

THE YESHIVA PIRCHEI SHOSHANIM SHULCHAN ARUCH PROJECT

Hilchos Shatnez Lesson 2

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Maris Hoayin

Siman 298, Seif 1-2

SIMAN 298:1

The Chachomim forbade because of ‘MARIS HOAYIN’ i.e. appearance of wrongdoing, silk together with wool, because of its similarity to linen.

They also forbade ‘Kalach’ which is a woolly substance which grows on the rocks of the ocean in seaside towns, to mix together with linen because of ‘MARIS HOAYIN’ i.e. appearance of wrongdoing.

“Today since silk is commonly found and everyone is familiar with it, there is no risk of confusion, therefore it is not forbidden because of “MARIS HOAYIN” and silk and wool or silk and linen is permitted.

SIMAN 298:2

Wool from a sheep, which was born from a goat, is prohibited with linen, because of ‘MARIS HOAYIN’ i.e.: appearance of wrongdoing.

***Rama:** 1) It is prohibited to sew a fabric of hemp cloth to a woolen garment, where hemp cloth is not commonly found because of Maris Hoayin i.e. appearance of wrong doing (Tur in the name of the Rosh)
2) however in a place where hemp cloth is commonly found it is permitted to attach hemp and wool.*

Maris Hoayin Concerning Camel’s & Goats Hair Fabric

Question:

THE MECHABER SAYS,

Camel and goat’s hair is permitted with linen, why was it not prohibited because of ‘Maris Hoayin’

I.e. the appearance of wrongdoing; one may accuse the wearer of wearing *Shatnez?*

Answer: Camel and goats hair was not prohibited because of “*Maris Hoayin*” since these fibers were commonly found.

Question: True these fibers are commonly found, however in order to be able to differentiate between fabric made of camel’s hair and fabric made of wool, or between goats hair fabric and woolen fabric, one must be an expert. Accordingly, why did Chazal not prohibit this mixture because of *Maris Hoayin*, since to the majority of people it is an appearance of wrongdoing?

Answer: The **Mechaber** calls goat’s hair “*Notzal*” **Rashi** (Menachos 39b) explains that goat’s hair is called “*Notzal*” because it is not as soft as sheep’s wool.

Camels hair is also coarser than wool from sheep.

This is why fabrics and threads of camels and goats hair were not prohibited because of *Maris Hoayin*, because one can easily notice that this fabric is not wool, since these animal fibers are not as soft.

However, the **Mechaber** 298:2 forbade wool from a sheep, which was born to a goat, together with linen because of ‘*Maris Hoayin*’ (the appearance of wrongdoing), because wool from a sheep, born from a goat is soft, and not much different than any other wool, therefore it was forbidden because of *Maris Hoayin*.

Conclusion: Wool from sheep is soft, camel and goat’s hair are coarser, and therefore there is no risk of confusion. A fabric of camel or goat’s hair sewn with linen fabric will not be mistaken for wool and linen. Therefore the Chachomim did not prohibit camel and goat hair because of *Maris Hoayin*.

Maris Hoayin Concerning Hemp Fabric

THE MECHABER SAYS:

“Hemp fabric is permitted with wool”

We concluded in *Shiur* 1: “Linen” mentioned in the Torah is not referring to ‘Hemp’ and hemp is permitted with wool, even though hemp is structurally very much the same as linen.

Question: Why did the Chachomim not prohibit because of *Maris Hoayin* - “Hemp with wool”, since hemp in its appearance is very much the same as linen, the wearer will be accused of wearing *Shatnez*?

Answer:

- 1) The **Rambam** (in his commentary of the *Mishnayos – Kilayim* 9:2) says linen thread is smooth.
- 2) The *Bais Shlomo* (*Yore Deab* Volume 2 *Siman* 179) says linen threads are smoother than hemp thread.
- 3) The **Bach** in *Siman* 299 also says hemp’s external appearance is not the same as linen.

Since the external appearance of hemp thread is different than of linen thread, one will not confuse hemp and wool fabric with a linen and wool fabric. According to this, the *Chachomim* did not prohibit hemp and wool because of *Maris Hoayin*.

