

Beit Hamidrash Hameir Laarets | Issue 99

**Tzav** | The Influence of Clothes on Your Soul



# MESILLOT

## *Pathways to the Soul*

Illuminating teachings and insights on the weekly parasha  
by **Rabbi Yoram Michael Abargel zt"l**

From the weekly lectures of his son,  
**Rabbi Israel Abargel shlita**

# ...*~* PATHWAYS TO THE SOUL *~*...

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## Parashat Tzav

### Don't Forget Your Tzitzit!

**The** accursed spirit of the Haskalah, which began to fill the Jewish streets, devoured many. Its net trapped mainly the feet of the youth, deprived of knowledge.

**In** their foolishness, they believed that when they went out into the open world to intervene with the gentiles, to learn from their ways, and to be “enlightened” with their wisdom and science, it would raise the honor of the Jewish people. However, their bitter end, with complete assimilation among the gentiles, proved that there’s nothing better for the Jewish people than to dwell alone, as it says, “A people which shall dwell alone and will not be reckoned among the nations” (Bamidbar 23:9).

**Apart** from the spiritual destruction and waves of assimilation, the Haskalah left no trace in the history of the Jewish people. Of those who followed it,

there are almost no refugees left. Even the forefathers of the Haskalah didn’t leave behind them a root or branch connected to the Jewish people. All their descendants disposed of their past, discarded their nation, and perished with no trace of Jewish blood after them...

**The** evil began in Germany. There the plague broke out, and there it subsided. Admittedly, after its harvest, the Haskalah continued and dug its claws into the walls of Judaism in other Eastern European countries, Poland, Galicia, etc...

**R.** Yedidia was one of those unfortunate Jews for whom the raging spirit of lawlessness, in the form of the Haskalah, exacted an immeasurably high price from them, the price of lost children who went to graze in foreign fields.

**When** he learned that his son was caught in the trap, he didn’t

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know what to do with himself from grief and sorrow. He ripped his clothes and sat on the floor as a mourner. But nothing helped to stir the slightest awakening within the stone heart of his son.

**The** locking of the father's door in the face of his wayward son displayed its consequences mostly in his son's pockets, who began to know the life of destitution. He began to feel the darkness and bitter taste of poverty. However, the power of the *yetzer hara* was greater even than the power of deprivation to bring him back home.

**After** a few years had passed in the same gloomy situation, the father received a rumor that his son had taken a liking to a wealthy gentile, and he decided to take him as his son-in-law. The son, who was tied to the chains of the Haskalah, didn't find any fault in this deed, and his conscience didn't oppress him in any way.

**However,** the father, R. Yedidia, a faithful Jew, felt that his strength couldn't withstand this devastation. He felt his heart

was about to explode from grief and sadness. So much so that his friends and close associates also noticed this and began to fear for his sanity and life...

**A** few of his acquaintances got together to deliberate the situation. After a lengthy discussion, the friends decided that the best advice for the father was to travel to the holy tzaddik, Rebbe Yehoshua Rokeach of Belz. From all corners of the country, multitudes flocked to Belz to be blessed by the holy mouth of the Rebbe, to be entrusted with his words of salvation and mercy, and to bask in his wisdom.

**With** a torn heart, R. Yedidia sat down and spilled his heart out before the Belzer Rebbe, who listened attentively to every word that came out of the mouth of the grieving father. When the father finished, the Rebbe answered, "If only you listen to my advice, dear Jew, to cease from your former ways of driving away your disobedient son, rejecting him with both hands, and expelling him from home. On the contrary! Begin to draw him closer to you. Show

him a forgiving face, as if you've forgotten about all the sorrow that was caused to you, and begin to show him signs of affection. Love your son and do only kindness with him. Even as the date of his wedding approaches, don't deprive him of anything. Give him the best of the best, like a Jewish father is accustomed to give to his son in preparation for his marriage... In the end, his heart will feel closer to you, and then, according to your wisdom, bring him to Belz, to me, even before his marriage!"

**R.** Yedidia heard the advice of the tzaddik... He felt like he was being stabbed continuously. The tzaddik threw upon him a heavy burden that the heart could not understand and the mind could not comprehend. Why would he give him everything ahead of his disgraceful wedding?!

**Since** the Rebbe repeated his advice a second time, the father couldn't challenge his holy words and, by necessity, against his will, nodded his head as if he had taken it upon himself to carry out all that was thrown upon him.

**With** great joy, the son received his father's message that the door had opened to him and that from now on, he may return home and reside as usual.

**"Indeed,"** his son haughtily said to himself, "what his intellect didn't do, time did! Finally, despite his zeal, the old man came to the conclusion that it's better for him to accept the "progressive" opinion of his "enlightened" son than to try to bereave him. Lo and behold, he returned and opened the doors of his house to me!"

**His** son expected to see a change in his father's attitude towards him, but he didn't imagine it being to such an extent.

**Not** only did his father "forget" about the controversial issue, but he even showed kindness to him, taking care of all the preparations for his approaching wedding.

**Day** by day, the bond between the father and son grew stronger, and the son's gratitude towards his father grew equally. So much so that the son couldn't refuse when his father begged him to travel with

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him to Belz in order to be blessed by the Rebbe before his wedding...

**The** displays of closeness that the son merited by the Rebbe overtook him. With exceptional patience, the Rebbe devoted precious time from his day to talk with the son about his affairs, not even skipping over the subject of his upcoming marriage.

**The** son sat and lectured to the Rebbe about the main views of the Haskalah, which didn't find any faults in mixed marriages... After a long hour of sitting and listening, being interested and inquiring, while maintaining peace and calmness visible on his face, the Rebbe suddenly answered and opposed the young man, "Everything is good! But this is still a family of gentiles. How do you know that there are no anti-Semites among them who wouldn't hesitate to lay hands on a Jewish man like you, who desires to enter their family?!"

"*Chas v'shalom!*" the young man jumped back, appalled

by the expressed idea, "That's unthinkable! This is a noble, enlightened, and progressive family that abandoned their old beliefs long ago and rose above the differences between races and religions! The evidence is that they chose me as a groom without requiring me to convert to Christianity! Among such enlightened people, there's no longer even a trace of the ancient hatred of Jews!"

