

Next was the כתונת (ketonet; tunic/robe), like the long undershirt, a robe of sorts. Then was the

אבנט (avnet; belt/sash), which is a belt. And finally a מצנפת (mitznefet; head covering/hat), which was a hat.

These are the four pieces of clothing that the כהנים have.

Now on top of these four, you had the כהן גדול. Besides these four he wore on top of it:

- A second robe called the מעיל (me'il; outer robe).
- The אפוד (ephod; apron-like garment).
- The חושן (chosben; breastplate).
- And finally the ציץ (tzitz; gold forehead plate).

Eight in all.

## Clothing — And What It Really Means

When we think of clothing, we think of something a person wears to cover their body. Something external. Something for the body. External to the soul.

But the מלבי"ם explains something very deep.

The same way clothing is external for the body — and the body itself is the external clothing of the soul — so too, character is the inner clothing of the soul.

The body is clothing for the soul. And character is clothing for the soul from within.

The clothing that the כהן גדול wore, that the כהנים wore — all the clothing was there to guide them



## The Clothing of the כהנים (Kohanim)

פרשת תצוה (Parashat Tetzaveh) — and I want to share with you a beautiful מלבי"ם (Malbim) on this week's פרשה (parashah). The תצוה (Tetzaveh) explains this whole idea that the פרשה discusses — the clothing of the כהן (kohen; priest) and of the כהן גדול (kohen gadol; High Priest).

We know the כהנים had four pieces of clothing, and the כהן גדול had an extra four on top of those four.

Let's quickly go through the eight.

Number one was the מכנסיים (michnasayim; pants/shorts), what you could call the boxers, the shorts, the underwear. That was the first thing that he wore. He didn't have anything else under it — that was the מכנסיים. Starting from scratch. That was all the way on his skin. That's the מכנסיים — the pants, the shorts.



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and help them stay straight, to stay with good character.

These garments were not just clothing.

It wasn't, "Put on whatever you want." It wasn't jeans, a t-shirt, a suit, a tie.

No.

Each one had a specific message to the כהן. Not guiding him what to wear on the outside — that was only there to reflect what he should be correcting on the inside.

The מידות (*middot; character traits*), my friends — the character of a person — that's where the main work lies.

Fixing who we are underneath.

And it's very hard.

It is much easier to fix the outside.

The תורה (*Torah*) is telling us about the clothing of the כהנים. And it's through the clothing that they are able to reflect and take in a message of what they are to improve inside.

## What Each Garment Atones For

Our rabbis tell us in the גמרא (*Gemara; Talmud*) that the eight garments each atone for a different sin.

We're going to go one by one and see how they apply to the כהנים.

- The מכנסיים (*michnasayim*) — the shorts — atone for immorality.
- The כתונת (*ketonet*) — for murder.

- The מצנפת (*mitznefet*) — the head covering — for haughtiness.

- The אבנט (*avnet*) — for thoughts.

And the next four:

- The אפוד (*ephod*) — for idolatry.
- The חושן (*choshen*) — for justice.
- The מעיל (*me'il*) — for gossip.
- The ציץ (*tzitz*) — for brazenness.

Now the first four garments were worn by all כהנים. And they address a person's main passions.

## The Three Forces That Remove a Person From the World

Our rabbis tell us in פרקי אבות (*Pirkei Avot*):

הקנאה התאוה והכבוד מוציאים את האדם מן העולם (*ba'kinah ba'taavah ve'ha'kavod motzi'in et ha'adam min ha'olam; jealousy, desire, and honor remove a person from the world*).

If you're going to have קנאה (*kinah; jealousy*), it will remove you from this world.

A jealous person — someone always looking at what others have — will look at his own life like it's never enough.

No matter what I have:

I could have a big house — but my friend has a bigger one.

I could have a nice car — but they have a newer one.

I could have a beautiful wife — but maybe the other one is more beautiful.



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## תאווה — Desire

תאווה (*taavah*;

*desire*).

Desire.

Today there are many different desires.

We're talking specifically about women in this context — but it's not limited to that.

Desire for money.

How many people today are gambling? Throwing away their savings? Destroying their marriages?

