דיני כיסוי ראש

כה. לא ילך ארבע אמות בגילוי ראש. [ש"ע ס"ו]. ואף על פי שהעיקר לדינא שהוא ממדת חסידות, מכל מקום בזמן הזה הוא יותר ממידת חסידות ויש להחמיר בזה יותר, כי כיסוי הראש מעיד על שייכות למחנה שומרי התורה והמצוות, והכיפה שעל הראש הינה היכר מיוחד בין עובד אלקים לאשר לא עבדו, ששומרי המצוות נזהרים ללכת תמיד בכיסוי ראש, והפכה הכפה שעל הראש לסמל ולמופת, שהוא שייך למחנה הדתי, ומורא שמים עליו. ומי שהולך בגילוי ראש יש לחוש בו משום מראית העין שיחשדוהו לפורק עול מלכות שמים מעליו. [יחו"ד ח"ד סי' א, יבי"א ח"ט סי' א]

וכל שכן שהבא במחיצתו של רב גדול בישראל, שמתורת דרך ארץ, עליו לכסות את ראשו כהלכה (וכמו שאמרו בקידושין לג ע"א). [יבי"א שם]

וביותר יש ליזהר שלא לברך, או להוציא הזכרת ה' מפיו בראש מגולה [ראה ש"ע סי' צא ס"ג], וכן יש להזהר ולהזהיר שלא להיכנס לבית הכנסת בגלוי הראש. [שם]. ראה לקמן בסימן צ"א.

Covering One's Head

Day 29

Importance of covering the head

25) One should not walk the distance of four cubits while bareheaded. Although this is technically the practice of the devout and it is not strictly forbidden to go bareheaded, in our times it has become quite important to always have one's head covered. This identifies a person as being a Jew who believes in the Torah and observes the mitzvot. The yarmulke has become a symbol of those who are mitzvah-observant, whereas going bareheaded symbolizes one's rejection of these sacred values. It has become the norm for observant Jews to always keep their heads covered. Therefore, anyone who goes bareheaded [when among other Jews] is likely guilty of casting suspicion on himself that he is not observant. It is forbidden to cast such suspicions on oneself.

When in the presence of an eminent Torah scholar or a leading rabbi, it is especially important to cover one's head as a gesture of respect for this great man. Likewise, it is very important to avoid reciting a blessing or to mention God's Name while bareheaded.[91] See below in *Siman* 91.

91. *Shome'a ka'one* while bareheaded

If someone wishes to listen to another person reciting a blessing on his behalf, the listener must not be bareheaded, just as if he was reciting the blessing himself. This is the ruling of the *Bayit Hadash* (*Siman* 183) and the *Peri Megadim* (*Mishbetzot Zahav* 183:3).

כו. מידת חסידות שלא ילך אפילו פחות מארבע אמות בגילוי הראש. [משנ"ב ס"ק יא, כה"ח ס"ק טז]. ואפילו אם יושב ואינו הולך, יש להחמיר. [ברכ"י אות ג, כה"ח ס"ק טז]. ויש ליזהר בכל זה אפילו בבית שיש בו תקרה, וכל שכן תחת אויר השמים. [משנ"ב ס"ק י]

כז. ממידת חסידות שיהיה ראשו מכוסה כל הלילה גם בעת השינה. [של"ה, הו"ד במשנ"ב ס"ק יא, כה"ח ס"ק יח]. ומכל מקום אינו מדינא. [ראה יבי"א ח"ו סי' טו אות ב]

Sitting in one place

26) The practice of the devout has always been not to walk the distance of four cubits while bareheaded.[92] It is advisable to adopt this practice, and in fact to avoid being bareheaded even while sitting in one place.[93] This halakha applies even under a roof and certainly when out in the open.[94]

While sleeping

27) It is an act of piety to keep one's head covered through the night even while sleeping. This is not a halakhic requirement, however.[95]

92. Mahar"i Brona (#34) ruled that there is no prohibition in walking less than four cubits while bareheaded. The *Magen Avraham* (2:6) disagreed and ruled that the pious avoid going bareheaded even when going one step. This is likewise the ruling of Harav HIDA (*Birke Yosef* 2:3) and the *Mishna Berura* (2:11).

