



# Bet Horaah בית הוראה Shaarei Ezra שערי עזרא

Parshat Yitro

Zmanim for New York:

Candle Lighting: 4:56pm

Shabbat ends: 5:59pm

R"T 6:28pm

Heartfelt appreciation and blessings extend to our generous donor for his unwavering and continuous support. May he and his family merit a year filled with health, success, and sweetness.

**SECURING IDENTITY: NAVIGATING CONCEALMENT IN CHALLENGING TIMES.**

WRITTEN BY RABBI SHAY TAHAN

\*TO RECEIVE THE WEEKLY NEWSLETTER PLEASE TEXT OUR HOTLINE 347-918-4088

## HALACHA QUESTION?

WhatsApp: 347-666-3467

Website: www.askhalacha.com

Call/Text: 347-918-4088

Email: askhalacha1@gmail.com

Over 2,000 classes can be found at Rabbishaytahan.com

When times become challenging, and anti-Semitism rears its ugly head in various parts of the world, Jewish individuals often choose to conceal their Jewish symbols to mitigate potential risks and avoid attacks. Let's address a few questions and explore the guidance provided by Halacha on this matter.

Let's commence our discussion with the halacha (יו"ד סימן קנד) that whenever Jews face persecution and are compelled to violate any Jewish law or remove any Jewish sign, even if it pertains to a Jewish custom such as wearing specific shoelaces, they may not comply. Even if a non-Jew threatens to kill them for non-compliance, the halacha dictates that one should choose martyrdom rather than violate the minhag ואל יהרג ועבור).

Accordingly, we can conclude that removing the Mezuzah or kipa in a place of danger should be prohibited. However, it is important to note that this obligation is primarily applicable in situations of persecution, where non-Jews attempt to force conversion or openly command violations of Jewish tradition. In a scenario where it is merely dangerous to be around non-Jews with these Jewish symbols, it is permitted to conceal them.

### Mezuzah Placement in High-Risk Locations.

As the Mezuzah on the door is the most conspicuous indication that a Jewish individual resides in a house, in certain locations around the world, Jews have opted to remove the Mezuzah from their front doors. Is that permitted?

The Halacha openly addresses a scenario where partners share a house, one being Jewish and the

other a gentile. The Rema (סימן רפ"ט) notes that such a house is exempt from having a Mezuzah. Among the reasons provided for this exemption, some suggest (ש"ך) that it is due to the potential danger that the gentile partner might suspect the Jewish partner of engaging in supernatural practices with the Mezuzah, potentially leading to harm against the Jew.



The Meiri (יומא י"א) explains that Hashem does not desire a person to expose themselves to danger and rely on miracles for the fulfillment of the Mitsvot. Similarly, it is written in the responsa "Chikrei Lev" (סימן קבט) that the Torah did not command the placement of a Mezuzah for the sake of potential harm. The Shach (ש"ך) writes that throughout the

exile the Jewish ghetto's gates were exempt, as they were prone to non-Jewish hostility in those locations.

According to these considerations, there certainly would have been grounds to exempt the residences in a dangerous area to prevent harm to property and life. However, there is a distinction between the case discussed above and today's situation. In a house shared with a non-Jew, it is not possible to affix a Mezuzah at all, as the non-Jew would see the Mezuzah both upon entering and exiting. Nevertheless, in a location where non-Jews only pass from the outside, one can place the Mezuzah in the inner part of

the entrance, visible from within the house but not from outside. Even though our Sages established (הובא בשולחן ערוך סימן רפט ס"ב) that its fixed position should be within a handbreadth of the outside (טפח החיצון) to immediately encounter the Mezuzah upon entering, and to safeguard the

## SECURING IDENTITY: NAVIGATING CONCEALMENT IN CHALLENGING TIMES.

entire house from harmful entities, this is merely an ideal practice, but in time of danger, one can place it more internally.

