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WITH

R' AVIGDOR MILLER ז"ל

BASED ON HIS BOOKS, TAPES & WRITINGS OF TALMIDIM

Pride of Israel

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## Part I. Garment of Pride

### The Pride Parade

First, a short introduction. Someone once brought me an interesting picture from London; I still have it in a drawer at home. You see there a parade of important people; nobles and dukes, and they're walking in a procession to Windsor Castle. All of them are wearing long gowns of purple velvet – Royal Purple – and elaborate hats with large feathers protruding.

By the way, if you ever see a person wearing a feather in his hat – it's a strange thing; why should you have a feather in your hat? The answer is it's an imitation of those nobles in London.

Now, who are these nobles in the picture? It's "the Most Noble Order of the Garter". Once a year they parade through the streets celebrating their ancestors who had the privilege of being from the Knights of the Garter.

### A Great Privilege

What does that mean to be a Knight of the Garter? Now, I'm just imagining but it's something like this. It means that your ancestor had once been given the privilege to come to the palace early in the morning to help the king get dressed by putting a garter on his foot. Not both feet; that's too much honor for one person. And it doesn't mean every day he had the privilege to put on the king's garters – it was a once-in-a-lifetime event.

And so this nobleman got ready. He rehearsed beforehand – you can't just walk in and put a garter on a king *stam azoy*. He rehearsed for a long time. And he had new garments sewn for him by the best tailors and he bought the best coach and horses he could to travel to London. And the night before, he made a big banquet to celebrate with all his friends. And then the great moment came – he was in the palace and he was being coached by the chamberlain. And he knelt on one knee and the king stuck his

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foot out from the bed and this nobleman reverently took the garter and he put it on the king's foot.

And then the chamberlain gave him a signal, "Scram. It's enough. Enough *kovod* for one person." And the nobleman bowed his way out; he walked out backward. And he was glowing; he was radiant. He and his children forever were happy with this dignity and they were privileged to wear a big medal: The Medal of the Knight of the Garter. And they fought for this *kovod*! They schemed, intrigued and they bribed! The chamberlain got rich!

### **Ascending the Ranks**

Now, let's consider the truth of the matter: Who was the king after all? He wasn't elected. He wasn't chosen because he was most worthy. How did it begin way back? Way back there was a brigand in the highland of Scotland who was more viscous than his fellow murderers and so he gained control of his clan. And after doing very many deeds of mayhem, he finally succeeded in building himself a castle and making himself a member of the Scottish nobility; and after a while, he was so rich that his family intermarried with the reigning family in England, and then when it was a suitable situation, he hired someone to plunge a dagger into his *mechutan* and he took over. That's how he became king.

And yet, when this king, this 'noble creature', stuck his foul foot out from the bed and somebody was privileged to put a garter on it, to service the king by pulling up his garter, that honor was never forgotten. That especial privilege given by the King to the Knight of the Garter was *l'dorosam*, it was for all his generations. Forever and ever the children considered themselves privileged.

### **Our Royal Symbol**

That was the introduction. Now we come to our subject.

At the end of this week's *sedrah*, Hakodosh Boruch Hu is talking to the Am Yisroel and He's

teaching them about the mitzvah of tzitzis. וְעָשׂוּ לָהֶם צִיצִית עַל כַּנְּפֵי בְּגָדֵיהֶם לְדֹרֹתָם – You should make fringes on the edges of your garments for all your generations. וְנָתַנּוּ עַל צִיצִית הַכֶּנֶף פְּתִיל תְּכֵלֶת – and you should add on a *psil techeiles*, the tzitzis had strings of blue wool originally and the purpose of the blue is royalty.

In ancient times this *techeiles*, that's a certain kind of blue - royal blue - was forbidden to anyone except members of the royal family. That's why it's called royal blue. Nothing to do with the royal navy. Royal blue means in the olden days, *techeiles* was worn only by princes; and so Hakodosh Boruch Hu said, וְהָיָה לָכֶם לְצִיצִית – this shall be your fringes. "Others will wear their own fringes," Hashem says. "Some may put feathers in their hats. Others will have badges, insignias, and medals. But I, the King of the universe, I confer upon you an eternal sign of royalty, the blue threads of the tzitzis. All day, every day, you'll be walking around with royal garments."

