

"And they shall not shave an edge of their beard." (21:5)

During the investiture of the *Leviim*, the *Torah* commands them to shave their heads. The *Recanti* observes the disparity between the term used for the *Levi -taharah*, purity - and that used for the *Kohen -kedushah*, holiness. What is the significance of the distinction between the goal set for these two paradigmatic spiritual leaders? **Horav Eli Munk, zl**, explains that "purity," the term used for the *Levi*, indicates a negative quality, the absence of contamination. On the other hand, *kedushah*, the term used for the *Kohen*, signifies a positive trait. When the *Levi* cut his hair short, he was symbolizing separating himself from the past in order to begin a life of unimpeded purity.

The *Kohen*, on the other hand, let his beard grow in order to demonstrate his willingness to extend his spiritual/moral virtue beyond the scope of his body. Not an integral part of the body, the hair represents the means by which the body extends to the outside world. The *Kohen* is enjoined to teach *Klal Yisrael* -- and thereby leave his imprimatur of holiness upon those around him.