MARIS HOAYIN CONCERNING SILK FABRIC

THE MECHABER SAYS

The Chachomim forbade because of *Maris Hoayin*, silk together with wool, because of its similarity to linen.

Firstly, let’s familiarize ourselves with silk. Where does silk come from?

What is Silk?

From the egg laid by the silk-moth emerges a tiny caterpillar, which feeds and grows for 40 days. It then starts to build a little “house” called a cocoon around itself by squeezing out a gum-coated filament from a hole below the jaw. By exuding this thread whilst continuously twisting its head in a figure eight movement, it constructs a home for itself, which is in fact, composed of one unbroken thread.

Inside that home, it will change into a moth and after about two weeks it will bite its way out through one end, breaking the delicate windings. A small percentage of the moths are allowed to pierce the cocoons and emerge to lay eggs for the next generation. The rest are killed by heat before they can emerge and damage the cocoon (they will unwind over a thousand meters of single strand silk from each unbroken cocoon).

THE MECHABER SAYS

“The Chachomim forbade because of *Maris Hoayin* silk together with wool”

Question:

The prohibition of *Kilayim* applies exclusively to a combination of wool and linen. Obviously, then, silks are not at all prohibited. Then why did the Chachomim forbid ‘silk’ because of appearance?

Firstly what is the source?

The Mishnah Kilayim 9:2 says “*Shirayim*... is not *Kilayim*, but it is forbidden because of its appearance.

What is ‘Shirayim’?

The term ‘*Shirayim*’ means silk. (Rav, Rambam commentary)

(Apparently it is related to the word *seres*, the name of the Chinese people who discovered silk. The term still in use today in use today; the cultivation of the silkworm is called sericulture.)

There are many grades of silk – which grade is called ‘*shirayim*’?

Rashi (Shabbos 20b) explains ‘*Shirayim*’ refers to silk in its natural unprocessed unrefined state.

Silk in its natural state is a gum-coated filament.

Question: How does the silk fiber come to be coated with ‘gum’? What is the purpose of the gum?

Answer: The silkworm ejects a smooth, lustrous protein mixture that hardens with exposure to air into a fiber.

Two 15-inch long glands coil within the silkworm’s body and produce liquid silk. The silk passes through the pink midsection of the glands, where it is coated with a sticky substance that gives the cocoon cohesiveness.

The Ma’aseh Oreg (section four) explains, the procedure of making ‘Shirayim’ as follows:

1. The cocoon is placed in hot water to loosen the gum.
2. The thread is then unwound onto a silk winder. This thread is too fine for practical purposes. Therefore the ends of several cocoons are made to pass through a tiny ring as they unwind.
3. The natural gum present, which has just been softened by the boiling water, will glue all those strands together.
4. Soon the glue will harden again leaving a single continuous thread made up of several strands all lying side by side.
5. The coating of the gum, however, renders the thread hard and impervious to dye.

This is what’s called “*Shirayim*”

The *Tiferes Yisroel* (*Kilayim* 9:2 #11) says *Shirayim* is similar to linen therefore the *Chachomim* prohibited the mixture of *Shirayim* and wool because of *Maris Hoayin*.

Shirayim is similar to linen in 2 ways.

1. The **Rambam** says in his commentary on the *Mishna* (*Kilayim* 9:2) “*Shirayim*” is smooth like linen. With the above we can explain the *Rambam* – The harder the fiber the smoother it becomes. *Shirayim* is hard silk therefore it is smooth. Linen too is hard and therefore is also smooth.
2. *Shirayim* is impervious to dye – linen is the same way.

Source: The *Yerushami* (*Kilayim* 9: Halacha 1) says:

“No fabrics contract Tzaraas other than wool or flax”

The only garments that are susceptible to *Tzaraas* are garments made of wool or of linen as is stated explicitly in the Torah (Lev. 13:47):

“When a garment is afflicted with Tzaraas, a garment of wool or linen”

The Torah repeats the specification of wool and linen in *Posuk* 13:59 to teach us – that only white garments of wool or linen are susceptible to the *Tumah* of *Tzaraas*; By juxtaposing the words wool and linen the verse teaches us the following comparison just as it is true of linen that ,Linen naturally is white ,so too must it be true with respect to wool that only white woollens can contract *Tzaraas*.

