

ספר

עוז והדר לבושה



Modesty
An Adornment for Life

Halachos and Attitudes
Concerning Tznius of
Dress & Conduct

By

Rabbi Pesach Eliyahu Falk

Gateshead, England

First Edition - Nissan 5758 / April '98
Second Edition - Av 5758 / August '98

Copyright © 1998
by Rabbi P. E. Falk

146, Whitehall Road,
Gateshead, NE8 1TP,
England.

This book, or any portion thereof, may not be reproduced in any form without written permission from the author, except for purposes of quotation in a review printed in a magazine or newspaper.

THE RIGHTS OF THE COPYRIGHT HOLDER WILL BE STRICTLY ENFORCED.

Trade Distribution

FELDHEIM PUBLISHERS
200 Airport Executive Park, Nanuet, N.Y. 10954

FELDHEIM PUBLISHERS
POB 35002, Jerusalem, Israel

European Trade Distribution

J. LEHMANN HEBREW BOOKSELLERS
20 Cambridge Terrace, Gateshead, England NE8 1RP

Plates by Frank - Jerusalem
Printed in Eretz Israel



Chapter Five

COVERING HAIR - CROWN OF THE JEWISH WOMAN

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the *halachos* and guidelines of *mitzvas Kisuy Sa'aros* - the *mitzva* for married women to cover their hair - will be explained בע"ה. Although many inroads have unfortunately been made over the last decades to undermine this wonderful and holy *mitzva*, we do not accept the prevailing attitude of people that nothing can be done to restore it to its previous glory. In our day and age, many women are ready to follow the *derech ha'emes* - the road of truth - if only it is explained to them in the correct way.

It should be noted that in the times of *Chazal* even non-Jewish women covered their hair when married (*Sanhedrin* 58b). This demonstrates just how deep-rooted the need for *tznius* is in the constitution of the married woman, and all the more so in the nature of the Jewish married woman. It is, therefore, an unnatural state of affairs that some women no longer feel a need for special modesty once married. Segregation, which is the corner-

stone of *kedushas Yisroel* (and in more normal times, was understood to a degree even by the *umos ha'olam*) is particularly indicated for a woman after marriage, as she is an *eishes ish*. See 5:D:2(h) below and *Mekoros* 21:5.

These notes explain the *halachos* with their underlying reasons and relevant *hashkofos* and it is hoped that this elucidation will awaken a dormant spark and help restore the honor and sanctity of the *Bas Yisroel*. *B'ezer Hashem* this great *mitzva* will once again take its rightful place of honor amongst all other *mitzvos* of the Torah.

A. COVERING HAIR IN PUBLIC

1. WOMAN IS IN PUBLIC - OBLIGATION MIN HATORAH: It is an obligation *min haTorah* for a married woman [or a woman who was married in the past - M.B. 75:11] to have her hair covered whenever she is in a public area or appears amongst a large number of people. This is derived from the verse, ופרע את ראש האשה - “The *Kohen* shall uncover the hair of the *sotah*” (*Bamidbar* 5:18) which implies that before the action of the *Kohen* her hair was covered, because she was in *Beis Din* among many people. See 5:D:2(g-h) for reasons why this *mitzva* was given to married women.

Although it is an obligation *min haTorah* for a married woman to cover her hair when in public, the *ervah* status given to the hair is an innovation by *Chazal*. Consequently, *min haTorah* a man may say a *bracha* when looking at the uncovered hair of his wife or other woman because they are not *ervah*. *Chazal*, however, labeled hair of a married woman “*ervah*” and it is therefore *ossur mid'Rabanan* to say a *bracha* when looking at such hair, be it another woman's hair which he may not see, or his own wife's which he may see - see 4:B:1(a) above, and *Mekoros* 21:16-19. [See Y.D. 195:7 that a husband may not always see her hair.] Hair was given the status of *ervah* by *Chazal* because when part of a female that should be covered is uncovered it can affect a man who sees it and cause him to feel attracted to her.

2. WOMAN CAN BE SEEN BY INDIVIDUALS - MITZVA D'RABANAN: It is an obligation *mid'Rabanan* for a married woman to cover her hair when she is not in the public eye but she could be seen by men who are not part of her intimate family, e.g. when she goes out to the porch or yard. The *issur* applies even if she can only be seen by one individual, such as when she opens the door to a stranger.

As explained previously, obligations related to *tznius* of women's dress that are *min haTorah* are called *Das Moshe* whilst obligations originating from *Chazal* are called *Das Yehudis*. Accordingly, covering hair in public, which is an obligation *min haTorah*, is *Das Moshe*, whereas covering hair where only an individual can see her hair is *Das Yehudis* (*Kesubos* 72b).

3. HAIR THAT IS DIFFICULT TO COVER - DEPENDS ON MINHAG:

Hair which is difficult to contain in a regular well-fitted hair covering is *halachically* exempt from this obligation. This refers to hair which grows on the temples next to the ear or on an exceptionally low hairline that extends below what a net or *tiechel* would normally contain. These are known as *שערות היוצאות חוץ לצמתן*. Although the temples are considered as part of the head, the *halachic* obligation to cover is limited to that which is naturally contained in a net-like cover. It is, however, *ossur* for a man to gaze with intent at such hair just as he may not gaze at her face (M.B. 75:13).

Although there is no obligation to cover such hair, nevertheless, if local *shomrei mitzvos* are stringent and cover them, the *halacha* obliges all women who live in this locality to behave likewise. In fact, many have adopted the custom to be stringent because Kabbalistically much stress is put on covering all hair of the head without exception (M.B. 75:10 and 551:79). See also *Mekoros* 22:1-2.

If a woman lived in a place that is lenient on this issue but is now (permanently or just temporarily) in a place that is stringent, she is obliged to cover this hair in accordance with the local *minhag* (*Biur Halacha* 75:2 s.v. *Michutz*). It would be considered immodest for her to show hair in a place where people do not usually do so (and local men are not used to seeing even these hairs of married women), even though it is *halachically* permitted for her to do so at home where people are used to it - see 1:G where this concept is explained at length.

