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A Mother's Pride

In the early part of the twentieth century, money was a scarce commodity, especially for Jews. Materialism was not the primary focus in life, and the little things that might not matter as much today, had much greater value at that time. Clothes were a luxury. Hard-earned money was spent only for something important.

A dress for the mother was important, but it was a process that took time. It entailed deciding on the fabric, design, and color. Then there were the measurements that were taken at different intervals of the garment's creation. In other words, purchasing a dress was an "event."

The story takes place in the early 1900's, as the family of Yitzchak, an outstanding young boy of eleven, waited in anticipation for the new dress the father had ordered for the mother. It would be the first new dress she would have in years. *Pesach* ('Passover') was coming soon, and what better time than a *Yom Tov* (holiday) to put on the new dress for the first time.

The entire family waited eagerly in anticipation of the arrival of the new dress. Finally, news came that it was ready, but the mother was not going to put it on until *Yom Tov*. It was just not right.

Yitzchak was an exceptional student who was very adept at his Torah studies. Although young in age, he had skipped a few classes and was already studying with boys much older than himself. He came home a few days before *Pesach* and told his mother that he had just completed the Talmudic tractate of *Bava Kamma* [one of the longest—yt].

His mother beamed with pride. Yitzchak himself didn't make much of the accomplishment, but his mother was thrilled. The next evening, Yitzchak came home from *yeshiva* to be greeted by an astonishing sight. The table, covered with *Shabbat* linen, was set with their finest china; the candles were lit; and - his mother was wearing her brand new dress that she had been saving for the grand festival of *Pesach*!

Yitzchak was shocked. After taking a few moments to compose himself, he asked, "What is all of this? It is not *Shabbos* and it is not *Yom Tov*.

Why are you wearing the dress that you were saving for Pesach? What is the happy occasion?"

His mother looked glowingly at Yitzchak, smiled and said, "You are correct. I was saving the dress for Yom Tov. What greater Yom Tov is there, however, than when my son completes a *Mesechta* (tractate) of Gemara? There is nothing more special to me than my son's Torah learning! Since you will now be making a *siyum* ('completion' of a Talmudic tractate – an official occasion for a Judaism celebration), then I want to celebrate with you!"

Yitzchak never forgot this incident. He knew how proud his mother was of his achievements, and he was now acutely aware of the value she placed upon them. As he continued to complete one *Mesechta* after another, his mother's message reverberated within him. And when Yitzchak grew into the venerable **HaRav Yitzchak Hutner**, z'l, Rosh Yeshivah of Mesivta Rabbeinu Chaim Berlin, he imparted this lesson to his thousands of students!

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*Source:* Adapted by Yerachmiel Tilles from "Shabbos Stories for Parshas Shemini 5775," where it was reprinted from "Torah U'Tefilah: A Collection of Inspiring Insights" compiled by Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg, who found it in Touched by a Story by Rabbi Yechiel Spero.

*Connection:* Weekly Reading of *Toldot* - the first verse (with Rashi's explanation).

*Biographical note:*

**Rabbi Yitzchak Hutner** [5666 – 20 Kislev 5741 (1906 - Nov. 1980)], born in Warsaw, was the founder and Rosh Yeshiva of Pachad Yitzchok in Har Nof Jerusalem, and of Mesivta Rabbi Chaim Berlin and Kollel Gur Aryeh in Brooklyn, NY. His lectures on Talmud were dazzling; nevertheless, he recognized the critical importance of creating well-rounded disciples, so in 1949 he began publishing his discourses on morals and ethics. His discourses on Yomim Tovim and Shabbat, called *Pachad Yitzchok*, are collected in seven volumes.