Because they have so much desire for more.

תאווה gets you nowhere.

Destroys your life.

Takes you out of the world.

## כבוד — Honor and Ego

כבוד (*kavod*; *honor*).

Honor.

Ego.

כבוד is the worst thing.

It gets a person into his own head.

And it's never enough.

What we'll do for honor.

What we'll do because "my honor was stepped on."

Because you embarrassed me.

The other ring is bigger.  
The other children are more well-behaved.

A jealous person will live a miserable life.

## Haman — The Example of Jealousy

המן (*Haman*) was a jealous guy.

It didn't matter that he had everything. He didn't care.

He cared about one thing he didn't have.

One guy — מרדכי (*Mordechai*) — wouldn't bow down to him.

And this made him so angry.

What happened to המן?

He could have lived a regular, happy, successful life.

But he couldn't.

It got to him.

It made him angry.

It made him jealous.

And it led to murder.

He wanted to kill מרדכי.

קנאה (*kinah*) destroys people.

Jealousy. Anger. These are not good things to hold onto.

They will not help us in this world.



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Because you said this to me.

Because I wasn't invited.

Because I wasn't included.

And the כבוד destroys a person.

## The Three Passions — And the First Four Garments

So these are the three passions — the main passions of a human being:

קנאה (*kinah; jealousy*),  
תאוה (*taavah; desire*),  
כבוד (*kavod; honor*).

Jealousy, desire, and honor.

The first four garments address these three forces.

Let's go one at a time.

## The אבנט — The Belt Around the Heart

First of all, the אבנט (*avnet; belt*).

The belt was for the thoughts of a person.

All negative thoughts come from the heart.

The אבנט went around the heart.

By the way — and this is beautiful — the מלבי"ם says the אבנט was thirty-two cubits long.

Why thirty-two?

Because that is the גימטריא (*gematria; numerical value*) of the word לב (*lev; heart*).

לב is heart — thirty-two.

The אבנט went around the heart

because that is where thoughts emanate from.

That is where they begin.

The belt is tightening, surrounding, guarding the heart.

## The מכנסיים — Guarding Desire

Then you have the מכנסיים (*michnasayim; shorts*).

That represents תאוה (*taavah; lust/desire*).

Immorality.

And that was the first piece of clothing that the כהן (*kohen; priest*) put on.

A reminder.

Be careful.

Before anything else — be careful.

## The כתונה — Anger and Murder

Next is קנאה (*kinah; jealousy*).

Jealousy leads to anger.

Anger leads to hatred.

Hatred leads to murder.

Our rabbis told us that the כתונה (*ketonet; tunic/robe*) was a תיקון (*tikkun; rectification*) for murder.



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This addresses anger.

Because when a person is angry — sometimes people kill.

And sometimes they kill the people around them without literally killing them.

They destroy them.

They ruin their confidence.

They say things.

They yell.

They curse.

They abuse.

Physically. Emotionally.

They cause the people around them to die — a part of them dies.

An angry person who is not in control of his words, not in control of his actions — השם ישמור (*Hashem yishmor; may God protect us*) — what they can do.

That is the כהונה.

## The יוסף כתונת פסים of

A very good example of this is the כתונת (*ketonet*) of יוסף (*Yosef*), the כתונת פסים (*ketonet passim; striped tunic*).

It's a very famous כתונת.

When the brothers wanted to kill him — and instead sold him — they stripped him of his כתונת פסים.

They dipped it in blood.

They showed it to their father.

This was jealousy.

This was anger.

The כהונה of the כהן reminds him:

Stay away from קנאה (*kinah; jealousy*).

## The מצנפת — Humility

And finally — כבוד (*kavod; honor*).

He wore a hat.

The מצנפת (*mitznet; head covering*).

The hat was there to keep him humble.

To remind him that always הקדוש ברוך הוא (*HaKadosh Baruch Hu; the Holy One Blessed be He*) is on top.

You're not on top.

השם (*Hashem; God*) is on top.

השם is in charge.

An arrogant person — there's no room for השם in his world.

It's me.

My dreams.

My brand.

My desires.

What I want.

What's comfortable for me.