**"Nevertheless,"** said the Rebbe to the foolish son, "it would be desirable that at the time of the wedding, you equip yourself with something that will protect you from the harm of the anti-Semites! At the end of the day, it's impossible to be sure that among a large crowd of gentiles who will attend the wedding, there won't be one Jew-hater whose anger might flare up against the Jewish groom!"

**The** Rebbe told his assistant to bring him a *tzitzit*. He took the garment and handed it over to the "groom."

**“Take** this as protection!” he said, “And don't forget to wear it on your wedding day!”

**Unable** to refuse, the young man accepted the gift from the Rebbe, solemnly promising to wear the garment on his wedding day. He didn't forget to state, with much “enlightenment,” that although he doesn't believe in such things, due to the honor of the Rebbe, who brought him so close and understood him, he is ready to fulfill his wish...

**Before** the father and his son parted the tzaddik, the Rebbe ordered the father to attend the son's wedding...

**“It** goes without saying that you won't be able to sit at the same table with the gentile family, but I trust your son that he'll arrange a separate table for you on the side so that you too can take part in the “joyous” occasion!”

**As** R. Yedidia's heart was about to explode at the sound of the Rebbe's command, the son's eyes shone with happiness, and his entire being expressed deep gratitude to

the Rebbe, who showered him with love and “understanding” to an incredible degree...

**“Also,** you, remember” added the Rebbe to the father, “to remind your son to wear the *tzitzit* on his wedding day! It's really important! It's his protection! Remember, and don't forget!”

**R.** Yedidia said goodbye to the Rebbe as his head was spinning and his heart was full of wonder. He made his way back home with his son... He came to the Rebbe with the hope that a great miracle would happen to him, that the Rebbe would dissuade the son from his foolish ways. But now, as he returned home, that final hope was destroyed. Not only that, but the Rebbe commanded him to participate in his son's marriage ceremony!

**“If** only the earth were to open its mouth and swallow me alive!” mused R. Yedidia while he was sitting at a small table on the side at his son's wedding, “Woe to me and to my soul that I was destined to sit and watch my son get married to a gentile family!”

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**Admittedly**, the gentile “father-in-law” and his family members tried to demonstrate their “enlightenment” and “progressiveness” as much as possible and welcomed the Jewish father. The figure of the bearded Jew, sitting alone at a side table, apparently didn’t disturb any of those present, and there was no sign of any hostility towards him.

**The** happy “groom” didn’t keep his feeling of “victory” to himself. He toiled to draw the father’s attention to the fact that he indeed entered an “enlightened” family, one whose pleasant behavior is evident...

**After** feasting on the best of the wedding delicacies served, the celebrants got up to dance and gloat as they do. A short while later, the sound of drunk people filled the ballroom from one end to the other.

**R.** Yedidia curled up inside himself in his corner as if he wanted to squeeze into a narrow crack between the stones in the wall, provided that he wouldn’t be at this revelry party.

**At** that time, the appearance of the wedding looked no different than a country tavern on a Sunday evening, when the peasants gather all together to fill their dry souls from the barrel...

**After** a long hour of partying, when the faces of the participants were flushed and sweaty as if after a steam bath, and the heat in the crowded hall made it difficult to breathe, the distinguished “gentlemen” began to remove their jackets and continued to dance and run around.

**Even** the “groom,” after he had also proved his strength of revelry, took off his ironed wedding suit and sat down to dry off from the sweat that bathed his body. After he calmed down, he returned and joined the circle of dancers without bothering to put his suit back on.

**At** that moment, the eye of one of the celebrants, also from the “enlightened” gentile family, noticed the *tzitzit* that were sticking out from under the groom’s clothes. The tremendous shout emanating from that man’s throat instantly paralyzed



the entire celebration, “Jewish clothing!”

**All** eyes turned at once to the “groom.” Someone volunteered to approach him and pull the strings out for everyone to see. The “enlightened” crowd seemed to have been struck by a shockwave. Silence reigned throughout the ballroom.

**The** first to recover was the “father-in-law.” With quick steps, he stormed towards his “son-in-law,” grabbing an empty iron flask that happened to be next to him, and began smashing him in the face with murderous rage...

**Within** seconds, droves of those present came to their senses and began to vent their anger at the Jewish “groom,” who dared to come here with a Jewish garment on his body...

**If** it hadn't been for R. Yedidia, the father, who quickly took action and hurried to drag his son out of the hall and escape from the hands of the rioters, there was no doubt that he wouldn't have come

out alive. His entire body was beaten, bruised, and bloody...

**For** a long time, the father and son hid not far from the wedding hall, with the darkness of the night serving as a refuge from those seeking their lives. The wild roars of the gentiles in their search for their fleeing victims resembled a pogrom scene...

**Close** to dawn, when the chaos subsided, the fugitives managed to save themselves and reach a safe place. At daylight, they hired a wagon and hurried to leave the city.

**The** father and son sat in silence the whole way back to their city. R. Yedidia didn't see any need for him to assist his son in drawing the necessary conclusions from the incident. He left him to conclude on his own, what “nobility,” “enlightenment,” and “progressiveness” mean in gentile terms, and what the nature of “Haskalah” and its assimilation feels like.

**The** decisive conclusions were well engraved in the flesh

and bones of the wounded and bruised son...

**After** his son recovered from his wounds, he himself decided to get up and go to Belz. He wanted to thank the Rebbe...

**He** was well aware of how excellent the “protection” that the Rebbe gave him, in the form of *tzitzit*, that saved him from assimilating with those “enlightened” gentiles and being part of them, was truly good for him.

**Even** until his old age, that son didn’t forget what he experienced personally, “A people which shall dwell alone and will not be reckoned among the nations !”<sup>1</sup>

### The Five Sages

**At** the beginning of the Pesach Haggadah, we read about five sages who gathered to celebrate the Seder night.

**There** it’s told that once, Rabbi Eliezer, Rabbi Yehoshua, Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah, Rabbi

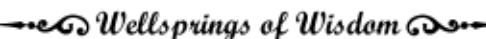
**Let’s** summarize...

