

לזכות  
החיילת בצבאות ה'  
שיינא תח"ל ראפארט  
לרגל יום הולדתה ט' תשרי

נדפס ע"י זקיניה  
הרה"ת ר' יוסף יצחק אהרן וזוגתו  
מרת נחמה ביילא ומשפחתם שיחיו  
בראקמאן

# PRACTICAL HORA'OS

A CLOSER  
LOOK AT  
SOME OF  
THE REBBE'S  
HORA'OS

## SILK ON SHABBOS

A PRACTICE OF CHASSIDIM  
WITH DEEP SIGNIFICANCE

The *kapote* or *sirtuk*, the traditional coat Chassidim wore for generations, is customarily worn on Shabbos, Yom Tov, and many other special occasions.

Historically, Chassidim were meticulous to wear a *kapote* made of silk on Shabbos. Yet throughout the generations, especially due to the tremendous financial strain on Chassidim in Russia, this practice became less common, and even rare and unknown.

Beginning in the earliest years of the Rebbe's *nesius*, he began encouraging Chassidim to once again adopt this practice of wearing silk on Shabbos.

### "ZAI DENE ZUPITZE"

During the farbrengen of Simchas Torah 5711\*, the Rebbe instructed Reb Menachem Zev Halevi Greenglass to wear his *sirtuk* inside-out. The next day, he asked the Rebbe for an explanation; was the Rebbe implying that he was not worthy of wearing a silk *kapote*?

The Rebbe replied that his intention was so that the atmosphere of Simchas Torah should be more evident. And with regards to the *sirtuk* itself, on the contrary!

The Rebbe continued: "It should be instituted that all *yungerleit* wear silk *kapotes* on Shabbos and Yom Tov, and *yasher kocham* to those who do so."

The Rebbe explained that the custom of wearing silk on Shabbos is actually clearly explained in a *maamar* of the Rebbe Rashab (see below). In addition, the Rebbe said, as Chassidim, we must act in a way of "וּנְפַלְיֵנוּ" that we are unique. This expresses itself in wearing silk ("זיידענע זופיעעס") on Shabbos.

The Rebbe continued, "I am surprised that Chassidim, like so-and-so, do not wear silk *kapotes* on Shabbos. The reason for [their actions] this is seemingly because of the poverty in Russia, which made it impossible to wear silk *kapotes*.

"In any event, the time has come to start wearing silk *kapotes*, and it will gradually be instituted as a custom for all—that all *yungerleit* wear silk *kapotes* on Shabbos and Yom Tov."

Smiling, the Rebbe added, "This is even though I myself still wear a '*pinjak*' (a short jacket) on weekdays."<sup>1</sup>

### SILK SIGNIFICANCE

In a footnote to a *maamar*, the Rebbe Rashab explains the practice of wearing silk on Shabbos: On Shabbos, a revelation of *Olam Habriah* comes into the world,




UNTIL 5750\*, THE REBBE WOULD NOT WEAR A SILK KAPOTE REGULARLY DURING THE WEEK. THE EXCEPTION WAS ON SPECIAL OCCASIONS, SUCH AS FARBRENGENS, LAG B'OMER PARADES, ETC.

in contrast with the weekday. Therefore, one should be meticulous to wear clothing made from animals — *chai* — who correspond with the world of *Briah*.<sup>2</sup>

This explanation should, seemingly, exclude materials such as cotton or flax as they grow from the ground.

Taking this a step further, the Rebbe explained that silk has an advantage over any other materials that come from animals, even wool. Although wool comes from sheep, it is the *tzomeach* of the sheep, a material that grows from it, and not the sheep itself. Silk on the other hand, comes from the silkworm itself, making it the ultimate *chai*, and is thus the most appropriate to wear on Shabbos.<sup>3</sup>

An additional reason the Rebbe gave: The Rabbeim would customarily wear silk on Shabbos. A custom that a Rebbe practices in public serves as a lesson for Chassidim and should be followed.<sup>4</sup> 

1. Toras Menachem 5711 vol. 1 pg. 53.
2. Sefer Hamaamarim 5662 pg. 231 (older version). The Rebbe Rashab cites the Mikdash Melech as a source for this custom, although we don't find mention of it in this sefer. It was recently discovered in the Kehilas Yaakov, a sefer often cited by the Rebbe Maharash and the Rebbe Rashab.
3. Toras Menachem 5715 vol. 1 pg. 309.
4. Toras Menachem 5748 vol. 4 pg. 304.
5. Beis Chayeinu 5752 issue 121 pg. 27.

## DURING THE WEEK

Harav Efrayim Yolles, a distinguished rav from Philadelphia, would visit the Rebbe annually during Chol Hamoed Pesach, meriting a special *yechidus*.

During his 5747\* visit, the Rebbe noticed that his grandchild was wearing silk. The Rebbe asked: “Is it your custom to wear silk during the weekdays?”

Rav Yolles replied: “They wear a *chalat*. It's not silk or wool.”

The Rebbe said: “I would have been more glad if you said that you wear silk during the weekdays as well. [Wearing] silk is connected to Chassidus.”

Rav Yolles replied: “Yes, I heard from Chassidim that the Rebbe spoke about the importance of wearing silk in the first years.”<sup>5</sup>