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That's why the most dangerous מדה (middah; trait) is arrogance.

We're studying about it in ארחות צדיקים (*Orchot Tzaddikim*; "Paths of the Righteous").

Haughtiness.

The haughty guy has no room for anyone else.

It's all about him.

So he has to put on a hat.

What does a hat do?

A hat represents humility.

Today men wear a יארמולקא (*yarmulka*; skullcap).

I found this out recently — they say that יארמולקא stands for ירא מלכא (*yarei malcha*; one who fears the King).

They say it quickly — יארמולקא — but it's really ירא מלכא.

I am fearing the King.

When a person covers their head, they remember that השם is on top.

שיויתי השם לנגדי תמיד (*shiviti Hashem lenegdi tamid*; I place God before me always).

הוא הקדוש ברוך הוא is above me.

It's not about me.

It's about השם and His world.

And I'm only here to do for Him.

As long as it's about me — I get upset.

I get jealous.

I get territorial.

It's me versus you.

Fighting.

It's a vicious world out there.

A zero-sum game.

If you win, it's at my expense.

And I'll do whatever I can to take you down.

That's how a haughty person thinks.

A humble person?

It's not about me.

It's about הקדוש ברוך הוא.

What does God want?

If this is what השם wants — I'm okay with that.

## The Arrogant Player — The Team Analogy

Think about a team for a second.

Imagine a team with an arrogant player.

The coach draws up a play that this player is going to shoot the ball to win the game.

But the arrogant player — who's the best on the team — thinks he should shoot the ball.

So what happens?

What the coach draws up doesn't matter.

It's not about the coach.



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It's not about the team.

It's about me.

I want to score the game-winning shot.

He gets the ball.

Instead of passing it to the open player for the easier shot —

“It's about me. My brand. I have to be the one to take the shot. I have to be the one to win.”

He shoots.

He misses.

They lose the game.

Because it's about me.

This is how an arrogant person thinks.

Haughtiness destroys a person.

Destroys the world.

It's not about the name on the back of the jersey.

It's about the name on the front.

Never forget that.

As long as we remember that, we'll be successful in life.

When it's not about me.

When it's not about me, there's no room for hatred.

No room for anger.

No room for jealousy.

Doesn't matter.

This is what השם wanted.

השם wanted him to have that house.

השם wanted them to land that job.

It's not my world.

It's God's world.

When our כבוד (*kavod; honor*) gets stepped on — it hurts.

It hurts.

But we have to remember — it's not about my name.

It's about השם's Name.

Don't worry about your name.

Do what's right for השם.

If a person lives like that, they can't go wrong.

## Summary of the First Four

So these are the four pieces of clothing:

- The כתונת (*ketonet*)
- The מכנסיים (*michnasayim*)
- The מצנפת (*mitznefet*)
- The אבנט (*avnet*)

The shorts for immorality.

The כתונת for murder — for jealousy.

The אבנט for thoughts — around the heart.

The מצנפת — the hat — for haughtiness.



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## Why Does the כהן גדול Have Four More?

Now on top of these four garments, the כהן גדול (*kohen gadol; High Priest*) had to wear four more.

Why?

If I ask you — why did the כהן גדול get four more pieces of clothing?

The way we usually think is:

Because he's higher status.

He deserves more honor.

More clothing.

More כבוד.

More grandeur.

The average כהן only gets four.

He gets eight.

Like jewelry.

More jewelry.

According to the מלבי"ם — it's the exact opposite.

The clothing are there to remind him about character.

Because the כהן גדול has more status — he needs more warnings.

More reminders.

More fences.

More guardrails.

Because the more power I have — the more it gets to me.

Power corrupts.

Absolute power corrupts absolutely.

Because the כהן is regular — he needs four.

But the כהן גדול — he's high level.

He needs more reminders.

The clothing are not there for prestige.

According to the מלבי"ם — for him, it should feel like more fences.

More obligations.

## The King Analogy — More Status, More Restrictions

It's like the king.

The king had more restrictions because he was more powerful.

Because he was more in the spotlight.

He needed more fences.

The king had to play by different rules than the average person.