**That** son threw off the yoke of heaven, and his father fought with him with all the tools at his disposal. However, when he came to visit the tzaddik, he was taught that only with pleasantness, love, and by genuinely bringing closer, can one find pathways to the heart.

**Ultimately**, the tzaddik activated the enormous power of “wearing a Jewish garment,” thereby rescuing the son from the jaws of the abyss... About that power in our parasha...

**But** before we focus on the power of clothes, we’ll clarify further the lesson we learned from the story...

Akiva, and Rabbi Tarfon were reclining [at a Seder] in Bnei Brak. They spoke about the exodus from Egypt all that night, until their students came and said to them, “Our Rabbis ! The time of reciting the morning Shema has arrived.”



1. Emunei Am Segula (Vol. 1, p. 127).

**Five** sages got together and spoke about the story of the Exodus. But one of those sages' relevance to the lessons of the Exodus stunned them all...

**Rebbe** Tzadok of Lublin zt"l writes<sup>2</sup> that Avraham Avinu was 100 years old and Sarah, his wife, was 90 years old when their son, Itzhak, was born. Two very old people for whom, according to nature, it was impossible to have children. That is, apart from the fact that Sarah was barren... And then, precisely then, after complete despair, their only son, Itzhak, was born, continuing their legacy.

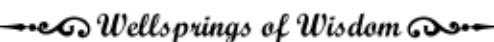
**But** why was the Jewish nation formed specifically in this way?

**In** order to instruct the entire nation that "אין שום יאוש בְּעוֹלָם כְּלָל" (never despair!) To instruct that "Even if a sharp sword rests upon a person's neck, they shouldn't despair of mercy."<sup>3</sup> There's no such thing as despair, whether in matters of the body or the soul.

**So** it was in the building of the body of the nation with the birth of Itzhak, and in the spiritual building of the nation as Hashem's people with the exodus from Egypt. Then too, they were in a hopeless situation. A nation of slaves under an oppressive rule that made them work hard all day in the field. They continued to deteriorate to the abyss of disgrace, to the 49<sup>th</sup> gate of impurity, until even angels couldn't tell the difference between them and the Egyptians, asking,<sup>4</sup> "How are these different from those?"

**Even** the Jews themselves weren't able to digest the news of their salvation. They said to him, "Moshe Rabbeinu! How will we be redeemed? All of Egypt is filled with our idol worship!"<sup>5</sup>

**Then**, a radical transformation took place, "Withdraw and take" (Shemot 12:21) – Withdraw your hand from idol worship, and take yourselves to the service of Hashem! At once, they went out



2. Divrei Sofrim (Ch. 16).

3. Brachot 10a.

4. Brachot 55a.

5. Shir HaShirim Rabbah 2:8.

from “slavery to freedom, from sorrow to joy, from mourning to festivity, from darkness to great light, and from servitude to redemption!”<sup>6</sup>

**How** symbolic is it that their redemption was at midnight when the darkness was at its height? Then, the Zohar says<sup>7</sup> there was a revelation of the Shechina and a light as bright as noon in the month of Tammuz!

**Rebbe** Tzadok continues and writes that, therefore, a Jew shouldn’t despair of anything. Even if they realize that they’re immersed in the affairs of this world, they shouldn’t despair of themselves by saying that they won’t be able to get out, for there’s no such thing as despair for a Jewish person.

Hashem can help in any matter.

**After** all, the entire formation of the Jewish nation only occurred after complete despair, and no one believed, not even Sarah, that she would be able to give birth. For this

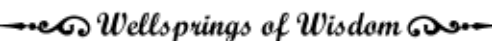
is the Jew, to believe that there’s never a reason to despair, that Hashem can always help, for “Is anything too difficult for Hashem?!”

**And** we were commanded to remember the exodus from Egypt every day in the morning and in the evening, to remember that there’s no place for despair, and one must never lose hope. To remember the past, that in the midst of darkness, at the height of darkness, the light shone for us, and salvation came.

**Now** we’ve come to that one sage who truly implemented this lesson of the Exodus in his life.

A very poor man from a family of converts. A shepherd of the flock of one of the wealthiest people in Jerusalem in the generation before the destruction. That wealthy man had a daughter named Rachel. A very smart, discerning woman.

**Marriage** offers came in from all directions—pleasing proposals from many wise, strong-minded young men with good *middot*.



6. Pesachim 10:5.

7. Zohar (Bo 38a).

**But** Rachel rejected them all... With her fine sense of discernment, she sensed that the “treasure” was hiding inside Akiva, the shepherd of the flock ! She approached Akiva and said to him, “If we get married, do you promise me that you’ll go study Torah ?”

**Akiva** promised.

**Her** father, the extremely wealthy man, heard that his precious daughter was engaged to the ignorant shepherd, the poor man from the family of converts. Foam spilled out of his mouth from his rage. He fired the shepherd, excluded his daughter from his inheritance, and threw her out of the house. They got married in the peak of winter and chose a barn as their residence. They would cover themselves with straw. In the morning, they would spend an hour plucking out the straw that clung to their hair...

**He** faced many difficulties at the beginning of his studies because he didn’t even know the shape of the letters... But one day, he saw stones worn away by drops of water. He then awakened, “If

something soft can carve something hard, then all the more so, the words of Torah, which are like steel, can engrave themselves on my heart, which is but flesh and blood !”

**The** next day he went to school with his son, Yehoshua. He sat with him on the benches of first grade and memorized the letters with him. At the end of the day, he knew how to read. He discovered within himself hidden powers. Remarkable memory, lightning-fast perception. He asked his wife for permission to go to Jerusalem to study Torah. Permission was gladly granted. He went and immersed himself in the world of Torah, a world open to all, regardless of status, wealth, or family...

**For** 24 years, he sat and studied with great perseverance (with the permission of his wife, Rachel), and during those years, he was able to amass 24,000 students !

