



HaRav Shaul Israeli zt"l  
Founder and President

# HEMDAT YAMIM

## Parashat HaShavua

Bamidbar, 27 Iyar 5776

### Between a Liberated Nation and a "Mamlechet Kohanim"

Harav Yosef Carmel

Historical events in the world and especially in *Am Yisrael* have always included a merging of a divine plan and the decisions of people based on free will.

The Jewish calendar of contemporary times also shows expressions of such a merging. The Jewish Nation has incorporated into the period between Pesach and Shavuot (holidays mandated by Torah law) the commemorative days of Yom Hashoa and Yom Hazikaron L'chayalei Tzahal and celebratory days of Yom Ha'atzmaut, Lag Ba'omer, and Yom Yerushalayim, all of the latter having been set by the nation through its representatives. (We will not delve here into the character of each day.) We cannot deny that there is a disagreement within the community of believers whether the choice of these days should have significance in the daily public and private service of Hashem.

By taking a look at the historical development at the time of the formation of our nation, we will gain insight on the matter. Moshe was first involved in the physical liberation from the enslavement in Egypt. The oppression was very harsh and painful from an individual perspective. However, Moshe was not satisfied with solving the problems on an individual basis, but he was dedicated to bringing about a national liberation. The Exodus was accomplished when the nation was able to march out of Egypt in national strength (see Shemot 14:8 – "*b'yad rama*" is a term that can only capture a national movement, not a mass of individuals), as the nation was indeed finally free.

On the other hand, it is clear that without the giving of the Torah, the formative event which we celebrate on Shavuot, there is not national significance for us as the Nation of Israel. As Rav Saadia Gaon, said that our national status stems specifically from the Torah. Walking through the desert between Pesach and Shavuot was preparatory for the completion of the process, which occurred at Sinai.

A similar historical process transpired some 400 years later at the time of David and Shlomo, founders of the first organized State of Israel. First David declared independence. When he conquered the city of Yevus and turned into the City of David, he declared the end of the Philistine dominance. First Jerusalem was established as a political entity, and only later did it become the eternal spiritual capital of *Am Yisrael*, which began with the bringing of the Holy Ark to the city (Shmuel II, 6).

Shlomo also proceeded along this model. For 20 years he built the *Beit Hamikdash* and the greater capital city of Yerushalayim. This was the physical and political development. Only afterward did he bring the Holy Ark into the Holy of Holies in which the Divine Presence dwelled along with the special cloud and fire from the Heavens, as occurred at Sinai. After the Pesach-like (physical) experience, they came to a Shavuot-like (spiritual) experience.

Within the Jewish religious community, the debate has been raging: what precedes what? Can the national rebuilding occur without it being directly tied to Torah? Can the physical building come before the spiritual? Maybe first there has to be a full spiritual reawakening and then a national one? If we learn from the precedents of the Exodus and the founding of the Davidic kingdom, the answer is clear.

Let us pray that the whole nation will join in standing together as one person and with one heart and declaring: "We shall do, and we shall hear."

#### Refuah Sheleymah to Orit bat Miriam

#### Hemdat Yamim is dedicated to the memory of:

R' Eliyahu Carmel, Rav Carmel's father, who passed away on 8<sup>th</sup> of Iyar 5776

Yechezkel Tzadik, Yaffa's father, who passed away on 11<sup>th</sup> of Iyar 5776

Hemdat Yamim is endowed by Les & Ethel Sutker of Chicago, Illinois. in loving memory of **Max and Mary Sutker & Louis and Lillian Klein, z"l**

R' Meir ben Yechezkel Shraga Brachfeld o.b.m

R' Yaakov ben Abraham & Aisha and Chana bat Yaish & Simcha Sebbag, z"l

Mrs. Sara Wengrowsky bat R' Moshe Zev a"h, who passed away on 10 Tamuz, 5774

Rabbi Reuven Aberman zt"l Eretz Hemdah's beloved friend and Member of Eretz Hemdah's Amutah who passed away on 9 Tishrei, 5776



#### Eretz Hemdah

Deans: Harav Yosef Carmel, Harav Moshe Ehrenreich  
2 Bruriya St. corner of Rav Chiya St.  
POB 8178 Jerusalem 91080  
Tel: 972-2-5371485 Fax: 972-2-5379626.  
amutah number 580120780

