

LINSEY-WOOLSEY
Rabbi David Levin-Kruss

Sources

1. Vayikra 19:19

...You shall not put on cloth from a mixture of two kinds of material.	וּבְגָד כְּלָאִים שֶׁעֵטָנָה לֹא יַעֲלֶה עֲלֶיךָ.
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2. Devarim 22:11

You shall not wear cloth combining wool and linen.	לֹא תִלְבַּשׁ שְׁעֵטָנָה צֻמְרָה וּפְשָׁתִים יַחְדָּו.
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Reasons

3. Vayikra 19:19

You shall observe My laws...	אֶת-חֻקֹּתַי תִּשְׁמְרוּ...
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4. Breishit 3:21

And the L-rd G-d made garments of skins for Adam and his wife, and clothed them.	וַיַּעַשׂ ה' אֱלֹקִים לְאָדָם וּלְאִשְׁתּוֹ כְּתָנוּת עוֹר וַיִּלְבָּשֵׁם.
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5. Breishit 4:3-5

In the course of time, Cain brought an offering to the L-rd from the fruit of the soil; and Abel, for his part, brought the choicest of the firstling of his flock. The L-rd paid heed to Abel and his offering but to Cain and his offering He paid no heed...	וַיְהִי מִקֶּץ יָמִים וַיָּבֵא קַיִן מִפְּרִי הָאֲדָמָה מִנְחָה לַה'. וְהָבֵל הֵבִיא גַם-הוּא מִבְּכֹרוֹת צֹאנוֹ וּמִחֻלְבֵּהֶן וַיִּשַׁע ה' אֶל-הָבֵל וְאֶל-מִנְחָתוֹ. וְאֶל-קַיִן וְאֶל-מִנְחָתוֹ לֹא שָׁעָה וַיִּחַר לְקַיִן מְאֹד וַיְפֹלוּ פָּנָיו.
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6. Breishit 1:11-12

And G-d said, "Let the earth sprout vegetation: seed-bearing plants, fruit trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit with the seeds in it." And it was so. The earth brought forth vegetation: seed-bearing plants of very kind, and trees of every kind bearing fruit with the seed in it and G-d saw that this was good.	וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹקִים תִּדְשָׂא הָאָרֶץ דָּשָׂא עֵשֶׂב מִזְרִיעַ זָרַע עֵץ פְּרִי עֵשֶׂה פְּרִי לְמִינֹו אֲשֶׁר זָרְעוּ-בוֹ עַל-הָאָרֶץ וַיְהִי-כֵן. וַתּוֹצֵא הָאָרֶץ דָּשָׂא עֵשֶׂב מִזְרִיעַ זָרַע לְמִינֵהוּ וְעֵץ עֵשֶׂה-פְּרִי אֲשֶׁר זָרְעוּ-בוֹ לְמִינֵהוּ וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹקִים כִּי-טוֹב.
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7. Breishit 1:24-25

G-d said, "Let the earth bring forth every kind of living creature: cattle, creeping things, and wild beasts of every kind." And it was so. G-d made wild beasts of every kind, and all kinds of creeping things of the earth. And G-d saw that this was good.	וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹקִים תּוֹצֵא הָאָרֶץ נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה לְמִינֵהּ בְּהֵמָה וָרֶמֶשׂ וְחַיֵּיתוֹ-אָרֶץ לְמִינֵהּ וַיְהִי-כֵן וַיַּעַשׂ אֱלֹקִים אֶת-חַיֵּית הָאָרֶץ לְמִינֵהּ וְאֶת-הַבְּהֵמָה לְמִינֵהּ וְאֶת-כָּל-רֶמֶשׂ הָאֲדָמָה לְמִינֵהוּ וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹקִים כִּי-טוֹב.
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8. Ramban Vayikra 19:19

...One who combined two different species, thereby changes and defies the work of Creation, as if he is	המרכיב שני מיניו, משנה ומכחיש במעשה בראשית,
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thinking that the Holy One, blessed be He, has not completely perfected the world and he desires to help along in the creation of the world by adding to it new kinds of creatures...	כאילו יחשוב שלא השלים הקב"ה בעולמו כל הצורך ויחפוץ הוא לעזור בבריאתו של עולם להוסיף בו בריות.
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9. R. Hirsch Shmot 23:19

In an animal thought and movement are entirely in the service of the vegetative side... Man is different...He was endowed with the breath of G-d...The vegetative is to submit to the animal and both to the human intellect...Now, their function is no longer to mutually intermix and serve each other, but both to subordinate themselves to the "human"...