**All** those years, his wife Rachel coped alone. Without parents – who excommunicated her. Without a husband – because she willingly sent him to study

Torah. Without a livelihood - living in terrible poverty !

**Then**, 24 years later, Rabbi Akiva returned to his home accompanied by his students.

**All** the people went out to greet him. To greet the rising star in the sky of Judaism, the genius who knew the entire Torah, who acquired it with endless toil and unfathomable diligence. He had a unique ability to absorb everything, Halacha, Aggadah, Kabbalah, etc., and to sort everything in wonderful order.

**All** the people went out, his wife as well. One of her neighbors, a cruel man, turned to her and said, "Where are you going? Now he's a great man. He'll surely abandon you..."

**She** was a downtrodden woman who lived in poverty... Facing the hardships of life alone for 24 years. When she saw her husband from afar, for the first time after all those years, surrounded by 24,000

students, his long white beard, his face beaming with the light of wisdom, she, a poor woman dressed in rags, tried to approach him, but the wall of students blocked her. Suddenly, her husband raised his eyes and saw her.

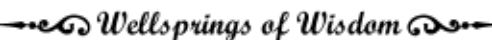
**"Make way!"** he said and walked towards her, "My Torah knowledge, and yours, is all hers..."

**In** a moment, she was made into a great, honored woman. In an instant, she went out from darkness into light! Because that's this world is conducted. In the midst of the darkness, at the height of darkness, the light shines, and salvation arrives!<sup>8</sup>

**So** far, everything is understood.

**When** Rabbi Itzchak Abarbanel z"l learned this part of the Haggadah, he took his pen and wrote...<sup>9</sup>

**"Once**, Rabbi Eliezer, Rabbi Yehoshua, Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah, Rabbi Akiva, and Rabbi



8. Maayan HaMoed (Haggadah shel Pesach, p. 131).

9. Zevach Pesach 8b.

Tarfon were reclining [at a Seder] in Bnei Brak.” Although Bnei Brak is a name of a place, here the interpretation of Bnei Brak is different. “בְּנֵי בְרַק” (Bnei Brak) meaning beautiful vessels, shining in splendor, fine white, green, and blue. After their radiance, they are called “בְּרַק” (shine).

**Rabbi** Ben Tzion Fendler adds that in addition to the

beautiful vessels there, the sages who reclined there were also dressed in shiny silk clothes (also called “Bnei Brak”).

**According** to Rabbi Fendler’s interpretation, we need to understand, why did the compiler of the Haggadah trouble himself to mention this detail?

**But** before that, we’ll move on to this week’s parasha...

### Lift the Ashes

**The** first job that was done in the Beit HaMikdash every day was the *Terumat HaDeshen* (removal of ashes). As the Mishna says...<sup>10</sup>

**Initially** (before they instituted lotteries), whoever (of the Kohanim) wished to remove the ashes from the altar removed them... But once the *Beit Din* saw that they were coming to potential danger (as is explained in the Mishna), they instituted that they (the Kohanim) would remove the ashes from the altar only by means of a lottery...

**The** Kohanim were commanded regarding this *avodah* in our parasha, “The Kohen shall dress in his linen garment and he shall wear linen pants on his flesh, and he shall lift the ashes of the burnt-offering that the fire consumed on the altar and place it next to the altar” (Vayikra 6:3).

**It’s** a mitzvah for the Kohen to wear priestly clothes, and to pick up the ashes of the burnt sacrifices, called “*deshen*,” that accumulates on top of the altar with a *machta* (a fire pan) and place

**Parashat Tzav - Take Out the Ashes**

them next to the altar, to the east of the ramp (which they would use to go up to the altar) and there it would be miraculously swallowed up.<sup>11</sup>

**After** the Kohen (who won the lottery) performed the mitzvah of lifting the ashes, the other Kohanim would go up to the altar and sweep

the ashes from the entire area of the altar and concentrate them on top of the *tapuach* (a pile of ashes) located in the middle of the altar.

**This** mitzvah occurred every day. But in addition to that, there was another mitzvah of taking out the ashes...

**Take Out the Ashes**

**When** the ashes on top of the *tapuach* accumulated to a point where there was no more room to add any more ashes, they would remove them by taking them outside the city.

**The** Torah says in our parasha, “He shall remove his garments and dress in other clothes, and he shall take the

ashes outside the camp to a pure place” (Vayikra 6:4).

**In** this verse, the Kohanim were commanded with another mitzvah, “He shall remove his garments and dress in other clothes, and he shall take the ashes outside”<sup>12</sup> – that is, if the Kohen who lifted the ashes also wants to take out the ashes, he must take off his priestly clothes and put on other clothes.

— *~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~* —

**11.** The Kabbalist, Rabbi Yaakov Tzvi Yalish zt”l writes (Kehillat Yaakov, Dash)... Regarding the ashes of the altar that would be miraculously swallowed up, the Kabbalists write that a certain angel called (do not say out loud) ”קריאל”, would stand by the altar and would swallow all the ashes.

**12.** **In** a lesson given by Rabbi Eliezer Shlomo Schick, the Moharosh zt”l, he said the following...

**It’s** appropriate for every man to feel an obligation and responsibility to take the garbage out of his house and to make sure not to delay so that the garbage truck can take it on time. For this is part of the *middah* of cleanliness and respect for the Shechina that rests in their home, that the garbage be removed from their house, and that the house be clean at all times.



**Parashat Tzav - Take Out the Ashes**

**Although** it seems unnecessary to talk about this subject, unfortunately, some people think that taking the garbage out is an inferior task and a slight to their dignity, that it's not fitting for them to do it, and that they'll wait for their wife or children to do it. Because of this, the garbage amasses, and a foul smell wafts throughout their home, and even when they finally take out the garbage, it remains there because they missed the garbage truck...

**Then** the whole area in front of their house smells terrible, which bothers the neighbors. All because of a foolish thought that it seems to him that it's not fitting for him to take out the garbage... He doesn't understand that this is his honor, that his house is clean and polished from all garbage, and on the contrary, the biggest disgrace is when the garbage amasses in their home, and no one takes care of it properly.

