

Shvilei Pinches

Parshas Tetzaveh

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Parshas Tetzaveh 5771

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The Divine Kabbalist Rabbi Shimshon of Ostropol, hy"d:

In Exile HKB"H Wears the Four Golden Garments Symbolized by אִמַּח"ץ

In this week's parsha, parshas Tetzaveh, we read the following (28,2): **וְעָשִׂיתָ בְּגָדֵי קֹדֶשׁ לְאַהֲרֹן אַחִיךָ לְכַבּוֹד וּלְתִפְאֵרֶת, וְאַתָּה תְּדַבֵּר אֶל כָּל חֲכָמָיו לֵב אֲשֶׁר מִלֵּאתִיו רוּחַ חֲכָמָה, וְעָשׂוּ אֶת בְּגָדֵי אַהֲרֹן לְקֹדֶשׁוֹ לְכַהֲנֹתוֹ לִי, וְאֱלֹהֵי הַבְּגָדִים אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשׂוּ, חוֹשֵׁן וְאַפֹּדֶרֶת וּמַעִיל וְכִתּוּנַת תְּשֻׁבָּץ מִצְנֶפֶת אִמַּח"ץ — You shall make sanctified garments for Aharon, your brother, for glory and for splendor. And you shall speak to all the wise-hearted people, whom I have invested with a spirit of wisdom, and they shall make Aharon's garments to sanctify him so that he may serve as a priest before Me.**

These are the garments that they shall make: a Choshen (a breastplate), and an Eiphod (an apron), and a Me'il (an outer robe) and a Kutoness (tunic or inner robe) of checkered texture, a Mitznefes (a turban) and an Avneit (a sash); they shall make sanctified garments for Aharon, your brother, and his sons—so that they may serve before Me.

We have learned in the Mishnah (Yoma 71:): **כֹּהֵן גָּדוֹל מְשַׁמֵּשׁ בְּשִׁמוֹנָה כְּלִים, וְהַדְּרִיט בְּאַרְבַּעָה, בְּכִתּוּנַת וּמִכְנָסִים וּמִצְנֶפֶת וְאַבְנֵט, מוֹסִיף עֲלָיו כֹּהֵן גָּדוֹל חֹשֵׁן וְאַפֹּדֶרֶת וּמַעִיל וְצִיץ**. The Kohen Gadol, the High Priest, wore eight garments while performing his service; whereas the ordinary kohanim performed their duties while wearing four basic garments—the tunic (kutoness), pants (michnasayim), turban (mitznefes), and sash (avneit). The additional four garments worn by the Kohen Gadol were the breastplate (choshen), the apron (eiphod), the outer robe (me'il) and the headplate (tzitz). The Mishnah and the Gemorah refer to the ordinary kohen's garments as: **ד'** **בְּגָדֵי לְבָן**—the four white garments, since they were made of white linen; the four additional garments worn by the Kohen Gadol are referred to as: **ד' בְּגָדֵי זָהָב**—the four golden garments, because they contained gold.

The Gemorah teaches us that the purpose of the Kohen Gadol's eight vestments was to provide atonement for various sins. The Gemorah states (Zevachim 88:): **לְמַעַן נִסְמַכָּה פְּרִשְׁת קִרְבָּנוֹת**—**לְפָרֶשֶׁת בְּגָדֵי כְהוֹנָה, לֹאמַר לָךְ מֵה קִרְבָּנוֹת מִכְפָּרִין אֵף בְּגָדֵי כְהוֹנָה מִכְפָּרִין**—we learn from the juxtaposition of the two passages—the passage of the korbanos, the sacrifices, and the passage describing the priestly garments—that the priestly garments afford atonement just as the sacrifices do. At the present time, after the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash due to our multitude of sins, we no longer have a Kohen Gadol serving in his eight vestments to atone for us. As a consequence, we must make due with our ability to occupy ourselves in the study of these matters—as the Gemorah teaches us (Menachos 110.): **כֹּל הַעוֹסֵק בְּתוֹרַת חַטָּאת כְּאִילוּ הִקְרִיב חַטָּאת**—one who studies the details of the "chatat," the sin-offering, it is as if he actually offered a chatat.

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Similarly, anyone who engages in the study of the details of the Kohen Gadol's garments, merits atonement—just as if the Kohen Gadol was standing here and performing the service in his eight priestly garments. It is only fitting, therefore, that we examine, this week, a fascinating concept concerning these holy garments. It is taught that HKB"Y acts like the Kohen Gadol dressed up in his eight garments, so to speak; however, during times of exile, He only wears the four vestments of an ordinary kohen. May Hashem guide us along the path of truth.

