

HALACHOS HATZRICHOS

PACKET #6



YARMULKA

Part of the “uniform” for a boy in Tzivos Hashem is a yarmulka.

The *Shulchan Aruch* lists a few reasons why a Jewish boy needs to wear a yarmulka all the time:

1) **Tznius** — For a boy, the top of the head is a part of the body that should be covered. Boys wear yarmulkas to keep their heads *tznius*.

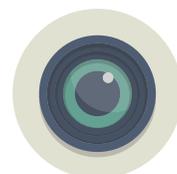
2) **Acting like a Yid** — Because of *tznius*, it became the *minhag* of Yidden to wear yarmulkas. Not wearing a yarmulka is now like acting in a *goyishe* way. This is *asur* because of “*Uvechukoseihem Lo Seileichu*,” that we are not allowed to follow a non-Jewish way of behavior.

3) **Yiras Shomayim** — Wearing a yarmulka reminds us to have *Yiras Shomayim*.

The *Gemara* (*Mesechta Shabbos, daf 156 amud beis*) tells a story about an *Amora* named R’ Nachman. An astrologer told his mother that he would be a thief! R’ Nachman’s mother told him to always keep his head covered, so that the fear of Heaven would be upon him.

Another important reason to wear a yarmulka all the time is to be able to follow the *halacha* that your head needs to be covered whenever you say Hashem’s name.

See the Alter Rebbe’s Shulchan Aruch, siman beis



YARMULKA

Jewish boys and men need to have their heads covered with a yarmulka all the time. A yarmulka is needed so that we are *tznius'dik*, and it helps us have *Yiras Shomayim*.

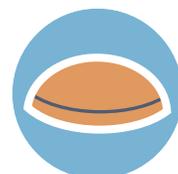
Unless you glue your yarmulka to your head, it might fall off sometimes! If that happens, the *halacha* is that we cover our head with our hand as a *heker* (reminder) until we reach our yarmulka and can put it back on.

But that only helps for SOME of the reasons we wear a yarmulka.

Another reason we wear a yarmulka is to make sure our head is covered whenever we say Hashem's name. We can't cover ourselves with another part of ourselves — that's not called covering! ("*Ein Etzem Mastir Al Etzem.*") We need to cover our head with something separate in order to say Hashem's name.

So if someone needs to say Hashem's name when he can't reach his yarmulka right away, he should cover his head with his sleeve, or with someone else's hand.

See the Alter Rebbe's Shulchan Aruch, siman beis



TAKING OFF SHOES

When we take off our shoes, there is a *halacha* for that too!

We see that the Torah gives *kavod* to the right side, for example when it speaks about the *kohanim* during the *Yemei Miluim*. We learn from this that we should also give *kavod* to the right side of our body.

In order to give *kavod* to the right side, we take off the left shoe first. This way the right side is still wearing a shoe.

See the Alter Rebbe's Shulchan Aruch, siman beis



THUNDER & LIGHTNING

If you hear lightning and thunder at the same time, you only make one *bracha* — either “*Osei Maasei Bereshis*, or “*Shekocho Ugvuraso Malei Olam*.” That’s because each of these *brachos* could be made on either thunder or lightning, so one *bracha* is enough for both.

But if you hear or see one and then the other afterwards, you should say two *brachos*. Like we said, either *bracha* works for either one, but the *minhag* is to say “*Osei Maasei Bereishis*” for the lightning, and then “*Shekocho Ugvuraso Malei Olam*” (which talks about Hashem’s *gevurah*) for the thunder, which reminds us about Hashem’s *gevurah*!

We say both *brachos* (instead of saying the same *bracha* twice) because it’s best to praise Hashem in different ways!

If the thunderstorm stopped, and a new storm started afterwards, do you make another *bracha*?

If you saw the clouds move away, and you could see the sky, and then new clouds came, you will need to make another *bracha* if you see lightning or hear thunder again!

(Source: *Seder Birkas Hanehenin*, 13:15-16)



THUNDER & LIGHTNING

According to *halacha*, a *bracha* needs to be said at the same time as we enjoy the thing we are making the *bracha* on.

So in order to make the *bracha* on thunder and lightning, we need to start the *bracha* within 3 or 4 seconds after hearing the thunder or seeing the lightning. This amount of time in *halacha* is called “*Toch Kedei Dibur*.”

If we were in a place where we couldn't make the *bracha* when we heard the thunder or saw the lightning, we only make the *bracha* if we were able to start it “*Toch Kedei Dibur*,” within 3 or 4 seconds. If we missed it, we should wait for the next time we hear thunder and lightning. If we're afraid we might not hear it again, we should say the *bracha* without Hashem's name.

(See *Seder Birchos Hanehenin*, chapter 13 *halacha* 17)



TZNIUS

The *mitzvah* of *tznius* is to treat our body with *kavod* the way Hashem wants us to.

One of the ways we show *tznius* when we are in the bathroom is to close and lock the door so that nobody else should come in.

See the Alter Rebbe's Shulchan Aruch, siman gimmel



TZEDAKAH BEFORE LICHT BENTCHEN

The time of *bentching licht*, lighting Shabbos candles, is a special time for women and girls to *daven* to Hashem. It is a special time when Hashem listens extra closely to whatever they ask for.

Because of this, it is a *minhag* to give *tzedakah* before *bentching licht*. *Tzedakah* is a channel that helps bring down the *brachos* of Hashem. At a time when we ask for Hashem's *brachos*, we should give *tzedakah* to help bring those *brachos* down to us.

(That is also a reason why we give *tzedakah* before *davening*, as a path to bring down the *brachos* we ask from Hashem.)

The Rebbe's *Igros Kodesh* is full of letters to women where the Rebbe suggests that they keep this *minhag*, to help them receive the *brachos* from Hashem in whatever they need.

