

*"Hashem has told you what is good, and what Hashem demands of you, merely to do justice, love, kindness, 'V'hatznea leches' - Walk modestly with your G-d."*

(Micha, 6:8)

אונזער זעג

# OUR VOGUE

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**S**an a bride think of anything beyond her upcoming marriage? She invests every available moment into preparing for it.

A woman remodeling her home is held in the grip of a daily parade of decisions. She has no interest in anything other than advice about the best tiles, cabinets, flooring, and appliances.

A person training for a major sports competition follows a precise schedule which will fill every moment of his life — including a strictly regimented diet and specified hours of daily exercise.

A law student preparing for the bar is consumed with his studies. He puts aside everything in his life until the exams are over.

These people are absolutely one-track minded. If you are going to strike up a conversation with them it had better be about the topics in which they are totally enveloped. But eventually these overwhelming, all-consuming events will pass — just as Pesach does — and the bride, mother, and law student will forget that they once dwelt on these issues to the utter exclusion of all else.

Being one-track-minded means there is something in your life that you feel passionately about, something that would make you act boldly. It would be filling your mind when you're falling asleep and would be your first waking thought in the morning. It would even override your need to sleep.

Chabad shluchim, for example, are one-track-minded, going out of their comfort zone, investing every last cent and going into debt as well, all to rehabilitate Jewish souls. How wonderfully one-track -minded we chassidim are, having

imbibed the Rebbe's intense do-it-all- the-way, give-it-all-you-got approach. Fully and wholly invested.

We think and act that way even if we're not official shluchim. Once, when I was shopping in our local supermarket, a non-frum-looking woman asked me where she could find the candles we use for Shabbat. Every woman within earshot pounced on the opportunity of helping a Jewish woman come closer to her roots. She was showered with invitations for Shabbos meals and offers of other Jewish services. I realized by the excitement pounding in my heart that helping a fellow Jew discover her soul is more exciting than winning a lottery. Yes, we are one-track minded wellspring-spreaders.

Can a person be one-track-minded about several things at once? Certainly the Rebbe was. The Rebbe was single-minded in his commitment to the mitzvah campaigns, to the integrity of the Jewish nation (giur according to halacha) and the security of Eretz Yisroel, and to Jewish education... to name but a few. And above all, of course, the Rebbe was single-minded in his commitment to

bringing the Geulah, a vision of which he had fixed in his mind from the tender age of three.

As important as all issues were to the Rebbe, when it came to women, the Rebbe felt strongly that women should be most specifically one-track-minded about the topic of Tznius.

We should be "over the top" about tznius, yes — from the tender age of three (the age at which tznius training begins to apply). Yes, children at the age of three already have this sensitivity because it is part of the makeup of a Jewess to be

## ARE YOU ONE-TRACK MINDED?

Editorial by Gitty Stolik

drawn to tznius. It is Divinely embedded in our feminine DNA — because it is vital for the survival of our people. So it's always on our mind, whether we talk about it or avoid the topic because “it makes us uncomfortable.” We may not necessarily think of it as “tznius,” but something indefinable bothers us when we encounter coarse speech, mannerisms or dress.

I read a book recently written by Glenn Doman, who practiced as a physical therapist in the 1940's. He was driven by his compassion for brain-injured, disabled children he encountered to figure out why these children failed to improve, no matter how intense the therapeutic interventions. These unfortunate children often ended up living their lives in institutions.

The matter gave him no rest and he pursued it with fiery determination until he found the answer: Treating disabled and paralyzed hands and feet was futile when the source of the damage was the in the brain. Treatment, he came to understand, must therefore target the brain, the root of the problem.

Doman's belief that the brain has the power to overcome the damage impelled him to give up a comfortable job, to sit for days on end in cramped dusty cellars poring over medical records and travel to the most remote and dangerous locales to study the developmental patterns of primitive people. This pioneer researcher now heads the world-famous Institutes for the Achievement of Human Potential, where brain-damaged children are maximally rehabilitated and can achieve mobility and normal functioning.

One-track-minded is so aptly phrased: It's all in the mind. It's so important to make that point because people think tznius is just a dress code. But when a person “walks modestly with G-d,” when G-d and tznius are in the person's mind, that person is going to be sensitive to every aspect and nuance of self-ex-

pression. As Glenn Doman discovered in his pursuit of human potential, healing comes from the brain, and a healthy brain “knows” and self-monitors the activity of its mouth, hands and legs.

Being one-track-minded sounds extreme, obsessive even. But obsession, like everything else, has a positive face and a negative one. True, there are times when a person's extreme one-track-mindedness is purposeless and self-defeating, as in obsessive-compulsive disorder. The obsessive compulsion to wash one's hands is unhealthy. The anxiety-driven compulsion to check for unlocked doors may be a nuisance. But the constant vigilance of protecting parts of the body from exposure is actually keying in to the highest levels of kedusha.

For a Jewish woman tznius is a necessary obsession...

