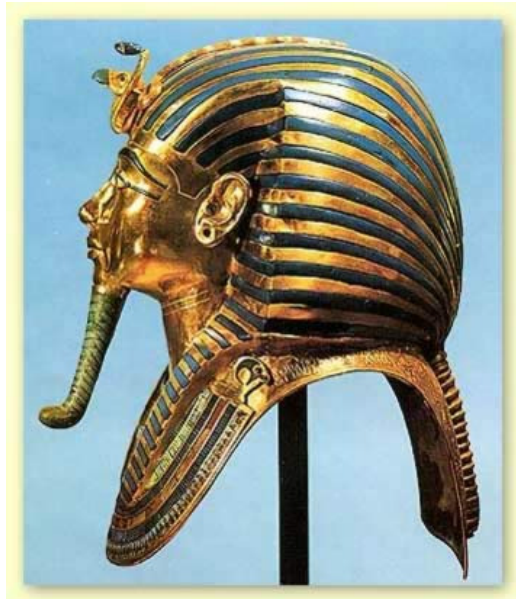


Shayla: Should we grow peyot like the Ch'assidim?

Meforshim:

¹First, let's take a look at the slightly larger context of the verse upon which the practice is based shall we? Shaving off the hair was also associated with occult practices.

- **Leviticus 19:26-28 HCSB** "You are not to eat *anything* with blood *in it*. You are not to practice divination or sorcery. **27** You are not to cut off the hair at the sides of your head or mar the edge of your beard. **28** You are not to make gashes on your bodies for the dead or put tattoo marks on yourselves; I am the LORD.
- Compare to **Jeremiah 9:26 HCSB** Egypt, Judah, Edom, the Ammonites, Moab, all those who clip the hair on their temples and reside in the wilderness. All these nations are uncircumcised, and the whole house of Israel is uncircumcised in heart."



Notice the Egyptian style. So, apparently goatees or "Vandykes" were out! Apparently the custom was to "mar" the beard or the hair in a distinctive way to identify one's self as being an occult practitioner. The practice was also used to identify one's self as being in mourning for a dead loved one.

- **Leviticus 21:1-5 HCSB** The LORD said to Moses: "Speak to Aaron's sons, the priests, and tell them: A priest is not to make himself ceremonially unclean for a *dead* person among his relatives, **(2)** except for his immediate family: his mother, father, son, daughter, or brother. **(3)** He may make himself unclean for his young unmarried sister in his immediate family. **(4)** He is not to make himself unclean for those related to him by marriage and so defile himself. **(5)**

"Priests may not make bald spots on their heads, shave the edge of their beards, or make gashes on their bodies.

Both Leviticus 19:28 and Leviticus 21:1-5 make a clear association with worldly mourning practices. "Why would this be prohibited?" you may ask. The Lord God has granted us the hope of resurrection. Even the patriarchal fathers understood that.

- **Job 19:25-26 HCSB** But I know my living Redeemer, and He will stand on the dust at last. **(26)** Even after my skin has been destroyed, yet I will see God in my flesh.

Therefore, a person who grieved over much, particularly those in the priesthood, indicated a gross lack of faith.

To further cement that idea, I'd like to point out that the shaving of one's beard was associated with punishment or judgment.

- **Isaiah 7:20 HCSB** On that day the Lord will use a razor hired from beyond the Euphrates River--the king of Assyria--to shave the head, the hair on the legs, and to remove the beard as well.
- **Isaiah 15:2 HCSB** Dibon went up to its temple to weep at its high places. Moab wails on Nebo and at Medeba. Every head is shaved; every beard is cut off.

¹ Image from <http://2.bp.blogspot.com>

- [Ezekiel 5:1-2 HCSB](#) "Now you, son of man, take a sharp sword, use it as you would a barber's razor, and shave your head and beard. Then take a pair of scales and divide the hair. 2 You are to burn up one third *of it* in the city when the days of the siege have ended; you are to take one third and slash *it* with the sword all around the city; and you are to scatter one third to the wind, for I will draw a sword *to chase* after them.

Conclusion

To say that they are not to “cut off the hair at the sides of your head or mar the edge of your beard” is not the same thing as “grow ridiculously long sideburns”. That’s the usual Ch’assidic approach of “putting a fence around the Torah”.

To say that they are not to “cut off the hair at the sides of your head or mar the edge of your beard” does not mean that one cannot cut the hair at all because that would be a direct contradiction of the priestly requirements.

- [Ezekiel 44:20 HCSB](#) "They may not shave their heads or let their hair grow long, but must carefully trim their hair.

Hashem wants men to look like men and women to look like women. Most men naturally grow beards. That’s how He made us and those of us who accept that allow the hair to do what it does naturally. We don’t allow it to become unruly or wild because we want to be good representatives of our King. We simply keep it nicely trimmed.