

## Spotlight on...Everlasting Shoes!

### Background:

In Parashat Eikev Moshe continues to speak to the Israelites and retell the story of their journey in the desert. In Chapter 8 pasuk 4 Moshe says:

שְׂמַלְתְּךָ לֹא בָלְתָהּ מֵעַלְיָךְ וְרַגְלֶךָ לֹא בָצְקָה זֶה אַרְבָּעִים שָׁנָה:

*The clothes upon you did not wear out, nor did your feet swell these forty years.*

This pasuk raises a lot of questions. What does it mean that their clothes didn't wear out? How is that possible? And why would their feet swell? What does Moshe mean by that? The mefarshim offer different answers to these questions.

Regarding the **clothing**, **Ibn Ezra** offers two explanations. The first is that their clothing did not wear out because they brought many garments with them from Egypt so they had enough clothing to last them all 40 years. The second explanation is that the manna did not cause them to sweat, and so their clothes didn't wear out.

**Rashi** offers an entirely different explanation - he quotes a midrash which states that their clothes didn't wear out because the clouds of Hashem would rub the dirt off their clothes and bleach them so that they looked like new white garments. And, as their children grew, their clothes grew with them - just like a snail's shell grows as the snail grows.

Rashi and Ibn Ezra offer similar explanations for their feet not swelling. Rashi explains that, naturally, a person's feet swell when they travel. Ibn Ezra says that this means that Hashem gave them strength, and also that Hashem had them walk slowly so that their feet wouldn't swell.

### Questions:

1. What types of explanations does the Ibn Ezra provide for why the clothes did not wear out? Are these natural explanations, or miraculous?
2. What type of explanation does Rashi provide for why the clothes did not wear out? Is this a natural explanation, or miraculous?
3. Why do you think that the Ibn Ezra and Rashi explain this in the way that they do? How would these explanations appeal to the Israelites?