Because of Your Sins אמכם Will Be Sent Away and אמחץ Will Remain

Let us open our discussion with a fascinating statement found in the Midrash Ne'elam as quoted by the divine kabbalist, Rabbi Shimshon of Ostropol, hy"y, in a letter to his relative, the author of the Meginei Shlomo. This letter appears in his sefer Likutei Shoshanim:

"נשאלתי מן שאר בשרי הגאון הגדול המפורסם מוהר"ר יושע נר"ו מושל בגבורתו בק"ק קראקא יצ"ו, מה שמצאנו במדרש הנעלם, וזה לשונו המדרש ככתבו וכלשונו: כד ישראל חייבין, [כאשר ישראל חייבים בדין בגלל עוונותיהם], אתקיים בהון (ישעיה נ א) ובפשעיכם שולחה אמכם, ואשתאר אמחץ [ונשאר אמחץ], דא הוא אמחץ ראש אויביכם.

וכד יתהדרו ישראל בתיובתא, [כאשר יחזרו ישראל בתשובה], אתהדר אמכם לאתראה, [תחזור אמכם למקומה]. בשעתא דא אשתלימו ח' בגדים דלביש כהנא רבא ביומא דכיפורא, [בשעה זו נשלמו ח' בגדים שלבש הכהן גדול ביום הכיפורים], עד כאן לשון המדרש הנעלם בזוהר חדש וקשה להולמו.

והגאון מוה"ר נתן מקראקא [בעל מגלה עמוקות] כתב עליו זה לשונו, המדרש הזה הוא חתום וסתום עד ביאת מורה צדק, כי צודו גיבורים ממנו אפילו פירוש המילות, עד כאן לשון מהר"ן בעל מגלה עמוקות. ומי שיש לו שכל שוה יראה ויבין שהמדרש הזה הוא עמוק, וכמה קדושים דרשוני ושאלוני לבאר להם היטיב וכו'. מגודל אהבתי דמר בהיותו עצמי ובשרי ואהבת עולם אהבתיו, לא אכחיד אמרי מלבאר המלות ועניינם בקיצור מופלג ולא הסוד, כי קצרה היריעה מהכיל סודו".

He says that his relative, Rabbi Yehoshua, asks him to unravel a puzzling Midrash Ne'elam. It states that when Yisroel are found guilty as a result of their sins, the prophesy of Yeshayahu (50,1) will be fulfilled: **אמכם—because of your sins, your mother (אמכם) will be sent away.** At that time, only **אמחץ** will remain—signifying that Hashem will crush the head of our enemies. When, however, Yisroel repent and perform teshuvah, **אמכם** will be returned to her proper place. Then, the eight vestments worn by the Kohen Gadol on Yom Kippur will be complete. This is the end of the Midrash Ne'elam as it appears in the Zohar Chodash.

The incredible author of the Megaleh Amukos writes concerning this Midrash, that its meaning is obscure and its interpretation awaits the coming of the mashiach. Rabbi Shimshon states that despite the esoteric nature of this Midrash, and the many holy people that have asked him to interpret it for them, out of his great love for his relative, he will not refrain from providing a very short explanation—avoiding the mystical.

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The following is Rabbi Shimshon's interpretation of the Midrash Ne'elam:

"וידוע מכתבי האר"י ז"ל, כאשר ישראל חוטאים, אז הקב"ה עושה את עצמו כמו כהן הדיוט ומשמש רק בארבעה בגדים, והדבר הזה שנוי ומשולש בכתבי המקובלים קטנים וגדולים איש על מחנהו ואיש על דגלו. הנה ידוע כהן גדול היה משמש בשמנה בגדים, כהן הדיוט בארבעה בגדים.

ואלו הבגדים ששימש כהן גדול, אבנט, מצנפת, כתונת, מכנסים, אפוד, מעיל, חושן, ציץ, אבל הדיוט שימש רק בארבעה בגדים. והנה כשהם חוטאים וחייבים, אז הקב"ה שולח ד' בגדים שהם ראשי תיבות אמכ"ם - א'בנט, מ'צנפת, כ'תונת, מ'כנסים, ומשמש רק בד' בגדים היתירים שהוא ראשי תיבות של אמח"ץ - א'פוד מ'עיל ח'ושן צ'יץ.