### **Becoming Fashionable**

I remember when I was in Europe I was once passing through a town where Jewish glaziers were putting windows into a building. The Jewish glaziers were wearing beards and their tzitzis were flowing in the wind. They were on top of a building – it was a gentile place – and they were putting in glass panes. I was watching those Jews on top of the building and their tzitzis were flowing in the wind; they were proud. I was proud too.

In America, a lot of this pride went away. If you walked among Jews in America you had to have *emunah* that they were wearing tzitzis because you couldn't see them. You had to be a big believer! Of course, if you went into the synagogue it was possible to see people who put on *taleisim* but Orthodox Jews on the street never demonstrated that they wore tzitzis.

Boruch Hashem, it has become a fashion lately among Orthodox Jews to display them. Today if you walk in the better neighborhoods you'll see men and boys and they have tzitzis hanging out of their

pants. It's frequent to see Orthodox Jews with strings trailing down from under their coats.

And it means royalty! Whatever else *tzitzis* means, this is number one – we are royalty! Everything else that is included in the *mitzvah* is built on this idea – that it's a *begeed* of royalty.

### **Real Princesses**

Now, before we continue this subject I want to say one thing. Ladies, I want you to listen to me. Our ladies, our girls, the women of the Am Yisroel are included in everything I'm saying here. It's true, there's a technical reason why women don't wear *tzitzis*. Men are obligated in time-bound *mitzvos*; women are not. Why is that? It's not our subject for now. But the women of the Am Yisroel are included in the Royal Nation. When men put on *tzitzis* they're not putting it on for themselves. Every father puts on *tzitzis* for all of his children and for his wife, too. There's no question that *tzitzis* are the property of the Am Yisroel.

There's no question that this is the case. I'm not saying this because it's America or because it's the spirit of the times; you can trust me on that one, I'm saying it because it's the truth. When women look at men and see that they're wearing a garment of glory, it's a glory for her too. If your husband is a king, then you're a queen. If your brother is a prince then you're a princess.

It means our people – all of us; men and women, boys and girls – are princes and princesses. We are dukes and barons and earls. We're all of that and more. We're kings and queens!

### **The Poor King**

I'll illustrate that. Rabbi Akiva (Bava Metzia 113b) tells of a case in *halacha*. There was a man who was in debt and he couldn't pay his debts but this man was seen to be wearing a remarkably expensive mantle. He was wearing a coat that cost a tremendous sum of money. And therefore the creditor came to *beis din* with a complaint that it's

not right for this man to be dressed like a king when he couldn't pay his debts.

There were two opinions about this question. One opinion was that we should confiscate his cloak and sell it and part of the money would go to pay his debts and with the rest, we would buy him a garment that's suited for his status, for his rank.

And Rabbi Akiva said, "No." Rabbi Akiva said, "כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּנֵי מְלָכִים הֵם – Every Jew is a king. He has the right to wear a kingly garment."

Now it's important for us to understand that we're not talking *halacha* here. In practice, it could be that we follow the other opinion because to be a king you have to pay your debts. A man who doesn't pay his debt is certainly not acting like a king. But it's the theory of Rabbi Akiva that's important for us – that a Yisroel deserves to have a royal garment. Who? Everyone, כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל – every Jew. Every Jew is royalty. That's an immense concept!

### **It's Our World**

And we have to rise to that; we have to raise our minds to that, to appreciate that every Jew, even the poorest, the lowest, deserves to be dressed in the garments of a king! He deserves a crown! He deserves an ermine cloak! He deserves all the trappings of a monarch! Every single Jew! That's how the Torah expects us to understand the Jewish people.

"Now why should that be?" you ask. "Is it fair to elect one nation and to give them the superiority?" So let's clear the decks for action and understand once and for all the answer to that question.

Hakodosh Boruch Hu didn't make the world so that it should be full of insects or plants or mammals. The world wasn't created for animals and birds and fish. The world wasn't even created for human beings. The world was created for the purpose of a righteous nation! Not for the Jewish people – for a righteous people, for a nation that would choose to be devoted completely to the service of Hashem.

