All document how the machines give a "razor close" shave.) Hence the ruling of the Shulchan Oruch regarding close-cutting scissors quoted by Rabbi Klass as a source of leniency is totally irrelevant to the question of shaving machines.

Another point: The Shulchan Aruch (Ibid.:3) rules that close-cutting scissors should not be used on the "peyos" of the head, which extend until below the ears (Ibid.:9). Hence, anyone who shaves his beard with even close-cutting scissors, but does not leave long sideburns until below the ears, is simultaneously transgressing the decision of the same Shulchan Aruch just a few lines earlier concerning the "peyos" of the head!

RABBI KLASS: HaGaon Rabbi Henkin stated: Shaving with a razor is prohibited but a shaving machine is considered like scissors which is permitted since the cutting blade does not touch the skin. (Aidose L'Israel p. 145)

FACT: A total misrepresentation of Rabbi Henkin's opinion! For some reason Rabbi Klass decided to delete the continuation of Rabbi Henkin's words in this same essay. After observing that the common practice has become to shave even with machines, Rabbi Henkin strongly criticizes and disputes the prevalent custom of shaving the beard, calling all methods of removing the beard "against the will of the Torah". Shaving machines whose blades do not touch the skin mentioned by Rabbi Henkin obviously are not those which give a <sup>VERY</sup> close shave, as evident from all the above. Indeed, a member of the Mirer Kōlel who studied with Rabbi Henkin in his later years relates that Rabbi Henkin explicitly told him that the newer models in use today are forbidden. Besides, many manufacturers of shaving machines and experts in the field admit that the blades of the machine occasionally do make contact with the skin (see responsa Minchas Yitzchok and Chelkas Yaakov loc. cit.). In his sefer, Rabbi Henkin goes on to cite responsa which vehemently oppose all forms of shaving. Rabbi Henkin continues to offer several other reasons why any METHOD of shaving is contrary to Torah. Lenient rulings on this matter have their place only in situations of danger and dire necessity, as is the case in other similar laws, Rabbi Henkin points out. Former colleagues of Rabbi Henkin relate that he would often rebuke even Rabbinic associates concerning this matter (see Hadras Ionim-Zokon p. 38). Although they refused to print it in their paper, the "Jewish Press" admitted to us in a private letter that Rabbi Henkin was indeed convinced to decide to forbid shaving ma-

chines!

RABBI KLASS: We do not issue a decree on the community unless we know the majority of the people will abide by it. And, we do not lay a hardship on the community unless the majority can endure it.

FACT: Another distortion! This rule only applies to Rabbinic enactments (see Rambam Mamrim 2:5), not Torah prohibitions (such as shaving). Regarding a commandment which is specified by the Torah, our Sages have enlightened us to the fact that "the Holy One Blessed be He does not come with undue hardships on His people" (Avodah Zorah 3a; cf. also Midrash Shemos 34).

RABBI KLASS: Quoted the Chasam Sofer, Orech Chaim 159, as a source of leniency in the use of shaving machines.

FACT: Another gross misrepresentation! The Chasam Sofer is one of the major sources to forbid shaving machines. In his responsa (Yoreh Deah 139) the Chasam Sofer forbids the use of even scissors which cut the beard close to the skin. He adds (ch. 140) that this is the accepted binding decision of the Remo. It is obvious why Rabbi Klass chose not to mention these decisions in his articles! Most commonly quoted regarding shaving machines is another responsa of the Chasam Sofer, found in Orech Chaim 154. There the Chasam Sofer explains that if an instrument both cuts and removes the beard hairs, thereby not leaving hairs long enough to grasp between one's nail and the skin beneath the nail, then this instrument - even if it is constructed like a scissor - is considered the same as a razor according to halacha. Our shaving machines are perfect examples of what the Chasam Sofer was speaking about. It is based upon this Chasam Sofer that many Poskim prohibited shaving machines. Little wonder why Rabbi Klass deleted also this chapter of the Chasam Sofer!

In the Teshuva Rabbi Klass did decide to quote, (Orech Chaim 159), the Chasam Sofer defends shaving. He is referring, however, to shaving with either: 1) depilatory cream - which was the common method of shaving in the Chasam Sofer's region (as the Chasam Sofer writes earlier in this chapter); or: 2) shears



which do not trim close to the skin (as the Chasam Sofer specifies elsewhere in this chapter).

Close cutting scissors the Chasam Sofer already ruled against, as above. Even creams and trimming shears are defended by the Chasam Sofer only if their use began with threats of physical danger, as occurred in Germany at the time of the Crusades. Those originating from countries which were not affected by the Crusades, such as Poland, as well as Torah scholars in all regions, never were included in any lenient ruling, points out the Chasam Sofer. (Concerning all the above see Minchas Elozor 2:48; Tirosh V'Yitzhar 68; Kol M'vaser 1:18-19; and many other responsa cited in Madras Ponim-Zokon p. 213 ff.)

