לד. מותר להכניס "רדיו טרנזיסטור" לחדר האמבטיה, ולשמוע ממנו דברי תורה בעת שעומד שם ערום להתרחץ. ואפילו אם משמיעים ברדיו, "שידור חי" ממקור ראשון בעת שהמרצה מדבר בדברי תורה, מותר. אולם אין להתיר בזה אלא בחדר אמבטיה שאין שם בית כסא, אבל אם משמש גם לבית כסא, יש להחמיר לאסור להרהר שם בדברי תורה. [יביע"א ח"ה סי' יא אות ד-ה, ח"ט סי' קח אות יג]

לה. כל שיש צורך מותר לישב בגילוי הראש, בפרט אם יש חשש הפסד פרנסה בשביל כך. אבל אם אין הכרח אל יתירא מפני לעג השאננים. [תשובת כת"י למרן הראש"ל משנת תרצ"ז, ראה ילקו"י עמ' רלו בהערה]

Day 32

Listening to Torah in the shower

34) It is permissible to listen to a Torah lecture over the radio while taking a shower although one is completely naked. This is true even if it is a live broadcast. This is so, however, only if there is no toilet in the bathroom. If there is a toilet in the room, it is forbidden to think at all about any Torah topics while inside.[103]

Bareheaded when necessary

35) It is permissible to remain bareheaded when it is necessary. This is especially so if one fears that wearing a yarmulke would adversely affect one's livelihood. If the only problem is that irreligious people mock those who display that they are observant Jews, one should face them fearlessly.[104]

103. Maran the Rishon Letziyon (responsa *Yabia Omer* Vol. V, #11) ruled that it is permissible to think about Torah topics while in a household shower, explaining that its status is equal to the outer room of a public bathhouse. Although some of the people in that room are naked, it is nevertheless permissible to think about Torah topics while there. Our Sages taught (*Shabbat* 150a), "Speaking [words of Torah] is forbidden, but thinking about them is permissible."

One might argue that although it is permissible to think about Torah topics, listening to someone else teach Torah is another matter. When someone learns Torah by listening to another person, it is as if he says the words himself, employing the concept of *shome'a ka'one*. Nevertheless, Maran the Rishon Letziyon explained that this concept applies only when listening to a voice emanating from a human throat. When listening to a radio broadcast, even if it is a live broadcast, one hears only a mechanically reproduced copy of the speaker's voice. If so, it is no different than listening to a recorded speech – the concept of *shome'a ka'one* does not apply. For this reason, it is not possible to fulfill the mitzvah of listening to *Megillat Esther* on Purim or the shofar blows on Rosh Hashanah over the radio. See the *Yalkut Yosef Purim English Edition* (*Siman* 690:30) and *Yalkut Yosef Yamim Nora'im English Edition* (*Siman* 589:3).

Thus, listening to a radio is not considered to be equal to speaking; it is equal only to thinking. Once we have established that a home bathroom has the status of the outer room of a public bathhouse, it becomes plain that it is permissible to listen to a Torah lecture over the radio while showering.

This ruling applies only to a home bathroom that has no toilet installed. If there is a toilet, it is forbidden to listen to the radio broadcast. Our toilets have the status of a regular *bet hakise* where it is forbidden even to think about Torah topics. Our toilets are not equal to the Persian *bet hakise* described in the Talmud, as Maran the Rishon Letziyon explained in responsa *Yabia Omer* (Vol. III, #2; Vol. IX, #108:13) and in responsa *Yehave Da'at* (Vol. III, #1). See the *Yalkut Yosef Berakhot English Edition* I (page 223).

104. Retail stores, banks and government offices

The responsa *Igrot Moshe* (Vol. IV, #2) deals with a person who was afraid that if he appears at his job interview while wearing a yarmulke he would not be accepted for the job, but once he would be hired he would be able to wear it while working. Rav Moshe ruled leniently, explaining that according to the Talmud and most *Poskim* there is no prohibition in going about bareheaded, although it is commendable to always have one's head covered. Although it has become standard to keep one's head covered at all times, and thus it has assumed the status of a genuine custom, it does not carry greater weight than a genuine *mitzvat ase*. Therefore, when faced with a hefty loss for observing this practice, one is not obligated to make such a sacrifice. Financial pressure is sufficient to override