Now, at the beginning, any nation could have stepped forward to fill that role. And Hakodosh Boruch Hu was waiting. Who would it be? And when finally Avraham stepped forward, Hakodosh Boruch Hu said, “I confer upon you and your children forever and ever the crown of royalty. You have been chosen now to work on My behalf, and to fulfill the purpose for which I created the world.” And from that point on, we became the purpose of the world.

### True Pride

Only us! The truth is that anyone who wishes can join us, but if he doesn't, he has no complaints against the plan of Hakodosh Boruch Hu. It's too late, you nations of the world. We may be sorry for you. We may sympathize with you. You had your chance however and you didn't utilize it, and now it's gone forever. You cannot undo history. **דְּבַר אֱלֹהֵינוּ יָקוּם לְעוֹלָם** – *The word of Hashem will stand strong forever* (Yeshaya 40:8).

“**אֶתָּה הוּא הַשֵּׁם הָאֱלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר בְּחָרָתָּ בְּאַבְרָם**, You Hashem chose Avraham (Nechemia 9:7).” And from then on, we are the one nation in the world. Not that we are a good nation. We are *the* nation, the one nation privileged to work in the service of Hakodosh Boruch Hu. And that's our pride forever and ever. Of course, we have nothing against the nations of the world. Let every nation be proud to be what they are. Why not? Let the Italians be proud and the Americans and the others; *gezunteheit*, be proud of whatever it is. But it's a *rachmonos* on them because when we say we're proud, we mean something else. We mean that we're royalty. And not royalty in the sense of the king of this country or that country. It's the only true royalty there is. When we say we are proud, it means that we are proud that Hakodosh Boruch Hu said about us, “*Avodai heim* – they are My servants.”

### Blessings of Gratitude

Now, that lesson of feeling pride because of our connection to the *Melech Malchei Hamelachim* is so important that it has to be studied and repeated every day. And actually, we do; we do that. I'll explain.

Every day in *shemoneh esrei*, three times every day, we make a *bracha* “**בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה הַשֵּׁם הָאֵל הַקְדוֹשׁ** – *Blessed are You Hashem, the most perfect G-d.*” And it's a *bracha* that seems to be different from all of the other *brachos* in *shemoneh esrei*. Because all the *brachos*, you have to know, are *brachos* of gratitude. **מִגֵּן אַבְרָהָם** – *we thank You, Hashem, for being the shield of Avraham*, which means He is a shield of our nation, He protects us because of Avrohom. In the second *bracha*, **מִחַיֵּה הַמֵּתִים**, we are thanking Hashem because He gives us food and He heals the sick and He gives rain – all the good things enumerated there – and someday He will revive the dead too.

Look through the entire *shemoneh esrei*; every *bracha* is a *bracha* of gratitude; we are grateful for a benefit bestowed. Actually, that's what the word *boruch* is. *Boruch* fundamentally means “we bend our knee to You.” It means we are bent-kneed, humbled, before You in gratitude.

But there is this one *brachah*, **בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה הַשֵּׁם הָאֵל הַקְדוֹשׁ**, we thank You for being holy, that doesn't seem to fit. We are talking about the *kedusha* of Hakodosh Boruch Hu which means His *shleimus*, His perfection. Ok, He's perfect; that's true. But what are we thanking Him for? We thank You because You are holy? What gratitude is required because He is holy? That's a point that we have to consider. What gratitude should we be thinking about?

## Pride in Perfection

Now we said here once that there are three answers to this question (See Rav Miller's *sefer* 'Praise, My Soul!') and the truth is that all three should be included in our expression of gratitude. Some people do that. One intention by *shacharis*, another by *mincha*, and another for *maariv*. Very good, very good. All three are important. But for our subject tonight we'll study only one of them.

