



Latest Style vs Old Fashioned

Category: Pekudei

Everyone always tries to follow the latest trend and have the hottest new feature. But this week, we are doing the opposite in Shul...

Who is Priority

I recently read that one of the reasons men aren't always excited about having a second or third child is because, before kids, they get more attention from their wives. But once the kids arrive, they're no longer Number One in the house. Naturally, they're not too eager to bring more competition into the picture.

I have to admit... there's some truth to that.

Each time we've been blessed with another child, thank G-d, I've slid one more spot down the totem pole. While some husbands complain about being Number Two or Three, I've fallen so far down the hierarchy that I don't think I even *rank*

anymore! At first, I was optimistic that things might change—but, well, let's just say I've made my peace with it.

But all joking aside, today is no ordinary Shabbos—and if you'd known what was coming, you might've thought twice about showing up to shul!

First, we're completing the book of Shmos today, which is a pretty big deal. At the end of the reading, we'll all rise and declare, "*Chazak, chazak, v'nischazeik!*"—"Be strong, be strong, and may we be strengthened!" It's a powerful moment, and it only happens five times a year—once for each Chumash.

On top of that, we're standing at the doorway to the month of Nissan, and that means today is also *Parshat Hachodesh*.

What's *Parshat Hachodesh*, you ask? Let me explain.

This is one of the four special Torah readings leading up to Pesach. It details G-d's command to Moshe and Aharon: "*This month shall be for you the first of the months*"—establishing *Nissan* as the first month in the Jewish calendar, and outlines the laws of the first *Korban Pesach* (Passover offering) in Egypt, including the requirement to take a lamb on the 10th of Nissan, slaughter it on the 14th, and eat it that night with matzah and maror. The reading also mentions the prohibition against chametz and the obligation to celebrate Pesach for seven days.

We read this as a special preparation for Pesach—it's a reminder that Pesach is just around the corner. That's why we take out two Torah scrolls from the ark today: One to read the Torah portion of the week, Parshas Pekudei, and the other to

read about Hachodesh.

Which Comes First?

But if you pay close attention, you'll notice a specific pattern: first, we read the regular Torah portion, and *only then* do we read *Parshat Hachodesh*.

Now, if it were up to me, I'd do it the other way around. I mean, think about it—*Parshat Hachodesh* is special, rare, and only read once a year. It's fresh, it's short—wouldn't it make sense to read it first, while everyone's still paying attention?

After all, in the news, the top headline is always the most dramatic, eye-catching story. Only after you've read the big scoop do you get to the less exciting, everyday reports.

But Jewish law takes a different approach.

There's a rule in Halachah: "*Tadir v'she'aino tadir, tadir kodem*"—"When you have something regular and something occasional, the regular one comes first" (Talmud, Brachos 51b). In other words, when two mitzvos need to be done, the one we do more often takes priority. That's why we read the weekly *Parshah* first—it's our *tadir*, our regular reading—before moving on to *Parshat Hachodesh*, which only comes around once a year.

So while the news world puts the biggest headline first, in Torah, the *breaking news* always comes last.

Tadir Everywhere

This rule of *tadir v'she'eino tadir*—"the frequent comes before

the less frequent”—applies in many areas of Jewish practice.

Take *tallis* and *tefillin*, for example. Every morning before *Shacharis*, a Jewish man puts on both. But Halachah clearly states that the *tallis* goes on first. Why? Because a *tallis* is worn every day—whether it’s a weekday, Shabbos, or Yom Tov—while *tefillin* are only worn on weekdays. Even though *tefillin* are an everyday obligation and a *tallis* is technically optional, *tallis* still gets priority simply because it’s worn more often—seven days a week instead of six.

Another example: eating *matzah* at the Seder.

Now, at the end of the day, *matzah* is just a very crispy kind of bread. That’s why, before eating it, we recite the standard blessing for bread: “*Hamotzi lechem min ha’aretz.*” But on *Pesach* night, we also add a special blessing: “*Al achilas matzah*”—acknowledging the mitzvah of eating *matzah*.

So which blessing comes first? Here too, we follow *tadir v’she’eino tadir*. The blessing of *Hamotzi* is recited all year round, while *Al achilas matzah* only comes up once a year. Since *Hamotzi* is the “regular,” it goes first.

The New Should Build on the Old

But why do we follow this principle? What’s the reasoning behind putting the *tadir*—the frequent and familiar—before the new and exciting?

In the world around us, we see the exact opposite. Everyone craves the newest, freshest, trendiest thing. The top headlines scream at us with breaking news, while yesterday’s stories are

buried on some back page, forgotten. Technology moves even faster—Twitter, Facebook, iPads, and whatever new gadget is trending this week—while last year’s cutting-edge computer is now gathering dust in a drawer, obsolete.

The same goes for fashion. One day, you’re perfectly in style; the next, your once-trendy wardrobe is suddenly so outdated it’s embarrassing. And unfortunately, this mindset extends to people too. Society tends to glorify youth while pushing aside the elderly, treating them as if they’ve already had their turn. That’s why there’s an obsession with looking younger—because in today’s world, if you’re not “new,” you’re irrelevant.

But then comes the Torah, *thank G-d*, and flips this entire way of thinking on its head: *Tadir v’she’eino tadir, tadir kodem!* The older and more established something is, the more power and permanence it has. In Judaism, the new doesn’t push out the old—the new *builds* on the old. The young don’t replace their elders; they stand on their shoulders.

Think about it: all of Judaism is based on wisdom that dates back 3,300 years to Mount Sinai. And no new discovery, no modern trend, no “hot take” can undermine that stability.

Would we stop circumcising our sons because some modern doctors claim it’s unnecessary—despite the fact that we’ve done it for 4,000 years? Should we abandon the tradition of writing mezuzos by hand with ink on parchment just because we now have digital printing? Should we stop lighting Shabbos candles because, well, electricity exists?

Of course not. Because in Judaism, the new doesn’t replace the

old—it honors and preserves it. A son is never more important than his father. On the contrary, parents, elders, and traditions have the strength of time behind them. And if history has taught us anything, it's that the oldest ideas—the ones that have withstood generations—are the ones that truly last. Meanwhile, the “new and improved” ideas? They rise and fall just as quickly as the latest fashion trend.

Remember What Comes First!

When it comes to priorities, this concept isn't just theoretical—it applies to each of us in our daily lives.

Let's say you're planning a vacation, and then you realize that Shabbos or a holiday falls right in the middle of your trip. What do you do? Well, *tadir v'she'eino tadir* reminds us that Torah was here before us, and it comes first. It's *our* job to align with the Torah, not the other way around.

My dear friends, the Jewish people have been around for 4,000 years. In that time, countless nations and movements have risen and fallen—the Romans, the Greeks, the Persians, even the once-mighty British Empire. In their time, they were the hottest thing going. They were the trendsetters, the powerhouses of their era. And today? They're history.

But the Jewish people? We're still here—because we know that *tadir v'she'eino tadir, tadir kodem*. We stick to what's lasting, to what has stood the test of time.

And by the way—just in case anyone needs a *halachic ruling* on this—technically speaking, in married life, husbands should

come first, *before* the kids. After all, we've been around longer, so we should get priority, right?

Of course, don't try bringing this up at home. You'll lose that argument faster than last year's fashion trends.