**This** indicates a lack of *emuna*, for the home of a Jewish couple is a dwelling place for the Shechina, and the cleanliness of their home and table is like the *Terumat HaDeshen* (removing of the ashes) on top of the altar. For the table is likened to the altar (Chagigah 27a), and removing the garbage from the house is like taking the *deshen* (ashes) outside the camp, which is a mitzvah from the Torah, as it says, "He shall lift the ashes... and he shall take the ashes outside the camp" (Vayikra 6:3-4), and the Kohanim were very careful about this, as *chazal* say (Tamid 28b), "Never was a Kohen lazy in removing the ashes."

**If** so, why would a man say it's not fitting for him to take the garbage out of the house? If he had any sense, he would know that his home is a dwelling place for Hashem, and the removal of the garbage is an example of the removal of the ashes, and precisely this is his honor.

**It** breaks my heart to talk about this, but only Hashem knows how much *shalom bayit* has been destroyed and how much trouble has been caused because of such nonsense that the husband claimed that it wasn't fitting for him to take out the garbage and insisted that only his wife should do it, and this led to quarrels between them, until they parted, *rachmana litzlan*. What stupidity! This is nothing but a sign that the husband has garbage in his head and doesn't know how to take it out. Therefore, he thinks such a way. For if he had a little sense, he would take out the garbage with great joy and be happy that his house is clean and polished.

How is this a slight to his dignity?

**Why** would a man say, "It's not fitting for me to take out the garbage! Why do I have to take out the dirty garbage?" It's Hashem's will!!! That you're your house be clean and pure! Thus, by taking out the garbage, you're fulfilling His will and giving pleasure to your Father in Heaven! If you serve Hashem only where you feel comfortable or when *you* think it's important, you're not serving Hashem, you're serving yourself!

**Parashat Tzav - True Protection**

**In** parashat Tetzaveh, the Kohanim were commanded regarding their priestly garments. In general, there are three sets of clothing...

**The** clothes of a regular Kohen, the clothes of the Kohen Gadol (eight pairs of clothes), and the white clothes of Yom Kippur (which were worn by the Kohen Gadol).

**In** our parasha, we learned more about clothes, that there are clothes that are suitable for working in the Temple and clothes that are suitable for fulfilling the mitzvah of removing the ashes. But we must understand, why do we need to put so much emphasis on clothes ?

**Let's** explain...

**True Protection**

**In** a lesson given by Rabbi Shimshon David Pincus zt"l, he said...

**It** says in parashat Tetzaveh, "Make holy garments for your brother, Aharon, for honor and glory" (Shemot 28:2).



**The** Torah goes on to detail the unique, glorious, holy clothes worn by the Kohanim while working in the Temple.

**In** truth, every Jew is called a Kohen, as it says, "You will be to

Me a kingdom of Kohanim" (Shemot 19:6). Every Jew constantly stands before Hashem serving Him with their prayers, Torah study, and fulfillment of mitzvot. Therefore, like the Kohanim in their work in the Temple, each and every Jew should wear unique clothing so that it's evident that they're a servant of Hashem.

**A** Jew's clothing should be unique in three ways...

**First**, that their clothes be modest, unlike the gentiles' new

— *Wellsprings of Wisdom*  —

**Some** say that it's *bitul* Torah... It's not *bitul* Torah, it's Hashem's will! Hashem doesn't want you to learn right now. Hashem wants you to close the book and take out the garbage (or whatever else one has to do at that time).

You don't feel *bitul* Torah within your heart because you're nullified to His will! That's called truly serving Hashem! Thus, it's fitting that you do it with great joy!

- Sichot Moharosh (Vol. 16, p. 101).

fashion trends, whose whole purpose is to arouse lust and evil thoughts and despise everything holy.

**Second**, that their clothes don't transgress the Torah, namely clothing mixed with wool and linen (*shatnez*), for the prohibition of *shatnez* is equal to the prohibition of eating pork.

**Third**, that they wear clothing in which they fulfill a mitzvah, like *tzitzit*, which is equivalent to all the mitzvot of the Torah.

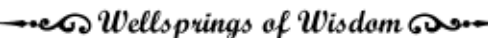
**It** seems to a person that clothes are merely an external matter and not so important, but the truth is that they contain a very deep matter, and therefore they occupy an important place in the service of Hashem.

**The** purpose of clothing is mainly to protect the person's exterior, their body, from outside harm such as heat, cold, and the like.

**But** in truth, their purpose is also to protect the person's interior. A person who wears clothes that display that they're Torah observant finds it difficult to be found in places that aren't fitting for them. Their clothes protect them against bad influences. Such a person won't be able to enter a restaurant that isn't kosher. This phenomenon isn't accidental, rather there's sanctity within one's clothes that protects a person from transgressions.

**The** first to wear clothes were Adam and Chava, as it says, "Hashem Elokim made for Adam and his wife skin-garments and He clothed them" (Bereshit 3:21), and *chazal* explain that the word "skin" (עור) alludes to the word "light" (אור), for in truth, those whose clothes are within the boundaries of modesty and sanctity are always clothed with light.

**All** the more so, someone who wears clothing in which they fulfill a mitzvah, like *tzitzit*,<sup>13</sup> a true garment of light that saves



13. A woman fulfills a mitzvah by wearing all clothing that is modest and is according to Halacha.

**Parashat Tzav - Inside Out**

one from dangers, just like the *mezuzah* guards Jewish homes. Likewise, the *kippah*,<sup>14</sup> our crown

of glory, and a candle of Hashem lit above our heads, both of which protect us from all harm...<sup>15</sup>

### Inside Out

**Hashem** blessed us with His great mercy to write a series of books called *Chelev Haarets*. There we expanded on this matter as follows...<sup>16</sup>

**It** has been made known by many *Gedolei HaDor* and *tzaddikim* throughout the generations that a person's external mannerisms and appearance greatly influence their inner characteristics.

**Therefore**, it's very important for a person to have a pleasing and orderly appearance, for their external appearance significantly helps internal development, such as attaining a lucid and stable mind in the service of Hashem.