The Navi says (Tehillim 106:47) about the Am Yisroel לְהַשְׁתַּבַּח בְּתִהְלֵתְךָ, that we aggrandize ourselves by Your praise. With what does our nation pride itself? Is it because we are an *am chacham v'navon*, a wise and understanding nation? Or maybe because we are a nation of *chesed*, other good traits? It could be; could be that's true but that's not how we praise ourselves. לְהַשְׁתַּבַּח – we aggrandize ourselves with one thing. בְּתִהְלֵתְךָ – with Your praises. However great and perfect and *shaleim* You are, that's how we find our pride.

We take pride that we have such a G-d Who is unequalled. That is our pride, that is our happiness. He chose us. We are His people. That is an unequalled pride.

### Proud Servants

A *maschal*. Let's say you have a boss over you but the boss himself is an underling; he's a nobody, an unimportant man; so you won't take too much pride in working for him. But if somebody, let's say, is an assistant to the President, so that's already something to be proud of. Even the President today, he's nothing special but still, you probably feel some pride if you work in the White House. And if you're the assistant, *l'havdil*, to Dovid Melech Yisroel, then surely you are important. That's already something you can be proud of.

And if we are assistants to Hakodosh Boruch Hu, if He chose us and He considers us His beloved ones, and His entire interest is in us, so we are so happy that we have such a G-d, that לְהַשְׁתַּבַּח – we

have to boast in the praise of Hashem. We take pride in the fact that He is so great and we thank Him because of that, that we have such a Hashem. We thank *Hakodosh Boruch Hu* because we are His people, we are the people of *Hashem*.

And therefore our Melech, that's our greatness. Who are we? We are אֲנָא עֲבָדָא דְקוּדְשָׁא בְרִיךְ הוּא – we are servants of Hakadosh, the perfect One. We don't serve any caricature of a god. We don't serve a man who died or a desert madman. We don't worship any idols. We were chosen to serve the One who has all power and all wisdom and all kindness.

And therefore we say to Him, בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה הַשֵּׁם – we thank You, הָאֵל הַקָּדוֹשׁ – the perfect One. Because all of that redounds to our credit and our greatness. Now there's much more to it than that, but that's important to have in mind; when we say בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה הַשֵּׁם הָאֵל הַקָּדוֹשׁ we're thanking Him for our greatness that's reflected upon us from Him. We are identified with Him and therefore our greatness is measured by His greatness.

### Cause of The Gold Rush

We have to remember that. We have to thank Hashem for that always, עָלֵינוּ לְשַׂבַּח – we have to thank Hashem for that וְלֹא עֵשְׁנוּ כְּגוֹיֵי הָאָרְצוֹת וְלֹא שָׁמְנוּ – Our place in this world is not like everyone else. הוּא ה' אֵלֵינוּ – He is ours! The King who is King of all Kings, the One who made the universe and rules the universe. He knows the furthest reaches of the most distant galaxies; לְכֹלֵם שְׁמוֹת יְקָרָא – he knows the name of every star among the trillions of stars in the remote distances, it is all His and הוּא ה' אֵלֵינוּ – He is our G-d.

Do you know what that means? הוּא ה' אֵלֵינוּ – He is ours, בְּכָל הָאָרֶץ מִשְׁפָּטִיו – And in all the world are His judgments (Tehillim 105:7). It means that whatever happens in the world we shouldn't make any mistake, anything that happens in the world is done because of us. הוּא ה' אֵלֵינוּ בְּכָל הָאָרֶץ מִשְׁפָּטִיו –

in all the world are His judgements. How do You do Your Judgments? In the role of Hashem elokeinu.

And so, if you hear that there is a lack of rain in a certain place and that people are suffering, Hashem is doing it because of us. Now, how that works is a question, it is a good question, but it is because of us. If gold is discovered in a certain state, it is because of us. If there is a hurricane, it is because of us. There is no question about that. Because it is made by Hashem, and who is Hashem? ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ – הוא ה' – He is our G-d. בְּכֹל הָאָרֶץ מְשַׁפְּטִיו – in the whole world are His judgments.

### **The Subject of Tanach**

You have to know that most people don't think this way. They never understood what the *bracha* of Hakeil Hakodosh means. They don't know what *tzitzis* means; they're not listening to what the *tzitzis* is trying to teach them. And there's no excuse for that. You have to study what is written in the *kisvei hakodesh* and you have to attune your mind to the truth of the Torah; everything is done by Hashem and is done because He is ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ. Everything is done because we are the Royal Nation.

