

# HALACHICALLY SPEAKING



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Special Issue



## HAIR COVERING FOR WOMEN

The *halachos* of the requirement for a woman to cover her hair are discussed at length in the *poskim*. In this issue we will discuss many of these *halachos*: Is a woman allowed to uncover a little bit of her hair? When does the obligation for a woman to cover her hair begin? Is one permitted to recite a *beracha* in front of a woman whose hair is uncovered?

After learning these *halachos* we will have a handle on this sensitive but very important topic. One should train his children to be careful with *tznius* so they grow up keeping this *halacha*.<sup>1</sup>

### *Tznius*

The *Chofetz Chaim*<sup>2</sup> said that many of the *tzarus* which happened in his day were due to wide-spread laxity regarding *hilchos tznius*. Women commonly walked around their homes with uncovered hair and short sleeves causing their husbands and sons to transgress the prohibition of saying a *beracha* in front of an *ervah*<sup>3</sup> which is a profanation of *Hashem's* name.

The *posuk*<sup>4</sup> says that “wherever you mention my name (i.e. in a respectable manner) I shall come and bless you with wealth”.<sup>5</sup> If *berochos* are said when facing an *ervah* it causes poverty as *Chazal* say “In all

אין לו  
להקב"ה  
בעולמו  
אלא ד'  
אמות  
של הלכה  
בלבד...  
(ברכות ח.)

1. Geder Olom page 24.

2. Chofetz Chaim AI Hatorah pages 322-324. Refer to Chukei Nashim 17, Modesty page 234.

3. Shulchan Aruch O.C. 75:2.

4. Sefer Shemos 20:24.

5. Refer to Mishnah Berurah 75:14.

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places the name of Hashem is mentioned (improperly) poverty is found.”<sup>6</sup>

Other *seforim* write that when a woman covers her hair it is a *segula* to have children who are *yirei shomayim*.<sup>7</sup> In addition one’s husband will be blessed with many *berochos*.<sup>8</sup>

## Source

The *Gemorah*<sup>9</sup> says that a married woman may not be in a public (or semi-public) place with her hair uncovered.<sup>10</sup> The *Medrash*<sup>11</sup> says this is learnt from the *posuk* in *parshas Noso*<sup>12</sup> which says a *Sotah* is publicly humiliated by uncovering her hair. We see from here that going around with uncovered hair is a degradation since it is against *halacha*. *Chazal* tells us that a Jewish woman must cover her hair in public.<sup>13</sup>

There is a discussion in the *poskim* if this *issur* is *d’oraisa* or *d’rabbanan* in nature.<sup>14</sup>

## Reasons

Many times people are asked why Jewish women cover their hair and have no answer. There are numerous reasons why Jewish women cover their hair – we will list a few of them. By wearing a hair covering a woman conceals a natural source of attraction from the public and shows she is reserved for her husband.<sup>15</sup> Furthermore, hair grows in places that cause *tava* for men, and therefore it needs to be covered.

## At Home

A woman in the privacy of her own home does not have to cover her hair.<sup>16</sup> The *Gemorah*<sup>17</sup> says that *Kimchis* was *zocheh* to have seven children who were *kohanim gedolim* since the four walls of her house never saw the hair of her head. Based on this the *Zohar*<sup>18</sup> (and other *poskim*) says that a woman should cover her hair even in her house.<sup>19</sup> *L’maseh*, the *Mishnah Berurah*<sup>20</sup> says women should not be lenient with this *inyun*, and should cover their hair while at home as well. One reason is because her husband may need to recite *berochos* and if her hair is uncovered a *beracha* may not be recited (see below).<sup>21</sup> The *Chazzon Ish* is quoted as saying that the extent of a woman’s hair covering is the extent of her *yiras shomayim*.<sup>22</sup>

Based upon the *Zohar* many women have the custom to cover their hair while sleeping<sup>23</sup> even though the covering will usually fall off.

## Exposing Partial Hair

Many *poskim* are of the opinion that absolutely no hair may be exposed when walking in public.<sup>24</sup> *Horav Moshe*

6. Mesechtas Nedarim 7b. Refer to A Practical Guide to Tznius page 27. It also causes the *yetzer hara* to be present in one’s home (Mishnah Berurah *ibid*).

7. Refer to Zohar Noso page 239, Geder Olom pages 19-21, Sharei Halacha U’minhag E.H. page 145, Teshuvos V’hanugos 2:269:page 556 quoting the opinion of the Chasam Sofer, see Chut Shuni Shabbos 3:page 272.