#### American Friends

of Eretz Hemdah Institutions  
c/o Olympian, 8 South Michigan Ave.,  
Ste. 605, Chicago, IL 60603, USA  
Our Taxpayer ID #: 36-4265359

[www.erezhemdah.org](http://www.erezhemdah.org) [info@erezhemdah.org](mailto:info@erezhemdah.org)

Donations are tax deductible according to section 46 of the Israeli tax code

# Ask the Rabbi

by Rav Daniel Mann

## Removing Hair from Eyebrows

**Question:** I am a young man with a unibrow, which I find very embarrassing. May I remove some hair with tweezers from that area? Also, may I remove some more hair to make my eyebrows less bushy?

**Answer:** The *gemara* (Nazir 58b-59a) forbids a man to shave his pubic and underarm hair with a razor. There are different versions on whether this ruling is a severe Rabbinic violation or a violation of the Torah law forbidding a man to do things of aesthetics that are considered feminine (“*lo yilbash gever simlat isha*” – see Devarim 22:5).


There is a *machloket* among the *Rishonim* (see Beit Yosef, Yoreh Deah 182) whether there is any problem with hair removal from other parts of the body. The Shulchan Aruch (YD 182:1) rules that in these other places, it is forbidden only with a razor, whereas it is otherwise permitted even to cut short with scissors. Presumably, tweezing eyebrows falls under the category of being permitted.

The *gemara* (ibid.) tells of one whom Rav Ami gave a special dispensation when Rav Ami discovered he did not remove underarm hair. The Ran (Avoda Zara, 9b of the Rif’s pages) makes the following halachic observations. It must have occurred in a place where most men remove hair from there, so that we see that hair removal is then permitted, just that the pious still avoid it. This is how the Rama (YD 182:1) rules. The Rambam (Avoda Zara 12:9) says that in that case, it is not a severe Rabbinic violation, which warrants flogging, but, as the Beit Yosef (ibid.) understands the Rambam, it is still forbidden, as he rules in the Shulchan Aruch (YD 182:1). The Rav Pealim (III, YD 18), after declaring that Sephardim should rule like the Shulchan Aruch, justified the wide practice in Bagdad for men to remove hair from one of the problematic places using chemicals, given that women do it by razor.

While we find that changed practice can turn classically forbidden grooming into permitted, practice can also expand matters forbidden due to its feminine nature. The *gemara* (Makkot 20b) forbids removing individual hairs (from the head or the beard, which is generally permitted) if he is removing white hairs from among dark hairs, to make him look younger, as women do. Similarly, *poskim* of our era have generally assumed that grooming eyebrows is a feminine activity, and thus, as a rule, is forbidden for men.

Even so, fixing a unibrow is permitted according to rabbinic consensus (including Rav S.Z. Auerbach, cited in Nishmat Avraham, YD, p. 140). While not meaning to put down anyone who is willing to keep it, many, including you, consider it an embarrassing blemish (in some cultures, it is desired). Just as the Shulchan Aruch (ibid. 4) permits hair removal that would otherwise be forbidden when it is done to alleviate skin pain, so too it is permitted to remove emotional distress, even if it is not extreme. The main rationale is not that the need enables waiving minor prohibitions or relying on lenient opinions. Rather, the prohibition is based on the assumption that a man is acting with a degree of care for beautification that is generally reserved for women (see Igrot Moshe, YD II:61, in permitting coloring hair in order to get a job for which he looks too old). Removing a unibrow is not seen as acting to looking one’s absolute best, but just as avoiding sticking out negatively, and this is not within the prohibition’s parameters.

Regarding bushy eyebrows, the matter is less clear-cut and depends on time/place but likely also on the degree of grooming one is talking about. Extreme bushiness could reach the point of blemish. Regarding cases that are within the bounds of normal, we would say that a few decades ago, it was forbidden. However, it has become increasingly common for men to groom eyebrows (the norms of non-Jews are, according to many, relevant for determining these matters – Prisha, YD 282:5). Therefore, it is likely permitted these days in many places. We would just say that a man should do the grooming in the way men do it, if and assuming it is different from the way women do.



