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## maskil Le'David

### Significance of Clothing

**"I shall take you out from under the burdens of Egypt; I shall rescue you from their service; I shall redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. I shall take you to Me for a people"** (*Shemot* 6:6-7).

Chazal point out that these verses contain four different expressions of redemption (I shall take you out... rescue you... redeem you... take you). The Midrash Lekach Tov writes that these four expressions correspond to the four merits Yisrael possessed, which made them worthy of redemption from Egypt: They did not change their language, nor their way of dress, they did not reveal to the Egyptians that they had secretly taken their vessels, and they did not abolish the mitzvah of Brit Milah.

Chazal attach great significance to a person's clothing, to guarding the traditional way of dress of our ancestors. It is incumbent upon us to understand why, when after all it is something external and not part of a person's essence. And what special power does it possess that our ancestors were redeemed from Egypt in its merit?

Clothing, in fact, was created as a result of the sin committed by Adam and Chava due to the snake. Before the sin, Adam and Chava had no clothing, as it says (*Bereishit* 2:25), "They were both naked, the man and his wife, and they were not ashamed." Once they sinned and ate from the Tree of Knowledge it says (*Bereishit* 3:7), "Then the eyes of both of them were opened and they realized that they were naked, and they sewed together a fig leaf and made themselves aprons."

Although today clothing is an essential and basic requirement, it is explained that before the sin clothing was unnecessary, there was no need for it. It was the sin that caused clothing to become a necessity for man. If we delve deeper into the matter, we find that there is a contradiction between the state of man before and after the sin. Following the sin, we understand that man requires clothing due to his importance and greatness

as an intelligent being. The more distinguished and respectable the person, the more clothing he adds to cover his body and command respect to his position.

On the other hand, lowly people who disregard themselves walk around half-dressed, may Hashem protect us, and animals who have no intelligence whatsoever have no clothing at all. However, before the sin, the entire concept of clothing and covering one's body was completely unnecessary, and on the contrary, proved Adam and Chava's lofty level before the sin. This shows that the prominence and high level of man is cause for *not* requiring clothing, which seems to be a contradiction to after the sin, when dress seems to follow the opposite rule.

To reconcile this matter, we will explain that Adam was created with great perfection, comparable to his Creator. He was born with upright *middot* and pure qualities, completely perfect in body and soul, pure and spotless from anything evil. Before the sin, the *yetzer hara* was not an internal part of Adam; the power of evil in the world was external to him. However, once he sinned, filth was injected into him by the snake, and the *yetzer hara* received permission to enter inside man and rule over his wishes and desires.

Because of this, prior to the sin when Adam himself was perfect and clear of any evil, there was no need for clothing. Clothing serves to cover and hide, and when man's body is perfect and his soul is pure there is nothing to cover or hide. Before the sin the *yetzer hara* was present in the world in the form of a snake. It was not an intrinsic part of man and his desires, but an external being which had the power to try and make man stumble and sin.

To counteract the external *yetzer hara* Hashem created the Torah, the power that subdues the *yetzer hara* and protects a person from it. However, after the sin, suddenly clothing became a necessity. It became necessary to cover the body, the place where temptations dwell, and conceal his animalistic part, and in this way subdue his *yetzer hara*.

The nations of the world took the concept of clothing and used it to achieve the direct opposite of its true goal. With their arrogant and immodest dress, they increase lust and impurity in the world.

Now we understand the great importance that the Torah attaches to the Jewish mode of dress, and the great praise with which our forefathers in Egypt were commended for not changing their dress.

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28 Tevet 5786

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Va'eira



## Hilula

28 Tevet

Rabbi Avraham Antebi

29 Tevet

Rabbi Yitzchak Kaduri,  
a venerable Kabbalist

1 Shevat

Rabbi Moshe Shik,  
the Maharam Shik

2 Shevat

Rabbi Mantzur Ben Shimon

3 Shevat

Rabbi Yosef of Amshinov

4 Shevat

Rabbi Yisrael Abuchatzera,  
the Baba Sali zy"ta

5 Shevat

Rabbi Yehuda Aryeh  
Leib Magor





## PARSHAH PEARLS

### Inspiring Reflections

#### We are Not Jealous of the Nations of the World

**“I shall take you to Me for a people and I shall be a G-d to you”** (*Shemot* 6:7).

One Rosh Hashanah, Reb Meshulam Zusha of Anipoli *zy”a* left the *beit midrash* before the shofar blowing and noticed an unfortunate young Jewish child of destitute parents, dressed in rags. Reb Zusha asked him, “My child, are you not jealous of the gentiles who eat fattening foods, drink sweet beverages, and are dressed in respectable clothing?”

The child replied, “No, I am not jealous of them at all. Mine is greater than theirs. I am a Jew and believe in the G-d of the Jews.”