והנה הסוד במדרש הנעלם הנ"ל הכי פירושו: כד ישראל חייבין אתקיים בהון ובפשעכם שולחה אמכם... כי כאשר ישראל זכאין אזי הוא יתברך משמש בשמנה בגדים, ככהן גדול ביום הכיפורים בבית המקדש למטה, לאפוקי כד חייבין, אזי שולחה ד' בגדים המרומוזים במלת אמכ"ם כנ"ל.

ונשארין ד' בגדים שהוא ראשי תיבות אמח"ץ - א'פוד מ'עיל ח'ושן צ'יץ, כמו שכהן הדיוט משמש רק בד' בגדים כמו כן הוא יתברך משמש בד' בגדים, [אף שבגדיו יתברך המרומוז במלת אמ"חץ אינם של כהן הדיוט, מכל מקום נשתווה הוא יתברך לענין זה שמשמש רק בד' בגדים דוק], ומרמז שהקב"ה מוחץ ראש שונאי נפש ישראל, (תהלים קי ו) מחץ ראש על ארץ רבה.

וכד יתחזרון בתיובתא, אז תחזור אמכ"ם לאתראה, פירוש כאשר יחזרו בתשובה, אז ד' בגדים המרומוזים במלת אמכם כנ"ל יוחזר למקומה וארמון על משפטו ישב, אז בשעתא דא אשתלימו שמנה בגדים דלביש כהנא רבא ביומא דכיפורה, רצונו לומר אז בשעה שיהיו ישראל זכאין וצדיקים, ממילא יוחזר ד' בגדים המרומוזים במלת אמכם, ויתחברו עם ד' בגדים המרומוזים במלת אמח"ץ, והוא פלאי והוא רחום יכפר".

כה דברי ש"ב ואהובו שמשון במרנא ורבנא מוהר"ר פסח

The Arizal teaches that when Yisroel sin, HKB"H dresses up as an ordinary kohen who performs his duties adorned in a mere four garments. It is known that a Kohen Gadol performed his duties while wearing eight vestments: the avneit (sash), the mitznefes (turban), kesones (tunic), michnasayim (pants), eiphod (apron), me'il (outer robe), choshen (breastplate), and tzitz (headplate).

When Yisroel sin, HKB"H, acting as a Kohen Gadol, removes four garments symbolized by the word **אמכ"ם**—an abbreviation for avneit, mitznefes, kesones and michnasayim—and continues to serve clothed only in the four remaining garments symbolized by the word **אמח"ץ**—an abbreviation for eiphod, me'il, choshen and tzitz.

This is the meaning of the enigmatic Midrash: When Yisroel are meritorious and worthy, HKB"H performs his functions wearing eight garments—just like the Kohen Gadol on Yom Kippur in the earthly Beis HaMikdash. In contrast, when they are undeserving, he removes the four garments alluded to by the term **אמכ"ם**.

The remaining four garments are those alluded to by the term **אמח"ץ**. He continues to function wearing only four garments just like an ordinary kohen—even though, the remaining four garments are not the garments of an ordinary kohen. Nevertheless, He is akin to an ordinary kohen in that He

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is clothed in a mere four garments. The significance of the term **אמח"ץ** (meaning: I will crush), representing the four remaining garments, is that it signifies that HKB"H will crush the head of Yisroel's enemies—as stated in the possuk (Tehillim 110,6): **"מחץ ראש על ארץ רבה"**—**He will crush the head of the mighty land.**

When Yisroel return to Hashem by performing teshuvah, the four garments alluded to by the term **אמח"ץ** will also be returned to their rightful place. At that time, the eight garment attire of the Kohen Gadol will once again be complete and in full force, ready to atone.

The Kozhnitzer Maggid's Wonderful Clarification

In this essay, we wish to clarify the meaning of this great tzaddik, Rabbi Shimshon of Ostropol—who died serving Hashem on the fourth day of Menachem Av during the massacres of 5408 and 5409, while still adorned with his tallis and tefillin. (It was said that he possessed the neshomeh of Mashiach ben Yosef.) According to his understanding of the Midrash Ne'elam, it seems that in times of exile, HKB"H dresses up as an ordinary kohen—for, He chooses to wear only four vestments. On the other hand, the four garments He chooses to wear are the four golden garments of the Kohen Gadol, symbolized by the word **אמח"ץ**—an abbreviation for **אֵיפֹד מֵעֵיל חֹשֶׁן צִיץ** (eiphod, me'il, choshen, tzitz). We must attempt to understand this enigma. If HKB"H wishes to dress up as an ordinary kohen, then why does he wear the four golden garments worn exclusively by the Kohen Gadol? Conversely, if He wishes to dress up as a Kohen Gadol, why does He not wear all eight of the Kohen Gadol's vestments?

