

TZNIUT - MODESTY BULLETIN # 22

**"THE WOMAN WHO FEARS HASHEM, SHE
SHALL BE PRAISED" (MISHLE 31:30)**

WORLD JEWISH TZNIUT AND KEDDUSHA COMMITTEE

WHAT REALLY CONSTITUTES DRESSING UP IN HONOR OF SHABBAT: A LETTER FROM A TEACHER TO HER STUDENTS

To my devoted Talmidos

After much consideration I have decided to write to you about a subject that would generally have been mentioned in a shiur. I feel that in this instance the written word may have a deeper impact and reach further than the spoken word and have them fore made an exception. The subject is kedushas Shabbat and the way it can be enhanced both at home and in Seminar'.

Before coming to the point, I wish to put on record that over the years much headway has been made in improving the refinement of dress and general tznius of our students, and with gratitude to Hashem we are aware that the vast majority of our students dress at all times in a way that complies with the spirit and the halachic requirements of tznius.

However in one area some are lacking direction. This concerns what we do in "honor of Shabbat". Even on this issue the majority of girls are not to be faulted, and their appearance on Shabbat is as befits the sanctity of the day. However, since there are some who err, it is important that we state clearly our hashkofoh on this matter. In this way all girls will know what is not within the spirit of the chinuch we offer our girls. Our chinuch has been successful, if, when nisyonos arise after leaving Seminary a girl will know the derech hayashar a Bas Israel is to follow.

Now for the main letter. It is written in a firm and forthright manner (although only some err as stated) as befits the importance of the issues it addresses: Some girls are under the impression that dressing for Shabbat for adult girls involves more than dressing into Shabbat clothes and effecting some minor physical enhancements. They therefore engage in beautifications that far

surpass the needs of Shabbat. For example, they brush their hair in a way that it hangs loosely and flowingly over their shoulders. Also, they apply substantial facial cosmetics, such as different forms of eye makeup, bright lipstick etc. Those who do so are, however, very mistaken, and have a distorted vision of what a Bas Israel should look like on Shabbat. Whilst their manner of dress might be the authentic way of honoring Shabbat, their ways of beautification are foreign implants. They have confused self beautification' with beautifying Shabbat'

If these girls are asked, "For whom are you beautifying yourselves?" they will surely answer in all earnestness, "In honor of Shabbat" The following must, however, be asked What would the holy day of Shabbat consider 'an honor' - hair that is kept short or bound together and made up in a b'cheint and eidel manner or long hair that lies loosely over the shoulders in a way typical of non Jewish girls? Such a hair style projects the image of a girl who wants her beautiful hair to be noticed and admired Since this is the impression created, it lacks any vestige of kedusha, even if in fact this is not the girl's intention. We say in Tefillas Mussaf of Shabbat, "We Yidden are a people who sanctify the Shabbat." Can there be any doubt as to which type of hair style adds to kedushas Shabbat?

There are girls who throughout the week do not allow their hair to dangle freely because they are busy writing notes all day and loose hair would get in the way. However, on Shabbat, when no writing takes place and loose hair will not disturb, they leave their hair undone and open. What should we say to the trickery of the Satan. As always, he uses every means available to achieve his goal. He commissions our very Shemiras Shabbat and the fact that on Shabbat we do not write, and causes Bnos Israel to appear with long open unrefined hair on Shabbat, although these very girls look fine throughout the week.

Additionally, is Shabbat enhanced by applying substantial makeup, which paints over the true face of the Jewish princess and detracts from the Yiddishe chein of a Bas Yismel, or does a face that shines with the natural beauty and purity of the neshama of a Yid, add luster to this very special day? What confers onto Shabbat Kodesh the honor and prestige it deserves?

Another point that regrettably needs mention concerns the length of skirts. You have learnt in the name of all Gedolei HaPoskim that a skirt must reach four inches below the lowest point of the knee to guarantee pm per cover of the knees and above. There are those who comply fully with this ruling during the week, when they wear their usual everyday clothes. However, when it comes to Shabbat they feel that "l'chvod Shabbat" their skirts should be

shorter, because shorter skirts have a more pleasing look. What can be more hurtful than to see tznius lessened in honor of Shabbat! (Altogether, the whole basis of the nisayon needs investigation. Where does the feeling that 'shorter skirts have a more pleasing look' come from? Has this not been culled from wholly impure sources such as the substandard ways of dress we come across in the streets).

