

A Dvar Torah to encourage matters of Yiras Shomayim prepared to be shared and discussed with your family at the Shabbos table



## פרשת שלח

# 55

# THE BEAUTY OF MODESTY

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לימוד הדבר תורה לזכות ר' שלום מרדכי הלוי שי' בן רבקה לגאולה קרובה מן המיצר אל המרחב

### THE POWER OF MODESTY

At one point during his chase to kill Dovid Hamelech, Shaul Hamelech entered a cave to take care of his needs, unaware that this was where Dovid and his men were hiding. To ensure that no one see him, Shaul Hamelech went deep inside the cave, and hid himself even more by covering himself with his cloak. Dovid Hamelech, who was allowed to kill Shaul to save himself, was urged by his men to do so, but despite the opportunity, he felt unable to kill him and only cut off part of Shaul's cloak. He later told Shaul that because of his tznius, he had been protected from being killed. The מהר"ל explains that because he concealed himself, he was likewise rewarded, by being hidden and protected.

(שמואל א' כד, ד, ברכות ס"ב ע"ב, נתיבות עולם נתיב הצניעות פ"א)

When the malochim came to Avraham and asked, "Where is Sara your wife?" they were inquiring in what zechus did she, a barren women of ninety years, merit having a child. Avraham replied, "She is in her tent," implying that in the zechus of her tznius, she is worthy of Hashem's promise that 'Kings will come from you'.

(כלי יקר, בראשית י"ה, ט')

The תורה says that when Bilam wanted to curse the Yidden, he noticed that the entrances of their tents were not facing one another for reasons of tznius, and therefore bentched them instead.

The Rebbe notes that we see from here that one should not focus only on the main points of tznius, disregarding the finer points, for even a minute aspect of tznius has the power to transform a curse to a bracha.

(במדבר כ"ד, ה', לקו"ש חי"ג ע' 83)

The Medrash says that there is nothing Hashem loves more dearly than tznius.

(פסיקתא רבתי מו, א)

In the year תרי"ד, a decree was enacted in Russia, forbidding women to wear head coverings. Twenty years later, a draft was placed, requiring all men to join the army (unlike previous years, when only a specific sum of soldiers had to be provided from each city). The Rebbe Maharash recalled that those women who had kept their head covering despite the decree, their sons were able to evade the draft, and who knows what troubles befell the women who had not withstood the trial...

(שמועות וסיפורים, ח"א ע' 74, וראה סה"ש תו"ש ע' 188)

The תורה tells us that the true beauty of a Yiddische woman is within and not expressed in external appearance, but rather in inner qualities.

The Rebbe said at a farbrengen (שמחת תורה תש"ל) that the implication of their lack in tznius should be explained to the young girls. When uncovering a part of themselves to impress, it is as if they are carrying a

poster announcing that they have nothing else to show for themselves: no intelligence or emotions, and even that their face is disgusting... Now, why would someone want to proclaim this publicly?! The truth is however, that each one has innate qualities, and once they understand this, the test of dressing tzniusdik will become easier.

(תהלים מוה, יד; שיהו"ק תש"ל ח"א ע' 122)

The Rebbe Maharash was not present at the wedding of his son the Rebbe Rashab, which took place in the city of the kallah, Avrutch. After the wedding, the Rebbe Rashab and his kalla Rebbetzin Shterna Sara traveled to Lubavitch. The chosson asked his kalla to request from her father-in-law the brachos she deserves, for had he been at the wedding, he would have bentched them under the chuppa. Agreeing, Rebbetzin Shterna Sara went to the Rebbe Maharash and asked for a bracha, to which the Rebbe replied, "I agree to give you my bracha on condition that you cut off the feather from your hat." She came to Lubavitch wearing a hat which had a prominent feather on it, as was the style then. She cut it off, and the Rebbe bentched her.