8. Zohar *ibid*, see Mishnah Berurah 75:14.

9. Mesechtas Kesubos 72a-b.

10. Refer to Mesechtas Kesubos 72a-b, Rashi on the Rif page 64, Rosh 7:9, Meiri Mesechtas Kesubos page 309, Rambam Hilchos Ishus 24:11-12, Issurei Biah 21:17, Encyclopedia Talmudis da’as yehudis 8:page 19.

11. Medrash Rabbah Bamidbar 9:16.

12. 5:18, see Rashi “u’para.”

13. Mesechtas Kesubos *ibid*, Rashi “azhura,” Shulchan Aruch E.H. 21:2, Chai Adom 4:5, Igros Moshe O.C. 1:42, Yaskil Avdi 4:9:3.

14. Refer to Terumas Hadeshen 10, Maharsham 4:138, Mishnah Berurah 75:10, Otzer Haposkim 21:2:24.

15. Refer to Modesty pages 242-243.

16. Taz 75:5, Shvili Dovid 75:2, Igros Moshe E.H. 1:58, Y.D. 2:75, O.C. 5:37:12. See Bnei Bonim 3:24. Refer to Lehoros Nosson 5:10:14 who is stringent.

17. Yoma 47a. Refer to Modesty pages 23-24.

18. Parshas Noso page 239.

19. Magen Avraham 75:4, Kaf Ha’chaim 75:18, Chasam Sofer O.C. 36, Shevet Ha’levi 5:199:2, Divrei Chachumim page 261:54 quoting the opinion of Horav Chaim Pinchus Sheinberg Shlita, Chut Shuni Shabbos 3:page 272.

20. O.C. 75:14, Biur Halacha “m’chutz l’tzmasam.”

21. Modesty pages 232-233.

22. Pe’er Hador 3:page 18.

23. Zohar Parshas page 239, see Yalkut Shemonei Bereishis 347.

24. Refer to Shulchan Aruch O.C. 75:2, E.H. 21:2, Magen Avraham 75:4, Maharam Elshakar 35:pages 158-160, Eishel Avraham Butchatch 75:2, Tzemach Tzedek 139,

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*Feinstein zt"l*<sup>25</sup> is of the opinion that *b'dieved* a woman who exposed less than a *tefach* of hair did not transgress the prohibition of showing hair if she is not in a public place.<sup>26</sup> Even according to *Horav Moshe*, the amount which may be uncovered is less than two inches wide (an area of 3.5 inches, it does not mean 3.5 inches wide across the head).

Accordingly the following should be noted:

- A woman should be careful not to wear a snood that starts in the middle of her head.<sup>27</sup>
- A woman should be careful with certain caps if the hair protrudes out of the back of the cap.<sup>28</sup>
- A woman may not comb her own hair into her wig even if by looking at it one cannot tell that it is her own hair.<sup>29</sup>

### Hair protruding from the Temple, Neck

There is a dispute among the *poskim* whether hair which grows next to the ear (sideburn hair) or on the bottom of the temple bone is exempt from the *halacha* of covering one's hair.<sup>30</sup> Most *poskim* are of the opinion that such hair is exempt from the *halacha*.<sup>31</sup> Hair that grows on the neck is also exempt.<sup>32</sup>

According to all opinions a woman is allowed to have facial hair.<sup>33</sup>

### To Whom Does this *Halacha* Apply?

**Unmarried Girls/Women** - In many communities unmarried women do not have the custom to cover their hair.<sup>34</sup> However, there are some communities that have the custom that unmarried women should not go out in public without their hair braided.<sup>35</sup> The reason being because of *tznius*. However, most communities do not accept this *minhag*.<sup>36</sup>

One of the reasons why unmarried women do not have to cover their hair is because they have to look good for a prospective man to marry. However, a married woman who is an *eishes ish* has to hold back some of her beauty- *chein* from the public eye.<sup>37</sup>

There is a dispute among the *Sefardik gedolim* whether an unmarried woman has to cover her hair when she recites any *davar sh'bekedusha* (e.g. *shemonei esrei* or *birchos hamazon*).<sup>38</sup> One should consult with their own *Rav*. However, the custom amongst *Ashkenazim* is to be lenient.<sup>39</sup>

Mishnah Berurah 75:10, Dovev Mesharim 1:124, Mahratz Chias 53, Teshuros Shai 1:51:1:page 12, Chasam Sofer ibid, Darchei Teshuva Y.D. 198:91, Igros Moshe E.H. 1:58, 114, O.C. 4:112, Divrei Yisroel 1:33, Minchas Yitzchok 1:7, Maharsham 4:138, Yabea Omer E.H. 4:3:3, Chekel Yitzchok 81, Lehoros Nosson 5:pages 166-190 in great depth, Teshuvos V'hanugos 1:62, 2, 692 (quoting the opinion of the Chazzon Ish), Bais Boruch 4:10:footnote \*, Chut Shuni Shabbos 3:page 272, Minhag Yisroel Torah (Nesuin) pages 52-53. Refer to Ketzos Ha'shulchan 1:page 90, Shevet Ha'Levi 5:195:1.