We can suggest a novel approach to our understanding of Rabbi Shimshon of Ostropol's sacred message based on an illuminating gem I found among the pure, incomparable teachings of the holy maggid, Rabbi Yisroel of Kozhnitz, zy"a. In his sefer Ohr Yisroel, in his comments on the Tikunei Zohar (Introduction 3:), he addresses the following conversation between Moshe Rabeinu's neshomeh and Eliyahu HaNavi:

"קום אליהו... דאנת כהנא, תקין ליה לקודשא בריך הוא ארבע בגדי לבן וארבע בגדי זהב... ארבע בגדי לבן כלהו רחמי בשמא דיקו"ק, ולית מאן דמחיל בהון עריין אלא איהו, ארבע בגדי זהב כלהו דינא מסטרא דאדנ"י, ולית מאן דמחיל על עבודה זרה אלא איהו."

Translation: "Rise Eliyahu, for you are a kohen. Prepare for HKB"H four white garments and four golden garments. . . The four white garments all represent the mercy of the name "havaya," for, only He can forgive sins of immorality; the four golden garments all represent the judgment of the name "adonai," for, only He can forgive the sin of idolatry."

This teaches us that the four white garments worn by an ordinary kohen represent the four letters of the name **הו"י**; whereas the four golden garments worn by the Kohen Gadol represent the four letters of the name **אדנ"י**. At first glance, this seems incomprehensible. How is it possible that an ordinary kohen wears garments corresponding to the sacred and ineffable four-letter name "havaya," while the Kohen Gadol wears garments that only correspond to the four letters of the less significant name of judgment "adonai"? Appreciating this difficulty, the holy Maggid of Kozhnitz, zy"a, writes (ibid.):

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“והנה כהן הדיוט לא היה כוחו כל כך להמתיק הדינים כל השנה, לכן לבש רק ד' בגדי לבן והמשיך הרחמים על ידיהם, מה שאין כן כהן גדול משמש כל השנה בשמונה בגדים, וכולל הגבורות בחסדים, אבל ביום הכיפורים שצריך לשמש לפני ולפנים לבש ד' בגדי לבן, להמשיך מלובן העליון שאין בו דין כלל, ודי למבין.”

He explains that an ordinary kohen did not possess the power to minimize and soften the severity of the judgment that was in force throughout the year; therefore, he wore the white garments conveying mercy. The Kohen Gadol, on the other hand, served all year long in his eight vestments, signifying his greater powers with regards to combating the force of judgment.

Two Levels of Mercy

This explanation can be understood based on the fact that Yisroel are affected by two distinct forms of mercy. The first, deriving mercy from the blessed name “havaya,” effects mercy but lacks the power to fully overturn the decree of judgment. The second form of mercy is so powerful that it can even transform the bitter decree of judgment into manifestations of mercy.

Now, it is known that name **הוי"ה** represents the attribute of mercy; while the name **אדנ"י** signifies judgment—for, the letters **אדנ"י** can be rearranged to spell **דינ"א**, meaning judgment. The holy Zohar expresses this as follows (Raiya Mehemna, Mishpatim, 118.): **“אדנ"י בהיפוך אתוון דינ"א, ובגין דא אמרו מארי מתניתין, דינ"א דמלכותא דינא, כל דינן בהאי שמא אתדנו”**. It is impossible, therefore, to lessen the severity of judgment deriving from the name **אדנ"י** except with the aid of the name of mercy, **הוי"ה**.

In this light, let us return to the words of the holy Maggid of Kozhnitz. An ordinary kohen, who only wore the four white garments corresponding to the four letters of the name **הוי"ה**, only had the power to draw upon the first form of mercy; he did not have the power to overturn the force of judgment deriving from the name **אדנ"י** and to turn it into mercy. For this reason, he did not wear the four golden garments but only the four white garments.