It must be made quite clear that the above-mentioned leniency refers only to hair which grows on the temples and is therefore difficult to cover or to contain in a net. There is, however, no *heter* for a lock of hair that comes from the upper head area to descend and protrude from the *tiechel*, snood etc. at the temples or even below them since such hair can easily be contained. Such hair must therefore be covered in line with all other hair. It has unfortunately become fashionable in some circles to allow some locks of hair to show. This is related to the misconduct of window *sheitels*, explained

in 5:D:6 below and it should be widely publicized that this is totally incorrect even if the hair that protrudes measures less than a *tefach* - see 5:C:2-3.

4. HAIR THAT GROWS BELOW THE TEMPLES: The two *minhagim* mentioned in the previous point, concern hair that grows below the usual hairline down to the bottom of the temple bone. The temple bone is next to the ear and does not move around when the person opens and closes his mouth, in contrast to the jaw bone which does move. Down to the lowest part of the temple bone, which is identical with the lowest part of the ear tunnel, is part of the head rather than the face. It is called by the Torah, פאת הראש - “the corner of the head” - and, concerning a man, hair that grows there is *payos harosh* which he must not cut off completely - see Y.D. 181:1. It is with reference to hair growing in this area, that some have the *minhag* to cover even this hair since it is after all hair of the head whilst others do not have such a *minhag*. However, hair which grows below this point, which is hair that grows below the ear tunnel, is not subject to *minhag* at all. It is facial hair rather than head hair, and the obligation to cover refers only to head hair not to hair that comes from a totally different source.

5. HAIR THAT GROWS ON THE NECK: Hair that grows on the neck is exempt from the obligation of being covered, since the Torah obliges hair of the head to be covered (ופרע את ראש האשה - see 5:A:1 above) and the neck is simply not part of the head. Even the *minhag* mentioned (in 3 above) of covering the hair that grows on the temples, does not apply to hair that grows on the neck - see *Mekoros* 22:3.

It has nevertheless become a widespread *minhag* to keep this hair short. This is because if it is long it could appear to people to be hair of the head that is hanging down and is showing at the neck. As explained (at the end of 3 above) such hair must be covered since it is part of the general hair of the head. If the hairs on the neck are short it is obvious that they have grown on the neck and there is no general *minhag* to make an effort to guarantee that they are concealed - see *Mekoros* 22:4.

6. HAIR OF A MARRIED NON-JEWISH WOMAN: Some *Poskim* write that the hair of a married non-Jewish woman might be considered *ervah* (M.B. 75:12 in the name of the *Chayei Odom*). Their doubt is based on the fact that even non-Jewish women used to cover their hair once they were married (*Sanhedrin* 58b). This indicates that hair-covering is a fundamental

requirement for any married woman. There is therefore an element of *pritzus* in not doing so and this might give her hair the status of *ervah*. Other *Poskim*, however, maintain that since non-Jewish women are not obligated to cover their hair after marriage, and nowadays most do not do so, there is no reason for their hair to be considered *ervah* (*Derech Hachayim* No.1, *Kaf Hachayim* 75:16; *Responsa Igros Moshe* O.H. 4:15; *Yabia Omer* 6:13:5).

B. COVERING HAIR IN PRIVACY

There are four reasons why a married woman should preferably cover her hair even when she is at home and no one besides her husband can see her. They are as follows:-

1. REASON ONE -

- OPINIONS THAT HAIR IS COVERED INDOORS, MID'RABANAN:

According to most opinions, when a woman is in the total privacy of her home she has no *halachic* obligation to cover her hair. However, some opinions maintain that a woman must cover her hair even in the total privacy of her home, except when her physical needs require that her hair be uncovered e.g. when showering. Since the hair of a married woman has been labeled *ervah* by *Chazal*, they consider it a lack of *tznius* to leave the hair uncovered even in private. The *Mishna Berura* is of the opinion that one should preferably be stringent in this matter (*Biur Halacha* 75:2 s.v. *Michutz*). Accordingly, it is commendable that a woman has her hair covered with a *tiechel* when she goes to sleep at night - see *Mekoros* 23:1-8.

On contemplation, a person must be overwhelmed at the *kedusha* which permeates every aspect of a Jewish person's life. Even when alone, he is aware of a "Presence" and behaves with the same respect and dignity as when other people are around - מי כעמד ישראל גוי אחד בארץ -

2. REASON TWO -

- CHAZAL HIGHLY COMMEND TZNIUS PRACTICED IN PRIVACY:

The *Poskim* write that even the lenient opinion (that maintains that she is not *halachically* duty-bound to cover her hair in privacy) agrees that it is an extremely praiseworthy act of *tznius* for a woman to cover her hair whenever possible (even in bed). This is evident from the story of *Kimchis*. This outstanding woman merited having seven sons who all became *Kohanim*

Gedolim. When asked what notable deed she did to merit having such children she answered, "The ceiling beams of my house never saw the hair of my head" (*Yuma* 47a). This means that even when she wished to comb her hair she would avoid exposing the hair properly. For example, she combed the hair under a shawl that lay loosely over her head - see *Mekoros* 83:4.

This was an outstanding act of *tznius* and it is certainly not expected of the average woman. However, the basic idea of reducing the exposure of hair to the absolute minimum is certainly to be learned from Kimchis, and her ways should be emulated as far as possible. As a result of this particular form of *tznius*, a woman could merit to have children who are great *Talmidei Chachamim*.

This recommendation is greatly strengthened by the fact that the *Zohar* lays very great stress on women covering all their hair whenever possible, (as will be mentioned in 5:C:3 below - M.B. 75:14). Therefore, although the average woman is certainly not expected to be like Kimchis, the *Poskim* recommend that she endeavors to follow the words of the *Zohar* and that her hair is kept covered whenever reasonably possible - see *Magen Avraham* 75:5 and *Mekoros* 23:9-12.