10. R. Kook, Fragments of Light

The legal iniquity in the ownership of property is registered in the prohibition of wearing a mixed garment of wool and linen. We are inhibited from the free mixing of wool, which was taken by robbery from the innocent sheep, with cotton, which was acquired by equitable, pleasant and cultured labor. The animal will yet rise in cultural status through the control of a higher moral sense, so that its readiness for idealistic participation with man will not be strange or far away.

11. Vayikra 20:23

You shall not follow the practices of the nation that I am driving out before you...	וְלֹא תִלְכוּ בְחֻקֵי הַגּוֹי אֲשֶׁר-אֲנִי מְשַׁלַּח מִפְּנֵיכֶם ...
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12. Rambam Moreh Nevuchim 3:37

We have explained in our large work that it is prohibited to round the corners of the head, and to mar the corners of the beard, because it was the custom of idolatrous priests. For the same reason, the wearing of garments made of linen and wool is prohibited: the heathen priests adorned themselves with garments containing vegetable and animal material, whilst they held in their hand a seal made of a mineral. This you find written in their books.

13. Kilaim 9:1

The priests wear for service in the temple only wool and linen.	אִין הַכֹּהֲנִים לֹבָשִׁים לְשֵׁמֶשׁ בְּבֵית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ אֵלָא צִמְרָא וּפְשִׁתִּים.
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14. Yevamot 3b-4a

A positive precept supersedes a negative precept ...It is written, "You shall not wear cloth combining wool and linen" and "You shall make tassels on the four corners of the garment with which you cover yourself."	אֵתִי עֲשֵׂה וְדָחִי לֹא תַעֲשֶׂה...דְּכָתִיב לֹא תִלְבַּשׁ שַׁעֲטָנָא גְדִילִים תַּעֲשֶׂה לָךְ
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15. Josephus Antiquities 4:8:11

Let not any one of you wear a garment made of woolen and linen, for that is appointed to be for the priests alone.

Shatnez

ONE - Shatnez is a word of non-Hebraic origin

Maybe Egyptian word

Coptic language, which is linguistically distantly related to Hebrew, the phrase *sasht nouz*, which is possibly cognate to *shatnez*, means *false weave*

Septuagint which translates the term as *false/adulterated/drossy*.

Mishna makes puns

TWO - Foreign to people at time so had to explain it

THREE - Chukim = opportunities to do G-d's will

FOUR - Clothing distinguishes us from animals

Holy in dress

FIVE - Mystical

It is forbidden because sheep were the sacrifice of Abel while linen was the sacrifice of Cain.

The first murder recorded in the Bible was over a dispute based on sacrifices of linen (by Cain) and sheep/wool (by Abel)

One midrash traces the prohibition against shatnez to the story of Cain and Abel. In the Torah, Cain brings G-d an offering of sheep, and Abel brings some sort of plant offering. For reasons not explained in the biblical text, G-d accepts Abel's offering, but rejects Cain's. Angry about this show of preference, Cain murders his brother. The midrash specifies that Abel brought G-d flax seeds, and Cain brought wooly sheep. After Cain killed Abel, G-d decreed that "the offering of the sinner should not be mixed with the offering of the innocent (*Midrash Tanhuma B'reishit* 9:9)."

The Zohar links the ban on wool and linen garments to the story of Cain and Abel. Cain brought an offering of produce of the land while Abel brought an offering from the best of his flock — each from the two separate domains. The bringing together of the two reminds us of this first horrific crime of fratricide. That the law of shatnez appears in Vayikra, right next to the commandment of "love your neighbor as yourself" testifies to this link of preventing brotherly discord. Keeping boundaries clear prevents a confusion of roles.

