



MY NEW SHIRT

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David's bubbie keeps giving him the same present every year – and every year, he dreads it. How can he escape the fate of the scratchy shirt while showing proper respect and gratitude to Bubbie?

JEWISH CONCEPTS

You Can't Outsource Gratitude

We've all been there. Someone gives you a gift that you don't really like, but you smile anyway and say, "Thank you." Expressing gratitude can be especially hard for kids, particularly when they don't feel thankful. In this story, David struggles with *hakarat hatov* (recognizing the good) – being grateful for the good things in his life. Gratitude is such an important concept in Judaism that during the *Amidah*, which is the core prayer of all religious services, a communal leader can say all the blessings except for the prayer of thanksgiving to God. Congregants must say that part for themselves – gratitude can't be outsourced to someone else.

Jewish Ghost Stories

David's daydream depicts a closet full of shirts that threaten to haunt him forever. The idea of a ghost or haunted object may not seem Jewish, but Judaism has its own answer to the paranormal—the *dybbuk* (Hebrew for "cling"). A *dybbuk* is a malicious, possessing spirit that won't rest until it is avenged. Traditionally, a *dybbuk* may need to be exorcised, but thankfully for David and his Bubbie, a little compassion helps the family banish this shirt-dybbuk for good.

USING THIS BOOK AT HOME

Does your kid have an old T-shirt hanging in the closet that no longer fits? Don't let it haunt you. Turn it into a fun, no-sew tote bag and take it with you. It's an easy project that also happens to be good for the environment – you're recycling a shirt and making a reusable bag. (Just watch out if your dog likes to chase shirts as much as Pupik does!)

Supplies:

- Old T-shirt
- Sharp scissors (and grown-up help)

Instructions:

1. Cut off the sleeves and then cut off the collar, leaving a larger neckline. This will create the handles of your new bag.
2. Fringe the bottom of the shirt by cutting slits about an inch apart through both layers. Make sure the fringes are long enough to knot them twice – about 3 to 4 inches.
3. Starting at one end, tie the aligning front and back pieces together in double knots until you have finished the entire row.
4. Tie small strips of fabric on each shoulder to decorate the handles.