

Judaism Does Not Prescribe Moderation

Cultivating a “middle path” (“Finding the Right Balance—Everything in Moderation Except Moderation,” Spring 2011) makes as much sense spiritually as it does physically. Follow health recommendations half the time and you’ll be half healthy. Be just and righteous half the time and you’ll be half Jewish. The prophet Amos warned against self-indulgence (6:4–6), and those who ignored his warning paid dearly. Let’s not go that way again.

Judaism is not a moderate prescription. As Deuteronomy (6:4–9) instructs us: “Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord alone. You must love the Lord your God with *all* your heart, with *all* your soul, and with *all* your might.”

Pat Cohen Dix
Bloomfield, Connecticut

Dress Codes on the *Bimah*

Notably, Don Levey, the author of the “Yes” opinion featured in “Should We Require Dress Codes for a Shabbat *Aliyah*?” (“Debatable,” Spring 2011) is from Massachusetts, and Rick Blumenthal, who wrote the “No” perspective, is from the LA area.

Growing up in Livingston, New Jersey, it never occurred to me to walk into the temple sanctuary on Shabbat without at least a jacket and tie.

When we first attended the congregation we later joined in Southern California, my wife in a dress, me in a three-piece suit, we were greeted warmly at the door, told we looked very nice, and informed that we never had to get that dressed up again. This change made

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me uncomfortable; it took me a while to begin dressing as everybody else did.

Now I find that, with the exception of special occasions, such as the High Holy Days or a bar mitzvah, I dress pretty casually, even on the *bimah*. I won’t wear shorts or jeans, but often I do not put on a tie.

Perhaps the attire differences on the *bimah* are more a matter of West Coast-East Coast divergence than a show of respect, or lack thereof.

Rick Shafarman
Saugus, California

Proper dress for receiving an *aliyah* depends on where you are.

I regularly attend Friday night services at my Brooklyn *shul* in my standard attire of jeans and sneakers, as do many others.

Similarly dressed, I occasionally attend our Saturday morning lay-led *minyan*, and often have the honor of

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