Therefore,

Neither a dyed wool nor a naturally colored wool (such as from a black sheep) is susceptible to this *tumah*.”

[With **Shatnez**, however color is not a factor and mixture of dyed wool with linen is also prohibited.]

Question: Linen can be found in many different colors?

Answer: Linen in the times of *Chazal* was impervious to dye (see **Rashi** niddah 61b), therefore linen fabrics or threads in the times of *Chazal* were white (in their natural state). For this reason linen is termed by *Chazal* as ‘*Levanim*’ - white garments.

Shirayim, therefore are similar to linen, impervious to dye and therefore could have been mistaken for linen and therefore was forbidden because of *Maris Hoayin*.

CONCLUSION:

The **Mechaber** says silk is prohibited with linen because of *Maris Hoayin*. The silk the Mechaber was referring to is “*Shirayim*”. We have explained why *Shirayim* is similar to linen, and how it could lead people to accuse the wearer for wearing *Shatnez*.

THE MECHABER (298: 1) SAYS

They also forbade ‘Kalach’ which is a woolly substance which grows on the rocks of the ocean in seaside towns, to mix together with linen because of *Maris Hoayin*.

Source: Mishnah: (Kilayim 9:2) *Kalach* is not *Kilayim* but it is forbidden because of its appearance.

What is Kalach?

The Gemara (Shabbos 20b) discusses which materials should not be used for making the wick for the Shabbos lamp.

One of the materials listed is *Kalach*.

The **Gemora** asks: What is *Kalach*? **Rav Yitzchok the son of Ze’ira** says it is ‘*Gushkara*’.

Rashi explains:

Gushkara is a silk fabric made from an inferior grade of silk. It is made from those cocoons whose threads were broken in thousands of places when their occupants emerged.

These broken cocoons are boiled to remove the gum and then “carded” like wool, spun, and then woven into cloth. This silk is unsuitable for use as a wick because its flame flickers.

Kalach is similar to wool and therefore the *Chachomim* prohibited the mixture of *Kalach* with linen. It is similar to wool because a thread spun from “carded” silk will be hairy like wool. (*Rambam Commentary Kilayim 9:2*)

The **Rambam’s** commentary refers to *Kalach* as a type of silk even though in his Halachic work (*Kilayim 10:1*), the Rambam describes it as a woolly substance with a golden hue, which grows on the rocks of the ocean. It is very soft like wool and for this reason it was prohibited because of *Maris Hoayin* with linen.

The source of the **Rambam** in his Halachic work:

The *Gemora* in Shabbos 20b states:

Shmuel said - I asked all the seafarers about this substance (*Kalach*) and they told me that *Kulcha* is its name.

The **Rambam** states:

That this Gemora is saying that *Kalach* is a wooly substance found on stones in the sea.

The **Mechaber** explained *Kalach* according to the way the Rambam described it in his Halachic work, which is referring to the wooly substance found on stones in the sea.

According to both interpretations whether *Kalach* is a type of silk, or a wooly substance, it is something the Chachomim prohibited to mix with linen.

Question: Why did the **Mechaber** choose to explain *Kalach* is a wooly substance and not a type of silk which appears like wool?

The **Mechaber** concludes:

Today since silk is commonly found and everyone is familiar with it there is no risk of confusion and therefore it is not forbidden because of *Maris Hoayin* and silk and wool or silk and linen is permitted.

The **Mechaber** does not permit the wooly substances found on stones together with linen nowadays. All grades of silk however, are permitted with either wool or linen.

Therefore,

The prohibition of *Maris Hoayin* concerning the wooly substance found on the rocks still applies today.

This is why the **Mechaber** chose this interpretation of *Kalach* to imply it is still prohibited today because of *Maris Hoayin*.