**On** the other hand, when a person's external mannerisms

and appearance are muddled and disorganized, it's almost certain that their mental state is confused and disorderly, and it's clear then that when a person's mental state isn't orderly, they aren't a fitting vessel to learn and receive Torah, and certainly not to learn in-depth and with logical reasoning...

**Therefore**, a person shouldn't take the arrangement of their clean appearance lightly.

**In** light of this, it's clear why we find among our sages, *Gedolei Israel*, who, despite their busy schedule, found an honorable place for these important matters and instructed their students and the generations after them...<sup>17</sup>

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*~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~*

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**14.** For a woman, her head covering, which protects her even more than a man's head covering protects him.

**15.** Tiferet Shimshon (Shemot, p. 341).

**16.** *Chelev Haarets* (Vol. 2, p. 108).

**17.** **Rabbi** Natan Tzvi Finkel, the Alter of Slabodka zt"l, was very meticulous in the manners of his students. Thus, Rabbi Dov Katz testifies in his book...

**Parashat Tzav - Inside Out**

**Everyone** who appeared before him (before the Alter of Slabodka), and in particular the young students, was scanned of all their movements: examining the way they stand, the way they sit, the movement of their hands and feet, their eyes and lips...

**The** Alter of Slabodka saw every uncalculated movement as an expression of carelessness, inattention, and instability, which could have serious consequences.

**He** was also very careful about the external appearance of his students, that their backs should be upright, their heads straight, and their posture firm and stable. He interpreted the words of *Chazal* (Brachot 43b), “One who walks with an upright posture, even four cubits, it is as if they push away the feet of the Shechina” – that *Chazal* spoke of the “uprightness” of one’s heart, that they don’t feel the Shechina and the providence of Hashem with every step, and thus that person thinks in their mind that “My strength and the power of my hand have acquired this wealth for me,” *chas v’shalom*. But if their thoughts are subservient to Hashem and their heart is submitted and contrite, there is nothing wrong with an upright posture and a head held high. On the contrary, one’s external movements affect their inner state, and an upright head and posture help one have upright thoughts and stability of mind.

**Rabbi** Natan Tzvi would also demand that his students wear clean, not torn clothes, be bathed in an immaculate manner, and that their hair is neatly

cut. When he felt that a student wasn’t careful about his appearance, he would reprimand him.

**In** the first periods of the Yeshiva, they hired a special tailor to sew the students’ clothes, and a few times, Rabbi Natan Tzvi himself accompanied the students to the tailor to ensure his sewing was accurate. Once, a student appeared before him missing a button on his shirt. Rabbi Natan Tzvi took a button, thread, and a needle and sewed the button for him. Likewise, Rabbi Natan Tzvi would reprimand a student who neglected his hair or nails, and he would even send some of them home, commanding him to cut them immediately.

**Even** in such matters, Rabbi Natan Tzvi saw the revelation of one’s inner powers, and for that reason, he put special emphasis on them. He was accustomed to saying, “A disorganized appearance is a disorganized head,” “A crumpled, tattered hat is a sign of a confused head,” etc...

**Because** of his education, the students of the Slabodka Yeshiva took on a new form and image of vigilant, shrewd young men, upright and firm in stature, well-mannered, cheerful, and good-natured, and whose appearance is pleasant, and who get along with everyone.

**In** this way, a small seed planted by Rabbi Natan Tzvi in Slabodka grew into a mighty tree with many roots that sent its branches worldwide, and its heights reached the heavens. Tens of G-d fearing Torah establishments, numbering thousands of

## To Honor Hashem

**We** were commanded by the prophet Amos, “Prepare to meet Elokecha, Israel” (Amos 4:12).

**Before** we stand in front of Hashem in prayer, we must prepare our bodies to be worthy of the occasion by being clean beforehand.

**There** are two aspects of cleanliness... External cleanliness and internal cleanliness.

**External** cleanliness includes washing one’s hands according to Halacha, washing one’s face and mouth (brushing teeth), etc...

**Internal** cleanliness includes relieving oneself, getting rid of mucus and phlegm, etc...

**Moreover**, from the verse, “Prepare to meet Elokecha, Israel,” we learn that a person must ensure that their general appearance is clean and organized.

**If** a person who stands before a minister or president of flesh and blood who comes from a putrid drop and who today is here and tomorrow is in the grave, presents themselves in fine, respectable clothing, when they stand before the King of Kings, HaKadosh Baruch Hu, Whose glory fills the entire world and Who exists forever and everything is in His hand and nothing is hidden from Him, is it not more so that they must present themselves in fine, respectable clothing ? !<sup>18</sup>

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*~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~*

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students, were founded, developing a deep, comprehensive system of thought, spreading far and wide and having an enormous influence on many sects of Judaism.

- Tenuat HaMusar (Vol. 3, p. 274).

**18. On** a side note... Rebbe Nachman of Breslov zt”l greatly expounds on the severity of a person who disregards the cleanliness of their clothes, and wrote

that disregarding the cleanliness of one’s clothes and their condition causes a great defect in the upper worlds... And this defect causes difficulty in earning a living... And the spiritual protection around them is impaired...

**These** are his holy words...

**One** must truly take care of their clothes. Never to treat them carelessly, and make

**Thus**, praiseworthy is the person who holds on to this. Who's always careful that when they fulfill a commandment of Hashem, such as Torah study or prayer, they do it with clothes that are clean of all stains and dirt, are ironed and

respectable, and that their general appearance is clean and respectable, leaving a good impression on those who see them. This is a part of honoring Hashem, that those who serve before Him appear dignified before the King...<sup>19</sup>

### The King's Army



**The** above-mentioned concerns every Jew. Every Jew must know that their outer appearance affects their inner state! If one walks down the street with tattered clothes that can only be used after the fact as pajamas, then surely their mental strength weakens, and their mood deteriorates...

**But** how much more so is the above-mentioned directed to those who fill the Beit Midrash, the beloved *Bnei Torah*, who carry the

crown of the King – the Torah! Who need to put an emphasis on their clothing, that they be clean and tidy when learning Torah and praying.