25. E.H. 1:58. Refer to Igros Moshe O.C. 4:112:4.

26. Horav Yisroel Belsky Shlita. Refer to Modesty pages 236-238 quoting the opinions of Horav Pam zt"l, Horav Dovid Feinstein Shlita, Horav Mattisyahu Solomon Shlita, Horav Korelitz Shlita, Horav Sheinberg Shlita, A Practical Guide to Tznius page 23. See Bnei Bonim 3:21-22

27. Lev Ita page 6.

28. Lev Ita ibid, see Sharei Halacha U'minhag E.H. page 143.

29. Lev Ita ibid.

30. Refer to footnote 24.

31. Ben Ish Chai Bo 1:12, see Modesty page 230, Lehoros Nosson 5:page 181.

32. Lev Ita page 2, Modesty page 230, A Practical Guide to Tznius page 24. Refer to Avnei Yushfei 3:107:3. The same is true for light colored hair which grows sparsely in the front of the head known as "baby hairs" (A Practical Guide to Tznius page 24).

33. Shevet Ha'Levi 5:16:2.

34. Rosh Mesechtas Berochos 3:37, Tur 75, Shulchan Aruch O.C. 75:2, Levush 2, Bach E.H. 21, Bais Shmuel E.H. 21:5, Be'er Heitiv 6, Chelkes Mechokek 2, Chai Adom 4:5, Chasam Sofer Mesechtas Nedarim 30b, Teshuros Shai 2:38, Salmas Chaim 65, Chazzon Ish O.C. 16:8, Igros Moshe O.C. 4:112, Yechaveh Da'as 5:62, Koneh Bosem 1:6, Machzei Eliyahu 9, Otzer Haposkim 21:2:page 31, Halichos Beisa 6:15:footnote 33.

35. Magen Avraham O.C. 75:3, Shevet Ha'Levi 6:199, see Machtzis Ha'shekel 3, Mor V'ketziah 75, Atzei Chaim 6:page 6, Birchos Shomayim 1:32-33. The Bais Avi 2:32 says if one is *davening* and is not sure if the woman in front of him is a single girl or married woman he may continue with his *tefilla* in any case (Refer to Rivevos Ephraim 1:59).

36. Opinion of Horav Tuvia Goldstein zt"l as related by Horav Webster Shlita. Refer to E'ven Yisroel 7:8, Koneh Bosem 1:6.

37. Modesty page 243. Refer to Sheitels pages 18-26 in depth on this issue.

38. Ben Ish Chai Shemenei 2:19, Yabea Omer O.C. 6:14:2, Yechaveh Da'as 5:6, Yaskil Avdi 7:page 289, Ohr L'tzyion 2:7:14:footnote 14.

Refer to Halichos Bas Yisroel 5:footnote 6. Refer to Halichos Beisa 6:10:footnote 33 if a woman whose head is uncovered may answer *amen* to a *beracha*.

39. Tzitz Eliezer 12:13, Rivevos Ephraim 6:page 571, Yabea Omer O.C. 6:15 quoting the opinion of Horav Elyashiv Shlita, Shevet Ha'kehusi 6:76, Halichos Shlomo Tefilla 2:footnote 28, see Rivevos Ephraim 3:page 348:2.

אין לו להחזיק בה בעולמנו אלא י' אקמות של הגפה בלבד (ברכות מ)



**Widow / Divorcee-** A woman who is a widow *r"l* or divorcee<sup>40</sup> still has an obligation to cover her hair.<sup>41</sup> There is a discussion among the *poskim* if a widow may be lenient with regard to covering her hair due to a possible financial loss.<sup>42</sup> Some *poskim* are of the opinion that since some non-Jews wear wigs due to health reasons there is no place to be lenient.<sup>43</sup> One should consult a Rav.

**Married Woman** - Once a woman gets married she should be careful not to expose her hair even in front of her father or other close relatives.<sup>44</sup>

### Not Wearing a Head Covering

In the time of *chazal* a man was permitted to divorce his wife without payment of her *kesuba* if she refused to cover her hair.<sup>45</sup> Although this does not apply today (since she is not covering her hair because she mistakenly believes that she is not obligated to do so, and not because she is disregarding the *halacha*),<sup>46</sup> one sees the severity of having a proper hair covering.<sup>47</sup>

Some women say there were many *Rabbonim* who let their wives go around without a proper hair covering.<sup>48</sup> Since we do not know the intent of these *Rabbonim*, this is not a reason for a woman to go around with her hair uncovered.