לו. מי שהיה מתפלל בביתו, ונפלה הכיפה שעל ראשו באמצע התפלה, ולא הרגיש עד לאחר שסיים תפלתו, שאז ראה את כיפתו מושלכת בארץ, בדיעבד יצא ידי חובת תפלה, וכל שכן אילו היה דבר זה בשאר ברכות שיצא ידי חובה בדיעבד. [יבי"א ח"ו סי' טו אות ו, ח"ט סי' א אות ו]

Praying while bareheaded

36) If someone was praying [the *Amida*] alone at home and his yarmulke fell off his head during his prayers without him noticing it until he finished, his prayer is valid and he does not have to repeat it. This is certainly the case if someone recited some other blessing while bareheaded – the blessing is valid.[105]

the constraints of a *mitzvat ase*, as we find in the *Shulhan Arukh* (*O.H.* 656, with comment 7 of *Magen Avraham*). One is certainly permitted to go bareheaded in such a case since there is no Torah prohibition involved or even an institution of our Sages.

Finding a job to support one's family is considered at least as important as a case of a hefty loss; forfeiting the job is a much greater loss than sacrificing a fifth of one's capital. Although the *Ture Zahav* ruled that going bareheaded is forbidden by the Torah because it means imitating non-Jewish behavior, that does not apply in our modern society. Therefore, one may definitely be lenient. The responsa *Minhat Yitzhak* (Vol. III, #33:3) pointed out that this leniency cannot be applied in all cases. Each case must be judged individually.

The *Yalkut Yosef* (page 245) agreed that there is a valid opinion permitting one to go bareheaded if one will lose one's job for wearing a yarmulke or hat. He cited a dispute among the *Poskim* whether one is obligated to wear a toupee in such a case. He concluded that each case must be judged individually with a competent rabbi.

A matter of diplomacy

The responsa *Shevut Yaakov* (Vol. III, #5) ruled that if a high-ranking duke pays a visit to a synagogue it is permissible for all those greeting him to doff their hats in his honor since that is what the visitor expects. This is permissible even inside the sanctuary. Harav HIDA (responsa *Yosef Ometz* #16:3), cited by the *Petah Hadevir* (92:2) ruled that if it is possible to persuade the visitor to excuse the Jews from this gesture, this should be done. The *Sede Hemed*, cited in the footnote there, postulated that the *Shevut Yaakov* agreed to this.

In court

The responsa *Vayomer Meir* Vaknin (#4) ruled that if someone is forced to sit bareheaded while in a courtroom, he may not engage in Torah study. He added that he strongly leans toward ruling that it is forbidden to even think about Torah topics while bareheaded, since there are *Poskim* who ruled that thinking is equal to speaking. According to them, he argued, thinking about Torah topics would be a case of trying to fulfill a mitzvah through committing a sin, which is no mitzvah at all.

Maran the Rishon Letziyon (responsa *Yabia Omer* Vol. VI, #15:7; Vol. IX, #1:6) rejected this ruling out of hand. If someone is in a courtroom and is forced to remain bareheaded, is it better for him to waste all the time he spends there in order to fulfill this unwarranted stringency? The Talmud (*Shabbat* 150a) rules clearly that one may think about Torah topics even when completely naked, emphasizing that only speaking words of Torah is forbidden but not thinking. Certainly if someone is dressed except that he is bareheaded, he may think about Torah topics. See above in the footnote to halakha 33.

To avoid desecrating God's Name

The responsa *Igrot Moshe* (Vol. II, #95) dealt with someone who was basically mitzvah observant but who wished to go to the movies. He wanted to know whether he should go bareheaded at those times.

Rav Moshe replied that it is absolutely forbidden to go to movies. It is not possible to suggest that someone should remove his yarmulke when going to such an establishment, adding one sin on top of the other! Nevertheless, if someone is powerless to overcome his evil inclination and he goes to the movies, it might be advisable for him to go bareheaded so that he will not be recognized as a religious Jew. This would be a sensible argument if we could say that the movie-goer makes this decision purely for Heaven's sake. "It seems improbable to me," Rav Moshe declared, "that such a person could have such pure motives. It is more likely that he wants to find an excuse to commit yet another sin by going bareheaded. Therefore, it is not possible to permit it."