**Moreover**, they should be very careful when going out into the streets that their clothes shouldn't have any stains at all, that they be clean and properly ironed, and that their faces be bright and lively, their hair neatly cut and combed, and their *peyot* neatly arranged behind

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 *Wellsprings of Wisdom* 

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sure they aren't stained or dirty. For a person's clothes themselves, judge them if they don't properly respect them. The greater the person, the more they must take care of their clothes, for the higher one's level, the more scrupulously one is judged.

**A** person who fails to protect their clothes from stains causes a division between Hashem and the Shechina... Because of

this, they make their livelihood only with great exertion and difficulty.

**Therefore**, one must ensure that their clothes are always in good condition and not torn. For when one's clothes are torn, *chas v'shalom*, they impair their protection...

- Likutei Etzot (Clothing).

**19.** Chelev Haarets (Vol. 2, p. 80).

**Parashat Tzav - Jewish History**

the ears, (and those who curl their *peyot* should curl them nicely that they don't have an untidy appearance), all so that the Torah will not be disgraced, *chas v'shalom*.<sup>20</sup>

**Now**, let's return to the question we opened with. Why



did the compiler of the Haggadah bother to point out that the reclining sages were dressed in shiny silk clothes?

**But** before that, we'll have to refresh our memory with a piece of history...

**Jewish History**

**In** the history of the Jewish people, the fall of Beitar is

considered a most fateful turning point. Sixty-two years after the

— *Wellsprings of Wisdom* —

**20. In** a lesson given by Rabbi Yitzchak Zilberstein shlita, he told the following...

**My** father-in-law, Rabbi Yosef Shalom Elyashiv zt"l, emphasizes and encourages the *Bnei Torah* community to look clean and polished in order to sanctify Hashem's name. This is what he said...

**"We** are obliged to be faithful servants to our Father in Heaven and to sanctify His name in public so that all the misguided who stray after vanity will be proven that there's nothing like a Jew who observes the Torah in all that has to do with matters between man and his fellow, and there's no one like a *Ben Torah* who behaves with *derech eretz* and with good *middot*.

**It's** forbidden for *Bnei Torah* to go out into the streets with a stain on their clothes. It's our duty to portray ourselves in the eyes of humanity as polite, decent

people, free from any trace of wrongdoing, and by doing so, calming the terrible storm that rages against us outside. Cleanliness is a logical thing to maintain for anyone who's sane and thus is appropriate for the children of Hashem."

**Included** in his holy words is keeping a good, tidy appearance, for it's clear that included in matters of cleanliness is the general appearance of a person. Therefore, one should ensure that their hair is neat and tidy, and the same goes for their beard. And those who behave according to the opinion of the Arizal in all their matters, even though they don't comb their beard, they should be careful to fix it nicely with their hands so that it doesn't look unkempt and messy, *chas v'shalom*, which causes the Torah to be disgraced, *chas v'shalom*.

- Tuvcha Yabiu (Vol. 2, p. 303.



destruction of the Second Temple, the Jewish people, led by Shimon Bar Koziva, revolted in an attempt to free themselves from the Roman conquerors.

**Bar** Koziva succeeded in his mission and chose the fortified Beitar as the center of his regime and war. For three years, Bar Koziva succeeded until the greats of the generation, such as Rabbi Akiva and his colleagues, recognized him as King Mashiach. Seeing that the Roman Empire was unable to control his rebellion, it sent its best legions. On Tisha B'Av of that year, they captured Beitar, destroyed it, and massacred its inhabitants until not a remnant of them was left.

**With** the fall of Beitar, their last attempt, the Jewish people stopped rebelling against their oppressors, and the days of exile began.

**During** the two years after this catastrophe, the Roman government passed harsh decrees against Am Israel. They decreed a death sentence for anyone who

learned Torah or observed mitzvot, forbade Jews to set foot in Jerusalem in general and in the Temple in particular, and didn't permit the burial of the Beitar martyrs who fell in the war.

**However**, that didn't help the Romans in the slightest! Not threats, not punishments, or cruelty! The Jews, the children of Hashem, sacrificed their lives, literally, and kept the holy Torah!

**About** that generation, the verse says, "To those who love Me and keep My commandments" (Shemot 20:6).

**The** Midrash says<sup>21</sup> that the verse, "To those who love Me and keep My commandments," is speaking about those who live in the Land of Israel and give their lives for all the mitzvot. They're asked, "Why were you sentenced to death?" – "For circumcising my son." "Why were you sentenced to be burned alive?" – "For learning Torah." **Why**

**Parashat Tzav - Hide in The House**

**were you sentenced to be hung?” – “For eating matzah.”** “Why were you sentenced to be whipped 100 times?” – “For taking the lulav.”

**It** was only after the blessed death of the tyrant, Hadrian, and the ascension of Antoninus to the

royal throne, that well-being prevailed, and all the decrees were abolished, including the one that forbade the burial of the dead. That day was set as a Yom Tov and was the last of all the days of remembrance written in *Megillat Taanit* (The Scroll of Fasting).<sup>22</sup>

**Hide in The House**

**The** days of Hadrian’s persecutions are at their height. His cruel soldiers are roaming the streets, searching for a victim. There’s no end to their joy when they find a Jew fulfilling a mitzvah...

**Devilish** smiles, venomous laughter, and Amalekite cruelty are some phenomena that are witnessed...

**Then**, the month of Nissan arrives.

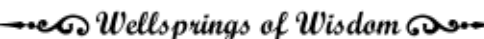
**Hadrian** calls his commander-in-chief and gives him an explicit order.

**The** commander summons the best soldiers and orders

them, “Take your best weapons with you. Swords made of steel (rather than plain iron), sharpened, shiny spears, and ornate shields.

**They** get on white horses, pass through all the Jewish settlements in the Land of Israel, and announce, “In the name of the emperor! Any man or woman who celebrates the Seder night and eats unleavened bread on Passover will die by means of severe, bitterly cruel torture.”