An average person has one ספר תורה (*Sefer Torah*).

The king needs two.

An average person could have many wives.

The king cannot.

An average person could have many horses.



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The king cannot.

Certain restrictions are placed on people.

And the bigger you are — the more restrictions.

That's an amazing lesson for ourselves.

As we grow — we think:

“I made it.”

“Now I can afford more.”

“Now I can pamper myself more.”

But according to the מלבי"ם — the bigger you are, the more you restrict yourself.

The more you have to be careful.

The higher you are — the more you practice פרישות (*perishut; abstinence/self-restraint*).

An average person doesn't need פרישות.

He's fine.

But the bigger you are — now it gets to your head.

Now you have to stay away.

“What do you mean stay away? I just started making money — now I'm going to spend it!”

Opposite.

Because now it will get to you.

This is how the תורה thinks.

It's unbelievable.

So the כהן גדול isn't spoiled with four more garments.

He is obligated to wear four more — to keep him grounded.

To guard him.

## The מעיל — Guarding the Tongue

So now let's go into the four additional garments of the כהן גדול (*kohen gadol; High Priest*).

The first of the four was the outer robe — the מעיל (*me'il; outer robe*).

Our rabbis tell us that this robe was an atonement for speech — for gossip.

Be very careful how you talk.

Especially now that you're big stuff.

You're כהן גדול.

It's very easy, as you grow in life, to start looking down at people.

How many times when we start getting more religious, when we start growing, when we start climbing — we look at people who are still not where we are. They're still down there. They're not growing like us.

Whether it's in religion.

Whether it's in health.

Fitness.

Financial.

Doesn't matter.

It's easy to look down and say, “Look at you. How come you're not like me?”



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We lose tolerance.

We start judging.

We start speaking  
gossip.

The תורה (*Torah*) says to the גדול:

You're גדול (*gadol; great*).

But be careful that your head doesn't become גדול.

Don't let it get too big.

Don't start looking down at people.

Don't talk gossip.

## The Bells — When Should You Speak?

What was on the bottom of the robe?

Bells.

And pomegranates.

The bells made noise.

The פסוק says:

ונשמע קולו בבואו אל הקודש  
(*ve'nishma kolo be'vo'o el ha'kodesh; his sound shall  
be heard when he enters the holy place*).

Metaphorically, our rabbis explain:

We should only hear your voice when you enter  
קודש (*kodesh; holiness*).

Only speak when it's holy.

If it's not something holy — keep your mouth shut.

If you have nothing nice to say — don't say it.

If it's going to be  
gossip.

If it's going to  
degrade.

If it's going to pull someone down.

Keep it to yourself.

ונשמע קולו בבואו אל הקודש.

When you're coming into holiness — then speak.

Otherwise — better not.

## The Amidah — Opening and Closing the Mouth

We say every morning in the עמידה (*Amidah; the  
standing prayer*):

ה' שפתי תפתח ופי יגיד תהלתך  
(*Hashem sefatai tiftach u'fi yagid tehilatecha; God,  
open my lips and my mouth will declare Your praise*).

We're asking God:

Now that I want to pray to You — open my  
mouth.

Otherwise — my mouth should stay closed.

And when we finish the עמידה, what do we say?

אלהי נצור לשוני מרע ושפתי מדבר מרמה  
(*Elokai netzor lesboni me'ra u'sefatai midaber  
mirmah; My God, guard my tongue from evil and  
my lips from speaking deceit*).

One more special request.

By the way, God — if my עמידה wasn't enough — I  
have one more request.

Please guard my tongue from evil.



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Help me not to say anything wrong.

Now that I opened my mouth and prayed eighteen ברכות (*berachot; blessings*) — please make sure my mouth doesn't stay open to hurt people.

To knock people.

To destroy people.

To talk gossip.

## **We All Think We're Not Guilty**

No one thinks they're guilty of gossip.

But my friends — we're all guilty.

We all do it.

And we all have justified reasons.

"No, this is different."

"This case doesn't apply."

"This person is evil."

"I'm allowed to talk about them."

The bells say — think first.

## **The Tongue Has Two Fences**

That's why the tongue has two fences.