Don't say everybody is the people of Hashem, don't be a democrat. You have no right to give away what doesn't belong to you, you have no right to hand out honors to the other nations of the world. And anybody who feels he wants to be an *anav*, he wants to feel meek and humble and not be superior to anybody else, he has to know that he is a *kofer b'chol hatorah kuloh*; because the entire Torah talks only about one subject. You know that? It talks only about one subject. What is the subject the Torah talks about all the time? It talks about Hashem, but it talks about something else too, it talks about Hashem's people.

I myself have 165 places I counted where it says in Tanach Hashem Elokei Yisrael, Hashem calls Himself "the G-d of the Jewish people". Besides all the places which say Elokei Avraham Yitzchak veYaakov. Besides the many places where it says

"you are My people". Besides the many places where it says, "You are My servants." The whole Tanach from beginning to end says you, Yisroel, you are My people and nobody else.

### **Book of The World**

Did you ever pass a church and you hear on the loudspeaker someone reading from the bible, and he's saying "And the L-rd spoke to Patrick"? No, it doesn't say that. The L-rd spoke to Moshe it says. Even the priest in the church says that. He reads "And the L-rd spoke to Moses." Even Christians say the L-rd spoke to Moshe. Mohamedans also say that.

Now, that's a remarkable thing. It's only because of habit we overlook that point. We think, "Naturally, a Jewish book is about Jews." But it's not a Jewish book! It's the world book! It's the universe book! The history of the universe is being narrated because the Torah starts out בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הָאָרֶץ – in the beginning, Hashem created everything. It's not a history of the Jewish people! The Torah is a history of the universe!

And what is written in the Torah? It is written that Hakodosh Boruch Hu chose the Am Yisroel. You know, if there were a lot of torahs in the world it would be a different story. A Polish Torah that Hashem gave, alright, in the Polish Torah it talks about the Polish. If there was an African Torah, it talks about Africa. There is only one Torah however, and even the Polish say that; there is only one Torah, they don't say there are two torahs, they agree.

And yet as soon as Avrohom appears on the scene, then the Torah stops to talk about anyone else and from now on it's זָרַע אֲבִרָהָם אֱהָבִי – the seed of Avrohom who loved Me. Avrohom is in the center of the stage from now on and his son and his son's son and their grandchildren and so it continues throughout all the centuries forever.

## Good News!

If that is the case, we begin to see what an obligation there is upon the Am Yisroel to be proud. Even as you walk on the street, you must think you are a prince or a princess.

Of course, you shouldn't despise or show contempt to anybody. The pride we have in being servants to Hashem should never lead to a certain disrespect of non-Jews. That's not prudent; it's silly and it's not *kvod Shomayim*. But amongst ourselves, when we speak to each other, of course, we say the truth. We must spread the good news among our families and our friends. Absolutely we must do that.

And it's not just talk. It's Torah. And if you don't feel it in your bones, then you're a cold Jew. You have a lot to warm up to yet, to understand that principle.

## Part III. Restoration of Pride

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### Reasons To Weep

Now, when Yirmiyahu HaNovi was foretelling the Churban Beis Hamikdash and exile to Bavel he made a statement in the name of Hashem (13:17): Hakodosh Boruch Hu is talking and He says, **בְּמִסְתָּרִים תִּבְכֶּה נַפְשִׁי** – *My soul weeps in secret places*.

For what is Hashem weeping? So we think we know. So many Jews were slaughtered in the time of the *churban*! **עַל בַּיִת יִשְׂרָאֵל וְעַל עַם הַשָּׁם כִּי נָפְלוּ בַחֶרֶב** – *the house of Yisroel and the people of Hashem that fell by the sword* (Shmuel II, 1:12, Kinno). Hakodosh Boruch Hu cries for that, no question.

