



Selected Halachos from Kitzur Shulchan Aruch

Session 3 – Getting Dressed

סימן ג

It is written: "You shall walk modestly with your God. Micah 6:8." It is therefore necessary to be modest in all your ways. Thus when putting on or removing your shirt or any other garment from your body you should be very careful not to uncover your body. You should put on and remove the garment while lying in bed under a cover. You should not say: "I am in a private, and dark place." "Who will see me?" Because the Holy One, Blessed is He, Whose glory fills the entire world [sees] and to Him darkness is like light, Blessed be His Name. Modesty and shame bring a person to submissiveness before Him, Blessed be His name.

We are not permitted to follow the ways of the gentiles, nor adopt their styles in dress or in hair style or similar things, as it is said: "You shall not follow the ways of the gentile." Leviticus 20:33. It is [also] said: "In their ways you shall not follow" Leviticus 18:3. It is [also] said: "Guard yourself lest you be ensnared to follow them." Deuteronomy 12:30. You should not wear a garment which is specifically worn by them as a symbol of ostentation, such as a garment of high-ranking officers. For example, the Talmud states that it is forbidden for a Jew to be similar to them even in regard to shoelaces; if their practice was to tie one way and the practice of Jews to tie another way, or if their practice was to wear red shoelaces and Jews wear black shoelaces because the color black indicates humility, submissiveness and modesty. [In all such instances] it is forbidden for a Jew to deviate. From these examples everyone

א. כתיב, וְהִצַּנַּע לְכַת עִם אֱלֹהֶיךָ. לְפִיכָּה צָרִיךָ הָאָדָם לִהְיוֹת צָנוּעַ בְּכָל אַרְחוּתָיו. וְלִכְּנֹשׁ לְבָשׁ אוֹ פוּשֵׁט אֶת חִלּוּקוֹ אוֹ שָׂאָר בְּגָד שֶׁעַל בְּשָׂרוֹ, יִדְקֶדֶק מְאֹד שֶׁלֹּא לְגַלוֹת אֶת גּוּפוֹ, אֲלָא יִלְבִּישׁוּ וַיִּפְשִׁיטוּ כִּשְׁהוּא שׁוֹכֵב עַל מִשְׁכְּבוֹ מְכֻסָּה. וְאֵל יֵאמַר הַנְּנִי בְּחִדְרֵי חִדְרֵים וּבְחִשְׁכָּה מִי רוֹאֵנִי, כִּי הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא מְלֵא כָּל הָאָרֶץ כְּבוֹדוֹ, וְכִחֲשִׁכָה כְּאוֹרָה לְפָנָיו יִתְבָּרַךְ שְׁמוֹ. וְהִצַּנִּיעוֹת וְהַבְּשָׁת, מְבִיאֹת אֶת הָאָדָם לַיָּדֵי הַכְּנָעָה לְפָנָיו יִתְבָּרַךְ שְׁמוֹ.

ב. אִין הוֹלְכִין בְּחֻקוֹת הַגּוֹיִים, וְלֹא מִתְדַמִּים לָהֶם, לֹא בְּמַלְבוּשׁ וְלֹא בְּשֵׁעַר וְכִיּוֹצֵא בָּהֶם, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר, וְלֹא תִלְכוּ בְּחֻקוֹת הַגּוֹי. וְנֶאֱמַר, בְּחֻקוֹתֵיהֶם לֹא תִלְכוּ. וְנֶאֱמַר, הִשְׁמַר לָךְ פֶּן תִּנְקֹשׁ אַחֲרֵיהֶם. לֹא יִלְבַּשׁ מְלַבּוּשׁ הַמִּיחָד לָהֶם לְשׁוֹם גְּאוֹת וְהוּא מְלַבּוּשׁ שָׂרִים, וְלִדְגְמָא הָא דְאִמְרִינָן בְּגִמְרָא, דְאָסוּר לְיִשְׂרָאֵל לְהִתְדַמּוֹת לָהֶם אֲפִלּוּ בְּרִצּוּעוֹת הַמִּנְעֵל. שְׂאֵם הִיָּה דְרַכָּם לְקִשְׁר כֶּף וְדָרָךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּעִנְיָן אַחַר אוֹ שֶׁהִיָּה מִנְהַגָּם לִהְיוֹת לָהֶם רִצּוּעוֹת אֲדָמוֹת וְשֶׁל יִשְׂרָאֵל שְׁחֹרוֹת מְשׁוּם דְּצַבֵּעַ שְׁחֹר מוֹרָה עַל עֵנּוּה וְשִׁפְלוּת וְצַנִּיעוּת, אָסוּר לְיִשְׂרָאֵל לְשִׁנּוֹת. וּמִזֶּה יִלְמַד כָּל אָדָם לְפִי