Teeth.

And lips.

Keeping the tongue inside.

So every time you open your mouth — you have to think twice.

The tongue has to think twice.

The teeth.

The lips.

Do I really have something smart to say right now?

Do I really want to say this?

Is this going to build the person?

Or destroy them?

Uplift?

Or pull down?

The פסוק says:

מה יוסיף לך לשון רמיה  
(*mah yosif lecha lashon remiyah; what more can be given to you, deceitful tongue?*).

What more could I give you?

I gave you two fences.

And still — the tongue finds a way to come out and destroy.

King Solomon reminds us:

חיים ומות ביד הלשון  
(*chayim u'mavet be'yad ha'lashon; life and death are in the hand of the tongue*).

Your tongue can kill people.

You talk about someone — you can destroy their life.

Their שידוך (*shidduch; marriage match*).



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Their marriage.

Their job.

Their career.

And many times we don't even know what we're talking about.

## The Shidduch "Question Mark"

"I don't know... I heard once that they were this... that they were that... just look into it."

"I'm not saying anything bad. Just saying — look into it."

You give an introduction like that — who is going to pursue that שידוך?

"Oh, there's a question mark."

"You should look into it."

Is it serious?

Is it real?

Where did you hear it?

If you don't know — you have to be very careful.

Simultaneously — if you do know something serious, that will matter to the marriage — you absolutely have to say.

That's when you open your mouth.

But more often than not — we're speaking at the wrong time.

We're speaking words that are not קודש (*kodesh*; *holy*).

Not nice vocabulary.

Not uplifting.

Not building.

This is the מעיל

(*me'il*).

Now that you're big — be careful how you talk.

## The Pomegranates — See the Good

And what else was on the bottom of the robe?

Pomegranates.

Our rabbis tell us:

אפילו ריקנים שבך מלאים מצוות כרמון  
(*afilu reikanim shebach male'im mitzvot kerimon*;  
*even the empty ones among you are filled with mitzvot like a pomegranate*).

The lesson of the pomegranates is this:

Always see the good in people.

Even if from far they look empty.

Take a closer look.

Take a deeper look.

Take a second look.

This Jew may look empty from far — but he's not empty at all.

He's filled with חסד (*chesed*; *kindness*).

Filled with כיבוד אב ואם (*kibud av va'em*; *honoring parents*).

Everyone has something good.



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## The Funeral Joke

It reminds me of the joke of the fellow who passed away.

Everyone who got up to speak just spoke the worst things about him.

“This guy’s a crook.”

“This guy’s a liar.”

“This guy’s a cheater.”

“He owes me money.”

One after another.

The Rabbi feels horrible.

The guy just died.

It’s the funeral.

The Rabbi gets up and says:

“Please — does anyone have anything nice to say?”

A woman raises her hand from the back.

“Yes, I do.”

“Please,” says the Rabbi.

She stands up.

“His brother was worse.”

Everyone has something nice that you can say about them.

The pomegranates remind the כהן גדול:

Look for the good.

When you look for the good — you’ll speak good.

## The אפוד — Oneness of

### God

The second of the four garments of the כהן גדול was the אפוד (*ephod; apron-like garment*).

It resembled the aprons worn by priests of idolatry.

And so it makes sense that this garment atoned for עבודה זרה (*avodah zarah; idolatry*).

But this apron was meant to serve one God.

To remind the כהן גדול of the unity — the oneness — of השם (*Hashem; God*).

On the shoulders of the אפוד were two stones.

One on each side.

Engraved on them were the twelve tribes.

Six names on one stone.

Six on the other.

How many letters total on each stone?

Twenty-five letters on this side.

Twenty-five letters on that side.

Listen to what the מלבי"ם says.

Twenty-five is the number of the oneness of השם.

## Yaakov’s Deathbed — שמע ישראל

He takes us back to יעקב אבינו (*Yaakov Avinu; our forefather Jacob*).



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*Blessed is the Name of His glorious kingdom forever and ever).*

יעקב was on his deathbed.

He wanted to reveal to his children when משיח (*Mashiach; Messiah*) would come.

But the שכינה (*Shechinah; Divine Presence*) departed.