3. REASON THREE -

- HER HUSBAND MIGHT SAY BRACHOS FACING HER HAIR:

According to the opinions that there is no *halachic* obligation to cover the hair when in private, there is still a serious consideration due to which the *Chofetz Chayim* recommends that a woman covers her hair. This is that the hair of a married woman is *ervah* to everyone, even her husband (ערב באשה), and it is *ossur* for any man to say a *bracha* or *davar shebikdusha* when facing the hair even if the woman is in a place where she has no strict obligation to cover her hair (M.B. 75:10). See 6:Q:2 below and *Mekoros* 23:12.

The probability of transgressing the *issur* should not be underestimated. For example, if a husband or son says a *bracha* or sings *zemiros* when facing his wife/mother whose hair is uncovered he has transgressed an *issur*. Moreover, any *dvar* Torah the husband tells his wife will require that he avoids facing her at the time, since when facing her and all the more when looking at her, he is in a position also to look at her uncovered hair. Similarly, if a husband says *krias shema* in his bed while facing his wife whose hair is uncovered he is saying a *davar shebikdusha* in front of *ervah*. Due to the prevalence of these considerable pitfalls, it is highly recommended

that a woman covers her hair whenever possible (*Chofetz Chayim* in *Geder Olam*, Chapter Two and letter of the *Chofetz Chayim*, printed in the *sefer*, *Chofetz Chayim Al HaTorah*, page 322).

It is clear from the words of the *Chofetz Chayim*, that he maintains that the opinion which permits a woman to leave her hair uncovered indoors (*Magen Avraham* 75:5), allows this only for a short time but not that she spends the whole day with her hair uncovered. To do so is wrong according to all opinions because it will inevitably cause her husband and sons to say improper *brachos*. It must also be made clear that even the opinion which is *halachically* lenient quotes the *Zohar* mentioned above, and recommends that one follows the words of the *Zohar*.

4. REASON FOUR -

- **HER HAIR SHOULD BE COVERED FOR HER OWN BRACHOS:** An additional reason why a married woman should keep her hair covered even indoors is the fact that a married woman should not say a *bracha* when her hair is uncovered. This is the opinion of many *Poskim* who maintain that just as a woman's hair must be covered when she is in public, so it must likewise be covered when she says a *bracha*. They surmise that just as a man should not say a *bracha* when his hair is uncovered (O.C. 91:3, O.C. 206:3, M.B. 2:12), so too, a married woman should not say a *bracha* when her hair is uncovered. In their opinion in both cases it is *kalus rosh* (being distinctly disrespectful) to say a *bracha* "with a bare head" as this symbolizes the removal of the Heavenly yoke (*Trumas Hadeshen* 10).

This is the opinion of the *Chesed L'Alafim* O.C. 2:8 (quoted in *Responsa Yabia Omer* 6:15:11); the *Tzror Hamor* (quoted in *sefer Halichos Beisah* 6:15 and *Taam V'Daas*, *Nassoh* s.v. *V'Omrah*). This is also the opinion of *Responsa Yaskil Avdi* Vol. 7 page 289 and *Chalas Lechem* on *Chalah* 7:7. Similarly, the *Ben Ish Chai*, year two, *Shemini* 19 and the *Amoros T'horos* on *Hilchos Tevilah* by the *Gaon MiButchatch* No.20 write that women should cover their hair when saying a *bracha*. They do not, however, state that it has the same severity as a man, as do the first *Poskim* quoted.

It should furthermore be noted, that even an opinion which holds that women may say a *bracha* with uncovered hair agrees that it is a widely accepted *minhag* that married women cover their hair before saying a *bracha* (*Halichos Bas Yisroel* note 5:6 in the name of Hagaon Harav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach *zt"l*).

In addition, a woman should certainly not *daven* with her hair uncovered. *Davening*, which is an audience with *Hashem*, requires that the person is dressed in a respectable manner, which is in clothes that he would gladly go out in. For example, a person should not *daven* in nightclothes, a bedroom robe (M.B. 91:11), without socks so that part of the foot is visible (M.B. 91:12) or in a yarmulke that is not covered by Tallis or hat (*ibid.*). Similarly, working clothes which a person would not wear when amongst other people, such as an apron, should be removed before *davening* (*ibid.*). Returning to uncovered hair - since it is an embarrassment for a married woman to be seen with her hair exposed (*Rashi, Bamidbor 5:17 s.v. Uporah* and *Rashi Kesubos 72a s.v. Azhara*) it is obvious that her hair must be covered before *davening*.

Since a woman should cover her hair before saying a *bracha*, which is said frequently throughout the day, and before *davening*, it is obvious that her hair should be covered at all times of the day, since otherwise she is bound to err. This reason is in addition to the first three significant reasons stated, due to which hair should be covered even indoors. Apart from all these reasons, one must consider visitors who frequently come to the house such as the *chavrusos* (learning partners) of her husband or grown up sons, school friends of her boys, nephews who come to visit, guests who come for a meal and general callers to whom she regularly opens the front door. If she does not always have her hair covered, the obligation of *kisuy sa'aros* will inevitably be transgressed on many occasions.