He weeps because His people were plucked from their homes and sent away among *goyim* in foreign countries; *Galus* – exile, a tragedy. They had to forsake their beloved homesteads; their farms and gardens and orchards that they had inherited for hundreds of years from their forefathers. And now they are on *admas neichar*, on foreign soil, and

they look back with longing to their old homes. **עַל גַּם-נְהָרוֹת בְּבַל שָׁם יֹשְׁבֵנוּ** – *We sat by the rivers of Bavel*, **וְכִינּוּ בְּזָכְרֵנוּ אֶת-צִיּוֹן** – *and we wept, when we remembered Zion*. And so we can be sure that Hashem wept along with them.

And what about the beautiful *Bais Hamikdosh*, the glorious *bais kodsheinu v'tifarteinu* that is now a heap of ruins. The house of Hashem was laid waste. Now that is something to weep for! That glorious house which once represented the presence of Hashem among us and it is now ashes.

### Weeping for Pride

But listen to what the Navi Yirmiyahu tells us that Hashem is crying for: **בְּמִסְתָּרִים תִּבְכֶּה נַפְשִׁי** – *My soul weeps in secret places*, **מִפְּנֵי גִּוָה** – *it's because of her pride*. **גִּוָה** from the word **גָּאוּה**. And the Gemara (Chagiga 5b) says it means this: **מִפְּנֵי גְאוּתָן שֶׁל יִשְׂרָאֵל** – Hashem says, “I weep because the Am Yisroel lost their pride. I'm crying because they were once a proud nation, and it was taken away from them.”

Now, that's a big *chiddush* to us. Because if you would have asked us why Hashem wept at the time of the *churban*, the pride of our people would have been way down at the bottom of the list. When we sit on the floor on Tisha B'Av and think about what to weep over, so we think that many things come before that.

And it's certainly true, of course, He weeps for all those things too; absolutely He weeps for that too. But the Navi tells us that more than anything else, He weeps **מִפְּנֵי גְאוּתָן שֶׁל יִשְׂרָאֵל שֶׁנִּטְלָה מֵהֶם** – *because they lost their pride in being a Yisroel*.

Once, they considered themselves *bnei melachim*; they knew they were princes. They knew why they were a nation that wears *tzitzis*, a nation garbed in royalty. We were a proud nation; we felt that we were the choicest of mankind, the exalted people. In the ancient days, every Jew knew that. It ran in our veins; it was our lifeblood.

## Proselytizing in Adiabenne

You know, once there was a group of Jewish merchants who were traveling on business and they were waiting for the next caravan to come so instead of wasting time, they visited the king and tried to make a Jew out of him. You hear that? A merchant, he's traveling in a foreign country but he has to wait now for a day for the next caravan to leave. So instead of wasting a half-day, he found a way to the royal palace and he tried to convert the king to Judaism.

A merchant had to go through Chadayev, it's Adiabenne, a certain province. And so instead of wasting time, he converted the king and the queen and some more people of the royal court. And that's how Munbaz, Munbaz HaMelech, came into being. Years later, the king of the Kuzarim was converted by a Jewish merchant in the same way.

Jews were so confident, so proud of themselves that they felt they were doing a favor to the king to make a Jew out of him. Why should they be silent? They preached Judaism because they knew that's the best merchandise there is and they had a monopoly on it. And the King grabbed the opportunity.

You know if President Bush had some brains he would give up the presidency to become a member of a *shtibel*, a little *shtibel*. He'd be *mesgayer*, he'd be *mahl* himself, put on *tefillin*, keep Shabbos; it would be a tremendous elevation for him! If he understood what's taking place, he'd go wild with *simcha*! Of course, he wouldn't be able to tolerate such a *simcha*. He'd collapse from happiness. Unfortunately, we're not collapsing!

## Cone, Koch, and Lewis

Once we were put into exile, that pride began to weaken; we began to forget who we are. That is the greatest of all tragedies. And for this Hashem weeps. He weeps for all of those who learned to cringe in *galus*. All the Jews who lost their pride.

Here's a Jew; his name used to be C-O-H-E-N; the name has been metamorphosed ten times and now it is C-O-N-E, like an ice cream cone. Ice cream sounds better than C-O-H-E-N which means a *kohen Hashem*, a priest of the most high.