There are girls who throughout the week wear a loose-fitting skirt. They, however, improve their dress for Shabbat and wear a close-fitting straight skirt as it is a more classy way of dress. These skirts are often shorter than the fuller types of skirts mentioned and are commonly less than the required length. There is of course no heter to be lax with any of the fundamentals of tznius. It is similarly wholly incorrect that some of these straight skirts are tight fitting, pronouncing parts of the body. Other skirts are distinctly narrower further down than higher up. This is very wrong even if it is a loose fitting skirt as this too displays the hips and general shape of the body and is therefore an immodest manner of dress.

Let us stop and reflect for a moment. How can we possibly view wearing such clothes as giving Kovod to the Shabbat and to Hashem who gave us the Shabbat? Whilst these mistakes are of course oversights, they would not occur if we internalized the feelings for tznius and made them part of our lives.

Finally it must be pointed out that there are girls who wear on Shabbat thin tights that add no tznius or refinement to the legs whatsoever. The institution of covering the legs is totally defeated when the tights do not lessen the visibility of the leg in a meaningful way. There can be no prospect of honoring Shabbat while dressed in a manner that contravenes modesty and care for kedushas Israel - the symbols and endorsements of the Jewish daughter. Once again, not intending to do wrong does not correct the damage caused. In the song Mah Yedidus we sing, "Just as rose bushes protect a garden, so Shabbat brings calm and protection to its sons and daughters." If we protect that which has been entrusted into our hands, we will be deserving of the protection that is granted in the merit of honoring the holy day of Shabbat!

To summarize: The overall appearance of the Bas Israel on Shabbat is that of nobility, chein and purity. Her clothes are majestic and aristocratic. Her hair is refined and eidel looking, and the beauty of Shabbat as it blends with her tznius which is internalized shine forth from her tranquil face. If girls accept these great truths they will find that Shabbat will become quite a different day for them. Its uplifting ruach will extend to all the days of the week.

BS'D

I sincerely hope this matter receives your earnest and immediate attention. Wishing each one of you the multiple brachos of Shabbat, as we sing in the zemiros of Shabbat, - "Whoever keeps Shabbat as befits it etc. shall be richly rewarded in accordance to his deeds." The brachos of Shabbat are plentiful as Chazal say: "Whoever makes Shabbat delightful day shall be granted all the requests of his heart (Shabbat 118a). Our future happiness lies in our hands! (Taken from the Sefer Modesty: An adornment for life)

FROM IGGERET HAGRA: THE GRA ZTK'L WRITES TO HER WIFE AND SAYS:

Concerning solitude, the main thing is not to go outside of home. Even your visit to the synagogue should be very short. In fact, it is better to pray at home, for it is impossible to be spared from jealousy or from hearing idle talk or lashon hara in the synagogue. And one receives punishment for this, as we find (Shabbat 33a), "Also one who hears and is silent..." This is even the more so on Shabbat and Yom Tov when they gather to talk - It is then better that you don't pray at all. Refrain also from going to the cemetery (especially women), as all impurities stick to women there and all sorrow and sin comes from this. It is also advisable that your daughter not go to the synagogue, because she'll see beautiful clothes there, become jealous and talk about it at home. This will lead to lashon hara, etc. She should rather cling to Mussar and not become jealous of anything in this world, where everything is vanity and illusions, appearing and disappearing overnight (Yonah 4:10). "Though he grows as high as the sky, his head reaching the clouds, he perishes forever..." (Iyov 20:6,7). "For property does not last forever, or a crown for all generations" (Mishlei 27:24). And even while it exists it is worthless, loathsome and disdained by any sensible person. Woe to him who is impressed by it.

*EVERY WOMAN WHO GOES OUT TO THE MARKET HER
END IS TO STUMBLE, FROM WHERE DO WE KNOW THIS?
FROM DINAH AS IT IS WRITTEN: (BERESHIT 34:1) "AND
DINAH THE DAUGHTER OF LEAH, WHOM SHE BORE TO
YAAKOV, WENT OUT TO SEE THE DAUGHTERS OF THE
LAND. (MIDRASH RABBA BERESHIT 8:12)*