For those unable to affix the Mezuzah on the inner part of the entrance, an alternative is to carve into the doorpost and place the Mezuzah inside, concealing it from view. However, it's crucial to note that the Mezuzah should not be deeper than a hand breadth (טפח). While some poskim (יד הקטנה הובא בפת"ש סימן רפט) contend that if the Mezuzah is entirely invisible, one might not fulfill the obligation, as by placing the Mezuzah in a concealed manner, the intended purpose of the Mezuzah—to serve as a constant reminder of Hashem's presence when entering or leaving the house (Rambam)—is compromised, as its visibility is crucial for fulfilling this function. Still the majority poskim assert that while it's not the ideal way, the mitzvah is still considered fulfilled. (בן איש חי ש"ב פרשת כי תבוא אות יד, ערוך השולחן)

### Removing the Kipa in Vulnerable Environments.

Another conspicuous sign of a man being Jewish is the kipa. In a place where one might fear for his safety, the best course of action is to wear a hat, as it will cover the kipa. But what should one do if he finds himself in a dangerous place without a hat? Should he remove the kipa? This becomes particularly relevant, for example, when driving from Brooklyn to Manhattan and, upon reaching the Brooklyn Bridge, encountering a large and violent Palestinian rally. In such a tumultuous situation, should he remove the kipa to avoid drawing attention to his Jewish identity?

Let's first explore the obligation to wear a kipa. The Talmud (שבת קנ"ב) states that covering the head aids a person in acquiring Yirat Shamayim—the fear of Hashem. Maimonides (רמב"ם הלכות י"ד) further elucidates that it is a manifestation of

tsniut—modesty. The rationale is that when one wears a kipa, he senses a higher presence above him, prompting him to conduct himself with greater modesty and mindfulness of his actions compared to someone without a tangible reminder (רמב"ם מורה נבוכים ח"ג פרק נב).

Many poskim (אגר"מ ח"ד ס"ב ויבי"א ח"ט ס"א) maintain that according to the aforementioned opinions, wearing a kipa is considered a Midat Chasidut (מידת חסידות), an act of piety, and stringency, but it is not deemed obligatory. However, the Taz (סימן ח סק"ג) notes that in contemporary times, as non-Jews often go without head coverings, wearing a kipa also serves to distinguish the Jewish nation from others (בחוקותיהם לא תלכו). Contemporary poskim (ויבי"א ח"ט ס"א) assert that today the obligation to wear a kipa is even more pronounced. It serves to delineate the distinction between God-fearing Jews who believe in Hashem and those who do not. In the present context, it becomes essential not to appear as someone who lacks fear of God.

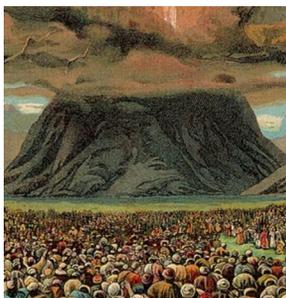
Returning to our discussion, Rabbi Moshe Feinstein was asked about someone seeking employment at a place where wearing a kipa would not be feasible. He responded that based on the poskim who consider wearing a kipa a stringency and not an obligation; one may go without head covering in a situation where finding alternative employment would be challenging. In light of this, it is certainly permissible in life-threatening situations not to place oneself at risk.

Next week, we will continue, with Hashem's help, the discussion on when one should consider a scenario dangerous and when one should not. We will also explore what one should do if asked directly about their Jewish identity in a perilous environment.

## WRESTLING WITH FEAR AND AWE WHILE NAVIGATING THE COMPLEXITY OF THE FEAR PARADOX.

ויאמר משה אל העם אל תיראו כי לבעבור נסות אתכם בא האלהים ובעבור תהיה יראתו על פניכם לבלתי תחטאו (שמות כ, טז)

In our parashah (Yitro), we encounter one of the most perplexing pesukim, capable of inducing bewilderment. At Mount Sinai, during the reception of the Ten Commandments, the first two were directly articulated by Hashem Yitbarach. As Hashem spoke, His voice resonated with such force that not only was it heard, but there was also a phenomenon where His voice became visible. Faced with the overwhelming experience, the nation, in fear, beseeched Moshe Rabenu to act as an intermediary, expressing their apprehension about direct communication with Hashem. In response, Moshe reassured them, saying, "Do not fear, for Hashem has come to elevate you, that His fear may be before you." This pasuk begins with Moshe encouraging them



not to fear, yet within the same sentence, he conveys that the purpose of Hashem's communication is to instill fear. How do we reconcile this apparent contradiction?

To unravel this, let us delve into the teachings of Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzatto (1707–1746) in his important work "Mesillat Yesharim" (Chapter 24). Same can be found in Orchot Tsadkim (שער יראת Hashem elucidates that the fear of Hashem is bifurcated into two components: the fear of punishment named Yirat Hachet, and the fear stemming from Hashem's greatness and exaltation called Yirat Haromemut.