5. CLOSING COMMENT: Besides all the valid reasons that have been given above, a major point that concerns the welfare of the Jewish people is associated with this issue. This is directly related to the third reason mentioned above, the *issur* for a man to say a *bracha* facing uncovered hair. It is expressed in a letter by the *Chofetz Chayim*, (printed at the end of *Chofetz Chayim Al HaTorah* page 322). The letter, dated *Tammuz 5684*, was written at a time when great financial difficulties befell the Jewish people and the *Yeshivos* were in desperate financial straits. In his letter the *Chofetz Chayim* attributes all the *tzaros* to the fact that women were lax with matters of *tznius* and walked around their homes with uncovered hair, short sleeves and even sleeveless dresses. This caused their husbands and sons to say many *brachos* in front of *ervah*, which is a profanation of *Hashem's* name. The *Chofetz Chayim* writes as follows (translated loosely, but as accurately as possible):-

“*Chazal* say that all parts of the female body that should be covered are *ervah*. Today, due to our many sins, serious breaches occur concerning this *halacha*. The *yetzer horah* entices women to go around in their houses with uncovered hair, sleeveless dresses and deeply cut out necklines, in a way that almost wherever a person looks he faces *ervah*. As a result of this, many of the *brachos* he says in his own house or when he *davens* at home facing his wife or grown up daughter are ‘improperly made *brachos*’, as they are said facing *ervah*.

“As everyone knows, a *bracha* contains the holy name of *Hashem*. When a *bracha* is said properly the *bracha* brings blessings upon the person as the verse says, בכל מקום אשר אזכיר את שמי אבוא אליך וברכתיך - ‘Wherever you mention My name [in a respectable manner] I shall come and bless you [with wealth]’ (*Shemos* 20:24). The same applies in the reverse, G-d forbid. When *brachos* are said facing *ervah* this causes poverty, as *Chazal* say (*Nedarim* 7b), בכל מקום שהזכרת השם מצויה שם - ‘In all places where the name of *Hashem* is mentioned [improperly] poverty is to be found.’ On this *Gemara*, *Rabbeinu Nissim* writes, ‘Since the positive mention of *Hashem*’s Name brings financial benefits, the negative mention of *Hashem*’s Name has the opposite effect and causes the curse of poverty.’..... Consequently, it should not surprise us that the Heavenly blessings cease to flow and that people’s earnings have dwindled drastically etc.”

Such are the bitter fruits of undermining a support pillar of *kedushas Yisroel*. It is exactly as was predicted in the *Zohar* quoted in full in 5:C:3 below.

A change of attitude will certainly help enormously in procuring and promoting the correct mode of conduct. Instead of ‘covering the hair’ being viewed as a restraint and encumbrance, it should be considered as the crown and glory of the Jewish woman, which is what it truly is.

It should be noted that the previous *Rav* of *Komemiyus*, Hagoon Harav Binyamin Mendelson *zt'l* related that he heard the following from the *Chazon Ish*:- “The extent of a woman’s *Yiras Shomayim* can be assessed by the way she covers her hair. As careful as she is with covering her hair, so authentic and genuine is her *Yiras Shomayim*” (*Pe'er Hador* Vol 3 page 18).

C. LEAVING FRONT OF THE HAIR UNCOVERED

1. THE OPINIONS OF THE POSKIM: According to almost all *Poskim* - amongst them the *Responsa Chasam Sofer* O.C. 36; M.B. 75:10, *Chazon Ish* (quoted in *Responsa Teshuvos V'Hanhagos* 1:62, 2:692) and the *Gedolei HaPoskim* of our generation (see their ruling in *Mekoros* 1:6) a woman must cover all her hair when in public and there is no *heter* for even a minor part of the hair to be uncovered over her forehead - see *Mekoros* 24:17-19. Unfortunately, some women have taken the liberty of leaving some of their hair uncovered, basing themselves on their understanding of a ruling given in *Responsa Igros Moshe* (O.C. 4:112). In truth, even in this *Teshuva* (Responsum) no general *heter* was given. This is fully evident from the wording of the *Teshuva* itself. For women to freely leave some hair uncovered on the basis of this *Teshuva* is a departure from the intention of its great author *zt'l* as will be explained - see *Mekoros* 24:1.

This is a matter of paramount importance as it is a violation of an aspect of *tznius* that is spelt out explicitly in the Torah (*Bamidbar* 5:18). Evidently, this aspect of *tznius* infuses considerable *tahara* into the Jewish home. Therefore, to undermine it is tantamount to ravaging a central pillar of *taharas Yisroel*. To clarify this matter further, the following points should be noted carefully.

2. AN OPINION THAT GIVES A HETER IN SOME CIRCUMSTANCES:

As mentioned, there is a general misconception concerning the nature of the *heter* given in the *Igros Moshe*. People assume that Maran Hagaon Harav Moshe Feinstein *zt'l* allowed women to leave less than a *tefach* uncovered. This is totally incorrect. He allowed this only under pressing circumstances as is evident from the wording at the beginning of the Responsum. To dispel incorrect interpretations the translation of a testimony by Harav Dovid Halpern *shlita*, *Rav* of *Beis Hamidrash* Hendon, London, has been incorporated (see *Mekoros* 24:18 for original text) :-

*On the fourth of Shevat 5754 I had an audience with Hagaon Rav Dovid Feinstein הגאון המפורסם רשכבה"ג מורה"ר ר' משה שליט"א son of משה ר' משה שליט"א and we spoke about the ruling of his father *zt'l* concerning the hair of a married woman. Hagaon Rav Dovid *shlita* said to me that it is clear from the text of the *Teshuva* that his father *zt'l* never intended to give an all-out *heter* for the exposure of two finger widths of hair. The *Teshuva* was a personal *heter* given for an*

exceptional case - as he writes, 'she [the lady who did not agree to cover her hair] should not be considered a major sinner *גורם*.' This is also indicated from the introductory words of the teshuva. 'In the first place I intended not to answer your query in writing as it is adequate that I give a verbal heter when the circumstances justify it etc.' The Responsum also finishes with the words 'It is correct for women to be stringent and cover their hair completely as the Chasam Sofer held.' All this clearly implies that no general heter was given.

I then showed Hagaon Rav Dovid shlita a letter written by Hagaon Rav Nissim Karelitz shlita of Bnei Brak. In it he writes the following: 'Some justify their action of not covering all their hair by saying that this was the opinion of the great Gaon, the author of the Igros Moshe *zt'l*. However, whoever learns the Teshuva from beginning to end will see clearly that it was written only for a special case and it is clear from the wording of the Teshuva that girls and women should be educated to cover all their hair.' Hagaon Rav Dovid shlita agreed to the content of the letter.