Rabbi Zusha returned to the *beit midrash* and proclaimed, “Master of the World, look down from Heaven and see. Who is like Your people Israel, the Chosen Nation? Even a young Jewish child who is hungry, thirsty, and dressed in rags, accepts everything with love – for he knows he is fortunate to be a Jew!”

#### Personal Gain Prevails Over Public Gain

**“Entreat for me”** (*Shemot* 8:24).

Pharaoh asked “entreat **for me**.” This is the character of that wicked king, and similarly of all the gentile kings who are interested only in their own good.

This precise wording, points out the *Ta’am V’da’at*, demonstrates that Pharaoh asked that they entreat for him only; he did not care at all about the fate of his people. In contrast, Jewish kings and Gedolim always take an interest in the public, and their concern for public welfare takes precedence over their own personal benefit.

#### The Sorcerers Rejected Faith in Tzaddikim

**“The sorcerers said to Pharaoh, ‘It is a finger of G-d!’”** (*Shemot* 8:15).

After the sorcerers yielded and proclaimed, “It is a finger of G-d,” why were they smitten with additional plagues?

The *sefer Siman Tov* answers in the name of the elderly chassid, Rabbi Chaim Neta Katz *zt”l*, who quotes the words of the Targum Yonatan: “Pharaoh’s astrologers said, ‘It is not from the power of Moshe and Aharon, but it is a plague sent by Hashem.’” The sorcerers indeed admitted that the plague came from Hashem, but said that it had no connection to the power of Moshe and Aharon.

It seems that the sorcerers denied the concept of faith in *tzaddikim*. Therefore, despite saying, “It is the finger of G-d,” they were subsequently smitten with additional plagues.

## WORDS OF THE SAGES



### Why is Dissension Compared to the Plague of Frogs?

The Maggid, Hagaon Hatzaddik Rabbi Aryeh Shechter *zt”l*, in his *sefer Aryeh Sha’ag*, imparts a wonderful lesson concerning the plague of frogs.

As we know, the plague of frogs began with one gigantic frog that slowly emerged from the river.

The Egyptians wished to kill this huge frog that had infiltrated their land and began hitting it forcefully. But every strike caused more frogs to emerge from it, filling the land of Egypt with their multitudes.

Seemingly, any onlooker would have asked the Egyptians: “What do you think you are doing? Have you gone crazy?! Can you not see that with every strike more and more frogs emerge? The blows are not helping at all, leave the frog alone and the plague will diminish!”

But this is the nature of man. When he acts out of anger and confusion, he loses his discretion and hits everywhere without a trace of logic or benefit.

Maran the Steipler, the Kehilot Yaakov *zt”l*, explains that a similar reality sets in with every fight and argument. When a person thinks his friend acted against him, he does not let it go but repays him twofold. After that his friend pays him back and so it goes on, back and forth, prolonging and increasing the fire of dissension, and it grows hotter and hotter.

Turning to one of the rivals and trying to inject some logic into him by saying: “Keep quiet, don’t respond! Why do you need more mud-slinging and disgrace?” will result in him replying with blind anger: “No! He started! I’ll show him I mean business!”

So, for every blow that one strikes one’s friend, loads of new “frogs” emerge, and the fire of argument intensifies and increases infinitely.

Therefore, any time one is faced with a dispute, friction, or quarrel, it is important to remember the verse: “You shall love your fellow as yourself for I am Hashem.” Indeed, it is not easy to swallow one’s words when someone else is spreading false reports about you and publicly degrading you, but if you keep in mind “I am Hashem,” that Hashem is looking at everything taking place, seeing with great pleasure how you are not responding to all the degradation and slander, it is easier to guard one’s tongue and count oneself among those who are insulted but do not insult.

If a person understands that all the suffering and distress he endures in This World is not happenstance but set in motion by an intentional Heavenly Hand, he will realize that anyone who humiliates him is simply a messenger of Divine Providence, a means of purifying him of his sins. Then automatically there is no reason at all to return battle, rather it is appropriate to search one’s deeds and understand why this evil befell him.



## WALKING IN THEIR WAYS

Tidbits of faith and trust penned by Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagaon Rabbi **David Chananya Pinto**, *shlita*

### The Merit of Torah Protects and Saves

I was visiting Bnei Brak when two women came to ask for my blessing concerning their respective problems. The first walked in and before she began speaking, it occurred to me to ask her, "What's with your husband's stomach?" The woman was shocked beyond words. She had come explicitly to tell me about his terrible stomach pains, and here I was, asking her about them!

Her face gave evidence to her amazement. Since she was speechless, I took the floor. "Do not worry," I reassured her. "*B'ezrat Hashem*, your husband will have a complete recovery in the very near future. Tell him there is no reason to conduct tests or see doctors. He should just continue studying Torah diligently and the merit of the Torah will protect him."