The Kohen Gadol, on the other hand, wore all eight priestly garments corresponding to the combination of the two names **הוי"ה אדנ"י**. Due to his extreme level of sanctity, he possessed the power to afford Yisroel the second form of mercy—in his merit, the bitterness of the judgment from the name **אדנ"י** was overturned by the mercy deriving from the name **הוי"ה**. Only during the parts of the Yom Kippur service, when the Kohen Gadol entered the Holy of Holies, did he wear only the four white garments corresponding to the name “havaya”; for, at those times, on Yom Kippur, he was able to draw mercy from the ultimate source, a source above and beyond the realm of judgment.

During Times of Exile Mercy Vanishes and Judgment Remains

Now, let us see how the Kozhnutzer Maggid explains the Midrash Ne'elam according to the holy Rabbi Shimshon of Ostropol. Although, he does not actually mention his name, it is clear as day that he is clarifying the latter's remarks. Here are his comments concerning the statement in the Tikkunim: **“ד' בגדי לבן כלהו רחמי בשמא דיקו"ק, ד' בגדי זהב כלהו דינא מסטרא דאדנ"י”**. The four white garments are entirely mercy from the name “havaya”; the four golden garments are entirely judgment, deriving from the name “adonai.”

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“ולכן אמרו במדרש, כי בעוונותיכם שולחה אמכם ואשתאר אמחץ, פירוש כי אמכ”ם ראשי תיבות א”בנט מ”צנפת כ”תונת מ”כנסים ד’ בגדי לבן, ואשתאר אמחץ ראשי תיבות א’פוד מ’עיל ח’ושן צ’יץ, כי בחורבן הבית נסתלקו הרחמים והאי שחור אדום הוא אלא שלקה, ולכן איתא בזוהר ושכינתא איתמר בה אל תראוני שאני שחרחורת.”

The Midrash states: “כד ישראל חייבין אתקיים בהון ובפשעיכם שולחה אמכם”—when Yisroel are guilty, the words of the prophet: “and because of your iniquities, your mother (אמכם) was sent away,” will be enforced. This means that, during periods of exile, HKB”H removes, so to speak, the four white garments symbolized by the term אמכ”ם (avneit-mitznefes-kesones-michnasayim), which correspond to the four letters of the name of mercy, הו”ה. “ואשתאר אמחץ”: the remaining garments, during those periods of exile, are only the four golden vestments symbolized by the term אמחץ (eiphod-me’il-choshen-tzitz), which correspond to the four letters of the name of judgment, אדנ”י.

As proof that the four golden vestments represent judgment, he cites the Mishnah (Yoma 43:) and the Gemorah (ibid. 44:) that one of the shades of gold is reddish. Furthermore, the color red is associated with judgment, as explained in the Gemorah (Chullin 47:) discussing uterine discharges: “שחור אדום הוא אלא שלקה”—**black is really red that has degenerated**. Black, of course, is the opposite of white, and, hence, signifies the attribute of judgment. We have now gained some understanding as to why HKB”H wears only the four golden garments during periods of exile—they symbolize judgment and due to our multitude of sins we are not worthy to receive the mercy corresponding to the four white garments.

We should mention that in Avodas Yisroel (Yom Kippur), the Kozhnitzer Maggid himself brings this interpretation of the Midrash Ne’elam according to Rabbi Shimshon of Ostropol with his own explanation:

“הנה כהן הדיוט לא יכול להמתיק כל כך הדינים, עד שלא היה יכול ללבוש רק בגדים לבנים מבחינת החסדים, אבל הכהן גדול היה יכול ללבוש אפילו בגדי זהב להמתיקם, וכמו שכתבתי בשם האלקי רבי שמשון מאוסטראפאלי על המדרש, בעוונותיכם שולחה אמכ”ם ואשתאר אמחץ, שרומז שאחרי החורבן נסתלק אמכ”ם, שהוא נוטריקון הארבעה בגדי לבן שהם נגד אותיות הו”ה, וישתאר אמחץ נוטריקון ד’ בגדי זהב שכנגד אותיות אדנ”י.”

All Sins Stem from the Inclinations of Idolatry and Immorality

Having had the privilege to learn a new interpretation of Rabbi Shimshon of Ostropol’s comments on the Midrash Ne’elam from the Kozhnitzer Maggid, we still need to clarify other parts of the Midrash. The Midrash Ne’elam states: כד ישראל חייבין אתקיים בהון ובפשעיכם שולחה אמכם, דא הוא אמחץ ראש אויביכם—when Yisroel are guilty, the words of the prophet, “and because of your iniquities, your mother (אמכם) was sent away; and only אמחץ remains—this means that I (HKB”H) will crush the head of your enemies. (אמחץ is an abbreviation for the four golden vestments, but literally means “I will crush.”)