There are many other reasons why women would feel they do not want to cover their hair.<sup>49</sup> Some women say their mothers did not cover their hair and they are just following in the family tradition. Others say covering their hair causes headaches. Some women also do not want to look like Jews in public.<sup>50</sup>

These reasons are not sufficient to permit a woman to walk in public with her hair uncovered.<sup>51</sup> Those who do so should speak with their Rav before continuing this practice.

### Saying *Berochos* etc in front of Exposed Hair

A woman who is supposed to have her hair covered and leaves it uncovered is regarded as an *ervah* to those in her presence.<sup>52</sup> Therefore, a man is not permitted to recite *krias shema*, etc in front of her.<sup>53</sup>

In the days of the *Aruch Ha'shulchan* the government said married women may not cover their hair. Therefore he held<sup>54</sup> that during that time hair was not considered to be an *ervah* since people became accustomed to seeing women with their hair uncovered. Based on this *pesak*, some say<sup>55</sup> that since nowadays it is common for women to walk around with uncovered hair, it is not considered an *ervah*. However, this should not be relied upon *l'chatchilah* since

40. Prisha E.H. 21:3, Bais Shmuel E.H. 21:5, Pischei Teshuva 2, Aruch Ha'shulchan E.H 21:4, Ohr L'tzyion 1:11. Refer to Halichos Bas Yisroel 5:footnote 8 who quotes the opinion of Horav Shlomo Zalman Aurbach zt"l.

41. Refer to Machzei Eliyahu 118.

42. Igros Moshe E.H. 1:57, Yabea Omer E.H. 4:3, Machzei Eliyahu 118-119, Halichos Bas Yisroel 5:footnote 8 quoting the opinion of Horav Sheinberg Shlita, see Lev Avraham 107:pages 185-187.

43. Opinion of Horav Tuvia Goldstein zt"l as related by Horav Webster Shlita.

44. Horav Yisroel Belsky Shlita. Refer to V'ein Lumo Michshal 4:pages 215-216 who speaks about a daughter-in-law acting modestly in her in-laws house.

45. Shulchan Aruch E.H. 115:4-5.

46. Igros Moshe O.C. 1:43, E.H. 1:114, Lev Avraham 1:105, Yabea Omer Y.D. 4:1, see Dovev Mesharim 1:124:2, Yabea Omer E.H. 3:21.

47. Igros Moshe E.H. 1:114. Some say one who knows his wife will not cover her hair has transgressed the *issur* of *lifnei eiver* since when the woman was single she had no obligation to cover her hair and now by marrying her you are making her transgress the *issur* of keeping her hair uncovered (V'ein Lumo Michshal 1:pages 120-121, Shevet Ha'Levi 9:284).

48. Refer to Ben Ish Chai Bo 1:12, Journal of Halacha and Contemporary Society 30:page 105, Hide and Seek page 27.

49. Refer to Hide and Seek pages 178-195.

50. Refer to Geder Olom pages 10-12, also see Hide and Seek pages 179-183.

51. Chofetz Chaim expressed in Geder Olom pages 5-6, Igros Moshe O.C. 1:43, Be'er Chaim Mordechai 52, Rivevos Ephraim 6:page 575, see Sdei Chemed mareches daled:page 361.

52. Mesechtas Berochos 24a, Shulchan Aruch O.C. 75:2. Refer to Halichos Yisroel pages 263-268 in depth on this issue. This applies to even less than a *tefach* according to many *poskim* (Refer to Bais Boruch 4:pages 102-103).

53. Shulchan Aruch 75:2, Maharsham 4:138.

54. O.C. 75:7.

55. Srdei Eish 2:14, Yabea Omer O.C. 6:13.

כל השונה הלכות בכל יום מופתה לו שהוא בן עולם הבא... (מדה עג.)

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the *gedolim* frowned upon this *heter*.<sup>56</sup> *Horav Moshe Feinstein zt"v*<sup>57</sup> was in agreement with this *heter*, and said in a *b'dieved* case one can rely on it.

