

The RYS Daily 9/26/06 Acme of Modesty I

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THE ACME OF MODESTY AND VIRTUE

His concealment of his deeds and behavior led to his attainment of modesty, simplicity and humility in life. He always behaved as an ordinary Jew, not allowing himself to be served by anyone. Nor did he engage in the practice of conferring berachot upon others. His behavior was entirely inconspicuous; no one could discern any particular piety in him. Even in prayer, intense as his fervor undoubtedly was, he restrained his emotions and suppressed all outward manifestations. One scholar described R. Israel praying on Yom Kippur in these terms, as "standing immobile. Only streaks of blood appeared to pass incessantly in the veins of his temple, while streams of tears poured down from his eyes." His dress was no different from that of the masses. He wore no fur coat or special headgear as was the prevailing custom in Russia. Nothing at all unusual could be noted in him, except for the luster of his face which seemed radiant with some celestial light, his enchanting, handsome features, the neatness of his clothing and his refined manners — all of which bespoke wisdom and nobility.

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