I furthermore had the considerable merit of having an audience with Hagaon Rav Avraham Pam shlita on the sixth of Shevat 5754. I showed him the complete text I had written after my visit to Hagaon Rav Dovid shlita. His response was that it is absolutely clear from the Teshuva that this is the true interpretation of it and that no collective heter was given to leave some hair uncovered.

(Harav) Dovid, son of Hagaon Harav Elchanan Halpern shlita.

An inquiry was made concerning the letter written by my esteemed friend Harav Dovid Halpern *shlita*, as to whether the Gaon Harav Dovid Feinstein *shlita* was willing that the testimony contained in the letter be publicized. Harav Hagaon R' Mattisyahu Salomon *shlita*, *Mashgiach Ruchni Yeshivas Gateshead* UK, now of *Beis Medrash Govoha, Lakewood*, New Jersey U.S.A. had occasion to be in the United States shortly after the above mentioned letter was written. He visited Hagaon Harav Dovid Feinstein *shlita* and presented him with this question. After the visit, Harav Salomon *shlita* released the following letter. It has been loosely translated from its original in *lashon haKodesh* - see original text in *Mekoros* 24:18. It reads as follows :-

I visited the Gaon Moreinu Harav Dovid Feinstein *shlita* in the month of Adar, 5754. While I was there, I showed him the letter

written by Hagaon Harav Dovid Halpern *shlita* and asked him whether he grants permission for this letter to be publicized in England. Hagaon Harav Dovid Feinstein *shlita* took the letter, read it slowly and carefully, and responded that he is in agreement and gives permission.

I then asked him whether he just allows us to publicize the letter or whether he means that there is an obligation and a positive duty to publicize the letter. He responded with a question, 'What will happen if you publicize it in England? Will people actually listen to you and follow the letter?' To this I said, 'There are many people who will not accept it from me, but there are also a large number of people who will accept what I say. They will respond favorably when they hear from a reliable source that they erred in their understanding of the opinion of his father the great Gaon *ztl.*' To this Hagaon Harav Feinstein *shlita* responded firmly and resolutely, 'If so, it is a *mitzva* to publicize this letter as it will hopefully prevent people from stumbling.'

I am hereby fulfilling the instructions of one of the foremost Chachmei HaTorah of our times. I am publicizing his opinion and thereby taking steps to remove a *michshol* (a stumbling block) from before the Jewish people.

(Harav) Mattisyahu Chayim Salomon.

This matter was also discussed with other *Gedolim* in *Eretz Yisroel*, (Hagaon Harav Nissim Karelitz *shlita* and Hagaon Harav Chayim Pinchas Scheinberg *shlita*) and they too concurred that it is erroneous to construe the ruling as if it is a *heter* for women to do so in the first place. See letter signed by these two *Gedolim* in *Mekoros* 24:18.

[Apart from all the above, a discrepancy must be pointed out. The ruling mentioned (O.C. 4:112) is written in a Responsum dated 5717 and again in a Responsum (E.H. 1:58) dated 5721. There is, however, a third Responsum (O.C. 4:15) dated 5732 in which it is written explicitly that even less than a *tefach* of hair must be covered in line with other "covered areas" of a woman's body which must be fully covered and even less than a *tefach* may not be exposed. See *Mekoros* 24:12 where this subject is discussed at length.]

In addition to all the above, experience has shown that those who are lenient quickly take liberties, willingly or accidentally and expose more of

their hair than the *Iggros Moshe* allows even under the most pressing circumstances. The *Iggros Moshe* stipulates that the visible strip which is about two *tefochim* long (18 cm., as wide as the forehead) must be less than half a *tefach* wide (i.e. less than 4.5 cm. wide) because if it is half a *tefach* wide the area showing will be equivalent to a square *tefach*, and this is definitely *ossur*. The facts are that those who leave hair open invariably leave a strip that is 4.5 cm. wide or more and for this there is no justification, as explained. Even if during the first hour of the day the hair showing is less than two inches wide, it easily slips back with the passage of time and during much of the day more hair can be showing than is justifiable according to any opinion.

It follows from all that has been explained that the trend to wear a snood or beret which covers most but not all the hair, is a departure from *halacha* and the *derech hayashar* - the path followed by *Klal Yisroel* from the earliest times. To claim that there is an unqualified *heter* by one of the *Gedolei Hador* of our times to dress in this way is fallacious, as explained above.

3. KABBALAH: GREAT DAMAGE IS DONE BY EXPOSING HAIR: All opinions agree that Kabbalistically a woman harms herself, her husband and children by partially exposing some of her hair. Moreover, those that leave some hair uncovered usually do so in order to look more attractive and from the *Zohar* it is evident that when the hair is uncovered to attract attention, the harm and damage done is even greater.

The importance attached by the *Poskim* to this *Zohar* is quite exceptional. The *Magen Avraham*, *Mishna Berura* and *Chasam Sofer* hardly ever mention Kabbalistic opinions in the context of a *halachic* analysis. In this matter however, they all quote the *Zohar Hakadosh* (*Nossoh*, page 125) and strongly recommend that one heeds its warning. See *Magen Avraham* 75:4, *Mishna Berura* 75:14, and *Chasam Sofer* O.C. 36. The *Zohar* says the following (the original Aramaic can be found in *Mekoros* 25:1-2 :-

Rabbi Chizkia said, 'Cursed be the man who allows his wife to expose hairs of her head beyond their covering. Covering the hair is one of the acts of modesty that should be performed even in the home (i.e. not just in public). The woman who allows some of her hair to be uncovered in order to exhibit it causes poverty to descend on her home, her children not to reach the prominence they could have achieved, and an impure spirit to dwell in her home. What precipitates such misfortunes? The hair that she exposed within her house! If the effect of an indoor exposure is

such, imagine what damage is caused by exposing hair outdoors..... A woman should, therefore, ensure that not even a single hair is uncovered even when she is indoors, and all the more so when she goes outdoors.'