According to the *poskim* who are more stringent, one who wishes to recite *krias shema*, etc. has to close his eyes when facing the uncovered hair of a woman.<sup>58</sup> Others say one is required to turn his body away from the direction of the uncovered hair.<sup>59</sup>

One is allowed to recite a *beracha* in front of a non-Jewish woman whose hair is uncovered.<sup>60</sup> One who does not know if the exposed hair belongs to a Jewish woman should judge by the majority of women in the area.<sup>61</sup>

A woman may recite a *beracha* in front of another woman whose hair is uncovered.<sup>62</sup>

## Swimming Pool, *Mikvah*

There is a dispute whether a woman should cover her hair at the swimming pool. Some say (based on the *Zohar* mentioned above) that a woman should cover her hair at the swimming pool.<sup>63</sup> Others are lenient since there are only women around.<sup>64</sup> When a woman attends the *mikvah* her hair should be covered before reciting the *beracha*.<sup>65</sup>

## When does the obligation begin?

There is a dispute among the *poskim* when a woman is considered married in order to be obligated to cover her hair.<sup>66</sup> Most *poskim* are of the opinion that the obligation starts after *erusin* (after the man recites *harei at...*, and puts the ring on her finger). Based on this, a woman should cover her hair before the *chupah* to ensure it will be covered when the *erusin* is over.<sup>67</sup> Some say the obligation starts after *yichud* (following the wedding ceremony),<sup>68</sup> while other *poskim* are of the opinion that the correct time for a woman to cover her hair is the morning after the wedding.<sup>69</sup> Most *bnei Torah* follow the view of the later *poskim* and permit their wives not to cover their hair until the next morning.<sup>70</sup> The custom of those attending *Yeshiva Chofetz Chaim* (Kew Garden Hills, N.Y.) is that their wives cover their hair before the *chuppah*. In *chassidisha* circles the custom is to have the woman cover her hair before the *chuppah*.

56. Refer to Mishnah Berurah 75:10, Geder Olom page 6, Toras Chaim 75:2, Mei Yehuda O.C. 14, Shulchan Hatohar 9:9:4:page 83b, Teharas Yom Tov 1:pages 46-47, Yaskil Avdi O.C. 9:3, Mahari Shteiff 1:75, V'yeishiv Moshe 1:105, Machzei Eliyahu 9:3, Ohr L'tzyion 1:10, Sheitels pages 30-31, Piskei Teshuvos 1:75:5 in depth, see Igros Moshe O.C. 4:15.

57. Igros Moshe O.C. 1:39, 1:42, 3:24, Lehoros Nossan 5:page 189. Refer to Ve'aleihu Lo Yeibol 1:page 286:4 who is lenient in this regard with saying *zemiros* on *Shabbos* in front of a woman whose hair is uncovered. Refer to Yaskil Avdi ibid about saying the *haggadah* in front of a woman whose hair is uncovered. Refer to Bais Boruch Meluyim 4:page 414 about being *mesader kiddushin* in the aforementioned situation, see Modesty pages 374-375.

58. Da'as Torah 75:page 127, Ketzos Ha'shulchan 1:page 90, Yechaveh Da'as 4:6, Teshuvos V'hanhugos 1:64. Refer to Tzitz Eliezer 15:11.

59. Refer to Nemukei Orach Chaim 75:3, Salmas Chaim 60.

60. Refer to Chai Adom 4:5, Mishnah Berurah 75:12, Igros Moshe O.C. 4:15, Yabea Omer 6:13:5, Rivevos Ephraim 1:58, Shevet Ha'kehusi 6:77. See Kaf Ha'chaim 75:16.

61. The Laws of Daily Living page 79.

62. Bais Yosef 75, Pri Megadim Eishel Avraham 1, Elya Rabbah 12, Ben Ish Chai Bo 1:9, Mishnah Berurah 75:8, Kaf Ha'chaim 75:11, Rivevos Ephraim 6:page 576, see Rama 75:1. One is permitted to recite a *beracha* in front of a woman who shaved off all of her hair (Halichos Yisroel page 268:footnote 6 quoting the opinion of Horav Chaim Kanievsky Shlita).

63. Horav Yisroel Belsky Shlita, see Modesty pages 543, 547. The same applies while exercising (Modesty page 547).

64. Based on the *poskim* quoted in footnote 62.

65. Refer to Shulchan Aruch Y.D. 200, Ben Ish Chai Shemeni 2:19, Chuchmas Adom 121:14, Kaf Ha'chaim 63:13, Oz Nedberu 6:40, 8:50, Chut Shuni Niddah page 327:3, Oztros Hatehara 6:114:footnote 301. This does not apply to a *kallah* who is going to the *mikvah* the first time before her wedding (Refer to Chut Shuni Niddah page 327:footnote 4).