Seemingly, this is inconsistent. Since the four white garments corresponding to the name of mercy “havaya,” and symbolized by the term אמכ”ם, have been removed, and only the four golden

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garments, corresponding to the name of judgment, אדני, and symbolized by the term אמח"ץ, remain, how can it be said that HKB"H crushes the head of our enemies? After all, during periods of exile, when Yisroel are subjected to the dictates of judgment, chas v'shalom—as a result of our numerous transgressions--we fall under the rule of our enemies.

Therefore, albeit with trepidation, we can suggest a novel idea. Earlier, we cited the following Tikunei Zohar: **“ארבעה בגדי לבן כולם רחמים בשם של יקו”ק, ואין מי שמוחל על עריות אלא --הוא, ארבעה בגדי זהב כולם דין מצד של אדני, ואין מי שימחול על עבודה זרה אלא היא”**—The four white garments all represent the mercy of the name “havaya,” for, only He can forgive sins of immorality; the four golden garments all represent the judgment of the name “adonai,” for, only He can forgive the sin of idolatry. Of all the possible sins, why did HKB"H choose to utilize the vestments of the Kohen Gadol to atone specifically for the two sins of idolatry and sexual immorality?

After careful consideration, I would like to propose that we find support here for an important principle of the Maharal of Prague's—that we have referred to countless times. He teaches us that HKB"H created only two yetzer horas, evil inclinations, in the world—a yetzer hora of idolatry and a yetzer hora of sexual immorality. These two include and incorporate all other sins and transgressions. All philosophical and ideological transgressions stem from the yetzer hora of idolatry—owing to a denial of the G-d of Yisroel. On the other hand, all transgressions characterized by desire and lusting after the meaningless whims of this world stem from the yetzer hora of sexual immorality.

And the Earth Became Corrupt Is an Expression of Immorality and Idolatry

The Maharal states this principle in Gur Aryeh, parshas Noach, expanding on Rashi's comment (Bereishis 6,11): **“ותשחת הארץ, לשון ערוה ועבודה זרה”**—**And the earth had become corrupt, is an expression of sexual immorality and idolatry.** The source for Rashi's comment is the Gemorah (Sanhedrin 57.): **“ותשחת הארץ לפני האלקים, ותנא דבי רבי ישמעאל בכל מקום: שנאמר השחתה, אינו אלא דבר ערוה ועבודת כוכבים, דבר ערוה שנאמר (בראשית ו יב) כי השחית כל בשר את דרכו, עבודת כוכבים דכתיב (דברים ד טז) פן תשחיתון ועשיתם וגו'”**—the academy of Rabbi Yishmael taught that wherever the term השחתה (literally: corruption or destruction) appears, it is an explicit reference to sexual immorality or idolatry. . .

The Maharal comments (ibid.): **“ונראה מה שלא נקרא השחתה רק ערוה ועבודה זרה, מפני שיצר הרע המסית האדם לרע אינו אלא בשביל אלו, דיש יצר הרע לעריות, ויש יצר הרע לעבודה זרה, כדאיתא במסכת יומא (ט:): ובפרק חלק (סנהדרין סד.), ובכמה דוכתיה אמרו תרי יצרא הוי, יצרא דעבודה זרה ויצרא דעריות”** He addresses the issue as to why “corruption” is an expression solely of sexual immorality or of idolatry.

He explains that, in truth, there are only two yetzer horas—that of sexual immorality and that of idolatry; all other yetzer horas that entice one to wrongdoing arise from these two. He brings proof for this from maseches Yoma and from maseches Sanhedrin. He is referring to the Gemorahs that discuss the events that took place when the Jews returned from Bavel to rebuild the second bayis in

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Yerushalayim. Ezra HaSofer and his court of members from the Great Assembly cried out to Hashem against the yetzer hora of idolatry that had caused the destruction of the first Beis HaMikdash (Nechemiah 9,4): **“ויועקו בקול גדול אל ה' אלקיהם”**

The Gemorah describes their pleas to Hashem. Although, we are rewarded for overcoming and resisting the yetzer hora's tricks and efforts at persuasion, they agreed that they were better off without the yetzer hora of idolatry and without the possible reward associated with it. A note fell down from heaven with the word **“אמת”** written on it. This was a sign that HKB”H acquiesced to their request; for, **“חותמו של הקב”ה אמת”**—HKB”H's seal is **“אמת”**.

