

..... From the desk of Yaakov Joseph

Date: Apr 18th 2008
To: The International Association of Professional Shatnez Testers
From: Yaakov Joseph
RE: Amazing Incident

Bs'd

Le'chvod Rabbonim & Bodkei Shatnez,

I would like to relate the following story that happened to me here in Australia.

I have been checking Shatnez for a number of years in Melbourne. I have made it a point to try to change people's attitudes about the importance the mitzvah of Shatnez and to reinforce those who are already keeping the mitzvah.

Often, it's difficult to get permission to speak in a shul, especially concerning a mitzvah about which the Rav himself does not know very much. Nonetheless, I began to try to speak in as many shuls as possible, raising awareness about the mitzvah of Shatnez.

In one shul, after one of my shiurim, a Baal HaBayis went over to the Rav, and said, "You tell us all about all the chumra'os we should keep, but I have never heard about Shatnez, and it's a d'oraisa!"

I feel that besides testing for Shatnez, we must educate people about the following points:

- The importance of the mitzvah
- How prevalent Shatnez is
- One cannot rely on the word of a storekeeper/tailor
- It is possible to remove the Shatnez once it has been found and have it replaced

without changing the appearance of the garment.

The following story relates some unbelievable Hashgacha Pratis that I witnessed first-hand.

I went to Sydney and spoke in the shuls there, and offered them a free testing for the first two garments on the Sunday. The next day, I was testing in Adass Yisroel in Sydney, when a Yid walked in with six suits. I could see he was an *oni mamesh*, a really poor Yid. The suits looked well made. I checked the labels and they were all tailor-made. I asked him where he got the suits. He told me that he inherited some from his father (they were about 40 years old), and one came from another Yid who didn't need it anymore. I began

to open each one at the collars, and told him I would have to take these suits to Melbourne to see if I can have the linen replaced. Out of all the suits, I left him only one suit that did not have Shatnez.

Upon my return to Melbourne, I opened the suits, only to discover that they were full of Shatnez. From the collar backing to the gimps, from the backing for the sleeve buttons to the floating chest piece, this woolen suit had linen wherever it was possible to place it.

Monday night, I got a call from the Yid, asking when he could have his suits back; all he had was the one suit that I left him. I stayed awake many nights, not knowing how I would replace these suits, knowing full well he could not afford to buy new ones.

The following Shabbos, I went to Blake Street Shul, a 40-minute walk away, to speak about the importance of Shatnez. Again, I made the same offer, a free testing for the first two garments on the Sunday after Shacharis. Someone told me I had better bring a sefer on Sunday morning, because I should not expect a large turn out.

I got there, and there were queues all morning, as people had their first experience having their garments checked. (I found more than 40% had Shatnez in the garments!)

The very first suit I checked had Shatnez. I was schmoozing with a South African man and he was telling me about where he got his suits. During the conversation, he mentioned that he had some expensive suits in his cupboard that were tailor-made for him; however, by the time he got around to wearing them, they didn't fit him anymore. He said he didn't want to just give them away, because they were brand new and very expensive. I asked him what size they were, and, would you believe it, they were exactly the same size as the Yid from Sydney!

Here you have a poor Yid from Sydney, who gave away all his suits except one for the sake of Shatnez, and, exactly 1 week later, the Ribono Shel Olam replaced them - not with second hand suits, or even brand new suits, but tailor-made suits, that fit him like a glove! You cannot imagine the joy and happiness it brought these two Yidden.

May we all be zocheh to continue to be mechazek this important miztvah.

Kol Tuv.

Yaakov Joseph
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