Linen is a product of a river agricultural economy, such as that of the Nile Valley, while wool is a product of a desert, pastoral economy, such as that of the Hebrew tribes. Mixing the two together symbolically mixes Egypt and the Hebrews

SEVEN - human encroachments upon divine law of creation

Force plant and animal species that by nature are closed to one another to unite in unnatural couplings

Leminehu

Each has own purpose

Mixing of distinct characteristics

Anthropological - Mary Douglas - general aversion to the mixing of categories found in the Leviticus holiness code

The laws of shatnez are positioned near laws relating to other forbidden combinations.

Here we have the prohibitions against grafting, of crossbreeding, and of course shatnez.

There is a general preference in Torah for keeping entities separate and compartmentalized, and an aversion to combining items of distinct domains.

In her work Purity and Danger, anthropologist Mary Douglas theorizes while explaining the laws of kashrut that the laws are about symbolic boundary maintenance. Prohibited foods do not fall clearly into any category. Similarly, shatnez's forbidding of wool and linen is the prohibition of the mixing of the animal and vegetable world.

Josephus – nature does not rejoice in the union of things that are not by their nature alike

Classical Kabbalah regarded such combinations as a defiance of G-d, because according to them G-d had given each species individuality.

The Moralistic: The 13th century Sefer haHinuch tells us that when G-d created the world, each worldly creation was allotted a heavenly authority to guide its own mission and help fulfill its growth potential. The mixing of certain species obstructs these Divine plans and weakens the heavenly powers that govern the earthly creations. We too must be clear on who we are and what is uniquely expected of us.

EIGHT - unnatural tinkering with the divinely ordained world.

NINE - Hirsch - Wool – animal

Linen – vegetative

Animals have both together

People have to separate

Not down to vegetative but up to G-d

A reminder to man that he must guard his assigned purpose and place in the world just as the species must be distinctly preserved

TEN - glimpse of a future world, in which animals will achieve a higher status

The Animal Rights Perspective: Rabbi Kook explains that the mitzvah of shatnez is to teach us thoughtfulness and sensitivity toward animals. Wool comes from animals, linen comes from plants. The Torah allows us to utilize animals for human benefit and

consumption. Nevertheless, we should not see animals as being akin to inanimate objects such as plant life.

TWELVE - Rational

such mixtures were worn by gentile priests
general law against imitating Canaanite customs.

THIRTEEN - priestly garments had wool and linen

Rabbinical Judaism maintains that *Shatnez* was permitted in the case of the priest's girdle, which was interwoven with purple, blue, scarlet, and fine linen. According to the Rabbis, the purple, blue, and scarlet were made from wool,

High priest's robe and covering of ark were shatnez

Permitted for cultic use

survivals of ancient magical taboos, mixtures were considered to be holy and/or were forfeited to a sanctuary

FOURTEEN - Rabbinical Judaism requires that shatnez must be used also in the case of the tekhelet cord entwined in the *tzitzit*, or the woolen *tzitzit* on a linen garment as the sacredness of the *tzitzit* is supposed by Talmudic commentators to protect against any evil effect from mixing fabrics.

The contemporary Bible scholar Dr. Jacob Milgrom explains as such:

The *tzitzit* are then an exception to the Torah's general injunction against wearing garments of mixed seed. . .The resemblance to the high priest's turban and other priestly clothing can be no accident. It is a conscious attempt to encourage all Israel to aspire to a degree of holiness comparable to that of the priests ("*Tzitzit*" in *Etz Hayim Humash*).

FIFTEEN - Some say that this was forbidden because such mixtures were reserved for the priests

Hybrids appropriate only for G-d or priests

Josephus – keep laity from wearing priest's clothing

It would be inappropriate for common people to wear *shatnez* outside the Temple, when that fabric comprised the holy vestments of the Kohen Gadol for use in the Temple Service

Insofar as wool and linen mixtures, like other forbidden products, belong to the realm of G-d, these are forbidden for ordinary human use. Such materials are specifically prescribed for moments when human beings are able to transcend the world of the ordinary and enter into the divine world.