*B'chasdei Shamayim*, that was exactly what happened. Her husband was completely healed in the merit of his Torah study.

After this woman left my room, her friend walked in. This time too, before she opened her mouth I said, "How are your kidneys functioning? Make sure to drink a lot." She too was speechless at my perception of her problem. She could not fathom how I knew why she was here. But I know that it was only in the merit of my holy ancestors. In the merit of their diligence in Torah study, the right words are placed in my mouth, words that provide support and guidance to my fellow Jews for their various problems.

I blessed this woman too with a speedy recovery and reminded her again to drink a lot. With Hashem's help she too was cured of her ailment. She retold her story in public and it resulted in a tremendous *kiddush Hashem*.

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Jewish dress is different from non-Jewish dress not only in its style but mainly in its essence and goal. And Am Yisrael in Egypt guarded their style of dress so as to isolate themselves from the outlook and opinions of the Egyptians concerning clothing and the purpose it is meant to serve.

In this merit, by being distinctive and preserving their own identity, Am Yisrael were trained to become G-d's nation which in the future would receive the Torah, the purpose of their redemption from Egypt.

I recall that my esteemed father *zy"á* did not leave his home for forty years so as to guard the purity and holiness of his eyes. He never perspired and his body never gave off an unpleasant odor, for the more a person sanctifies himself, the more his body becomes something spiritual with no connection to the physical laws of nature.



## FROM THE TREASURY

Based on the teachings of Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagaon Hatzaddik Rabbi **David Chananya Pinto**, *shlita*

### The Power of Free Choice

**"The necromancers of Egypt did the same by means of their incantations; so Pharaoh's heart was strong and he did not heed them"** (*Shemot* 7:22).

Explaining the words "by means of their incantations," Rashi says, "Our Sages say, an act of the demons."

"Ten things were created on Shabbat Eve, at twilight... Some say also destructive spirits" (*Avot* 5:6). The Ra'av explains that "destructive spirits" refer to demons. He explains that demons were created for a certain purpose which is why they are called "destructive spirits," for on Hashem's command they harm and punish those who deserve retribution, serving as His corrective stick. That is why Noah brought them into the Ark at the time of the Flood, for the world requires them.

This gives rise to a difficulty. How come the demons, which are like G-dly angels that carry out His word, assisted Pharaoh and his sorcerers, and disparaged Moshe and Aharon, Hashem's messengers? But this is the great power given to man through free-choice! We are accustomed to thinking that the power of free-choice enables us to make decisions concerning our bodies and actions; that man can do whatever he wishes for better or for worse. Here, through the deeds of Pharaoh and his sorcerers, it became clear that man not only possesses free-choice over his deeds and actions, but also over powers and creations that Hashem fashioned for His honor and the revelation of His Name. Man possesses the power to divert even beings created with the main goal of acting as Hashem's messengers from their goal. Instead of their fulfilling His command, man can harness them for his deeds and actions — even if, G-d forbid, this goes against the Will of Hashem.

This is the great responsibility that lies on man's shoulders. Man is the crown of creation and Hashem gave us power over His world. And man uses the creation both for the good and for the bad. This is the implication of Hashem's warning to Adam Harishon, "Make sure you do not spoil and destroy My world."

It is in man's hand to ruin not only himself and his soul, but also the world, which does not belong to him but to Hashem. Man has the power to destroy the creation whose purpose is the revelation of Hashem's sovereignty.

Now we can understand how the sorcerers used demons to undermine faith in Hashem Yitbarach — the opposite of the purpose for which they were created, which is to punish sinners and proclaim Justice. The foundation of free-choice and reward and punishment is to give man complete control over his deeds and actions both for the good and the bad. This is so even though our true purpose is to reveal His Name and increase His honor, as the verse says, "Everyone who is called by My Name and whom I have created for My glory, whom I have fashioned, even perfected."

Hashem is referred to as "An insulted King." The Ramak, in *Tomer Devorah*, explains that when a person sins, at that actual moment Hashem is breathing life into him and giving him the strength to carry out his plan! And he uses that very strength and life that is being bestowed on him at that moment by Hashem to rebel against Him. Yet Hashem restrains Himself and does not cease the flow of life.

# a NOVEL LOOK AT THE PARSHA

## Lowering Expectations leads to Gratitude



Rashi quotes the Midrash concerning Hashem's command to Moshe, "Say to Aharon, 'Stretch out your staff and strike the dust of the land'": "Since the dust of the land protected Moshe from discovery when he used it to conceal the Egyptian he killed, it would have been ungrateful for him to smite the earth, therefore it was smitten by Aharon."

The Torah relates (*Shemot* 2:11) how Moshe saw an Egyptian man striking a Hebrew man, and he wanted to protect him. The holy Zohar writes that Moshe took his stick and used it to kill the Egyptian, after which he "hid him in the sand."