יעקב wondered — why did the שכינה leave?

Maybe one of my children has heretical thoughts.

Maybe there's lack of faith.

He turned to his sons and asked:

Do any of you doubt God?

And what did the sons respond?

They said:

שמע ישראל ה' אלהינו ה' אחד  
(*Shema Yisrael Hashem Elokeinu Hashem Echad; Hear O Israel, Hashem is our God, Hashem is One*).

They said:

“Listen, ישראל (*Yisrael*).”

That was his name.

The same way you accept one God — we do too.

ה' אלהינו ה' אחד.

God is your God.

God is our God.

He is One.

And what did יעקב respond?

ברוך שם כבוד מלכותו לעולם ועד  
(*Baruch Shem Kevod Malchuto Le'olam Va'ed;*

ברוך השם (*Baruch Hashem; Blessed is God*).

The מלבי"ם says:

שמע ישראל ה' אלהינו ה' אחד — twenty-five letters.

ברוך שם כבוד מלכותו לעולם ועד — twenty-five letters.

Twenty-five and twenty-five.

The two stones.

The oneness of הקדוש ברוך הוא.

That is why the עבודה זרה atones for זרה.

It reminds the כהן גדול:

There is only One.

## The חושן — Unity and Justice

The third of the four garments of the כהן גדול (*kohen gadol; High Priest*) was the חושן (*choshen; breastplate*).

The חושן connected to the אפוד (*ephod*).

Our rabbis tell us that the חושן was an atonement for משפט (*mishpat; justice*), for corrupt justice.

Because if we are to have unity in השם (*Hashem; God*), we also have to have unity among the Jewish people.

We have to be one.

We say:

אתה אחד ושםך אחד ומי כעמך ישראל גוי אחד בארץ  
(*Atah Echad ve'Shimcha Echad u'mi ke'amcha Yisrael goy echad ba'aretz; You are One and Your*



Name is One, and who is like Your people Israel, one nation on earth).

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There was no one more appropriate to wear the breastplate of unity and justice than אהרן.

If we are not one, then God is not for us.

השם says we're all together in this.

ישראל אורייתא וקודשא בריך הוא חד הוא (Yisrael ve'Orayta ve'Kudsha Berich Hu chad hu; Israel, the Torah, and the Holy One Blessed be He are one).

We are bound together.

So how do we achieve unity?

Through justice.

Through integrity.

Through the חושן.

### אהרן — The First to Wear It

Who wore this breastplate first?

It says it went על לב (al lev; upon the heart).

On the heart of a very special person.

The first person to ever wear the חושן was אהרן הכהן (Aharon HaKohen; Aaron the High Priest).

אהרן was:

אוהב שלום ורודף שלום (ohev shalom ve'rodef shalom; one who loves peace and pursues peace).

אוהב את הבריות ומקרבתן לתורה (ohev et ha'briyot u'mekarvan la'Torah; one who loves people and brings them close to Torah).

And what was on the חושן?

The names of the Jewish people.

The names of the tribes.

And also the names of the אבות (Avot; forefathers) — אברהם (Avraham), יצחק (Yitzchak), יעקב (Yaakov).

All engraved.

All carried on the heart.

The כהן גדול was reminded every moment:

We are one.

Justice must be pure.

Unity must be preserved.

### The ציץ — Another Layer of Humility

And finally, there was the ציץ (tzitz; golden forehead plate).

The gold plate worn on the forehead.

Another layer of humility.

Another reminder to stay grounded.

To stay calm.

To not let position inflate the ego.

To remember Who you serve.



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## Closing Blessing

השם (*Hashem*)

should bless us to make sure that the way we dress truly reflects how we carry ourselves inside.

With the most stellar.

The most beautiful מידות.

## Returning to the מלבי"ם

This is the מלבי"ם on פרשת תצוה (*Parashat Tetzaveh*).

What an insight.

Clothing is not about fabric.

It is about character.

It is about guarding the inner world.

## פורים — Dressing Up

השם בעזרת השם (*be'ezrat Hashem; with God's help*), we all focus on the clothing that we wear.

And פורים (*Purim*) is a day when we dress up.