RABBI KLASS: Continued to quote the section of this chapter where the Chasam Sofer refers to the sefer "Aylin" which testified that the Gaon Rabbi Menachem Azariah was clean-shaven.

RABBI KLASS: This testimony has been rejected by the Poskim. Firstly, nothing of the sort is printed in the sefer "Aylin" in any of its editions, as has been noted by many scholars (see Minchos Elozor loc. cit.). Secondly, long before the time of the Chasam Sofer, the responsa Divrei Yosef (ch. 25) already recorded witness that the Gaon Rabbi Menachem Azariah had a full beard. Indeed, to this day the portrait of this Gaon is still existant - showing him with a full beard (see also Tirosh V'Yitzhar loc. cit.). Many prestigious Poskim write that had the Chasam Sofer seen this responsa Divrei Yosef, he would not have made any mention of this matter at all (Darchei Teshuva 181:17; Minchas Elozor loc. cit.; et. al.). The only allusion to Rabbi Menachem Azariah's shaving his beard is to be found in responsa Beer Eisek ( h. 70 ) - a work whose authority has long been repudiated (see responsa R. Yaakov Emdin 1:45; et. al.). Anyone can visit a library to see a copy of this responsa Beer Eisek. There, one will find that the Beer Eisek itself says that Rabbi Menachem Azariah merely trimmed his beard in places not included in the Torah precept (such as certain areas under the chin! - See responsa Divrei Yosef loc. cit. at length).

RABBI KLASS: According to the Maharam El Ashaker ch. 34: "Even of the laws of the Torah, Midoraisa and Midrabanim, our Sages say, 'leave Israel alone, better that they violate innocently and not inten-

tionally'..."

FACT: Why didn't Rabbi Klass quote the continuation of this Teshuva? There the Maharam Al Ashker qualifies his statement by explaining that this rule does not apply to a prohibition explicitly mentioned in scripture (any of the 613 commandments) - such as shaving the beard! This is also the ruling of the Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 608). According to Rabbi Klass' misleading quote, the entire mitzvah of "You shall surely rebuke your neighbor" (Vayikra 19:17) is never applicable!

RABBI KLASS: The Gaon, Rabbi Moshe Feinstein, realizing that you can't condemn hundreds of thousands of religious people, permitted the use of shaving machines.

FACT: Although this heter is not found in any of Rav Feinstein's printed works, we will assume that what Rabbi Klass says here is true. It is; however, well known that some shaving machines Rav Feinstein did forbid. Why no mention of this by Rabbi Klass? As for those shavers permitted by Rav Feinstein - does this detract from the fact that the majority of G'dolei Yisroel besides Rav Feinstein consider the use of shaving machines to be a grave violation of Torah law? Furthermore, it is noteworthy that Rav Feinstein readily tells questioners that even the most lenient authorities agree that the beard has awesome significance and sanctity in Judaism. See, for example, Aruch <sup>HA</sup> Shulchan (Orach Chaim 151:10) that using one's beard even to clean before the Holy Ark is a degradation of the beard's kedusha! Consequently, its preservation should be encouraged as much as possible. Thus, <sup>even</sup> the lenient poskim were extremely cautious about their own beards. Neither should this point have been ignored by Rabbi Klass. (Parenthetically, it is noteworthy that

← the "Jewish Press" wrote in a private correspondence to the undersigned: "So as not to embarrass the Gaon Rabbi Feinstein, who had given the heter on shaving machines, we will not publish your letters"! Also see below.

RABBI KLASS: We follow the Beth Yosef in the Tur Yoreh Deah 242 and the Hagahos Maimonides, Rambam Talmud Torah 5:3, about abiding by a Gadol HaDor even if he is the only one.

FACT: No such Beth Yosef or Hagahos Maimonides! These two sources discuss only the obligations of a student to his master. Besides, by no means do the opinions of any contemporary Posek enjoy universal acceptance. Each one's rulings are contested by their fellow scholars. Concerning our topic, several of the G'dolim who issued prohibitive decisions concerning shaving machines are considered by many as "Gadol HaDor", such as the Chofetz Chaim, the Chazon Ish, and the present-day Rav Shach and Steipler Gaon of Enei Brak, and Dayan Weiss of Jerusalem.

RABBI KLASS: We follow...the Shach in Yoreh Deah end of ch. 242 which states that when two Poskim dispute a din (halocho) we follow the lenient opinion.

FACT: A blatant distortion of the Shach!! Rabbi Klass couldn't have given us a better demonstration of daring to "misinterpret the Torah not in accordance with halocho" (Avoth 3:11)-  
The Shach is referring only to disputes over Rabbinic ordinances, not questions of Torah commandments (such as shaving). Regarding Torah prohibitions, the Shach is emphatic. We follow the more stringent view, even if its proponent is of lesser stature than the advocate of the more lenient opinion, says the Shach. The application of this rule to our issue is obvious.