should learn how to apply these standards to his time and place. A garment designed for showiness or immodesty must not be worn by a Jew, but rather his clothing should be made in a style which suggests humility and modesty. The following is mentioned in Sifrei: You should not say that since they go out with scarlet I shall go out with scarlet, since they go out with kulsin (the word kulsin meaning weaponry) I also shall go out with kulsin, because these practices are indicative of arrogance and haughtiness which are not the heritage of Jacob. Rather, our heritage demands of us to be modest and humble, and not be influenced by the haughty. Similarly, any custom or statute of which there is a suspicion of idolatrous intent or background should be avoided by Jews. Similarly, you should not cut your hair or style your hair as they do, but rather you should be distinct, in your clothing and speech and all other endeavors just as you are distinct in your perspectives and concepts. Similarly, it is said: "I have set you apart from the nations." Leviticus 20:26.

You should not dress in extravagant clothing because such a practice brings a person to haughtiness, nor should you wear tattered or soiled clothing and appear repulsive in the eyes of people. Rather you should dress in moderate, clean clothing. A person should even sell the beams of his house in order to buy shoes for his feet.

Since we find that the Torah gives deference to the right hand: in regard to service in the Temple and in regard to the thumb and big toe referred to in the milu'im and purification of the metzora and in the mitzvah of chalitzah; therefore in dressing and in other activities you should begin with the right [hand or foot] as opposed to the left [hand or foot.] When removing shoes or other clothing you should first remove the left (because this shows respect for the right.) However, in regard to tying [a lace] the left is held in higher esteem because we tie the tefillin on the left [hand]. Therefore when you tie your shoes, you

מקומו ושעתו, שהמלבוש העשוי ליוהרא ופריצות לא יעשה הישראל כן, אלא מלבושו יהיו עשויים בענין המורה על הכנעה וצניעות. הכי אמרין בספרי, שלא תאמר הואיל והן יוצאין בארגמן אף אני אצא בארגמן, הואיל והן יוצאין בקולסין (פרוש, כלי זין) אף אני אצא בקולסין, שדברים הללו דברי שחץ וגאווה הם, ולא כאלה חלק יעקב, אלא דרכם להיות צנועים וענוים, ולא לפנות אל רהבים. וכן כל דבר שנהגו למנהג ולחק דאכא למיחש שיש בו שמץ עבודה זרה, לא יעשה הישראל כן. וכן לא יגלח ולא יגדל שערות ראשו כמוהם, אלא יהא מבדל מהם במלבושו ובדבורו ובשאר מעשיו כמו שהוא מבדל מהם במדעו ובדעותיו. וכן הוא אומר, ואבדיל אתכם מן העמים.

ג. לא ילבש בגדים יקרים כי דבר זה מביא את האדם לידי גאווה, ולא בגדים פחותים מאד או מלכלכים, שלא יתבזה בעיני הבריות, אלא יהיו לו בגדים ממצעים ונקיים. לעולם ימכר אדם אפלו קורות ביתו ויקח מנעלים לרגליו.

ד. לפי שמצינו שהימין היא חשובה בתורה לענין עבודה ולענין בהן יד ובהן רגל של מלואים ושל מצרע ולענין מצות חליצה, לכן בלבישה וכן בשאר דברים לעולם יקדים של ימין לשל שמאל. ובחליצת המנעלים ושאר בגדים, יחלוץ של שמאל תחלה (שזהו כבודה של ימין). ואך לענין קשירה, השמאל חשוב יותר, מפני שקושרים עליו את התפליין. ולכן כשצריך לקשר יקשר של שמאל תחלה, כגון

should first tie the left. For example, with shoes that must be tied, put on the right shoe without tying it, and then the left shoe and tie it, and then tie the right shoe. This also applies to other clothing.

You should be careful not to put on two garments simultaneously because this causes forgetfulness.

It is prohibited to walk four amohs or to utter sacred words with an uncovered head. Also small children must be trained to cover their heads in order to encourage them to have reverence for God, as it is said of Rav Nachman bar Yitzchak: The mother of Rav Nachman bar Yitzchak was told by Coldai, ("Coldai" referring to astrologers), "Your son will be a thief." [Upon hearing this] she did not permit him to uncover his head. She said to him, "Cover your head in order that there be upon you the reverence of Heaven.

