

אליהו ורביזל שיחיו סימפסאן

By the Grace of G-d
16 Kislev, 5744
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Blessing and Greeting:

This is to acknowledge receipt of your letter of Nov. 14, in which you write about your son .

First of all, let me congratulate you and your husband on having on having been blessed with a son who stands firm on his principles and is not swayed by convention and the like. It is no small achievement for a Jew - and one who is a minority within a minority at that - to have the strength of character and conviction, where it would be so much easier to follow the crowd.

Especially in this day and age of tremendous upheavals, when so many young people are just drifting, without a firm foothold in life. Jewish parents who have been blessed with children who are unshakably rooted in, and proud of, their Jewishness, should surely thank G-d for it every day. There is no need to elaborate on the obvious.

The above is also my response to what you consider to be a problem, which to my way of thinking, based on experience of many similar cases, is really a blessing.

To be sure, there are orthodox circles (such as Young Israel, for instance) in which wearing a beard is not considered obligatory. On the other hand, there are those who not only grow a beard, but will not even trim it. I know from experience that is highly inadvisable to pressure a young man who has strong convictions in regard to religious values. To dislodge a brick may sometimes disturb the whole structure. Even if there is the slightest doubt about the consequence, it would be prudent to leave it alone.

Be it remembered that Jews who do not trim their beards are doing it out of conviction, not caprice, fad, or the like. They consider it a sacred Torah precept. This is no reflection on those who follow a different ~~author-~~itative rabbinic view. (Historically there have been legitimate differences within the Halachah as to how certain Mitzvos should be performed). But it would not be right - for the above reasons and others - to use pressure in matters of principle and time-honored practices, *or even interfere*

Wishing you and yours a bright and inspiring Chanukah,

With blessing,

מכתב הרבי לאשה שביקשה להשפיע על בנה לקצץ את זקנו