66. Refer to Chovos Yuer 196, Shevus Yaakov 1:103, Pischei Teshuva E.H. 21:2, Nodch B'Yehuda 2:79, Panim M'eros 1:35, Mishnah Berurah 75:11, Aruch Ha'shulchan E.H. 21:4.

67. Kinyan Torah 2:43, Oz Nedberu 8:65, 12:50:1, 12:64, Yechaveh Da'as 5:62, Shevet Ha'Levi 9:259, Teshuvos V'hanhugos 4:294, Chut Shuni Shabbos 3:page 271, Emes L'Yaakov E.H. 55:footnote 25, Yismach Lev 1:page 164, Halichos Chaim 2:329:page 157, Chazzon Yeshaya page 339, Avnei Yushfei 3:107:2 quoting the opinion of Horav Elyashiv Shlita, Shraga Hameir 8:24, Ohr Yisroel 21:pages 30-33, Oles Yitzchok 2:233, Divrei Chachumim page 243:13 quoting the opinion of Horav Elyashiv Shlita, Opinion of Horav Tuvia Goldstein zt"l as related by Horav Webster Shlita.

68. Refer to Soveh Smochos 1:13:1-2, Otzer Haposkim 21:27:2, Yismach Lev 1:page 163.

69. Horav Yisroel Belsky Shlita who also added that many of Horav Yaakov Kamenetsky zt"l's children had this custom. Refer to Chasam Sofer Y.D. 195, Mahari Shteiff 48, Rivevos Ephraim 6:page 570, Avnei Yushfei 3:107:2, Teshuvos V'hanhugos 4:294, Ishei Yisroel 55:footnote 77, see Chasam Sofer Y.D. 195. Refer to Bnei Bonim 3:23.

70. Horav Tuvia Goldstein zt"l heard this *pesak* from Horav Moshe Feinstein zt"l as quoted in Lev Ita page 87:footnote 4, and Divrei Chachumim page 243:13:footnote 13, Halichos Chaim 2 page 157:footnote 288 who quotes the opinion of Horav Aron Kotler zt"l, Opinion of Horav Avigdor Miller as related by Horav Webster Shlita. Refer to Gefen Porioh page 211.

אין ללמודה"ב לא בעולם אלא ד' אמות של הלכה בלבד (ברכות ח)



## When One's Wife is a *Niddah*

There is a dispute among the *poskim* if one's wife's hair is considered an *ervah* during the time when she is a *niddah*. Some *poskim* are of the opinion that one may see his wife's hair when she is impure,<sup>71</sup> however, other *poskim* are stringent in this issue.<sup>72</sup> One should consult with his *Rav* regarding this issue.

## The Length of a Woman's Hair

A unmarried woman should be careful not to wear her hair in an immodest fashion.<sup>73</sup> In regard to a married woman's hair there are different customs. Among the *chassidisha* communities the *minhag* is that the women shave their hair completely.<sup>74</sup>

There are many reasons for this custom. Some say the reason is because it should not be a *chatzitzah* when she attends the *mikvah*.<sup>75</sup> Others say the reason is because she should not come to uncover any of her hair.<sup>76</sup>

In the *Litvisha* circles<sup>77</sup> (and even some *chassidisha* communities)<sup>78</sup> the custom is that a married woman does not shave her hair. However, some advise for a woman not to let her hair grow long based on the above reasons.<sup>79</sup>

## The *Shaitel*

The topic of whether wearing a *shaitel* is permitted is discussed by many *poskim* and has been a topic of much debate.<sup>80</sup> Some say that a *shaitel* should not be worn because it is not a good covering since it is still the hair of a woman. Another area of debate is the human hair *shaitel* which looks exactly like one's own hair. This will be discussed below.

One of the reasons why a human hair *shaitel* is forbidden (according to these stringent opinions) is because it looks so real that it may appear one is not covering the hair at all.<sup>81</sup> Furthermore it is hard to tell the difference between a woman who is married and single since the *shaitel* looks like real hair.<sup>82</sup> While other *poskim* say it is permitted based on the following reason. This is because *chazal* said that a woman should cover her hair and it is covered when wearing a *shaitel*. While other *poskim* permit one to wear a *shaitel* as long as one has a covering over the *shaitel* because by doing so it takes away these reasons.<sup>83</sup> Some *poskim* only permit the wearing of synthetic *shaitels* because they do not appear to look like real hair.<sup>84</sup>

The *minhag* in most *Ashkenazik* communities is to permit a married woman to wear a *shaitel*<sup>85</sup> even if it looks like

71. Igros Moshe O.C. 5:37:12, see Y.D. 2:75, Rivevos Ephraim 2:197:8, Opinion of Horav Tuvia Goldstein zt"l as related by Horav Webster Shlita, Teharas Habayis 12:26:pages 164-166.