105. Our Sages taught (*Soferim* 14:15): Even if someone is barelegged, or if his garments are torn so that his bare flesh is exposed, or if he is bareheaded, he may recite kaddish, *Barekhu* and the *Shema* with its blessings. Others ruled that although this true regarding someone with bare legs or exposed flesh, it is not true regarding someone who is bareheaded, since it is forbidden to pronounce God's Name in such a state.

לז. יש אומרים שבמקום מצוה עוברת כגון ברכת רעמים, יש לברך אף בגילוי הראש. ונכון שיכסה ראשו בידיו. [ביי"א ח"ט סי' א סוף אות ו, וע"ע יבי"א ח"ו סי' טו אות ו]. ונכון יותר שיכסה ראשו בשרוולו, או שחבירו יניח ידו על ראשו (ויברך תוך כדי דיבור לשמיעת הרעם, כמבואר בילקוט יוסף ברכות סימן רכ"ז הלכה י"ב)

Blessing while bareheaded

37) If someone was bareheaded and he suddenly heard a thunderclap, it is technically permissible to recite the appropriate blessing without any head covering [since the blessing must be recited within one second of the thunderclap]. Ideally, he should place his sleeved arm on his head, or place another

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Maran ruled in the *Bet Yosef* that technically it is not forbidden to go about bareheaded, following the ruling of Rabbenu Meir of Rothenberg cited in the *Kol Bo* (#11). The Talmud's statement (*Shabbat* 118b) that "I will be rewarded since I never walk the distance of four cubits while bareheaded," means that this is a practice of the pious. This is likewise clear from Rabbenu Peretz, who ruled that it is forbidden to enter a synagogue while bareheaded [but it is permissible anywhere else]. Furthermore, Rabbenu Yeruḥam (end of Unit 16) ruled that it is forbidden to recite a blessing while bareheaded [implying that at other times it is permitted to be bareheaded]. Maran explained that he ruled according to the second opinion appearing in the above passage of tractate *Soferim*, and he concluded that we follow this ruling.

Thus, the halakha appearing in the *Shulḥan Arukh* (91:5) is, "Some *Poskim* ruled that it is forbidden to pronounce God's Name while bareheaded. Others added that we must not allow people to enter a synagogue while bareheaded."

Maran the Rishon Letziyon (responsa *Yabia Omer* Vol. VI, #15:2) argued that it is clear from the Talmud (*Berakhot* 60b) that it is permissible to pronounce God's Name while bareheaded. While describing the morning blessings that we each are to recite on a daily basis, it states, "When he places his head covering on his head, he is to recite the blessing of עוֹטֵר יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּתִפְאָרָה." Several other blessings were described before this one, and according to Rambam and other *Rishonim* all the blessings are to be recited in the order they appear in the Talmud here. If so, all the blessings listed before this one are recited while one is bareheaded.

Maran agreed with this interpretation, as is clear from the *Bet Yosef* in *Siman* 46. This is likewise the interpretation of Harav Eliyahu of Vilna (glosses on the *Shulḥan Arukh* 8:6). Maran the Rishon Letziyon reconciled this with Maran's rulings in *Siman* 91:3 and 91:6, but then he demonstrated that Maran ruled unequivocally in *Siman* 206:3 that it is forbidden to recite a blessing while bareheaded, just as it is forbidden to pray the *Amida* in such a state. Thus, it seems that there are contradictory rulings by Maran.

Harav Shelomo Luria (responsa #72) offered several proofs that it is permissible to recite a blessing while bareheaded. The *Peri Ḥadash* (91:3) likewise leaned toward the opinion that permits it, but he concluded that we should follow the stringent opinion.

Maran the Rishon Letziyon wrote that although a number of passages in the Talmud demonstrate that it is permissible to recite a blessing while bareheaded, they are not conclusive since one could argue that in all those cases the person really had his head covered. Nevertheless, it is clear that the great *Poskim*, including several *Rishonim*, were fairly confident that it is permitted.

Harav ḤIDA (*Kise Raḥamim* on tractate *Soferim* chapter 14) wrote that although Maran cited the stringent opinion as, "Some *Poskim* ruled," and did not state emphatically that it is forbidden, it nevertheless is proper to be stringent in this matter. This is further proof that it has become an established custom to follow the stringent opinion, as the Maharshal ruled. In fact, Harav Eliyahu of Vilna argued that the stringent opinion cited in tractate *Soferim* does not mean to say that it is absolutely forbidden to recite a blessing while bareheaded, but that one should avoid doing so as a matter of piety. According to this interpretation, it does not contradict the passage in *Berakhot* that shows that it is technically permissible to be bareheaded while reciting blessings, or the Midrash that states clearly that it is permissible to recite the *Shema* while bareheaded.