Did the sand perform a special act for Moshe? Certainly not, but since it assisted Moshe in hiding the Egyptian, Moshe felt obligated to honor the sand; therefore he refrained from striking the sand.

This requires further explanation: does the sand have a soul? Does it feel pain? Or does it feel honor? Is it bothered if the lice crawling over it came as a result of Moshe striking it?

Rabbi Meir Rubman *zt"l* imparts additional depth to the great principle of *hakarat hatov* brought in the holy sefarim:

The obligation of *hakarat hatov* is not just to show appreciation to the person who did us a favor, although it is correct to repay him. We learn from the words of the Midrash that *hakarat hatov* does not mean protecting the one who did the favor from hurt. Sand cannot understand good being done to it, and certainly cannot understand the idea of restraining from doing something negative to it, which is what Moshe Rabbeinu did.

If so, what is the idea behind showing appreciation to an inanimate object, for example water or sand? Harav Rubman says that although it is true that an inanimate object is not affected by our *hakarat hatov*, the obligation of *hakarat hatov* is for **the person himself**, that **he** should feel grateful! The point of showing *hakarat hatov* is not the concept of remuneration for the one who did me a favor, but so I myself should feel and express gratitude to this person for benefitting me. In order to acquire this feeling, it is not fitting for me to harm this person or to not return the good.

Therefore, the same is true with an inanimate object. The benefactor is not the reason for *hakarat hatov*, rather it is **we** who must accustom ourselves to feeling appreciation towards every object and every person, so as to sensitize our soul to this wonderful feeling of *hakarat hatov*.

This is why Hashem instructed Moshe Rabbeinu to not be the one to hit the sand, for he must nourish the inner feeling and sensitivity that it did him a favor.

This teaches us that the idea of *hakarat hatov* is a soul quality that we must strive to acquire! Man must elevate his soul by showing appreciation to everything that benefitted him.

The more modest a person, Hagaon Rabbi Reuven Elbaz *shlit"l* points out in his *sefer Mishkani Acharecha*, the more of an obligation he feels to show appreciation even for the smallest favor done to him. Even many years later he still feels that his very soul is obliged to the one who benefitted him!

On the other hand, a conceited person always feels that others are obligated to give to him and honor him. He is consumed with the thought, "I deserve it!" And if someone does him a favor, he doesn't understand why he must show appreciation for this. "What did he do for me already? Who is he that I have to show appreciation to him?" These thoughts stem from a false sense of pride and prevent him from repaying good with good.

This is the work required from us; to attach much significance to the good bestowed upon us and think that all the good was done for us only, until automatically we will feel obligated to show our appreciation. The fact that others also received the same good, or benefitted together with me, should not be of interest to me at all.

### Expressing Hakarat Hatov in the Home

First and foremost, we must feel appreciation towards our family members, and of course it is extremely important to express our thanks to them out loud. When people don't walk around feeling entitled, which is a result of pride, they will gratefully receive all that others went to the trouble of preparing for them. But it is equally important to show appreciation

for this and actually thank the benefactor.

"I recall," Harav Elbaz *shlit"l* relates, "once staying with a certain Rosh Yeshiva. When we entered his home after the Friday night prayers, we found the table set with elegant dishes. The Rosh Yeshiva turned to his wife the Rabbanit and said, **'I am telling you, even in the most luxurious hotels that I have stayed at, there was nothing so elegantly and tastefully laid out like you manage to do. Every time I see your beautifully set table, I am amazed anew! You do it with such good taste!'**

"And I will tell you the truth: I have no doubt that he tells her this every Friday night!"

If we would also enter our homes and exclaim to our families, "You really know how to prepare the table! I have never seen such a beautifully set table!" – what a good feeling this would give them!

When a person enters his home on Friday night and greets his family with "Shabbat Shalom," is there any greater peace than this?

The worst thing for the home is to criticize one's wife. That is a terrible situation! Picture this scenario: An unfortunate wife who feels she's not coping. She feels the responsibilities of the home are difficult for her, and she has the added stress of keeping the entire house tidy, exactly as her fastidious, pedantic husband demands (even though his shoes can be found in the dining room and socks someplace else...) . She exerts herself above her capabilities, just so that he should not criticize her! But she has yet to hear an encouraging word from him.

The worst feeling for a wife is when her husband tells her, "You didn't manage!" or "You made a mistake again!" What damage this can cause!

Therefore, it is important for a husband to never feel entitled to anything. In this way, he will expect less and not make unfair demands of his wife. He must express appreciation to his wife for all that she does do for him! She has many tasks awaiting her attention, and she is trying to complete them all. Increase her desire to please by complimenting what she does manage to do! You will then merit to have a happy, energetic and accomplishing wife.