72. Horav Yisroel Belsky Shlita, see Suga B'shoshanim page 215, Chut Shuni (Niddah) 295:pages 224-225, Shiurei Shevet Ha'Levi (Niddah) 195:7:2, Badi Ha'shulchan 195:114, Halichos Bas Yisroel 5:footnote 5 quoting the opinion of Horav Elyashiv Shlita, Halichos Yisroel page 268, Otzros Hatehara 4:24. Hair of one's wife which is detached from her head is permitted to be looked at (Shevet Ha'kehusi 5:168).

73. Mishnah Berurah 75:12.

74. Chasam Sofer ibid, Darchei Teshuva Y.D. 182:12, 198:91, Birchos Shomayim 1:32:2. Refer to Igros Moshe E.H. 1:59 if the husband's custom is that the woman does not shave her head and his wife does have the custom.

75. Refer to Teharas Yisroel 13:19:page 55 (new), Minchas Yitzchok 7:3.

76. Shulchan Haezer 2:9:10:1, Igros Moshe Y.D. 2:88, Invei Hagefen 1:9:23, Shevet Ha'kehusi 1:237, Minhag Yisroel Torah Nesuim page 56, Lehoros Nosson 5:page 190. Some *poskim* were against this practice because it may render her ugly in the eyes of her husband. Furthermore, a woman does not have to fear that her *tevillah* will not be valid since there is always a woman making sure her immersion is valid (Igros Moshe Y.D. 2:88).

77. Refer to Invei Hagefen 1:9:footnote 171, Sharei Halacha U'minhag E.H. pages 141-142, Gefen Porioh page 214, Teshuvos V'hanhugos 2:692. This is the custom of the *Sefardim* as well (Teshuvos V'hanhugos ibid).

78. Tzemach Tzedek 139, Igros Moshe E.H. 4:100:4, Kinyan Torah 1:11.

79. Opinion of Horav Tuvia Goldstein zt"l as related by Horav Webster Shlita. Refer to Biur Halacha 75 "m'chut兹 t'zmasam." See Modesty pages 262-266.

80. Refer to Shulchan Haezer 2:9:10:7-11 for the opinions on this matter.

81. Refer to Teshuvos Rav Yehoshua Leib Diskin (kuntres achron) 213:page 166, Shnos Chaim 316, Chasam Sofer 75:5, Divrei Chaim Y.D. 2:59, Teshuros Shai 1:570, Chesed L'Avraham E.H. 87, Bais Boruch 4:page 105, Shevet Ha'Levi 5:199:4, Modesty page 249 quoting the opinions of Horav Shlomo Zalman Aurbach zt"l, Horav Korelitz Shlita and Horav Elyashiv Shlita, Teshuvos V'hanhugos 4:294.

82. Modesty page 251, V'yan Yosef 1:41, Halichos Shlomo Tefilla 20:footnote 12, see Invei Hagefen 1:9:25.

83. Refer to Modesty pages 258-259.

84. Chut Shuni Shabbos 3:page 273.

85. Refer to Shitei Geborim Mesechtas Shabbos page 29:1, Rama 75:2, Levush 2, Magen Avraham 75:5, Be'er Heitiv E.H. 115:10, Shulchan Aruch Harav 75:4, Teshuva M'ahavah 1:47, Mishnah Berurah 75:15, Aruch Ha'shulchan 6, Kaf Ha'chaim 19, Ohr Yisroel 21:pages 42-45, 93-96, 22:pages 29-66 in great depth, Sharei Halacha

כל השנה הלכות בכל יום מופתה לו שחזר בו עולם הבא... (מדה עגב)

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one's own hair.<sup>86</sup> However, in some *chassidisha* communities they permit a married woman to wear a *shaitel* if they have a covering over the *shaitel*.<sup>87</sup> While in some *chassidisha* communities they prohibit a married woman from wearing a *shaitel* completely.<sup>88</sup>

A woman may not wear a *shaitel* that is made out of her own hair.<sup>89</sup>

There is a dispute in the *Sefardik* community whether a married woman may wear a *shaitel* due to the above reasons. *Hagoan Horav Ovadia Yosef Shlita*<sup>90</sup> is of the opinion that a married woman may not wear a *shaitel* but she should cover her hair with a *tiechel* etc.<sup>91</sup> and ensure that no hair should be showing. Other *Sefardik poskim* disagree and permit a *Sefardisha* married woman to wear a *shaitel*.<sup>92</sup>

Many *Sefardisha* women have the custom to wear a *teichel* to cover their hair and do not wear *shaitel's* at all.<sup>93</sup>

