



"HEALTHY SHLUCHIM WEAR FUR"

Farbrengen – 10 Shevat, 5741-1941

One of the stories that the Rebbe told in great detail was of the time that his father sent him on a mission to Petersburg, which at that time was the capital of Russia.

This was in middle of the winter. He had a meeting with a government official, who was an anti-Semite.

In general, this official was unconventional, and he set the appointment to meet at night. They met for a long time, so when the Rebbe left, it was very late.

The Rebbe related that despite the fact that he was wearing a fur coat, as fitting for that climate, in Petersburg, in middle of the winter. Despite his special clothing, he needed to go into an inn to warm up. The clientele were a wild bunch, but it was the only place open so late at night.

There are many details in this story. Since the Rebbe told the story with all of these details, each one of them carries a lesson.

However, the story also contains a general lesson, for people involved in public service.

A public servant leaves the confines of Torah study. It is not, Heaven forbid, that he does not want to study, rather he is forced to interrupt his studies and take the Torah along in memory, since it is imperative for him to perform his mission for the community.

First and foremost he must know that when leaving the place of Torah study it is necessary to wear a fur coat, special garments! For he is going outside of the warmth of Yiddishkeit, of studying Torah and fulfilling Mitzvot and praying with "the knowledge of before Whom you stand."

He is going outside, where he must deal with "outside matters," and with people who are outside of his civilization. Before he does so, while he is still at home—in a warm Jewish environment—he must put on special garments.

He might insist: Why do I need it? I've lived for quite a while, and I never wore a fur coat before. It is expensive, I will have to wear it. Furthermore, it appears to be a yoke, and he feels freer without the fur coat; he doesn't see a need for it.

He is told: There are healers of the spirit, as there are physicians for the body. They sacrifice their personal lives to provide direction to the perplexed, and know how to maintain spiritual health. One cannot ascertain one's own health, being neither a healer of the body nor of the spirit, for lack of time or some other obstacle.



פרשת חיי-שרה

When an experienced expert in this field tells him that he is being sent to the capital city to meet with government officials, the mission was first and foremost planned in a way that would benefit the Jewish people.

However, he must also know that even before leaving on his mission, he must prepare himself. Quite simply, one does not go outside wearing summer clothing, exposing himself to the climate and temperature, and only then return indoors to put on a fur coat.

Rather, he asks someone with experience, "what must I do to ensure that I will be able to carry out my mission in a way that I will not be harmed?" He is told: First and foremost, put on special garments.

The garments that are sufficient for Jews immersed in Torah and prayer, are not enough for him on his mission.

He needs garments that will protect him from the coldness outside. They protect him and separate him. They are the barrier between the cold of the street and the warmth of his body.

In order for a body to be truly Jewishly alive, it needs to be warmed with Torah and Mitzvot, with Yiddishkeit.

Even though when he is in the synagogue or Yeshiva, or in his own home, a certain number of Mitzvot may be enough –as every Mitzvah is called a garment. Nevertheless, when he goes out of this environment, it becomes absolutely necessary to add more garments.

He may argue: If I put on more clothing, it will separate me from the coldness of the street, and then I will no longer be able to have an effect upon it. In order to affect it, I must become like it –leave behind some of my warmth, and possibly even, Heaven forbid, take off some of my Jewish garments.

He is being told here: On the contrary! In order to succeed you must be healthy. In order to be healthy, your Judaism must be healthy, "for they are our life and the length of our days," you must be completely permeated with Yiddishkeit, with Torah and its Mitzvot.

Only then can you succeed in reducing the coldness, until the entire world is illuminated and warmed with the warmth of Torah and its Mitzvot.