He writes: "We must first introduce that there are two types of fear, effectively three types. The first type is very easy to attain, there being nothing easier. The second is difficult, while the second part of the second type is more challenging

### WRESTLING WITH FEAR AND AWE WHILE NAVIGATING THE COMPLEXITY OF THE FEAR PARADOX.

than everything. Its perfection is likewise a very great form of perfection.

The first type is fear of punishment (Yirat Hachet), and the second is fear of God's exaltedness (Yirat Haromemut), of which Fear of Sin is the second part therein. We will now explain their matters and differences.

Fear of punishment, as its name implies, is for a person to fear transgressing the word of Hashem, due to the punishments incurred for the transgression, whether to body or soul. This type of fear is certainly easy to attain, for every person loves themselves and fears for their soul, and there is nothing that deters a person from doing something more than the fear that this thing might bring harm to them.

The second type of fear is fear of Hashem's exaltedness (Yirat Haromemut). It means that a person distances and refrains from sin because of Hashem's great honor. For how could his heart of flesh and blood, lowly and petty, allow or dare to do something against the will of the Creator?!

This type of fear is not so easy to attain, for it will arise only out of knowledge and thought, namely by contemplating Hashem's exaltedness and the lowliness of man. All these things are outgrowths of the intellect which understands and attains insight."



Upon grasping these concepts, we can now decipher the significance of the conflicts within the pasuk. When Moshe observed the overwhelming fear that gripped the nation upon hearing the powerful voice of Hashem, causing them to dread for their lives, he reassured them that there was no need at this scenerio to fear punishment for their sins, as Hashem had not come to inflict punishment; therefore, the voice did not intend to instill the fear of their sins (Yirat Hachet). Instead, Moshe clarified that the purpose of the resounding voice was to cultivate the fear of Hashem's greatness and exaltation.

Hence, the pasuk is comprehended in this manner: "Do not fear that Hashem came to punish you; instead, He came to instill the exalted and elevated fear upon you."

It's not the only instance where Moshe Rabenu emphasizes the importance of Yirat Shamayim. At a later time, he instructs the people that Yirat Shamayim is the ultimate purpose of everything, stating (דברים י, יב), "What does Hashem ask from you? Only to fear Him." Chazal elaborate: אין להקדוש ברוך הוא בעולם הזה אלא יראת שמים בלבד (שבת לא, ב), expressing that Hashem desires Yirat Shamayim more than all other things.

May we all merit to possess both types of Yirat Shamayim.

### THE DYNAMICS OF LEANING IN AND MOVING AWAY IN RELATIONSHIPS.

#### Body language from Parashat Yitro.

וכל העם ראים את הקולת ואת הלפידים ואת קול השפר ואת ההר עשן וירא העם וינעו ויעמדו מרחק (שמות כ, טו) ויעמדו מרחוק- היו נרתעין לאחוריהם (רש"י)

In Parashat Beshalach, we discussed how Hashem instructed the nation to retract; recognizing that moving back is a sign of confusion and being lost. Consequently, Pharaoh would perceive the nation as vulnerable at this moment, potentially leading him to launch an attack. However, sometimes, moving backward is a sign of fear as we can learn from our parasha.

Paying close attention to the way the body leans can provide insight into one's feelings toward another. For example, when we like someone, we tend to lean our body and head towards them. Conversely, when we dislike someone, our body tends to move away from them.

We can gain insights into how others perceive us by observing the way their bodies lean during interactions. Surprisingly, we can also learn about ourselves through this process. Body language, being an automatic and unplanned reaction of the body, allows us to pay attention to our own physical responses when in the presence of others. By doing so, we can discern whether we naturally gravitate towards them, feel intimidated, or genuinely find comfort in their company.

In Parashat Yitro, when the nation gathered at Mount Sinai to receive the Torah, the pasuk notes that Hashem spoke to the people, emphasizing that they were able to "see the voice of Hashem." Rashi astutely observes that this extraordinary phenomenon induced a sense of great fear among the Israelites. But how did Rashi discern their fear when the verse itself does not explicitly mention it? The answer lies in another verse stating that they "retreated." Rashi deduces that this retreat was a direct outcome, revealing the unspoken reaction of fear to the awe-inspiring experience of witnessing the divine voice.

