

And make holy garments for your brother, Aharon, for honor and distinction. (28:2)

Seeing the *Kohanim* resplendent in their *Bigdei Kehunah*, Priestly vestments, must have been a glorious sight. These garments were similar to those worn by monarchs. Indeed, in the *Yom Kippur Musaf*, a prayer describes the appearance of the *Kohen Gadol*. *Emes mah nehedar hayah Kohen Gadol*, "True! How majestic was the *Kohen Gadol*." I have always wondered how it was that this wondrous sight did not impact all of *Klal Yisrael*. Some Jews, albeit a minority, did not buy into the program. After seeing such majesty and splendor, one should be enthusiastically filled with exceptional pride. Yet, we see that this was not always the case. Why?

Perhaps it is because, in order to be impressed, in order to be impacted, one must take note; one must see. One who does not perceive the greatness of the image before him is either sightless or refuses to look. One who refuses to look, to delve into the spectacle before him, will not be moved by its wonder. With the power of cognitive perception one is able to envision the beauty of an experience even though all that stands before his eyes are simple, mundane allusions to the greater experience. Please bear with me as I explain with a captivating story, which was related by my *Rav*, Rabbi Aharon Dovid Lebovics, in his *Shabbos* morning *drashah*.

The story was actually relayed on a tape by Rabbi Fishel Schachter. Rabbi Schachter related his family's experience with a *baalas teshuvah*, a young woman who had embraced Torah observance. Sadly, as the *yetzer hora*, evil inclination, would have it, as soon as she became *frum*, observant, everything started going downhill. She sustained a serious brain injury in an accident. Her health began to deteriorate. To add insult to injury, her mother vehemently opposed her decision to adopt the Orthodox way of life. Rather than giving her support in her time of need, her mother would rub it in that all of this had happened because she had become observant. This is neither the forum nor the venue for critiquing the mother's parenting skills, but let it suffice to say that the young woman was in the hospital alone and scared.

Somehow, the mother contacted Rabbi Schachter and the *Rav* and his family became regular visitors in the hospital, encouraging the girl and empathizing with her ordeal. Then the dread news came: she required life-sustaining surgery, which might have a serious effect on her vision. The surgery to save her life could drastically impact her optic nerve. Confronting sightlessness is a tall order for anyone, especially a young *baalas teshuvah* who had already been through so much. One would have expected a number of horrible reactions, but what Rabbi Schachter heard from this girl was startling.

Rabbi Schachter visited her that day, and she told him about her crisis. She was frightened about the surgery and, for lack of something to say, he injudiciously asked her, "Why?" Her reply is what this story is all about: "Being cooped up in the hospital, sedated with pain killers, unable to move about freely, not knowing what tomorrow will bring, I have one thing to which I look forward every

week. The *Bikur Cholim* girls visit every Friday and set up a little table with grape juice and *challah*. They provide me with an electric candelabra, so that I may experience *Shabbos*. This is my only moment of joy and reflection. If I lose my eyesight – how will I see *Shabbos*?”

Imagine, this young *baalas teshuvah* saw *Shabbos*! When the candelabra was lit and her little hospital table was bedecked with *challah* and grape juice, her perception of the holy day was beyond – indeed, way beyond – what the average *frum* Jew experiences. Her ability to see transcended the physical. An addendum to the story occurs six months later when, upon eating her *Shabbos* meal at Rabbi Schachter’s house, she spilled horseradish on her dress. She saw the stain!