Katz became Koch. What does Koch mean? It means nothing. You're ashamed of Katz? Katz means *Kohen tzeddek*; it's *roshei teivos* for *kohen tzedek*, righteous *Kohen*. The last name Levi became Lewis. Look at the names of the writers in the New York times, if you are careful you will note they're all Jewish names metamorphosed. They are ashamed of their Jewishness: they are ashamed of being Jews. They say we are not ashamed; "We are proud," they say. No, they are ashamed; they have an inferiority complex. To them being a Jew is a shame.

Even rabbis! How is it that Jewish rabbis take gentile names? Rabbi Louis, Rabbi Charles, Rabbi Howard, Rabbi Alfred. A rabbi should take pride in a gentile name? The answer is they have lost their pride as Jews. They think it's an honor to have the name of some Scotch drunkard or some Irish wife beater. To them, that enhances their personality. It's *nitlah gaavasan*.

## Ashamed of The Crown

Here's a man; one of the top men in the Syrian community had to visit me in my home for a certain reason. He wanted to invite me to speak somewhere. I knew he was coming, so I looked through the window. He got out of his car and he put a *yarmulke* on his head and walked into the house. Why? Why just when he walked into my house? He wouldn't walk with a *yarmulke* in the street because they're trained to be ashamed of a *yarmulke*.

A *yarmulke* is a crown of glory! You know we make a *bracha* every morning on a *yarmulke* and a hat. Not on *tefillin*. The *bracha* is בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה'שָׁם – we thank You, עוֹטֵר יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּתִפְאָרָה – You crown Your people Yisroel with glory. A hat or a beanie; whatever it is you wear on your head, a stovepipe, a tarbush,

a snood, a sheitel; anything you wear on your head, if you do it because you're a Jew, then it's a crown of glory!

Tzitzis surely he wouldn't wear out – if he's fortunate enough to wear tzitzis he surely won't let the strings hang out. Now isn't that a tragedy? To be ashamed of *bigdei malchus*? To stick a sign of royalty inside your pants? Suppose a king gives you a badge. You're ashamed of the badge? Instead of pinning it on your coat here, you pin it on your underwear?

### **True Dignity**

I ride on the bus sometimes. Sometimes by accident, my tzitzis come out. I see the Jewish matrons; they're looking with their eyes popping out. What do I do? I pull them out like this! Let their eyes pop out entirely!

Hakodosh Boruch Hu has given us signs of glory and we have perverted them; we're being ashamed of it. To be so ingrained in self-shame is a tragedy of tragedies! The tzitzis are a raiment of glory!

Not only tzitzis. How is it that a Jewish girl walks out wearing almost nothing? And as she's walking down the street well 'un'dressed, she's so proud of it. She thinks that she is dressed in the most noble raiment. How could that happen to us?

It's because she doesn't understand. She has no criterion of what it means to be dignified. Suppose a Jewish girl knew that **כָּל כְּבוֹדָה בַּת מֶלֶךְ**, that she's a *kevudah*, an honored person. Suppose she understood the lesson of tzitzis that she sees her nation wearing and she knew that she's a daughter of a king. A Jewish girl is a daughter of a king! She's a princess. She has to know that. It's not a *maschal*! It's a fact! She's a princess! A princess doesn't dress that way!

### **Our Job**

And therefore, the source of a lot of our troubles is a lack of pride in Hashem, in our being

the Am Hashem. All the wickedness of the gentiles has made inroads in the Jewish people solely due to the fact that the Jews have lost this pride. And therefore we have to go back and study the subject once more and realize what does it mean **גִּאוּרְתָן שֶׁל יִשְׂרָאֵל** – to be proud of being a Yisroel. That's our job, to regain the ancient pride of the Jewish people.

And therefore at all times, we sing **אֲשִׁירֵנוּ מֵה טוֹב הוֹלֵקֵנוּ** – *How fortunate we are*. A Jew has to sing at all times! At least in his heart, he should always be singing in happiness because of the great honor that he possesses. His heart should sing within him because Hakadosh Baruch Hu has elevated him. A proud Jew walks the streets, whatever street it may be, and he's walking on air. He's happy always!

