

He shall remove his garments and he shall wear other garments. (6:4)

Rashi explains, “This is not an obligation, but rather, proper conduct, so that he not soil, through taking out the ashes, garments in which he serves constantly, garments in which he has cooked a pot for his master...” Therefore, he shall don garments inferior to the ones which he wears when he serves in the Sanctuary. A similar idea is to be found with regard to the clothing we wear on *Shabbos*. *Shulchan Orach Chaim* (262:2): “One should try to have for himself nice clothes for *Shabbos*.” The *Mishnah Berurah* adds that this is part of honoring *Shabbos*. This applies even if he is alone or with gentiles who will not be aware that today is *Shabbos*; one must dress the part. The *Abudraham* compares *bigdei Shabbos*, the clothing we wear for *Shabbos*, to the *bigdei Kehunah*, Priestly vestments. The clothes one wears on *Shabbos* are different than that which he wears during the mundane work week.

Horav Sholom Bentzion Felman, zl, cites an intriguing *Yerushalmi* (*Peah* 8:7). Rabbi Chanina said, “One must have two cloaks – one for weekdays and one for *Shabbos*.” When Rabbi Simlai repeated this exposition to the public, his colleagues wept. They said to him, “*Rebbe*, the cloak which we wear during the week is the same one that we wear for *Shabbos*.”

This *Yerushalmi* teaches us that Rabbi Simlai’s colleagues were so impoverished that they could not afford two sets of clothing. And, for this, they wept – not because they were poor, but because they failed to properly give honor to the *Shabbos*. They gleaned from their *Rebbe* that one who does not have special clothes for *Shabbos* is missing the mark; he is failing to honor *Shabbos*.

When was the last time anyone cried because he was not sufficiently honoring *Shabbos*? These people were not concerned with their material privation. They did not feel impoverished. Who is wealthy? He who is happy with his portion. They cried because they were unable to serve Hashem by giving proper honor to *Shabbos*. They cried because their poverty did not allow them to carry out the *mitzvah* of *kavod* for *Shabbos*. This is why this *Yerushalmi* is intriguing – and inspiring.

Life is filled with multiple challenges – some are real, while others are contrived. Poverty, economic challenge, depends greatly on a person’s outlook. Unquestionably, one who lacks the wherewithal is unable to do, to go, to purchase everything that his wealthy counterpart is able, but it does not necessarily trouble him. True wealth lies in being content with what one has. This idea is encapsulated in the well-known *Chazal* (*Pirkei Avos* 4:1), “Who is rich? One who is happy with his portion.”

Poverty is most often associated with material deprivation, but it can also stem from a mindset of dissatisfaction, in which a person constantly compares himself to others and feels lacking, regardless of how much he possesses. Conversely, a person who truly has very little, but has a heart filled with gratitude, can, in fact, feel content and spiritually wealthy. True contentment is

more about perspective than possessions.

The *Brisker Rav* would relate the following story concerning the *Shaagas Aryeh*. At first, he was *Rav* in Volozhin, until, after a while, he decided to leave the pulpit to go into exile in order to study Torah. This was based upon the ruling of the *Rambam* (*Hilchos Teshuvah* 2:4) that exile atones for sin. In the course of his wandering, he visited many communities without revealing his name. He would congregate among the impoverished of each community, so that he could maintain his anonymity. This lasted until he came to Amsterdam, where the *Rav* recognized him and refused to allow someone of his stature to live like that. He provided lodging for him in a quiet attic and asked a woman in the community to prepare a hot meal for him daily and deliver it to him.

A short time later, the *Shaagas Aryeh* came to the *Rav* with an announcement, "I am certain that my money problems will soon be over." The *Rav* was taken aback. He never thought the *Shaagas Aryeh* even considered money something he would need. The *Shaagas Aryeh* immediately explained himself. "I am seventy-two years old today. Most of my life I have been impoverished, but it has never troubled me, because I was always able to learn Torah diligently. Today, for the first time, however, my economic straits caused me to waste time from Torah study. If poverty brings me to *bitul Torah*, I no longer accept it, and I prayed to Hashem to remove me from these challenging conditions. I am certain that Hashem listened to me."

What occurred that day that caused *bitul Torah* for the *Shaagas Aryeh*? Apparently, that day, the *Shaagas Aryeh* was engaged in a very intense *sugya*, topic, and, as a result, did not notice the woman who prepared his meal enter the room and place it on the table. A while later, after profound charged study, he innovated an original approach towards understanding the *sugya*. He became so excited and filled with joy, that he began to dance. His dancing was so enthusiastic that he raised the table upon which was his hot meal. The plates went flying and, upon landing on the floor, splattered into many pieces. When the woman returned to retrieve the dinner plates, she saw the mess. He heard her screams and could not understand why she was so upset. As a result, he became distraught and forgot the *chiddush* he had innovated. Thus, he said, if poverty could cause him to forget a *chiddush*, he could not accept it. Indeed, a short while later, he was offered the prestigious position of *Rav* of Metz, where he served for twenty years.

When *Horav Shmuel Greineman, zl* (brother-in-law of the *Chazon Ish*), arrived at the home of the *Chazon Ish*, he noticed the revered *gadol hador's* furniture consisted of boxes (the boxes he used to transport his possessions from Europe). *Rav Shmuel* was shocked by the abject poverty that reigned in the home. He asked his brother-in-law, "Why do you not purchase a table and chairs?" The response was classic: "I have no need for them. These boxes serve me well."

A well-known parable underscores the idea that material wealth does not necessarily beget contentment. The intangible virtues of gratitude, humility and faith are far more valuable and enduring. True contentment cannot be bought or given away; it must be self-cultivated within oneself. A powerful king had one daughter upon whom he doted. She was everything to him. Thus,

when she suddenly became gravely ill, he spared no expense to find the finest physician to cure her. Alas, no one was able to help. Physicians from all over the world converged on his kingdom – all to no avail. They were unable to help. Meanwhile, the princess was soon at death's door.

At last, a physician appeared, and, after examining the patient, declared that he had a cure. They must obtain a garment belonging to a man who was the most fortunate, content person in the world. The king's ministers began searching throughout the kingdom. They visited wealthy nobles, merchants, and scholars, but – despite their immense wealth, status and possessions – none could claim that he was truly content. Each one voiced complaints or expressed dissatisfaction with some aspect of his life, disqualifying him from the king's requirement.

The ministers then turned to the common folk, searching for someone who was genuinely happy, despite having nothing. At last, they came across the poorest man in the city, who lived in a small, dilapidated hut and owned barely enough to sustain himself. Yet, he was always cheerful and grateful for what little he had. When asked the secret of his happiness, he explained, "I rejoice in what I have. My needs are few, and my heart is full of joy." They were shocked by his attitude, seeing the squalor in which he was living, but, if he was happy, then he fit the king's criteria. When they asked him for a garment, he replied, "I do not own a garment. I have tattered clothing that I have sewn together, but I cannot say that I have one complete piece of clothing to give you." The lesson is powerful: one can be the most content person in the world and – despite his joy – has nothing to wear.