They fasted for three days and nights until the yetzer hora of idolatry was handed over to them. It appeared in the form of a fiery lion cub emerging from the Holy of Holies. They seized it and eradicated it from the world. Upon realizing their success, they felt that the moment was right to request mercy from HKB”H to eradicate the yetzer hora of sexual immorality, as well. On this account, they were denied; HKB”H did not acquiesce to their request.

It is apparent from this account that Ezra and his court only waged battle against two yetzer horas—that of idolatry and that of immorality—which incorporate all of the others. Rabbi Tzaddok HaKohen arrives at the same conclusion in Tzidkas HaTzaddik (158): **“כי ראשי היצרים הם שנים, וביאור זה כי כלל התאוות היצר הם שנים, יצרא דעבודה זרה ויצרא דערייות כמו שאמרו שם ביומא”** and also in Sichas Malachei HaShares: **“זרה ודעבודה זרה”**

How beautifully this explains the fact that HKB”H chose to give Yisroel two specific mitzvahs to perform at the time of the exodus from Egypt. The mitzvahs of the blood of the Pesach offering and of the blood of circumcision were targeted against these two yetzer horas—the sources of all the yetzer horas. The blood of the Pesach offering was aimed at weakening the yetzer hora of idolatry; the blood of the milah was aimed at weakening the yetzer hora of sexual immorality.

The Yetzer of Idolatry Is in the Brain the Yetzer of Immorality Is in the Heart

Now, let us see the Shem MiShmuel on this week's parsha (5674). He writes that the yetzer of idolatry is located in the intellect in the brain, while the yetzer of immorality is located in the cravings in the heart. In this manner, he resolves the difficulty we encountered earlier. We were bothered by the fact that the ordinary kohen performed his duties wearing the four white garments corresponding to the four letters of the name **הויה**—a name so holy that it was prohibited to pronounce it as it is spelled and written. On the other hand, the Kohen Gadol performed his duties wearing the additional four golden garments corresponding to the name **אדני**, which we do pronounce. Here is his explanation:

“אך יובן על פי המבואר עוד שם בתקוני הזהר, דארבעה בגדי לבן מכפרים על גילוי עריות, וד' בגדי זהב מכפרין על עבודה זרה, וידוע דחטא גילוי עריות הוא מצד התאוה הנטועה בלב ואם כן הוא פגם הלב, וחטא עבודה זרה הוא בשכל שבמוח ואם כן הוא פגם המוח, וזאת ידוע שפגם השכל והמוח קשה יותר לתקן מפגם הלב, על כן תיקון פגם המוח נמסר רק לכהן גדול, אבל תיקון פגם הלב נמסר לכל הכהנים.”

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The Shem MiShmuel begins by quoting the Tikunei HaZohar that states that the four white garments atone for acts of sexual indiscretion, while the four golden garments atone for acts of idol-worship. Whereas the former stems from desires rooted in the heart, the latter stems from the intellect in the brain. He explains that defects and faults arising from the brain are more difficult to correct than those arising from the heart. For this reason, correction of defects arising from the intellect and brain were solely the domain of the Kohen Gadol; whereas the shortcomings arising from the heart were delegated to the ordinary kohanim.

This also appears to be the Maharal's understanding as expressed in Netzach Yisroel (Chapter 3): **”ושני יצרים הם, האחד הוא יצר דערוה, והשני הוא יצר דעבודה זרה... כלל הדבר כי אלו שתי יצרים, יצרא דערוה ויצרא דעבודה זרה, הוא לשני חלקי האדם, הגוף וכח השכלי”**. According to the Maharal, these two yetzers correspond to the two compartments that make up a person—the physical and the intellectual.

This understanding allows us a greater appreciation of the daily mitzvah of tefillin given us by HKB”H. We place the tefillin shel yad opposite the heart and the tefillin shel rosh opposite the brain. Now, we have established that the root of all transgressions stems from these two evil inclinations—the yetzer of idolatry located in the brain and the yetzer of immorality located in the heart. Therefore, it is necessary to don the tefillin shel yad daily to subjugate the cravings of the heart entirely to the service of Hashem, and to don the tefillin shel rosh to sanctify the thoughts generated by the brain. Thus, all of the evil inclinations which evolve from these two will be eliminated.