93. Mahar"i Brona (#34) ruled that it is permissible to remain bareheaded when sitting in one place. Harav HIDA (*Birke Yosef* 2:3, cited by the *Kaf Hahayim* 2:16), however, cited a number of *Aharonim* who ruled that one should cover one's head even when seated.

While traveling

The *Ture Zahav* (2:5) ruled that when someone is riding an animal or sitting in a moving wagon, it is the same as walking and he should keep his head covered. This ruling is based on the Talmud's statement (*Kiddushin* 33b) that riding has the same status as walking. This would apply as well to someone riding in a car or plane. For us, it really doesn't matter since in our times we make sure to cover our heads at all times, even when actually sitting in one place.

94. Harav Shelomo Luria (responsa #72) ruled that the halakha of keeping one's head covered applies only when someone is out in the open but not when he is inside a building. The *Bayit Hadash* and the *Eliya Rabba* (2:4) disagreed, ruling that the halakha is identical inside a building and out in the open, and this is the ruling of the *Mishna Berura* (2:10). The *Mekor Hayim* (Bachrach) ruled leniently but he admitted that the common custom was to be stringent in this matter.

95. The *Shene Luhot Haberit*, cited by the *Mishna Berura* (2:11) and the *Kaf Hahayim* Sofer (2:18), wrote that it is commendable to keep one's head covered even while sleeping. Maran the Rishon Letziyon (responsa *Yabia Omer* Vol. VI, #15:2) pointed out that the Talmud (*Berakhot* 60b) teaches that, "when someone places his covering on his head [upon awakening in the morning] he recites the blessing of *oter Yisrael betif'ara*." This is not the first morning blessing listed in this passage, however. Several blessings are listed before this one. Rambam (*Hilkhot Tefilla* 7:3, 4) and other *Rishonim* taught that one is to recite the morning blessings in the order that they appear in the Talmud. If so, it must be that the Talmud tells us to recite the first few blessings bareheaded, before we cover our heads and recite the blessing of *oter Yisrael betif'ara*. Maran likewise understood the passage in this manner, as he wrote in the *Bet Yosef* (*Siman* 46). Harav Eliyahu of Vilna (*Bi'ur Hagr"a* 8:6) concurred that technically it is permissible to pronounce God's Name while bareheaded, but that it is a recommended act of piety to always cover one's head when pronouncing it. He cited this passage in *Berakhot* as proof for his ruling. Obviously then, a person was not expected to keep his head covered while sleeping.

It is possible to argue that the Talmud's case is someone who slept with a small cap on his head so that he was not bareheaded even when he recited the first blessings. When donning his hat or turban, he would recite the blessing of *oter Yisrael betif'ara*. Nevertheless, it is clear that Maran and Harav Eliyahu of Vilna understood that the first blessings were recited while bareheaded, and the instructions of the *Shene Luhot Haberit* are for the pious and

כח. ראוי שהכיפה תהיה בשיעור שתכסה את כל הראש, או על כל פנים את רובו. ומכל מקום גם בכיפה קטנה אפשר להקל, ובלבד שתהיה נראית היטב מכל צדדי הראש, מלפנים ומאחור. אולם אין להקל בכיפה קטנה שבקושי אפשר להבחין בה. [יחו"ד ח"ד סי' א]

ובשעת קריאת שמע ותפלה, וכל שכן בברכת המזון, ראוי להקפיד לחבוש כובע, או לכל הפחות כיפה המכסה את רוב הראש. [שם]. וראה בילקוט יוסף מהדו' אנגלית הלכות ברכות סימן קפ"ג הלכה ט"ז.