**Did you notice how when we're steeped in a topic everything seems to be connected somehow to the topic? Mrs. Sternberg\* tells how before Pesach she saw an ad for checked towels in a local store. She was so excited! Kosher for Pesach towels! She rushed there quickly to get a stack, only to discover that the store was selling, checkered towels.**



**\*Credit to Mrs. Esther Sternberg for steering me onto one-track-thinking with her moving talk about Mivtzah Neshek, a committee she heads from its inception.**



## BOOK REVIEW

### Bas Melech P'nima — The Rebbe on Modesty

Compiled by Rabbi Shimon Hellinger, published by Merkaz Anash. Available at Judaic stores in Crown Heights. Contact [info@merkazanash.com](mailto:info@merkazanash.com), [www.MerkazAnash.com](http://www.MerkazAnash.com), or call (347) 471-1770.



**Bas Melech P'nima — The Rebbe on Modesty** is a recently published collection of the Rebbe's letters on tznius. It gives us a solid view of the Rebbe's conviction that tznius should be on the list of every woman and girl's top priorities. “Bas Melech P'nima” is well-written and aesthetically designed. If I wasn't won over before, this book would set me on track. Merely riffling through the book, seeing page after page of the Rebbe's urgent words about tznius is compelling (a paragraph a day would do wonders) and pierces right to the feminine essence.

Even more refreshing than an adult's view is a teenager's enthusiastic en-

dorsement. This book review appeared in a school paper.

*“This book stands out from amongst the many that I have come across throughout my education in Beis Rivkah...”*

*“The positivity of the book is really refreshing. To see that the Rebbe's outlook on Tznius was so favorable while never being vague or unmindful was truly inspiring....It is evident how important these ideals were to the Rebbe, and how that must automatically be transmitted to us...”*

*“The information is given over in short, easy-to-read essays and tidbits which makes it enjoyable reading. It is light, yet full of depth and inspiration,*

*allowing everyone to truly benefit fully from this incredible masterpiece.*

*“I found this book to be extremely uplifting and inspiring while at the same time remaining practical and pertinent to my life, I highly recommend this Book to anyone looking to educate themselves and grow in this area of Yiddishkeit.”*

By Shaina Garelik and Sara Galperin.

Permit me to share some of the keywords and thoughts it evoked within me (they are simply spilling over!) ➤



# TRACK YOUR EXERCISE

## A Personal Letter from Aviva\*

Exercise is good for you. It can improve your breathing, digestion and circulation. It strengthens muscles, improves bone density, boosts memory and mood. "What is the best exercise one should do?" a former fitness director was asked. "Choose a program that you enjoy and are therefore more likely to stick with it. Some examples are dance, swimming, walking."

I would like to share my experiences and personal struggle in regard to exercise. Let me tell you about myself: when it comes to exercise, I do it all the way. I live it, breathe it, and get excited about it. I was seriously addicted to it, hooked on it to the point that my whole day revolved around it (one-track-minded!). Anybody who has struggled with being overweight (as do most yiddishe mothers) and manages to overcome it can understand the work involved to maintain weight loss. All in all, I was feeling fit, feeling great and on a high.

Underneath it there were some uneasy feelings that I tried to submerge. I was uncomfortable in the atmosphere and I was aware, on a subconscious level, that I was sort of worshiping the physical like some kind of deity.

But like all gray areas, I tried pushing this away. I rationalized, "There's nothing wrong, nothing against halacha. It's making me a happier person, and doesn't the Torah want us to be happy? And I feel so invigorated that I am actually nicer to the people around me — it is helping my ahavas yisroel!"

My misgivings grew when I was expecting. Is it bad to expose a holy neshama to this horrible music? Come to think of it, where is the music from? I should find out, because it is singing — no, blasting — in my head — the lyrics as well, at random times both day and night.

At one point my exercise peers convinced me to join the popular Zumba class. My senses were shocked in every way. The Zumba costumes floored me. People were shaking their bodies with unrefined and provocative movements to match the blaring vulgar vocals. I saw

the thrill and how hooked they were. I thank G-d that I was able to escape the class before my sensitivities got dulled any further.

In my utter confusion and misery, I began to talk to G-d, appeal to Him. "Please help me. I'm doing things I never dreamed of doing."

If so many nice frum ladies are exercising in this attire, or lack thereof, it makes you rationalize. It must be okay. So although I didn't feel right about it, I continued to participate.

After great internal struggles and opportunities that G-d miraculously sent my way, I had the courage to seek guidance. And, I stopped. It was the most painful thing. I cried for days. I felt sick. I felt as if a limb had been amputated, ch"v. And yet I thanked G-d for the gift of strength.

But G-d did not forsake me. I found a small group that has good music and better standards all around.

How important it is to check things out before we get drawn into the quicksand of addiction. Once we're in it's so much more difficult to think rationally and make the right choices.

