Modesty And Tight-Fitting Garments

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A Cry From The Heart

(From the book, "The Crown of Modesty" by the scholarly Kabbalist, Rabbi Daniel Frish, zatzal, author of the commentary on the Zohar, "Matok M'Dvash").

It is time to seriously examine the terrible breach brought about by clothes that hug the body in a provocative manner. When we contemplate to the depth of the matter, we must know that every time a woman goes out wearing a tight-fitting garment - even without intending to cause damage, but merely to appear "more attractive" - behold, she returns home burdened with thousands of serious transgressions, may the Almighty have mercy!

Each time a woman goes out to the street in immodest attire, she transgresses six prohibitions of the Torah and five positive commandments.

{styleboxop width=200px,float=left,color=maroon,textcolor=white,echo=yes}With each man that she causes to gaze at her with a lustful glance, she transgresses the prohibition, "Do not put a stumbling block before a blind man"{/styleboxop}(Vayikra, 19:14). Furthermore, she brings upon herself the same punishment that he will face in the future, as the holy Rashi explains on the verse, "He will bear her iniquity," that whomever causes his fellow to sin, is punished in his place (Bamidbar, 30:19).

In his book, "Letter of T'shuva," Rabbeinu Yona also makes this point, stating that a man who gazes at a woman lustfully, whether at her face or her hand, brings the punishment of hell upon himself. And she receives the punishment that she caused to each and every man who gazed at her, because she caused them to stumble by her not behaving in a modest fashion.

It is further stated in the book, "Shomer Emunim," in the name of the Sages of old, that when a woman goes about on the street dressed in an immodest fashion, she is accompanied by tens of thousands of evil forces and husks of impurity (klipot,) may the Almighty save us. These impure forces enter into the hearts of the men on the street, and tempt and bewilder these men into gazing at her and succumbing to lustful thoughts.

Therefore, a woman must realize that when she goes out in immodest attire, she "sins and brings the multitude to sin." In addition, she also causes other woman and young girls who learn from her example to sin, in that they are influenced to dress in the same fashion. Her immodesty causes others to treat the commandment of modesty in a flippant manner, bringing others to trespass. This is especially true if she is a woman of standing, or a mother, or grandmother, who set an example for daughters and granddaughters - how much greater the responsibility.

Concerning this, our Sages have said: "Yeravam sinned and caused the public to sin; thus the sin of the multitudes is attributed to him" (Avot, 5:21). Furthermore, they taught: "Anyone who causes a multitude to sin is not afforded repentance" (Ibid).

Therefore, the immodest woman plays a hand in the spiritual decline of every woman she influences, not only in regards to the woman who learned from her, but also from the woman who learns from the second woman, and there on down the chain. As long as this matter is not corrected, and the plague of immodesty not stemmed, the woman who influences others has a part in the whole.

She also causes the standard of modesty to crumble, and causes a weakening of Judaism, for she adds to the spreading of this errant fashion. When one commandment is taken lightly, the entire Torah is weakened, not only in her eyes, but in the eyes of her generation and the generations that follow. All of this comes in the wake of the woman who leaves her home wearing immodest clothes. How staggering are the consequences of this matter!

("The Crown of Modesty," Pg. 259)