



TEN COMMANDMENTS OF TZNIUS

We were redeemed from Egypt “bizchus nashim tzidkanios” who did not change their clothes to reflect the styles of the Egyptians. Let’s always have in mind, there are two very similar words in the English language: “attractive” and “attracting.” The first is not only permissible but expected of a Bas Melech. But when we cross the line from “attractive” to “attracting,” then we have crossed the line of what tznius is all about. It’s perfectly possible to be both stylish and tzniusdik.

1) **THOU SHALL WEAR A PROPER NECKLINE:** Think “scoop,” “v-neck,” “square,” “keyhole,” “boat.” If it has a name, aside from “crew” or “turtle,” it’s probably not kosher. If I find myself constantly shrugging, hunching up my shoulders, pulling my shirt down in the back, or worrying about “straps” that show - it’s called a “problem.”

2) **THOU SHALL NOT WEAR A TIGHT SHIRT:** The purpose of clothing is to give dignity and to cover, not to reveal. If my shirt so conforms to my body that it reveals everything that’s there - or not there - if it fits my ten-year-old sister or daughter, I should probably give it to her. And next time, I should buy a size or two larger.

3) **THOU SHALL NOT WEAR A SHORT TOP:** If my top is only long enough when I don’t stretch or bend - then I can wear it as long as I never stretch or bend. This is highly unlikely to happen to an active human being, or even one who is not very active.

4) **THOU SHALL WEAR SLEEVES THAT ARE LONG ENOUGH:** Shirts with three-quarter

length sleeves are very fashionable. I should make sure that those sleeves still cover the elbow whether I reach for an item on a high shelf or throw a machanayim ball. T-shirts with wide, elbow length sleeves are very comfortable but sleeves may ride up to my shoulders as soon as I lift my arm.

5) **THOU SHALL NOT WEAR A SHORT SKIRT:** A skirt should cover my knees whether I’m standing, sitting, walking, climbing into the car - without holding on to it at all times. It’s not enough if my skirt is long enough when I try it on in the dressing room. Sit on a chair in the fitting room, or find a chair somewhere in the store and sit down. I won’t even need a mirror to tell if it’s kosher.

6) **THOU SHALL NOT WEAR A SLIT:** A skirt, regardless of the length, should not have a slit or opening of any size. Lubavitch Rabbanim in many communities have paskened that we should not wear slits of any sort.

7) **THOU SHALL LOOK RESPECTABLE:** Everyone wants to be comfortable. But some fabrics, no matter how comfortable, are too “sheer,” “flimsy,”

“stretchy.” If “lines” are showing, it’s either too sheer, too tight, or both. Backwards baseball caps... skirts with 85 pockets hanging from the hips... skirts with tattered hems dragging on the floor... shirts emblazoned with large words... saggy socks... strange hemlines. I should be careful to ensure that my clothes are fit for a Bas Yisroel.

8) **THOU SHALL COVER THE LEGS:** If the skirt is long, knee socks can be worn. If the skirt is not down to my ankles, my only choice is pantyhose or tights. Shoes that cause heads to turn and draw attention to the shoe or the wearer are questionable.

9) **THOU SHALL NOT ACCENTUATE:** However, clothing that is designed to emphasize or draw attention to specific parts of my body might be trendy or stylish but they’re certainly not “in” when it comes to dressing in the fashion of tznius.

10) **THOU SHALL COVER HAIR PROPERLY WHEN MARRIED:** A sheitel is the proper way to cover my hair when outside of my home. At home, when I’m wearing head coverings other than my sheitel, my hair should be completely covered.

Tznius extends way beyond the letter of the law; one can be covered from the nose to the toes, with sleeves down to the fingertips, and still be very much missing the point. Think “refined,” “smart,” “classy,” “tasteful.” If it’s hard to figure out where to draw the line, I should imagine what my mashpiah or my favorite Chassidishe role model would say about a particular outfit.

As we approach Shavuos and the giving of the Aseres HaDibros (Ten Commandments) on Har Sinai, we should take heed of these Ten Commandments of Tznius. The Rebbe likened every Jew to a Sefer Torah with engraved letters rather than a Sefer Torah written with ink on parchment. We need only to brush away the dust that may have accumulated in the engraved letters and “instantly the letters will shine.” Let’s follow these “Ten Commandments” now, throughout the summer, and beyond, and we will shine into the Geula Shleimah.

I want to bring nachas to the Rebbe, make a Kiddush Hashem, a Kiddush Lubavitch, and hasten the revelation of Moshiach.