כט. הנחת היד על הראש של עצמו, מועילה שלא יחשב גילוי ראש [א"ר אות ה, הו"ד במשנ"ב ס"ק יא, ובכה"ח ס"ק יז, וסי' צא ס"ק כ], אולם אינה נחשבת כיסוי כדי שילך ד' אמות תחת אויר השמים, וכל שכן שאין זה נחשב כיסוי לענין שיוציא מפיו ברכות ודברי קדושה. [ראה משנ"ב סוס"ק יא בשם הפמ"ג, ובס"ק יב, עפ"ד הש"ע סי' צא ס"ד. ובכה"ח שם ס"ק כ]. אולם אם מושך את השרוול של בגדו על ידו, ומכסה את ראשו, נחשב כיסוי אף לענין זה. [משנ"ב ס"ק יב וסי' צא ס"ק י, וכה"ח שם סוף סק"כ]

Proper size of a yarmulke

28) A proper yarmulke is one that covers the entire head or at least most of it. There is a basis for leniency to wear a smaller yarmulke, but it should be worn in a way that is visible to others from any direction, whether they are in front of this person or behind him. It is incorrect, however, to wear a yarmulke so small that people do not see it on one's head.

When reciting the *Shema*, the *Amidah* and certainly when reciting *Birkat Hamazon*, it is highly recommended to wear a hat or at least a large yarmulke that covers the majority of one's head.[96] See the *Yalkut Yosef Berakhot English Edition* (Vol. II, page 179).

Covering head with a hand

29) If someone covers his head with his own hand, he is no longer considered bareheaded, but this does not permit him to walk the distance of four cubits outside in the open. [It does permit him to walk about inside a building.] He certainly may not recite blessings or passages of the prayers. Nevertheless, if someone pulls his shirtsleeve down over his hand and then places his hand on his own head, this is

devout. The *Leket Yosher* (page 46) cited Harav Yisrael Isserlin ruling that it is permissible to sleep bareheaded.

96. Harav Shelomo Kluger (responsa *Ha'elef Lekha Shelomo O.H.*, #3) ruled that it is forbidden to go completely bareheaded, but technically it is sufficient to cover a small portion of the head.The pious, however, cover the majority of the head at all times. He brought proofs for this ruling. This appears to be the opinion of the *Peri Megadim* (*Eshel Avraham* 2:6) as well. Maran the Rishon Letziyon (responsa *Yehave Da'at*) refuted this ruling, demonstrating that Rabbenu Meir of Rothenberg, the *Orhot Hayim* and the *Kol Bo* all ruled that there is no real prohibition against going completely bareheaded.

The responsa *Igrot Moshe* (*O.H.* #1) cited the ruling of the *Shulhan Arukh* (91:4) that if someone places his hand on his bare head he still may not pronounce God's Name, explaining that since the hand is part of the same person it is not considered a covering. Maran deduced from this that if someone else places his hand on this person's head, this person may recite blessings. This is proof that partially covering the head is sufficient to permit reciting blessings.

Maran the Rishon Letziyon ruled that it is recommended to wear a yarmulke that covers the entire head or at least most of it, citing the responsa *Teshurat Shai* and *Sho'el Venish'al*. Nevertheless, he maintained that there is a basis to permit a smaller yarmulke as long as it is visible from all directions. There is no basis to permit reciting blessings while wearing a yarmulke so small that it is visible only from one side of the head. Harav Ovadya Hadaya (responsa *Yaskil Avdi* Vol. VI, page 292a) testified that he often rebuked people for wearing a tiny yarmulke that covers only a small portion of the head.

ולכן אם נפלה ממנו הכיפה ברחוב, והולך להביאה ממרחק של יותר מד' אמות, יכסה ראשו בשרוולו.

