

“Taking off the Veil”

By Rabbi David Wolpe

In the Talmud, Rava decreed that no one is truly a scholar “whose inside is not like his outside.”

In our lives we all seek the seamlessness of character that allows us to be what we appear to be. This seems to be the deep significance of the *badeken*, the veiling that occurs before a wedding. Each of us wears a veil, a means by which we conceal ourselves in the course of daily life. One person’s veil is a professional persona, another’s is a smile, a third hides behind unhappiness. Under the chuppah the veil is lifted, for each life should be blessed with one person before whom no masks, no pretence, no veil is required. Without that we can never know another, and never know ourselves.

Lacking a faithful mirror we lose touch with who we are. In his poem *Modern Love*, George Meredith wrote, “We are betrayed by what is false within.” If modern love entails only appearances and deep dissembling, it cannot succeed. Yet if we find someone before whom our soul can speak its truth there will be honesty and beauty. We will have met Rava’s exacting criteria, matching what is inside of us with what we present to the world.