### HALACHOT RELATING WINTER.

#### Can one wear gloves on Shabbat?

Contrary to popular belief, gloves are actually permitted as

written in the Shulchan Aruch (סימן שא סעיף לז). The Mishna Brura explains that gloves are considered clothing, hence one can wear them even at a place without an Eruv

**HALACHOT RELATING WINTER.**

Still, the Mishna Brura mentions that some are strict because they concern that they'll remove their gloves in order to shake away a bug or alike, and then forget about them and carry them at the place that doesn't have an Eruv.

Rav Belsky wrote that the concerns is that they might meet a friend and remove the gloves to shake their hand, and then carry them. Accordingly he writes that women don't need to be strict or

concern at all since they usually shake hands with their gloves.

**Can one wear ear muffs on Shabbat?**

Ear muffs are certainly permitted since they are considered clothing, and there is no concern that one might remove them while walking outside.

**כיפה לגוי.**

שאר האנשים. אולם כששאלו את הגרי"ד סולוביציק השיב למנהל שאין צורך לבקש. ושוב הביא שהגר"א קוטלר ראש ישיבת ליקווד המעטירה השיב שדוקא לא יבקשו כן כיון שיש ענין של הבדלה מן הנכרים.

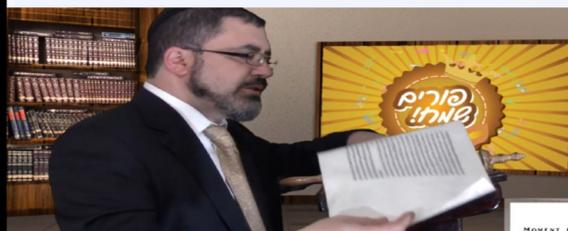
אולם היה נראה לי להוסיף שיש חילוק בין מה שאמרו הם לנידון דידן, כיון שמורה ללימודי חול רק מלמד את החומר המתבקש, אבל טבח מקצועו לבשל ולהכין אוכל, ולכן יש דוקא לראות שהוא אינו יהודי פן יכשלו לטעות בו שהינו יהודי ויסמכו עליו בעניני כשרות, וכן יתנו לו לבשל דברים שיש בהם משום איסור של בישולי עבו"ם.



**שלום לצוות ההלכה באתר ואללה. רצינו לבקש הדרכה לגבי טבח גוי שעובד אצלנו בישיבה, האם אנו צריכים לדרוש ממנו לחבוש כיפה על מנת שהוא לא יראה אחרת מכל שאר הנימצאים במקום. מודים לכם מראש.**

שלום וברכה.  
אכן שאלתכם מעניינת, ואחר החיפוש מצאתי שישנם כמה פוסקים בני הדור הקודם שחלקו בשאלה זו (הובא בספר החשוב פתיחת האגרות עמוד רל).  
בספר דברי הרב (עמוד קמג) כתב בשם רב שלום רפה שנשאל ממנהל ישיבה קטנה אם נכון לבקש ממורה נכרי ללימודי חול שיחבוש כיפה בזמן שהוא בביתו, והשיב שכן כיון שעליו להתנהג כמו כל

**MEHUDAR MEGILOT FOR SALE!**  
**RABBI SHAY TAHAN**  
**347-666-3467**

**Mehudar Tefilin & Mezuzot Sell & Check**

**Rabbi Shay Tahan**  
**3476663467**



Shaare Ezra is a one of a kind, multi-faceted organization that's there for the community. Under the leadership of HaRav Shay Tahan שליט"א Shaare Ezra feels that proper Halachic guidance should be accessible to everyone, therefore we offer the community the opportunity to call, text, WhatsApp, or e-mail any halachic questions they may have, through the Bet Horaah, where qualified, trained and ordained Rabbis are available to answer your questions in English, Hebrew and Russian. Shaare Ezra is from the community—for the community.

**Dedications from our Partners**

LILUI NISHMAT  
HANUKA BEN YOSEF YOSOFOV  
DAVID BEN ZOHOV  
TUNE' BAT BAHIYE.  
מייק מאיר בן מרטה

REFUAH SHELEMA  
ESTHER BAT MAZAL  
RACHAMIM BEN MIRIAM  
מלכיאל בן שריה

REFUAH SHELEMA  
CHAIM YISROEL BEN TOVA  
RIVKA  
LAYA BAT BRACHA

MAY HASHEM SEND SPECIAL STRENGTH IN TORAH AND ALL THE BERACHOT TO DAVID AKIVA AND RACHEL LEON.

**Lev Mavashev from Alpha Realty Hatzlacha and Parnasa Tova.  
Hatzlacha to Moshe and Saritt Samechov**