You should not walk with an upright [haughty] posture and an outstretched neck, as it is said: "And they walked with outstretched necks." Isaiah 3:16. Nevertheless, you should not bend your head excessively, but only moderately so that you will be able to see anyone approaching you and also see where you are walking. From the way a person walks we can tell if he is wise and intelligent, or if he is a fool and a boor. Thus said King Solomon in his wisdom: "Also in the manner that a fool walks his heart fails him, and he announces to all his foolishness,"¹⁴Koheles 10:3. thereby informing everyone that he is a fool.

מנעלים שיש בהם קשיחה, נועל של ימין ואינו קושרו, ונועל את של שמאל וקושרו, ואחר כך קושר של ימין. וכן בשאר בגדים.

ה. יזהר מללבוש שני בגדים ביחד, משום דקשה לשכחה.

ו. אסור לילך ארבע אמות או להוציא מפיו דבר שבקדשה בגלוי הראש. וגם הקטנים צריכים להרגילן לכסות ראשן, כי היכי דתהוי עליהו אימתא דשמאי. כדמצינו ברב נחמן בר יצחק. אמר דרב נחמן בר יצחק אמרו לה כלדאי (חוזים בפוכבים), ברין גנבא הוה, לא שבקתה גלויי רישא. אמרה לה, כסי רישך כי היכי דתהוי עלך אימתא דשמאי וכו'.

ז. אסור לילך בקומה זקופה וגרון נטוי, כענין שנאמר, ותלכנה נטויות גרון וגו'. ומכל מקום לא יכוף ראשו יותר מדאי, אלא במדה בינונית, בכדי שיראה את הבא כנגד פניו וגם יראה מדרך כף רגלו. גם ממהלכו של אדם נפר אם חכם ובעל דעה הוא או שוטה וסכל. וכן אמר שלמה בחכמתו, וגם בדרך כשהסכל הלך לבו חסר, ואמר לכל סכל הוא הוא. מודיע לכל על עצמו שהוא סכל.

A Story

In a Russian town, Slowieta, there lived two Jewish brothers, Shmuel Aba and Pinchas Shapiro. They ran a printing press. The brothers were very religious Jews and produced the most elegant printing. Their printings of the Jewish books, the Mishna, were of outstanding quality. They were the most famous printers in Europe.

The antisemitic Russian government officials were jealous of their superior press and schemed to destroy it.

In 1835 the following horrible incident took place. A Jewish worker, Leizer Protogeen, was found hanging in the synagogue. Leizer was the bookbinder for the Shapiro brothers and had been extremely depressed. In desperation the poor man hung himself.

This was the excuse needed for the antisemitic officials. The brothers were arrested under charges of killing Liezer. They were accused of taking revenge on Liezer for his report to the Russian government of the printing of antigovernment propaganda.

The charges were proven false but that did not help the Shapiro brothers. They were kept in a Kiev jail and subjected to daily tortures and awful cruelties.

The brothers were separated and asked to confess, but they would not confess to a crime that they did not commit.

In the hot summer of 1841, the verdict was passed. Both brothers would have to admit their guilt or run the gauntlet. The brothers chose to stick by their story. To tell a falsehood would be against the Torah. Their hands would be tied down at their sides. Five hundred soldiers, each holding a leather lash, a strap, would strike each brother as he was pulled through the gauntlet of soldiers.

The punishment was of unheard of proportions. No one had every survived such a terrible ordeal.

The brothers were stripped to their waists. Two long rifles were tied to their sides. The soldiers in front of each brother would pull him. As the unfortunate victim passed by, a soldier would whip him with the leather lash.

This happened three times. During the third time of being pulled through the gauntlet, the black yarmulke fell off Pinchas head. The man stopped moving. He refused to be led on. The soldiers kept on lashing, striking the poor man, but he would not move. A religious Jew does not walk with an uncovered head. Pinchas stood bleeding, his back completely raw, blood pouring from him, but he would not move.

Finally, an officer felt moved by the proud but suffering Jew. The officer picked up the black yarmulke, placed it on Pinchas and he was dragged onward.

Somehow the two middle-aged men survived. During the horrible punishment they kept praying to G-d. Never had soldiers seen such courage nor strength. They were taken to the Kiev hospital and nursed back to health. When they were well enough, they were sent to Siberia. Czar Alexander II freed them seventeen years later on June 1, 1856.