### **Crowding The Royals**

And it's a happiness that will be forever. Because the Navi says in those days when the truth will finally conquer, when it will overcome all the falsehood of the world, what's going to happen? Now it sounds like a *guzma*, an exaggeration but listen anyhow to what he said: **יַחֲזִיקוּ עֶשְׂרֵה אֲנָשִׁים מִכָּל יְהוּדֵי לְשָׁנוֹת הַגּוֹיִם וְהִחֲזִיקוּ בְּכַנֵּף אִישׁ יְהוּדִי** – *Ten men from every gentile nation will take hold of a corner of a Jewish man's garment*. Why the corner? They want to hold on by the corner because that's where our nation displays its royalty.

Now the question is: Why don't they put on tzitzis themselves? Let them wear tzitzis. Nothing doing! If a man has a crown of a king, can anybody else have the boldness, the impudence to put a crown on his head? You can't even put a sign outside your house Dr. So-and-so if you're not a doctor. They'll sue you in court. So how can you call yourself a king if you don't have the authority? And therefore, the *goyim* won't be able to wear tzitzis. But they'll want to hang on; at least that.

Now the Navi says "ten men for every nation;" how many nations are there? There are seventy nations. Ten men for each nation means seven hundred people. So seven hundred *goyim* will hold

on to the end of one of the corners of your garment. But your garment has four corners so it's 4 times 700; take out your calculator; 4 times 700 is 2800. The Navi is saying 2800 people will want to walk with you in the street when the time comes. Maybe you won't be able to let them all walk with you – it'll be too crowded – but they'll want to.

Now that only seems a *guzma* to us because we are far away from the truth. And therefore it's about time we started getting closer to the truth! We are royalty! And not royalty in the sense of the king of this country, that country. It's the only true royalty there is. We, men and women, boys and girls, we are the nation that wears *bigdei malchus*! And that's why we're proud and happy forever.

### Have A Wonderful Shabbos

#### LET'S GET PRACTICAL

##### *Taking Pride in Royalty*

This week I will attempt to regain the Pride of Israel, the pride in our status as the chosen ones of Hashem. At least once a day when I see *tzitzis* – whether my own, my husband's, father's, or that of any Jew in the street – I will *bli neder* take a moment to remember that this is a symbol of royalty. We are chosen by the King to wear His sign. This will have a profound effect on my behavior throughout the day, I'm not just anyone, I'm an honored servant of The King.

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## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

### שאל אביך ויגדך זקניך ויאמרו לך

Q:

**If a Jew blesses another Jew, is it a tefilla?**

A:

It depends. If you do it just as a formality, just for politeness, then that's what it is – a formality. It's a way of being *mechabed* him. On the other hand, if he has *seichel* to use it as a *tefilla*, then it's a very good investment.

Now, pay attention. One of the best things in the world to do is to bless a fellow Jew. Hakodosh Boruch Hu promised Avraham, *ואברכה מברכך* – I will bless those who bless you.

I'll explain that. Number one is that we have to know that Hakodosh Boruch Hu is *אוהב עמו ישראל* – Hashem loves Jews. No question about it. He loves Jews more than anything else in the whole world. Don't be afraid to say that. The whole Torah speaks about only that one theme – Hashem loves Jews! *אוהב עמו ישראל*. So if you love a Jew enough to give him a good *bracha*, Hashem will surely love you for that.

But in addition, there's a *bris*, a covenant that Hashem made with Avraham. He made a promise to Avrohom Avinu, *ואברכה מברכך* – I will bless those who bless you. So if you sincerely wish a fellow Jew he should succeed, that he should be healthy, Hakodosh Boruch Hu is loving you at that moment intensely! One of the best things to do is to bless your fellow Jews.

So, if you say "Good morning;" to your neighbor just as a formality, so that's all it is – a greeting. But if you put thought into it, then it becomes a *tefillah*, a *bracha*.

So when you pass by a house with a big *mezuzah*, waste a half minute and wish them they should all live long in that house, they should have *nachas* from their children. They should have plenty of *parnassah* and make *simchos*. As much as you can say, it will redound to your own benefit. It's to your own benefit to bless Jews as much as you can.