

HALACHA V'HALICHA... By Rav Chaim Schabes

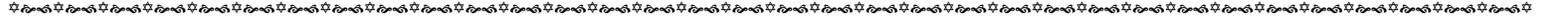
Moshe Rabbeinu was naturally humble, but as a leader, he had to present himself with strength and confidence and hide his true personality. This cover-up of himself was obviously unnecessary when communicating with Hashem, who knows the fundamental nature of every person; rather Moshe behaved according to his innate modesty and unassuming nature, which was his complete and true essence. This is how Rav Akiva Eiger understands the last pasuk in our parasha: וּבָא מֹשֶׁה לִפְנֵי ה' לְדַבֵּר אִתּוֹ יִסִּיר אֶת הַמָּסוּהָ עַד צֵאתוֹ. When Moshe came to speak in front of Hashem, he would remove the mask that covered up his humility in front the nation, and he would present himself with his natural humility as long as he was standing in front of the sh'chinah.

It is permitted to attach a woolen garment to one made out of linen with a button or with hooks, as long as the garments are loose, but if they are tightly connected, in a way that it is difficult to detach without unbending the hooks or tearing the buttonhole to be larger, it is not permitted according to all opinions. The accepted minhag is to allow a woolen jacket to be worn over a linen shirt, even if one wears a belt over the jacket, or ties it. This is permitted only because the shirt could be removed without completely taking off the jacket; the way this would be accomplished is by removing one sleeve of the jacket, and taking off the sleeve from that side of the shirt, then replacing the first jacket sleeve, and repeating the process with the other sleeve. However, many prohibit wearing a woolen sock over a linen one, and it is proper to follow this ruling. It is permitted to pass a linen string through a woolen bag, as long as one does not tie both ends together, and one is able to remove the string without tearing the holes. The custom is to sew leather pieces with linen thread, and attach it to a woolen material, although according to the Rambam this is sha'atnez דאורייתא. The custom is also to allow the attaching of a woolen material to a linen one, when one will separate between them with a different material, while acc. to the Rambam this is sha'atnez דאורייתא. To wear a belt that is woolen on one side, and linen on the other, would not be permitted, at least מדרבנן, even if the two sides are separated with leather in between, since when one wears it, he will be attaching both ends together. One may not wear sha'atnez, even if his intention is not to get any warmth from it but just to protect himself from getting dirty; however, if he just puts it over himself without wearing it, and his intention is purely in order not to get wet, it is permitted, as long as he does not get any warmth from it. One may not wear sha'atnez even if it is just very temporary, and even if the garment is very small, and even if he is wearing it on top of ten other garments. There is a more lenient position that allows trying it on to see if it will fit, since he has no intention to wear it, but the Chochmas Adam (106:20) holds that if he wants to buy it, and is dressing himself to see if it fits, according to all opinions it is considered wearing, and would be prohibited. This that we hold that it is permitted if he does not wear it, is only if he has no physical pleasure to even just one part of the body; therefore, it is not permitted to use a pot holder that is sha'atnez, nor may one hold a hot egg in a handkerchief that is sha'atnez. One may not use a towel that has sha'atnez, or even a book cover. For the same reason, a tablecloth may not contain sha'atnez, or any table cover, even for the bimah, because one may warm himself on it. A curtain also may not contain sha'atnez, but a paroches over the aron hakodesh may be made from sha'atnez, because no one warms himself on it. It is permitted to sit on a wagon whose cover is made from sha'atnez, even if it protects him from the elements, since this is not considered wearing, provided that he makes sure not to touch it (YD 301:6-12).



THOUGHTS ON THE HAFTARAH ... By Rabbi Yaakov Shapiro

Our Haftara (Melachim I 18:1-39) relates the awe-inspiring event known to us simply as 'Eliyahu at Har Carmel'. During the time of Ach'av, king of the 10 Tribes of Israel, Eliyahu HaNavi decreed a drought in the land to encourage the people to do teshuva for their evil deeds. After 3 years of a devastating famine, Hashem sends Eliyahu to Ach'av to push the people to do teshuva, so that the rains would return. This leads to Eliyahu's famous showdown with the false prophets of Ba'al based on a 'deal' he makes with the people: יַעֲנֶה בְּאֵשׁ הוּא הָאֱלֹהִים. But to implement this particular miracle, Eliyahu would have to sin by bringing a Korban outside of the Bais HaMikdash, which was of course prohibited at that time. Why couldn't he have chosen a different wondrous occurrence to convince the people, one that wouldn't involve any transgressions on his part? It would seem that this particular miracle was chosen for its unambiguous effect and results and evidenced by the people's response to Eliyahu's proposal, וַיַּעַן כָּל הָעָם וַיֹּאמְרוּ טוֹב הַדְּבָר. Why would this particular "miracle" be so convincing? Abarbanel offers the following explanation. Since the very beginning of his existence, Man has had an instinctive yet illogical need to serve Hashem by bringing animal sacrifices to Him. They did this despite understanding that a Supreme Being without any physical form has no real need for these sacrifices. As a sign to let Man know that his instincts were correct and that He was happy with the offerings, Hashem throughout history sent down a fire to consume these sacrifices. Beginning back at the time of Hevel, who brought the first korban to Hashem and merited to have this Heavenly fire consume his korban (see Rashi B'raishis 4:4), and continuing through Noach, Avraham, David and on a daily basis in the first Bais Hamikdash, we find references to this great miracle throughout Tanach. This miracle of having a fire, whose very nature is to have its flames rise up, to instead descend from the Heavens downward at Hashem's command, was a well-suited miracle that was so well known to all that it could not be disputed. That is why the people so readily accepted this test; and when they witnessed that great miracle they were inspired to exclaim unambiguously that which we repeat every year at the end of Neilah: ה' הוּא הָאֱלֹהִים!



LESSONS FROM OUR GEDOLIM: Shortly after his marriage, a fire occurred in the home of the Chiddushei HaRim. No one was hurt; but all of his physical possessions, including his entire large dowry, were destroyed in the fire (insurance did not then exist). He consoled himself by asking one question: Will this loss bother me as much next year as it does now? Having concluded that it would not, he said to himself: "They say you are a great Iluy. Certainly it should be no problem for you to imagine that it is already a year later..." And with that, he was consoled.