If women would realize the harm they inflict upon themselves by being lenient, they would surely return to the traditional Jewish way of covering all their hair. It is tragic that such an important *Chazal* as this *Zohar* is not more widely known.

4. IF LOCAL WOMEN COVER ALL THE HAIR, ALL MUST DO SO:

Those who reveal some of their hair although they live in a place where the general practice is to keep all hair covered [disregarding the warnings of the *Zohar* mentioned in the previous point], are unaware of a *halacha*. The *halacha* states that if the accepted way of Orthodox women is voluntarily to cover a certain area then, even though there is no *halachic* reason to do so, it becomes a binding obligation on every woman in that place, since it becomes מקום שדרכו להיות מכוסה (M.B. 75:2 and *Ben Ish Chai parshas Bo*, 12).

Therefore, if a woman lives in an area where the general way of dress of Orthodox women involves covering the hair entirely, it is *ossur* according to all opinions for her to leave a small part of her hair uncovered when going out in public. By claiming that she is relying on an opinion that is lenient, she is in fact displaying ignorance of *halacha*.

5. CLOSING COMMENT: We live in a time when the importance and far-reaching effect of *kisuy sa'aros* is little understood and is under threat, being presented by some as a matter of little significance. In truth, authentic *Yiddishkeit* and the whole character of the Jewish home are dependent on women practicing all aspects of *tznius* properly. The saying of *Chazal*, כהררים התלויים בשערה - "They are like mountains that hang on a hair" (*Mishna Chagiga* 10a) - is highly appropriate to our issue. It is most significant that the great *Chasam Sofer* *zt'l* and Harav Samson Raphael Hirsch *zt'l* who both succeeded in establishing healthy and vibrant centers of *Yiddishkeit* were great campaigners for this *mitzva* and instilled a deep respect and reverence for it amongst their followers.

The *Navi* says, נפלה עטרת ראשנו אוי נא לנו כי חטאנו - "The crown of our head has fallen; woe unto us for we have sinned" (*Eichah* 5:16). Due to our sins and lack of *kedusha*, the crown of our heads - the beautiful *mitzva* of *kisuy sa'aros* - has fallen. The crown is however not broken. It is up to us to pick it up and return it once again to its rightful place. With that we will

awaken once again within ourselves the deep rooted feelings for real *tznius* and *kedushas Yisroel*.

D. SHEITELS

1. A SHEITEL MADE FROM SYNTHETIC OR REAL HAIR: It has been widely accepted in *Klal Yisroel* that a woman may cover her hair with a *sheitel* (M.B. 75:15) although there are opinions which are strongly opposed to it - see *Mekoros* 28:1. Amongst those who permit a *sheitel* are the *Rema* (O.C. 75:2) and the *Magen Avraham* (75:5). They maintain that although a woman may not go out with her natural hair on display, a *sheitel* is no more than a garment made of hair, and neither the Torah nor *Chazal* forbade wearing such an item. A *sheitel* is therefore permitted according to these opinions whether it is made of synthetic hair or human hair. There are, however, conflicting opinions as to whether a woman may wear a *sheitel* made from her own hair. This should therefore be avoided (M.B. 75:15).

Should a woman settle in a community where women do not wear a *sheitel* because they follow the *Poskim* who forbid it, she is obliged to conduct herself according to the prevailing custom and not wear a *sheitel* - see 1:G above. Amongst those who forbid *sheitels* are the *Be'er Sheva* No. 18 and the *Chasam Sofer* in his commentaries on O.C. 75:2 (the *Chasam Sofer* might, however, refer only to human hair *sheitels*) - see 5:D:5(c) below.

When a woman wears a *sheitel* that is the same, or almost the same color as her own hair, she must take special care to ensure that no part of her own hair hangs out and passes as just part of the *sheitel*. It is understood that the longer she allows her hair to be, the greater the danger of this happening. Therefore, once a woman needs a haircut she should not delay it unnecessarily as this can result in some of her hair showing. It should furthermore be noted that the *Chofetz Chayim* writes in *Taharas Yisroel* (Chapter 13, Note 19) that it is praiseworthy practice for married women to keep their hair short, for reasons other than that her hair might show - see *Mekoros* 1:6.

2. THE GREAT EXALTATION OF THE MITZVA OF COVERING HAIR:

The head-covering is one of the most cherished pieces of clothing a woman possesses. With it she fulfills a great *mitzva min haTorah* and it bestows on

her many exceptional side benefits that emanate from fulfilling a *mitzva* that is founded on *tznius*, the most important characteristic of the *Bas Yisroel*:-

(a) She demonstrates submission to Hashem's wishes: When wearing a head-covering a woman conceals this natural source of attraction from the eye of the public and thereby demonstrates that she is a servant of *Hashem*. She places His wish, that an *eishes ish* (a married woman) covers her hair and conceals it from the view of the public, above her own natural desire to look attractive and enhance her appearance by displaying her natural hair.

(b) She demonstrates the purity of Jewish family life: The head-covering symbolizes the *kedusha* of the Jewish family, in which the wife dedicates her life to her husband to the near-total exclusion of any form of contact with other men. She therefore withholds the *chein* of her hair from the view of the general public (*Trumas Hadeshen* No.10) - see *Mekoros* 21:3, 28:3.

(c) It is a source of *Yiras Shomayim*: When this *mitzva* is kept properly and with the correct attitude it imparts considerable *Yiras Shomayim* to the person. Men cover their head with a *yarmulke* or hat in line with the recommendation of *Chazal*, כסי רישך כי היכי דתהוי עלך אימתא דשמיא - "Cover your head so that you shall experience the fear of Heaven" (*Shabbos* 156b). If covering just part of the head as is practiced by men has such an effect, how much more must covering the complete head have a deep and far reaching effect on a woman's *Yiras Shomayim*.