We are happy to present our third volume of "**Living the Halachic Process**". The book offers a compilation of questions and answers from our "**Ask the Rabbi**" project. A companion CD containing source sheets for the questions is also available. The volumes can be purchased through our office at the special rate of \$24. **Special offer: buy two out of three for \$37 or, buy all three volumes for \$54**

**Have a question?** -email us at [info@eretzhemdah.org](mailto:info@eretzhemdah.org)

## Enough to Know About Hardship

(condensed from Ein Ayah, Shabbat 2:202)

**Gemara:** Rav Yitzchak the son of Rav Yehuda said: One should always request mercy that he will not become ill, for if he becomes ill, they say to him: "Present merit, and you will be freed of it."

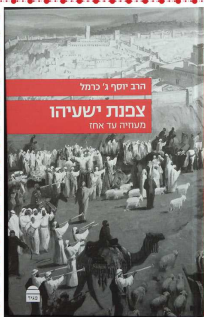
**Ein Ayah:** Disease, like all hardships in the world, has a moral purpose, namely, to soften a person's hard heart, thereby enabling one to more easily surrender to Hashem's good path for man. Just as there is a value in illness or another affliction actually occurring, there is also value in its existence without afflicting someone, in that it takes away from his tranquility, making him aware that only with Hashem's help and mercy will he avoid them. If that mindset works for a person, then the potential of the hardships is sufficient for him without their occurring. His heart will be softened by concern about potential hardships and by the request that they not come, which connects his heart and mind to Hashem.

As long as the person is in such a proper state that the concern for what could happen has the same impact as the actual hardship does for most people, that suffices, and he can remain healthy with Hashem's mercy resting upon him. This also serves as a sign that his spirit is pure enough that he remains holy enough that he does not turn to actually sinning, even if there are certain tendencies for bad in his thought process.

Still, to overcome those problems, there is just a need for a hint of what could happen along with a request of mercy, which includes man exposing himself as vulnerable and in need of divine mercy. These feelings uplift him in the ways of Hashem and curb the stupidity of images produced by lowly desires, which chase people away from the courtyards of Hashem. These uplifting experiences will return him to love of Hashem and following in His paths.

If a person actually becomes sick, it is a sign that his spiritual side deteriorated to the point that he needs a jarring situation and not just a hint at one, in order to remove the impurities. It must be that his negative side is not just a matter of images, for which images would remedy, but that it reached stages of actualization. In order to overcome this and not remain ill, there is a need for real merits, the products of actions, which can help counteract the damage to his soul. He needs to beg for mercy that these positive powers will suffice to stem the tide without the need for illness. Such sincere requests can raise him to the point that he can fix himself not only according to the situation he is in at the time but even one that he might come to in the future.

Based on these merits, he can succeed in having any changes within him being for the better. After all, Hashem is always prepared to bestow good, and a person just has to be ready to receive it properly. Asking for mercy is such a preparation to receive divine grace, as it purifies the emotions to be ready to do good deeds and contemplate proper beliefs, which straighten out a person without illness and afflictions. This is as the *pasuk* says: "It shall be if you listen to Hashem's voice and do what is straight in His eyes and listen to His *mitzvot* and follow His statutes, all of the illnesses that I placed upon Egypt, I will not place upon you, for I am Hashem, who heals you" (Shemot 15:26).



### Tzofnat Yeshayahu- Rabbi Yosef Carmel

The Prophet Yeshayahu performed in one of the most stormy and dramatic periods of the Israeli nation's life, a period of anticipation for the Messiah that was broken by a terrible earthquake, and also caused a spiritual and political upheaval. The light at the end of the tunnel shone again only in the days of Chizkiyah.

"Tzofnat Yeshayahu – from Uziya to Ahaz" introduces us to three kings who stood at this crossroad in our nation's history: Uziya, a king who sought God but was stricken with leprosy because of his sin; Yotam, the most righteous king in the history of our people; And Ahaz, the king who knew God but did not believe in His providence.