\* Name changed. Adapted from *A Guide to Innovative Tznius Resources* p. 78. Teves, 5774

## PRACTICALLY SPEAKING

**Q:** What is the halacha of participating in a mixed exercise group?

**A:** Neglecting your health is forbidden according to Halacha. It's straightforward. No ifs and buts. Mixed gyms are also forbidden according to Halacha. It's straightforward. No ifs and buts.

From an article printed in the *Tzemach Tzedek Bulletin*, Sydney by Harav Yosef Braun, currently member of Badatz Crown Heights

## THE REBBE WAS WAITING ON THE LINE

Guided by a Chabad shaliach, Dr. Y.L., a renowned psychologist in California, began to practice more and more mitzvos, along with his wife. There was only one thing that his wife didn't observe: she continued to wear pants. She justified this by pointing out that many other "observant women" also did.

When she sat shiva for one of her parents, the Rebbe sent the shaliach Rabbi Shmuel Dovid Raichik to visit her. While he was in their home, Rabbi Hodakov called and asked to speak with Rabbi Raichik (apparently the timing had been orchestrated in advance). Rabbi Hodakov told Rabbi Raichik that the Rebbe was inquiring whether she was undertaking to observe the requirements of tznius. The Rebbe would be waiting on the line for her reply. Rabbi Raichik approached her, presented the question as he was instructed, and she agreed immediately. (Bas Melech Pnima, p. 117)

## Tznius is...

...the essence of kedusha (It's "in" to be authentic and in touch with one's essence, is it not?)

...a foundation of yiddisheit. (Think about foundations. Could your house stand without one?)

You're into health? Tznius is a healthy way of living.

You care about Israel's security?

Tznius is a homemade Iron Dome.

It's an appreciation (of your inner unique self) rather than a restriction.

Identification with tznius is instinctive. Just as there's something intrinsically immoral about stealing and killing, an instinctive morality draws us to modesty.

A yir'as shamayim barometer.

And for the piece de resistance:

Incredible brochos for everything on your wish list. (Wow!)



# The Cantonists

From a compilation by Mrs. Chanie Wolf.  
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**R**eb Yerachmiel was a chasid of the Rebbe Rashab. After he learned in Tomchei Tmimim in Rostov, the Rebbe Rashab sent him to become the Rav of Petrozkotzk. The people of the town were all Cantonists, Jewish children who had been forcibly captured and sent to the Russian army to serve for twenty-five years. Now they wanted to live as Yidden again.

Reb Yerachmiel worked very hard to bring Yiddishkeit to these remarkable people. He and his family arranged kosher shechita, brissim and other Jewish needs of their community.

When Rosh Hashana was approaching, the community rented a large hall to use as a temporary shul. Reb Yerachmiel traveled to obtain machzorim and a sefer Torah. Everyone was excited to experience their first real Rosh Hashana in many years.

The first night of Yomtov the davening was emotional and beautiful. But the next day their ardor began to cool down. People began to whisper to their friends during davening, first a little, and then a little more, and soon it was hard to hear the davening and krias haTorah. Reb Yerachmiel managed to get everyone quiet during the Tekios, but the original

earnestness was lacking, and he was very disappointed. This was not the way Rosh Hashana was supposed to be!

One Cantonist named Fogel had served as an officer of high rank in the Czar's army and was respected by everyone. He noticed that the Rav was upset and he decided to take action. After the davening

was over he got up and banged his hand on the bima. "My friends!" he called out. "This is not the way to daven. A little respect for yiddishkeit! A little respect for kedusha! I want everyone who used to be a Cantonist to show up to shul tomorrow wearing his

army uniform and all his medals.

The next day, the shul was packed with men dressed from head to toe as soldiers. Their hats sat perfectly, their shoes shone, and not a crease was seen on their clothing. This time, during the entire davening you could hear a pin drop. No one dared make a sound. Before tekias shofar Fogel came up to the bima and faced the crowd. "Soldiers! For twenty-five years we served in the army, training for hours, enduring many hardships – even risking our lives. And all this for a king of flesh and blood! Imagine: now we are standing before the King of Kings, Hakodosh Baruch Hu!" The soldiers stood perfectly at attention, and Reb Yerachmiel blew the shofar.

**I want everyone who used to be a Cantonist to show up to shul tomorrow wearing his army uniform and all his medals.**

The mind is a powerful tool. It is affected by input via the visual and other senses (reading, listening to classes and talks). But there is another way to affect the mind, and it is very powerful: Clothing (modest gear, obviously) helps track the right messages into the Jewish mind. This story can make the point more powerfully than a long philosophical explanation.



Everyone felt they were truly crowning Hashem as King.

And that's how the custom to wear army uniforms for tekios every Rosh Hashana began in Petrozkotzk.

Fogel recognized the power of dress. If something was lacking inside, the outside could make a difference. They dressed like soldiers, and that made them feel the respect, obedience and seriousness that is expected of a soldier. Now it was easier for them to apply those feelings to the way they faced Hashem.

The external does indeed affect the internal.