In summary, it is never forbidden technically to be bareheaded, but when in the presence of a great Torah scholar or while praying the *Amida* it is highly recommended to cover one's head. The pious cover their heads at all times.

Maran the Rishon Letziyon related that someone once approached him with the following question: He had prayed in his home, and when he finished the *Amida* he noticed that his yarmulke had fallen off his head at some time. Is his prayer valid even though he had recited it while bareheaded? The answer he gave the man is that the prayer is valid and he need not repeat it.

לח. יש ליזהר לכסות ראשי הקטנים, שבזה תהיה עליהם יראת שמים. [כה"ח ס"ק יט, וע"ע משנ"ב ס"ק יא]. והוא מזמן שמתחילים ללכת, ולכל הפחות מגיל שלש אחר התספורת. [ראה ילקו"י עמ' רמ]

לט. כשלובש כל מלבושיו, ילבש תחילה הכיפה שעל ראשו תחילה. ונתבאר לעיל בהלכה י"ב.

person's hand on his head. If neither of these options is possible, he should at least place his own hand on his head.[106]

Educating children

38) It is important to train little children to keep their heads covered, since our Sages taught that this practice instills the fear of Heaven in the child's heart. Ideally, this training should begin as soon as the child can walk, but certainly once he is three years old and has had his hair cut.[107]

Dressing head first

39) When getting dressed, one should first place a yarmulke on one's head. This was explained above in halakha 12.

Maran the Rishon Letziyon brought several proofs for this ruling. One is that Rambam listed covering one's head as one of the steps taken in preparation for praying, and Rambam stipulated that if someone neglected to take any of the steps he listed his prayer is valid anyway. Another proof is from the passage in tractate *Soferim* according to the interpretation of Harav Eliyahu of Vilna.

Based on all this, Maran the Rishon Letziyon took to task the responsa *Igrot Moshe* (Vol. IV, #40:14) who ruled that if someone prayed while bareheaded his prayer is unacceptable to Heaven and he must cover his head and repeat the prayer. As explained here at length, that ruling is incorrect. Harav Shelomo Zalman Auerbach likewise ruled (*Halikhot Shelomo Tefilla* 2:16) that if someone mistakenly prayed while bareheaded it is not necessary to repeat it.

106. The *Me'ore Or* (Unit *Be'er Sheva*, page 15b) ruled that if someone needs to recite a blessing [after eating] but he is bareheaded and by the time he gets a head covering it will no longer be possible to recite the blessing, he may recite it while bareheaded. This is because we can rely on the opinion in tractate *Soferim* (cited in the previous footnote) that permits it.

Maran the Rishon Letziyon (responsa *Yabia Omer* Vol. IX, #1:6) commented on this ruling that it is best that he cover his head with his hand before reciting the blessing. He based this on a comment of the *Ture Zahav* (8:3).

As explained above in halakha 29, even if someone covers his head with his hand he is still considered bareheaded and he must not recite blessings in that manner. He must at least pull his shirtsleeve over his head for it to be considered covered. Above in halakha 30 it was explained that if one person places his hand on someone else's bare head, that person may now recite a blessing.

107. The *Magen Avraham* (2:6) wrote that it is important to cover little children's heads so that they will have the fear of Heaven, and the *Kaf Hahayim* Sofer (2:19) listed a number of *Aharonim* who gave similar instructions. In truth, it appears from a passage in *Nedarim* 30b that in the era of the Talmud children went about with their heads uncovered, but in *Shabbat* 156b it relates that the mother of Rav Nahman bar Yitzhak never allowed him to without a head covering, as explained in the preface to this section. It is recommended to follow her practice to instill the fear of Heaven in our children's hearts.

The *Mishne Halakhot* (Vol. VI, #2) discusses at length the issue of the age when parents should begin training their child in this practice. The *Yalkut Yosef* (page 240) states that according to his father, Maran the Rishon Letziyon, it is best to begin as soon as the child is able to walk, but certainly from age three. If the child refuses to comply, he should be offered rewards such as sweets to persuade him.

108. The Talmud (*Sanhedrin* 81a) states that one of the traits of a truly righteous individual is that he does