

**Good Shabbos Everyone.** The Torah tells us this week how Hashem commands the Bnai Yisroel regarding making the holy clothing of the Kohanim. The commentator Rashi explains that the Kohen becomes holy through wearing the special clothes. We see from here the power of clothing to influence the spirituality of a Jew.

Everyone should be able to recognize a Jew from the way he dresses. A Jew who dresses differently will have a sense of pride of being Jewish. Just as a soldier is proud to wear his uniform, so too is every Jew a soldier in the army of Hashem, a soldier who is proud to sport the look of his ancestors.

How should a Jew dress differently? One way is that Jewish men should cover their heads by wearing a yarmulke or similar type of head covering. In general, a Jew must cover his head at all times.

Admittedly, in the Talmudic era, the wearing of a head covering was optional and fell within the category of *midas hachasidus* - acting beyond the letter of the law. The deciders of Jewish Law have concluded, however, that today the wearing of a head covering is obligatory and not a matter of choice. (Yechave Da'as 4:1, see also Taz 8:3, Igros Moshe Orach Chayim 1:1) The widespread acceptance over many centuries of the custom of wearing a head covering, has imbued the custom with the significance of a halachic - legal requirement. Indeed, covering the head has assumed the status of symbolically demonstrating the adherence to mitzvos.

Most agree that it is forbidden to recite words of Torah or blessings without a head covering. Also, one must avoid walking four amos (approx. seven feet) without a head covering (P'ri Migadim 2:6, Mishna Berurah 2:11, etc.) Ideally however, one should not walk even less than four amos (cubits) or even sit in a house without covering one's head. (Mishna Berurah 2:11)

It is also interesting to note that it is necessary that the head covering be large enough to be seen from all vantage points. Tiny yarmulkes that are difficult to discern on the head are not adequate. (Yechave Da'as 4:1)

Although not required according to halacha - Jewish Law, one should also sleep with a head covering (Mishna Berurah 2:11, although one need not worry if it falls off during sleep--R'Shlomo Z. Auerbach) (All of the above is from The Laws of B'rachos Rabbi Binyomin Forst, with Rabbi Aaron D. Twerski, Artscroll publications Chapter 1, p.73)

One of the main reasons for a head covering is to remind a Jew that Hashem is above him at all times. A Jew who is meticulous in covering his head at all times shows everyone that he is proud to be in the Army of Hashem. Being a soldier in the Army of Hashem has its many privileges. The following amazing true story illustrates the amazing power a Jew has when he covers his head.

Isaac Schwartz is a plumbing-fitting salesman who often travels around the United States. As part of his business, Isaac is involved in bidding on large contracts to supply giant corporations. Isaac is a religious Jew, however, during his business trips he removes his yarmulke, so people have no idea that he is a religious Jew.

Several years ago, Isaac traveled to Chicago to take part in a bid for a large mid-west conglomerate. Isaac packed his samples and his brochures as he had done hundreds of times before. He felt like he was forgetting something as he left the house. Nevertheless, he was in a rush and so there was little time to think about what he had forgotten. As he boarded the early morning flight, he sent up a prayer that his trip would be successful and that he would arrive and return safely.

Once in Chicago, Isaac rushed to catch a cab to the corporate offices. The bidding was grueling and it lasted throughout the day. Finally, as the day grew long and the sunset approached, Isaac headed back to his hotel room. Exhausted from the traveling and the negotiations, Isaac settled into his comfortable hotel room. Suddenly, he realized that he had not yet davened (prayed) mincha (the afternoon prayers). He reached into his coat pocket for his yarmulke... it was not there. He reached into his pants pockets and then his jacket pockets once again... it was nowhere to be found. He searched his bags, but he simply could not find his yarmulke. He paced the hotel room right and left wondering what to do. As he passed by the large mirror in his hotel room, he noticed something on his head. He stopped in his tracks... He looked again and he felt his face turning red. He reached his hand on top of his head and felt the small piece of cloth; he had found his yarmulke.

He now knew what he had forgotten to do when he left his house. He had forgotten to take off his yarmulke! He had gone the whole day spending hours in negotiations wearing his yarmulke. His face burned with embarrassment. The next day, he received a phone call with some great news. The corporation had accepted his bid and they wanted him to sign a very lucrative supply contract. The president of the company told Isaac that they saw that he was a religious Jew and therefore they felt they could trust him. (Told by M. Zuckerbraun who heard it from R.B.Y. Graydon-some names and details have been changed)

Isaac was able to perform a tremendous act of Kiddush Hashem - making Hashem look good among the nations. Isaac distinguished himself among the nations and he was immediately rewarded. Let us learn from the example of Isaac. Let us be meticulous in covering our heads. And let us recognize the power of dressing Jewish.

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