(d) It is a source of *Kedusha* and inspiration: Considering that the head is the most distinguished and most significant part of the human body as *Chazal* say, ראש מלך על כל אבריו - "The head is king over all the limbs" (*Shabbos* 61a), the influence of *kedusha* that is transmitted to the whole person by a *mitzva* done continuously with the head must be immeasurable. Significantly, *Chazal* say that when a man wears *tefillin* he has a special defense against serious sin (*Menachos* 43b). Accordingly, a woman who lacks the outstanding *mitzva* of *kisuy sa'aros*, because she does not fulfill its *halachic* requirements, withholds from herself a vital source of spirituality and inspiration.

(e) It protects from illness and pain: Who can assess the physical advantage, in protecting the person from illness and pain, that is gained from an unceasing *mitzva* such as *kisuy sa'aros*. *Chazal* have taught us that a person is protected while he fulfills a *mitzva*, as they say, מצוה בעידנא דעסיק - "While a *mitzva* is being carried out it shields and safeguards the person" (*Sotah* 21a). Hence, a *mitzva* that is done over many hours of the

day is a highly prized source of protection. Similarly, the *mezuzah*, which is an ongoing *mitzva* fulfilled at all times, is singled out by *Chazal* as a *mitzva* which offers exceptional protection to people (*Shabbos* 32b).

(f) It procures great dividends: The head-covering enables a woman to fulfill the *mitzva* of *kisuy sa'aros* minute by minute throughout the day, thereby enabling her to earn great riches both in this world and in the world to come - see C:3 above. While a man adorns his head with *tefillin* for about an hour a day, a woman has the merit to adorn her head with an article of *mitzva* throughout the length of the day. In fact, one of the great *Rabbanim* of our generation, Hagoan Rav Shimon Schwab *zt'l*, once said that women are not obligated in the *mitzva* of *tefillin* because they wear "their *tefillin*" throughout all hours of the day. They therefore do not require the added sanctification of *tefillin* as in the case of men - (see 6:F:5 below, concerning *Tefillin shel Yad*).

Since the head-covering plays such an important role, it is only fitting that it displays the inner refinement and sensitivities of the *Bas Yisroel*. It should therefore be an article of clothing which adds luster and aristocracy to the royal status of the Jewish woman who is a *Bas Melachim*.

(g) The difference between a married woman and an unmarried girl: The Torah allows a girl to appear in public with her hair uncovered although it adds considerably to her *chein* and demonstrates her natural good looks whilst the Torah considers it *pritzus* for a married woman to do so. As mentioned previously, even the *umos ha'olam* understood this and expected their wives to cover their hair in public - see *Sanhedrin* 58b. A married woman is an *eishes ish* and this warrants that part of her beauty be withheld from the public eye. Although she should dress pleasantly and graciously in a manner which reflects her *simcha* and nobility, she should not display her full natural *chein* for everyone to see. (See this point in *Urah Kavodi* by Hagoan Harav Avigdor Miller *shlita* page 222 and *Mi Yirpeh Lach*, page 203).

On the other hand, an unmarried girl need not mask part of her natural *chein* and may allow her hair to reflect her natural good looks (although not in a way that draws attention to herself). An unmarried girl is not an *eishes ish* and there is therefore no need for her to cover her hair to withhold part of her *chein* from the public eye. Also, her good appearance can aid in finding her future partner in life. There is therefore a positive reason for her hair not to be covered and hidden - see *Kesubos* 52b. See also 1:N:3 above, 7:K:1 below and *Mekoros* 28:3-7.

(h) Additional reasons culled from Chazal for this special mitzva: Apart from the reason just given why a married woman must cover her hair, there are at least two additional reasons for this special *mitzva* that can be derived from the teachings of *Chazal*.

- Firstly, “covering and enwrapping the head” symbolizes the desire to be left alone and not wishing to socialize with everyone. For this reason, in the times of *Chazal*, a mourner would sit with his head covered and wrapped, known as עטיפת הראש - see Y.D. 386. In his grief he could not socialize nor did he want to. If people came to visit him and convey their condolence he was grateful, but he was certainly not in a mood to socialize in an enjoyable and lighthearted manner. Similarly, a *metzora* - a leper, would sit alone with his head covered and enwrapped to help him realize the enormity of the sins he had transgressed - see *Vayikrah* 13:45. He was to sit outside the three camps and also to dress in a way that helped him feel that he was not fit to enjoy proper contact with people.

Although the issues are far from identical, this is one of the prime inner reasons for the *mitzva* of *kisuy sa'aros*. By covering her head, which is a half measure of “covering and enwrapping the head”, the married woman is saying to men whom she comes across that she ‘wants to be left alone’ and is neither available for marriage nor for other types of unnecessary contact. Had Chava not caused Adam to sin, in which case the *yetzer horah* would have been far less intense, this symbol would not have been necessary, and she could have left her hair uncovered. However, now that the *yetzer horah* has been internalized and become a potent force, she must be safeguarded from all forms of immorality by this *mitzva*.

Hence, *Chazal* say in *Eruvin* (100b) that after the sin of the *eitz hadaas* Chava was told that from hereafter she was to be עטופה כאבל - “[partially] covered like a mourner” referring to the *mitzva* of *kisuy saaros*. This does not mean that she should look unpleasant or that she should walk around downhearted like a mourner. It means that she covers her hair as a sign to the public of ‘wanting to be left alone’, just as this is the message inherent in a mourner covering and enwrapping his head. She is telling the world, “I am a married woman and do not want to be sought after by men other than my husband” (*Responsa Shevus Yaacov* 2:11 and *Birkei Yosef* Y.D. 393:1).