[ראה ילקו"י עמ' רמא]

ל. אם אדם אחר מניח ידו על ראשו, נחשב כיסוי אף כדי שיוכל לברך ולהזכיר שם ה'. [שו"ע סי' צא ס"ד]

considered a proper head covering for those purposes as well. Therefore, if someone's yarmulke blows off his head and rolls down the street, he should cover his head in this manner while chasing it so that he does not walk four cubits while bareheaded.[97]

Someone else's hand

30) If another person places his hand on someone's head, it is considered covered and he may even recite blessings and pronounce God's Name.

97. The *Terumat Hadeshen* (#10) ruled that it is forbidden to pray while covering one's bare head with one's hand since both are limbs of the same body. Maran in the *Bet Yosef* deduced from this that it is permissible for a person to pray if someone else places his hand on that person's head, and he ruled accordingly in the *Shulḥan Arukh* (91:4). This is the ruling of the *Ḥaye Adam*, the *Ḥesed La'alafim* and the *Ben Ish Ḥai*, all cited by the *Kaf Haḥayim* Sofer (91:20).Although Harav Shelomo Luria (responsa #72) ruled that a person may pray while covering his head with his own hand, the *Magen Avraham* (91:4) rejected that opinion.

Regarding the status of being bareheaded

The *Eliya Rabba* (91:5) ruled that although it is insufficient to use one's hand to cover one's head while praying, it is sufficient to permit one to walk the distance of four cubits or more. This is cited by the *Mishna Berura* (2:11) and the *Kaf Haḥayim* Sofer (2:17; 91:20). The *Peri Megadim* (*Mishbetzot Zahav* 2:5), however, ruled that a person may not walk four cubits even if he covers his head with his hand. The *Mishna Berura* concludes his discussion concurring with this opinion. Accordingly, covering one's head with one's hand helps only if one sits in one place or when walking about inside a building.

It does not appear that Maran agrees with the distinction made by the *Eliya Rabba*. Therefore, one's own hand is not considered a head covering for any purpose. The *Eliya Rabba* based his ruling on the *Ture Zahav* (8:3). The *Ture Zahav* ruled that going bareheaded constitutes a transgression of "going in the ways of non-Jews." By covering one's head with one hand, one demonstrates that one is not emulating non-Jewish practices. Nevertheless, it does not permit one to pray in that manner.

If so, this distinction made by the *Eliya Rabba* is based on sound logic.

According to Maran, however, there is no basis for this distinction, unless we say that covering one's head with one's hand demonstrates that one is aware of the Shekhina's presence and is fearful of God. Since the entire rule of keeping one's head covered is a practice of the devout and not an absolute obligation, it is possible to say that it is sufficient stringency to be careful not to go completely bareheaded. If one's hand is on one's head, it is not necessary to refrain from walking about. On the other hand, since there are *Poskim* who ruled that it is forbidden to walk about bareheaded, we should not rely on this leniency. The *Aderet Yaakov* (commentary on the *Ben Ish Ḥai*, page 7) deduced from the *Ben Ish Ḥai* (*parashat Vayishlaḥ* halakha 16) that it does not help at all to cover one's head with one's hand. He admitted, however, that this is not necessarily the *Ben Ish Ḥai's* opinion. Since Maran the Rishon Letziyon ruled that the entire halakha of covering one's head is a matter for the devout, we have a sound basis to be lenient in this matter.

The *Kaf Haḥayim* Sofer did not bother to cite the stringent ruling of the *Peri Megadim*, and neither did the *Halakha Berura* (page 33). Apparently, this is because the *Peri Megadim* followed the *Ture Zahav*, as mentioned above. Since we do not follow the *Turei Zahav* but rather we follow the explanation that covering the head is necessary to demonstrate one's fear of Heaven, we can say that this is accomplished by covering one's head with one's hand.

The *Yalkut Yosef* (Vol. I, page 241), however, cited the opinion of the *Peri Megadim* as the halakha in practice. Therefore, he ruled that if someone's yarmulke blows away he should cover his head with his shirtsleeve, and not one's bare hand, while he chases it. Since it is possible that Maran agrees with this, it is best to follow this stringency.