## Snoods/ Bandanas/Head Band

Some women wear a snood that is crochet which may have large holes throughout and it does not cover the hair properly.<sup>94</sup> To make them wearable the snood must have lining. Some say the lining should be a different color in order to show that the snood has a lining. If it is a tight knit snood then it is permitted even without the lining. With regard to bandanas, if the bandana is very big and covers all her hair, without any loose hairs being exposed then it is permitted to be worn.<sup>95</sup> A bandana which is sewn closed in the back is permitted to be worn.<sup>96</sup>

It is permitted for a woman to wear a head band with a fall etc, as her hair is covered. The same thing would apply to wearing a bandana only if it used instead of a head band.

## Afterthought

One who chooses to wear a *shaitel* should discuss with their *Rav* which ones are permitted and which are forbidden to be worn. Lately it has become common for many women to leave a lot of their hair uncovered and think by doing so it is permitted according to *halacha*. As mentioned above, one who is careful with this *mitzvah* will have children who will be *yirei shomayim*. This is something all of us want, and what better *segula* do we need than to be careful with the *halachos* of *tznius*. It is a husband's obligation to tell his wife that a certain hair covering is or is not in the spirit of *halacha*.<sup>97</sup>

I would like to give a special thank you to Horav Yisroel Dov Webster Shlita (Dayan Yeshiva Emek Halacha – Rosh Av Beis Din of New York) for adding many insightful comments, and for loaning me his *kuntres Lev Ita* on this topic which was helpful to me in compiling this issue.

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U'minhag E.H. 50, see Journal of Halacha and Contemporary Society 30:pages 97-100, Shevet Ha'Levi 5:207:2, Hide and Seek pages 164-177 on the opinion of the Lubavitcher Rebbe zt"l on this topic.

86. Rivevos Ephraim 6:page 574, Minhag Yisroel Torah Nesuin pages 53-56, Avnei Yushfei 5:145:4. The Practical Guide to Tznius page 26 is stringent. Horav Yisroel Belsky Shlita added that one should try to make sure the *shaitel* does not look too real.

87. Minchas Elazar 5:35, Nemukey Orach Chaim 75.

88. Refer to Sheilas Yaavetz 1:9, 2:7-8, K'rayana D'igirisa 2:124:page 132. See Journal of Halacha and Contemporary Society *ibid*:page 103.

89. Mishnah Berurah 75:15, see Rivevos Ephraim 7:243.

90. Yabea Omer E.H. 4:3:3, 5:5 meluyim pages 351-352, Soveh Smochos 1:pages 176-180:2, see page 177:footnote 2, Rivevos Ephraim 6:page 574, 8:82, Teshuvos V'hanhugos 2:692, 4:294:page 368. Refer to Orchos Rabbeinu 4:page 241:38.

91. Refer to Modesty pages 254-255.

92. Yaskil Avdi E.H. 7:16, Pnei Yitzchok E.H. 6:6, see Igros Moshe E.H. 2:12, Avnei Yushfei 5:145:1, Opinion of Horav Chacham Refoel Harari Shlita (Brooklyn N.Y.) as related by Horav Webster Shlita. Refer to Lev Ita page 4.

93. Refer to Soveh Smochos 1:page 178-179, Rivevos Ephraim 6:page 574, Teshuvos V'hanhugos 2:692.

94. Modesty pages 256-257.

95. Sharei Halacha U'minhag E.H. pages 143-144, Avnei Yushfei 3:107:3, A Practical Guide to Tznius page 24.

96. Avnei Yushfei *ibid*.

97. Refer to Modesty pages 103-107, Teshuvos V'hanhugos 4:294:page 368.

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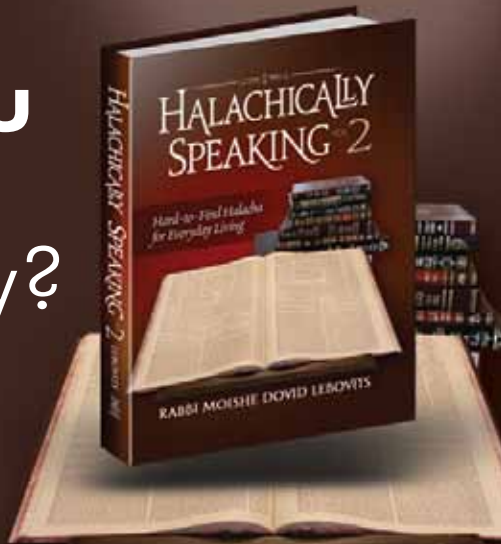
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