**The** Jewish sages, Rabbi Eliezer, Rabbi Yehoshua, Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah, Rabbi



Akiva, and Rabbi Tarfon gather and discuss the decree.

**After** lengthy deliberations, they decide to conduct the Seder inside a hidden house and close all the windows.

**Some** of their students who hear about this care for their rabbis and volunteer to stand outside and ensure that no “pests” arrive...

**Thus** we say in the Haggadah, “They were reclining [at a Seder] in Bnei Brak. They spoke about the exodus from Egypt all that night, until their students came and said to them, “Our Rabbis! The time of reciting the morning Shema has arrived.”

“**All** that night” – the compiler of the Haggadah reveals to us the magnitude of the *mesirut nefesh* of those sages. Even though sitting at the table on Seder night meant a death sentence in the eyes

of the Romans, they didn’t emphasize that fact at all. They reclined all that night!

**Even** though their lives were in danger and they could’ve shortened the story of the Exodus, they told the story of the exodus from Egypt all that night until the sun came up!<sup>23</sup>

**They** prolonged the story so much that their disciples entered the house and said, “Our Rabbis! The time of reciting the morning Shema has arrived!”

**During** that time of fear and trembling, the holy sages wanted to muster all possible strength in order to be able to celebrate the Seder night as it should be, with peace of mind and joy.

**As** part of their preparations, they wore shiny silk clothes, “Bnei Brak,” that were special for Yom Tov, and the compiler of the Haggadah bothered to point that detail out!

**Why?**

**In** order to teach us that by wearing special clothes for Yom Tov, they received true

enlightenment and strength from above!

**Look** how much importance clothes have!

**Shabbat Shalom!**

## *The Pathway...*

1. The first job that was done in the Beit HaMikdash every day was the *Terumat HaDeshen* (removal of ashes). As the Mishna says, “Initially (before they instituted lotteries), whoever (of the Kohanim) wished to remove the ashes from the altar removed them... But once the Beit Din saw that they were coming to potential danger (as is explained in the Mishna), they instituted that they (the Kohanim) would remove the ashes from the altar only by means of a lottery...”

2. The Kohanim were commanded regarding this *avodah* in our parasha, “The Kohen shall dress in his linen garment and he shall wear linen pants on his flesh, and he shall lift the ashes of the burnt-offering that the fire consumed on the altar and place it next to the altar” (Vayikra 6:3).

3. It’s a mitzvah for the Kohen to wear priestly clothes, and to pick up the ashes of the burnt sacrifices, called “*deshen*,” that accumulates on top of the altar with a *machta* (a fire pan) and place them next to the altar, to the east of the ramp (which they would use to go up to the altar) and there it would be miraculously swallowed up. After the Kohen (who won the lottery) performed the mitzvah of lifting the ashes, the other Kohanim would go up to the altar and sweep the ashes from the entire area of the altar and concentrate them on top of the *tapuach* (a pile of ashes) located in the middle of the altar. This mitzvah occurred every day. But in

addition to that, there was another mitzvah of taking out the ashes...

4. When the ashes on top of the *tapuach* accumulated to a point where there was no more room to add any more ashes, they would remove them by taking them outside the city. The Torah says in our parasha, “He shall remove his garments and dress in other clothes, and he shall take the ashes outside the camp to a pure place” (Vayikra 6:4). In this verse, the Kohanim were commanded with another mitzvah, “He shall remove his garments and dress in other clothes, and he shall take the ashes outside” – That is, if the Kohen who lifted the ashes also wants to take out the ashes, he must take off his priestly clothes and put on other clothes.

5. In parashat Tetzaveh, the Kohanim were commanded regarding their priestly garments. In general, there are three sets of clothing...

**A.** The clothes of a regular Kohen.

**B.** The clothes of the Kohen Gadol (eight pairs of clothes).

**C.** The white clothes of Yom Kippur (which were worn by the Kohen Gadol).

6. It says in parashat Tetzaveh, “Make holy garments for your brother, Aharon, for honor and glory” (Shemot 28:2). The Torah goes on to detail the unique, glorious, holy clothes worn by the Kohanim while working in the Temple. In

### *The Pathway...*

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**7.** A Jew’s clothing should be unique in three ways. First, that their clothes be modest, unlike the gentiles’ new fashion trends, whose whole purpose is to arouse lust and evil thoughts and despise everything holy. Second, that their clothes don’t transgress the Torah, namely clothing mixed with wool and linen, i.e., *shatnez*, for the prohibition of *shatnez* is equal to the prohibition of eating pork. Third, that they wear clothing in which they fulfill a mitzvah, i.e., *tzitzit*, which is equivalent to all the mitzvot of the Torah.

**8.** It seems to a person that clothes are merely an external matter and not so important, but the truth is that they contain a very deep matter, and therefore they occupy an important place in the service of Hashem. The purpose of clothing is mainly to protect the person’s exterior, i.e., their body, from outside harm such as heat, cold, and the like. But in truth, their purpose is also to protect the person’s interior. A person who wears clothes that display that they’re Torah observant finds it difficult to be

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בס"ד

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## Shabbat Times

### Tzav

10<sup>th</sup> of Nissan, 5783



City	Candle Lighting	Shabbat Ends	Rabbeinu Tam
New York	7:01 pm	8:02 pm	8:33 pm
Miami	7:18 pm	8:12 pm	8:50 pm
Los Angeles	6:54 pm	7:52 pm	8:26 pm
Montreal	7:02 pm	8:08 pm	8:35 pm
Toronto	7:25 pm	8:28 pm	8:57 pm
London	7:16 pm	8:25 pm	8:46 pm
Jerusalem	6:42 pm	7:33 pm	8:19 pm
Tel Aviv	6:39 pm	7:30 pm	8:15 pm
Haifa	6:39 pm	7:29 pm	8:15 pm
Be'er Sheva	6:39 pm	7:29 pm	8:14 pm

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*From the Words of  
HaRav Yoram Abargel zt"l*

*When a couple wants to build a home where Hashem can bestow His presence, they must build their foundations on common sense and not just on emotions. A home built only on emotions can be torn down at any moment by the slightest disagreement or argument...*



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