Interesting, isn't it?

Maybe the reason we dress up is because throughout the year we put too much focus on clothing.

On the outside.

Maybe פורים is reminding us — like the מלבי"ם — to focus on the inside.

We dress well.

We should make sure that how we dress reflects how we carry ourselves inside.

That our outer clothing reflects beautiful מידות (*middot; character traits*).

## Takeaway from the Lecture

The clothing of the כהנים (*kobanim; priests*) were not garments of prestige — they were garments of protection.

The מלבי"ם (*Malbim*) teaches that just as the body is clothing for the soul, our מידות (*middot; character traits*) are the inner clothing of the soul. The garments of the כהן and the כהן גדול were physical reminders to guard the inner world — jealousy, desire, honor, speech, justice, unity, humility, and faith in the oneness of השם (*Hashem; God*).

The first four garments address the three forces described in פרקי אבות (*Pirkei Avot*) — הקנאה התאוה והכבוד מוציאין את האדם מן העולם (*ha'kinah ha'taavah ve'ha'kavod motzi'in et ha'adam min ha'olam; jealousy, desire, and honor remove a person from the world*). The belt surrounds the heart where thoughts are born. The shorts guard desire. The tunic reminds us of the destruction that anger and jealousy can cause. The hat reminds us that ירא מלכא (*yarei malka; fearing the King*) — that השם is above us.

The כהן גדול did not receive more clothing as honor — he received more clothing as restraint. The greater the position, the greater the fences. The מעיל (*me'il; robe*) with its bells teaches that speech should



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only be heard when entering holiness —  
ונשמע קולו בבואו אל  
הקודש (*ve'nishma kolo be'vo'o el*

*ha'kodesh; his sound shall be heard when he enters the holy place*). The pomegranates teach that even those who appear empty are מלאים מצוות כרמון (*male'im mitzvot kerimon; filled with mitzvot like a pomegranate*). The אפוד (*ephod*) teaches the oneness of God through שמע ישראל ה' אלהינו ה' אחד (*Shema Yisrael Hashem Elokeinu Hashem Echad; Hear O Israel, Hashem is our God, Hashem is One*) and ברוך שם כבוד מלכותו לעולם ועד (*Baruch Shem Kevod Malchuto Le'olam Va'ed; Blessed is the Name of His glorious kingdom forever and ever*). The חושן (*choshen; breastplate*) resting על לב (*al lev; upon the heart*) reminds us that unity and justice must live in the heart. The ציץ (*tzitz; golden plate*) reinforces humility.

Clothing in the תורה is not decoration — it is discipline.

And when we dress — especially on פורים (*Purim*) — we are reminded that the outside should reflect the inside.

The real עבודה (*avodah; service*) is refining the inner garment.

## Five Shabbat Table

### Discussion Questions

1. The פרקי אבות in משנה (Pirkei Avot) teaches הקנאה התאוה והכבוד מוציאים את האדם מן העולם (*ba'kinah ha'taavah ve'ha'kavod motzi'in et ha'adam min ha'olam; jealousy, desire, and honor remove a person from the world*). In what ways do we see these three forces operating in daily life — in ourselves or in society?
2. The כהן גדול wore more garments not for prestige but for restraint. As a person grows in success, influence, or spirituality, what new “fences” should they consider placing around themselves?
3. The מעיל (*me'il*) teaches ונשמע קולו בבואו אל הקודש (*ve'nishma kolo be'vo'o el ha'kodesh; his sound shall be heard when he enters the holy place*). How can a person practically determine when speech is “קודש” (*kodesh; holy*) and when it is not?
4. The pomegranates teach אפילו ריקנים שבך מלאים מצוות כרמון (*afilu reikanim shebach male'im mitzvot kerimon; even the empty ones among you are filled with mitzvot like a pomegranate*). How can we train ourselves to look deeper and see the good in people we struggle with?
5. The two stones of the אפוד correspond to שמע ישראל (*Shema Yisrael*) and ברוך שם (*Baruch Shem*), expressing the unity of השם. How does strengthening our awareness of divine unity influence the way we relate to other Jews and pursue unity among ourselves?