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Project: Sermon Resource for Shluchim
Distribution Date: May 15, 2007 / כ"ז אייר תשס"ז
Parsha: Bamidbar / במדבר

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1. The first thing we teach our boys is to wear a kipa.

The kipa has become a Jewish badge.

But you can use whatever you want as long as your head is covered.



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2. Why must we cover our heads? A head covering will serve as a constant reminder that there is someone above you, and this awareness will inspire fear of heaven.

Alter Rebbe (Shulchan Aruch):

1. "This is the way of modesty and holiness - this draws the fear of heaven upon him."

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3. We also cover ourselves for the Birchas Kohanim, why?

Alter Rebbe:

In order that no one gets distracted we all cover our faces with the Tallit.



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4. The bride at her Chupa covers her face, why?

Some say modesty.



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5. Our Parsha:

Shevet Levi is given the task of transporting the Mishkan:

- Gershon and Merari: dismantle the Mishkan and load it onto carts.
- Kehot: carrying the Ark, Alters, Table, Menorah and vessels.

Before Kehot could touch them the Kohanim had to cover them, for anyone who saw the Ark would die.



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6. The Holy Ark devastates Shevet Levi:

Rashi: "Any Shevet about which the pasuk says **על-כך** had a large population, except Levi, because the Ark destroyed many of them."

Midrash: "Anyone who sees the *Shechinah* diminishes in number, and Levi saw the *Shechinah*."



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7. Of course, when the Levi's realized what the Holy Ark could do to them they would all run to take the other vessels first.



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8. Why is seeing the Holy Ark so wrong?

The Holy Ark represents G-d's presence. Seeing it would replace our "vision" of an infinite, undefined G-d with a physical image.



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9. More so, by covering whatever it is that represents the Shechina, we come to realize that there is more present than we can see with the naked eye. There is something unknown beyond the physical.



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10. This is why the Kohen is covered.
 Zohar: "It is forbidden to see the Kohen's hands when he blesses you for the *Shechinah* rests upon them."
 Anything that symbolizes G-d presence must be covered.

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11. Head Coverings:
 Zohar: A man must not go four cubits while bareheaded, because the *Shechinah* rests upon his head."
 Anything that symbolizes G-d presence must be covered.



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12. Jewish brides:
 On her wedding day the *Shechinah* shines from her face.
 Anything that symbolizes G-d presence must be covered.



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13. What is the lesson for us?

The Rebbe explains:

The Jewish body is only a cover to a spark of the *Shechinah* - the soul that thirsts for Judaism and G-dliness.

Don't judge a Jew by his body - find the soul!



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