(שמועות וסיפורים ח"א ע' 78)

The Frierdiker Rebbe related that the city of Frankfurt, although it had previously been filled with משכילים (freethinkers), now had very frum Yidden, whose Yiras Shomayim made a name for them over all of Germany. All this came about in the zechus of three women who were firm in their resolve to wear a sheitel, observe halachos of the home and provide their children with a proper chinuch. This had an effect on the men and other women as well, that with the passage of time, the community of Frankfurt changed for the better.

(תו"מ חי"ב ע' 188)

In a sicha to women, the Rebbe explained that the main aspect of tznius is "Modesty", the quiet and tzniusdik behavior at home, and from this follows the proper behavior outside.

(שיהו"ק תשכ"ח ח"ב ע' 159)

### THE IMPACT ON THE CHILDREN

In the Gemara it is written about Kimchis, a women who merited having seven sons become Kohanim Gedolim. When the chachomim asked her why she merited this great zechus, she replied, "Because I was careful that even the beams of my home should never see my hair."

The Rebbe highlights how this impacted the עבודה of the גדול כהן גדול in the יום קודש הקדשים on Yom Kippur for many future generations, because the position of Kohen Gadol is hereditary and stays within the family.

(יומא מ"ז ע"א, התועודיות תשמ"ב ח"ד ע' 2190)

On his way to Eretz Yisroel, the Baal Shem Tov passed through Istanbul, Turkey and saw young men who had נשמות of the תנאים. The Baal Shem Tov said that their mothers' merited having these נשמות born to

them because of their tznius. The Baal Shem Tov also said that in their merit, the תפילות there are accepted above.

(שו"ת הגרש"א אלפנדר, סוף ח"ב)

The Rebbe writes in a letter: Soon after my father-in-law the Friediker Rebbe arrived in America in the year ת"ש, he revealed that his shlichus in this land was to transform it into a place of תורה and Yiras Shomayim. There were those who then asked him, "Yet this is, after all, America, not like the 'old home'?" The Rebbe replied, "America is no different; with regard to תורה ומצוות, America is no exception!" Yiddishe women must know that the very same תורה ומצוות, and the very same principle of "כל כבודה בת מלך פנימה" the entire glory of the king's daughter is within" that applied in the 'old home,' applies in America as well.

(לקו"ש ח"ו ע' 364)

In a letter to a girl's school in Eretz Yisroel, the Rebbe writes: "The manner in which a teacher dresses is extremely important, even in the lower grades. Especially in light of the story that occurred in the times of the Tzemach Tzedek, when a Shochet was removed from his post because he wore galoshes. Surely there is no prohibition against wearing galoshes; however, it served as an external sign and manifestation of what was transpiring inside."

The Chasam Sofer was once visited by a Yid who had begun dressing more modernly, but he insisted that nothing has changed and he is still the same good Yid. The Chasam Sofer pointed to the clock on the wall and said, "If the hands of the clock would stop working, surely everyone would know that there is something wrong inside as well..."

(אגרות קודש ח"ט ע' 216)

The Rebbe uses strong terms to describe the importance of completely covering the hair at all times, and promises tremendous brachos to the woman who does so and her family as well. Based on this, the Rebbe gave many brachos including: health, parnosah, having children, nachas from children and grandchildren and finding a shidduch (when accepting to fulfill this mitzvah after marriage). The Rebbe contrasts the temporary discomfort involved in covering the hair to the everlasting brachos she will receive for generations to come, deeming it "irresponsible" to act otherwise.

In the earlier years of the Rebbe's nesi'us, the Rebbe held a strong campaign for women to cover their hair with a sheitel, which would properly cover the hair. Once, the Rebbe said regarding this that he would "succeed with נפש נפש." On another occasion, after giving a long bracha to one of the Chassidim, the Rebbe added, "On the condition that she will wear a sheitel, otherwise it is unrelated to me." Covering the hair with a sheitel was set by the Rebbe as a condition to have him be Mesader Kiddushin at one's chuppah.