In his commentary on the prophecies of Yeshayahu, Rabbi Yosef Carmel, Head of the Eretz Hemdah-Gazit rabbinical court and a disciple of Rabbi Shaul Israeli zt"l, clings to the words of Hazal, our sages, and to the commentaries of the Rishonim, the great Jewish scholars of the middle ages, and offers a fascinating way to study Tanach. This reading attempts to explain the Divine Plan in this difficult period and to clarify fundamental issues in faith. Tzofnat Yeshayahu reveals to the reader the meaning of the prophecies in the context of the prophet's generation and their relevance to our generation.

[Buy Now](#)

Hemdat Yamim is dedicated in memory of  
the fallen in the war, protecting our homeland.  
May Hashem revenge their blood!

## Preventing Unfair Rent Hikes – part I

(ruling 74091 of the Eretz Hemdah-Gazit Rabbinical Courts)

**Case:** The defendant (=def) is a community *yishuv* which for decades has been renting out commercial buildings, including a 220 sq. meter structure rented by *pl*. In recent years, *def* started raising the rent per meter of these buildings and last year they removed the longstanding 50% discount on half the area. *Pl* complains that *def* may not take advantage of *pl*'s lack of alternatives to raise the price in a manner that is not true to market values, and against the standard practice that rental agreements for commercial property are for 5-10 years. The 50% discount was done to encourage businesses to come to the area and once this was agreed upon decades ago, *def* is committed to keep to this arrangement. *Def* was also required to negotiate the matter with *pl* and not present the changes as a fact, and warning time needed to find a new location is 6 months. Therefore, *pl* demands that the rent should be linked to the inflation rate. *Def* responds that by a vote of its board, they may change prices like any landlord in a free economy and that they did allow *pl* to plead his case before the board, who rejected it. Regarding the reason for the change in policy, market forces no longer make it necessary to encourage rentals and the deficit in *def*'s budget makes it necessary to raise revenues. They delayed the end of the discount, and they gave ample notice for relocation if *pl* is unhappy with the new conditions.

**Ruling:** The main question is whether *beit din* has a right to monitor market rates when a price seems unfair or whether the free market system can be relied upon. There are two opinions in the *gemara* (Bava Batra 89a) on this basic matter, and the Rambam (Geneiva 8:20) and the Shulchan Aruch (Choshen Mishpat 231:20) rule that in some cases, *beit din* can intervene. However, the Shulchan Aruch limits this intervention to the sale of basic foods and says that it applies only when *beit din* is capable of monitoring the entire local market and only when the price control will leave the seller in a reasonable financial situation as well. In this case, all three reasons to avoid intervention apply, as real estate is not covered, because neither this *beit din* or (presently) any government authorities are able to set prices, and because *def* needs extra revenue. It has not been proven that the new prices are unreasonable compared to other places, but in any case, the rules of *ona'ah* (mispricing more than a sixth) do not apply to real estate (Shulchan Aruch, CM 227:1-2).

Regarding the discount, there is nothing that prevents a landlord from giving discounts when he needs to encourage rental and to remove them when there is enough demand. On the other hand, *beit din* rejects *def*'s claim to undo the discount retroactively since it was not approved by the broader decision makers. [Ed. note – There is a discussion about the decision making process used in the *yishuv*, but we will not get into those details.]

*Next time we will discuss the matter of advance warning for changing the rental conditions.*

When you shop at AmazonSmile, Amazon donates 0.5% of the purchase price to American Friends of Eretz Hemdah Inc.

Bookmark the link <http://smile.amazon.com/ch/36-4265359> and support us every time you shop.

Please spread the word to your friends as well.



**NEW BOOK!!**

### A Glimpse at Greatness

A Study in the Works of Giants of Lomdus (Halachic Analysis).  
Including Short Biographies of the Featured Authors  
and "An Introduction to Lomdus"  
by **Rabbi Daniel Mann**, Dayan at Beit Din "Eretz Hemdah - Gazit"

**Buy Now**

**Eretz Hemdah** is the premier institution for training young rabbis to take the Israeli Rabbinates' rigorous Yadin Yadin examinations. **Eretz Hemdah**, with its distinctive blend of Religious Zionist philosophy and scholarship combined with community service, ensures that its graduates emerge with the finest training, the noblest motivations resulting in an exceptionally strong connection to Jewish communities worldwide.