Thoughts of Immoral Behavior Only Arise in a Heart Devoid of Wisdom

Now, we should consider the fact that Ezra and his court only succeeded in eradicating the yetzer hora of idolatry; however, HKB”H did not grant their request to abolish the yetzer hora of sexual immorality. Clearly, HKB”H in His infinite wisdom, knowing our deepest thoughts and motives, recognized that Yisroel were not capable of overcoming the yetzer of idolatry but only the yetzer of immorality—in the aftermath of the destruction of the first Beis HaMikdash.

The reason is as follows. HKB”H gave us His Torah and promised us that it would not be entirely forgotten or abandoned by our people even during times of exile. As the possuk states (Devarim 31,21): **”כי לא תשכח מפיו זרעו”**—**for it shall not be forgotten from the mouth of its offspring**. We see, therefore, that we have been provided with a method of dealing with and overcoming the yetzer of desires and immorality. In the words of the Rambam (Hilchos Isurei Biah 22,21): **”גדולה מכל זאת אמרו, יפנה עצמו ומחשבתו לדברי תורה, וירחיב דעתו בחכמה, שאין מחשבת עריות מתגברת אלא בלב פנוי מן החכמה”**. He teaches us that thoughts of sexual impropriety can only win out in a heart that is devoid of wisdom; therefore, it behooves one to reserve one's thoughts for words of Torah wisdom.

In this light, it is not difficult to understand why HKB”H removed only the four white garments after the churban, as stated by the prophet: **”ובפשעכם שולחה אמכם”**—because of your iniquities, your mother (אמכם) was sent away—as we have learned, אמכם is an abbreviation for the four white

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vestments—avneit, mitznefes, kesones and michnasayim. These four garments correspond to the four letters of the sacred name “havaya,” which are capable of eradicating the yetzer of immorality. In lieu of this protection afforded by the four white priestly garments, we are advised to defeat this yetzer by means of engaging in Torah study. Yet, in His abundant mercy and kindness, HKB”H remained adorned in the four golden vestments symbolized by the term **אמח”ץ**—an abbreviation for eiphod, me’il, choshen and tzitz. These four garments correspond to the four letters of the name **אדנ”י**, which counteract the yetzer of idolatry. By so doing, HKB”H enabled Ezra and his court to eliminate the yetzer of idolatry, allowing Yisroel to survive in exile and remain steadfast in their faith in Hashem.

Now, let us return to the text of the Midrash Ne’elam: **כר ישראל חייבין אתקיים בהון ובפשעיהם** “שולחה אמכם, ואשתאר אמחץ, דא הוא אמחץ ראש אויביכם” When Yisroel are guilty and undeserving, the words of the prophet are fulfilled—the mother, **אמכם**, alluding to the four white garments are removed, and only **אמחץ**, alluding to the four golden garments, remains. Rabbi Shimshon of Ostropol interprets this to mean: **“ומרמוז שהקב”ה מוחץ ראש שונאי נפש ישראל, מחץ ראש על ארץ רבה”**—HKB”H is signifying that He will crush the head of Yisroel’s enemies. Incorporating what we have learned and discussed, this means that HKB”H will crush the head of our enemies—the head, specifically, the yetzer of idolatry located in the brain which is in the head. (It is also referred to as the head, because it is the more difficult and ominous of the two yetzer horas, as we learned from the Shem MiShmuel.) He will do so by means of the four golden priestly garments symbolized by the term **אמח”ץ**.

Then, the Midrash concludes: **“וכד יתהדרו ישראל בתיובתא אתהדר אמכם לאתראה, בשעתא דא אשתלימו ח’ בגדים דלביש כהנא רבא ביומא דכיפורא”** When Yisroel will return by performing teshuvah, repenting, the four white garments represented by the term **אמכם** will return as well. Thus, all eight garments worn by the Kohen Gadol on Yom Kippur will be on display and in force, once again. In other words, when we merit to hasten the future redemption, by means of teshuvah, HKB”H, as it were, will once again don the four white garments represented by the term **אמכם**.

This will serve to eradicate the yetzer hora of sexual immorality, once and for all, as the Gemorah teaches (Succah 52.): **“לעתיד לבא מביאו הקדוש ברוך הוא ליצר הרע ושוחטו בפני הצדיקים ובפני הרשעים”**—in the future, HKB”H will slaughter the yetzer hora in front of the righteous and in front of the wicked. Thus, the words of the prophet will be realized (Zechariah 13,2): **“ויאת רוח הטומאה אעביר מן הארץ”**—and I will remove the spirit of impurity from the land. Swiftly, in our days, Amen.