Mrs. Zelda Nemes told: I was born in Russia, moved to Eretz Yisroel, where I married, and then traveled to America. At that point, I was wearing a hat and a half sheitel to cover my hair. At the end of my first Yechidus, the Rebbe asked my husband to leave the room, and then told me that one should wear a sheitel. I stipulated that my hair is completely covered, as I wear a half sheitel in the back and a hat which completely covers my hair in the front. The Rebbe said that wearing a half sheitel is like having half one's health. These words deeply concerned me, and the Rebbe smiled broadly and said, "If one wears a sheitel, one is promised gezunt, parnosssah and nachas from the children and grandchildren." Then with a broad smile, the Rebbe asked me what else I would like, and I said that this is enough. He then called in my husband and told him to buy me the nicest sheitel so that others would also want to wear one.

(זוהר פ' נשא, מקדש ישראל ע' לב, עלון נשי חב"ד)

## THE RESPONSIBILITY OF TZNIUS

Rebbi Yochanan said: We have learned true fear of sin from a young lady who was heard davening, "רבונו של עולם! May it be your will that no man stumble because of me."

Yona writes: A woman must be tzniusdik and cautious, for people who look at her face are punished, and she receives punishment for every person who sinned because of her.

(סוטה כ"ב ע"א, אגרת התשובה לרבינו יונה אות נח)

When the mother of Reb Elimelech and Reb Zusia was a young girl, she worked in her father's inn, and being that most of the visitors were men, she made sure to speak in a heavy voice, to prevent herself from finding favor in their eyes.

Every week, she would travel to town to distribute money to the poor, always using the same wagon driver. Years later, he could still not identify her, for she actively made sure not to attract attention.

(סיפורים למעשה ח"א ע' תלח)

The Chasam Sofer's daughter Gittel was exceptionally good looking and therefore kept herself away from the public. She once went to the market to take care of something important, and noticed a man looking intently at her. Gittel quickly ran home and took out the Tehillim that her father would use in a time of צרה, and began saying Tehillim, sobbing strongly. When her father saw her, he asked what was wrong, and she explained that she is davening to Hashem that He take away her beauty, to enable her to live in the way of צניעות. Hearing this, he replied, "Because you are willing to give up your beauty לשם שמים, you will merit having a son who will light up the world." Sometime later, Gittel fell ill and her beauty lessened considerably as a result. She later gave birth to a holy child, who became known as the Chasan Sofer.

(סיפורים למעשה ח"א ע' תלט)

The Gemara relates that Rav Ada bar Ahava was once walking in the market when he noticed a woman wearing a red cloak. Thinking that she was a Yiddishe woman who was acting untzniusdik, Rav Ada immediately tore the cloak off of her. He later found out that she was a goyishe woman and was therefore obligated to pay her four hundred zuz for what he had done. The Rebbe derives from this the importance of acting immediately in protecting the tznius of Yidden.

(ברכות כ ע"א, שיהו"ק תש"ל ח"א ע' 59)

A girl, who was then not frum, once went by the Rebbe for dollars dressed in her usual untzniusdik way. When she received a dollar, the Rebbe told her that if she would be dressed properly on her next visit, he would give her two dollars. The girl asked her parents to buy her new clothing, but they brushed her off; however, when they saw that this was affecting her health, they agreed. The following Sunday, she once again went to receive a dollar from the Rebbe, this time dressed in tzniusdik fashion. When she passed by the Rebbe, she was disappointed to be given only one dollar. She continued walking, when she was suddenly summoned back. The Rebbe said, "I was sure you would remind me about what I had said, but seeing that you had not, I had to remind you myself, and here is your extra dollar!"

(החן החסידי ע' 129)

לע"נ ר' מימון ב"ר דוד ע"ה – כ"א סיון  
ור' מרדכי ב"ר שמואל ע"ה – כ"ד סיון