

Modesty and Humility in Jewish Leadership

Source 1- Micah 6:8 מיכה 6:8

ח הַגִּיד לְךָ אָדָם, מֶה-טוֹב; וּמָה-
יְהוָה דּוֹרֵשׁ מִמֶּךָ, כִּי אִם-עֲשׂוֹת
מִשְׁפָּט וְאַהֲבַת חֶסֶד, וְהִצַּנֵּעַ לְכַת,
עִם-אֱלֹהֶיךָ. {ס}

8 It has been told you, O man, what is good, and what the LORD requires of you: only to act justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God.

Source 2- Babylonion Talmud Megillah 13a-b מסכתא מגילה

R. Elazar said: It is written [Job, xxxvi. 7]: "He withdraws not his eyes from the righteous." In reward of the modesty of Rachel, King Saul descended from her; and in reward of Saul's modesty Esther descended from him. Wherein was Rachel modest?.... And when Leah was brought in her stead, Rachel said: My sister will be put to shame. So she confided to her the signs. And this is what is written: "And it came to pass that in the morning, Behold, it is Leah." That means, till the morning he knew it not....

Source 3- Babylonion Talmud Sotah 40a מסכתא סוטה

... לא צריך ליה לדידך, והאי דגחין וזקיף עליה, יקרא בעלמא הוא דעביד ליה; אזלא דביתהו ואמרה ליה
לרבי אבהו, אמר לה: ומאי נפקא לך מינה? מיני ומניה יתקלס עילאה

What do they say in the concluding service of the Day of Atonement?... R. Abbahu said: At first I used to recite them; but when I saw that R. Abba of Acco did not recite them I also did not. R. Abbahu also said: At first I used to think that I was humble; but when I saw R. Abba of Acco offer one explanation and his Amora offer another without his taking exception. I considered that I was not humble. How did R. Abbahu display humility? — The wife of R. Abbahu's Amora said to R. Abbahu's wife, 'My husband has no need of [instruction from] your husband; and when he bends down and straightens himself, he merely pays him respect' R. Abbahu's wife went and reported this to him, and he said to her, 'Why worry about it? Through me and him the All-Highest is praised'.