- A further reason for this *mitzva*, which like the first reason is inferred to by *Chazal*, is as follows: We are told in *T'nach* that after Tamar had been assaulted by Amnon she covered her hair. With this she demonstrated her yearning for modesty and chastity - see *Shmuel* 2:13:19.

Since her privacy had been tampered with, there was a danger that this would harm her natural trait of *busha* and *tznius*. To counter this she covered her hair when in public, thereby practicing an act of modesty which is beyond that of other girls. Marriage, in which a girl who had previously had no contact with men now has a husband, has a similar subtle potential of affecting her natural modesty. To prevent this, the married woman performs the additional modesty of covering her hair, which is a refinement beyond that expected of unmarried girls.

Chazal in *Sifri, Parshas Nasoh*, No. 56 bring the story of Tamar covering her hair after the incident with Amnon as a source for the *mitzva* of *kisuy saaros* by every married woman. With the explanation given this is very well understood since in both cases its function is to preserve her modesty. This also explains why the *mitzva* continues even when a woman is widowed and no longer an *eishes ish* - *Beis Shmuel* E.H. 21:5. This additional modesty is required *min haTorah* only when she is in public, because the modesty lies in withholding from the public the appearance of her full attraction. That being the case, to appear in public in a manner in which she looks no different to her usual self, is a violation of the very purpose of this *mitzva*.

These far reaching explanations should help people who seek the truth understand why it is wholly against the Torah's intention that a woman's head-covering is so well made that men would not know that she is married and that this is not her true hair - see 5:D:4(a) below for further elaboration.

3. THE PLAGUE OF UNREFINED SHEITELS:

(a) *Sheitels* that are unusual, long or eye-catching:

- **Wild unkempt look:** To our deep regret, the *yetzer horah* has succeeded in causing impurity of deed and sometimes even of thought to be associated with the *mitzva* of wearing a head-covering. For example, some *sheitels* have an unkempt wild look to them. Such *sheitels* do not comply with the most basic requirement of *midas hatznius*, since a woman wearing such a *sheitel* will be noticed wherever she goes because of her unusual and disarranged appearance. Also, such *sheitels* demonstrate a carefree approach to life. This is totally out of character for a *tznuva* who is blessed with *Yiras Shomayim* and is constantly careful. See 1:A:4(c) above and 7:C:1 below concerning clothes that are very casual. Other *sheitels* have been manufactured or set in elaborate immodest styles and are not fit to be worn by *N'shei Yisroel* who are inherently refined and self effacing.

▪ **Long styles:** Some *sheitels* are long and loose, and lie flowingly over the young woman's shoulders or even hang down her back. There could hardly be a more undignified way of fulfilling this *mitzva* than to copy hair styles sported by the common females of the *umos ha'olam*. In fact, many of the greatest *Poskim* maintain that it is *ossur* even for a girl to have long loose hair as it attracts far too much attention to her and lacks *tznius* (*Magen Avraham* 75:3, *Moir Uketziah* 75, *Responsa Shevus Yaacov* 1:103 - see also 5:H:2(a) below). All the more so, it is against *tznius* for a married woman to appear with such a hair-style, since a married woman is expected to dress with even more modesty than an unmarried girl - see 5:D:2(g-h) above.

Many *Gedolei Eretz Yisroel* (and of other communities) have ruled that women should not wear long *sheitels* even when the hair is bound together behind the head. They maintain that such *sheitels* are made to a style that was typical for girls but was never used by married women. They are therefore girl-like and not *tznius'dik*. In such places it is *ossur* for the individual to disregard the ruling and the local standard of *tznius*, and wear a long *sheitel*. (See *Mekoros* 1:6 for a statement signed by the *Gedolei Eretz Yisroel*, Hagaon Harav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach *zi'l* and *yibodel l'chayim*, Hagaon Harav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv *shlita*). Even in other places where there is no fixed ruling against wearing long *sheitels* provided the hair is bound together, nevertheless, much speaks for keeping *sheitels* no more than shoulder length, as *sheitels* are far more refined and *eidel* when short.

▪ **Conspicuous, lopsided *sheitels*:** *Sheitels* that have a deliberate and excessive difference in style on the two sides, e.g. on the right side the hair hangs forward over the eye and covers almost half the face, whilst on the left side it is brushed back behind the ear, are unrefined. This type of style is made to be highly conspicuous. To gain that advantage the woman is prepared to suffer the inconvenience of not being able to use one of her eyes properly. Such styles are naturally attention-seeking and contravene the most basic rule of *tznius* which is to shun attraction and attention - *Responsa Shevet HaLevi*, Preface Vol. 1 and 5:H:1 below. The *sheitel*, which is a *mitzva* article that is culled from the sublime world of true Jewish modesty, is severely degraded by having such a style.

Similarly, *sheitels* that are distinctly lopsided and much longer on the one side than the other, are unrefined. Those with a feeling for *tznius* are deeply distressed by these trends and worry what new *yetzer horah* will emerge tomorrow. They yearn for the day when the exterior of the Orthodox Jewish woman will once again reflect her rich and precious interior.

(b) The wrath of Hashem at eye-catching hair creations: These derailments from the tracks of *tznius* did not occur yesterday. On the contrary, they are thousands of years old and are part of a malady about which *Hashem* complained bitterly through His *Navi*, Yeshayohu. The verse in *Yeshaya* 3:16 says ויאמר ה' יען כי גבהו בנות ציון וכיו הלך וטפוף תלכנה - “*Hashem* complains that He is angered by the haughtiness of the Jewish daughter.....she walks bloated.” *Rashi* explains, הלך וטפוף: היו קושרות פאות - “Bloated means that they used to inflate their hair and turn it into an eye-catching creation by binding foreign pieces of hair onto their own hair. This caused their hair to stand tall and look grossly enlarged.” They did this in order to exhibit and parade their beauty whilst for basic good-looks and delightful appearance, brushing and styling their natural hair would have been quite adequate.

The condemnation of *Yeshaya HaNavi* refers to unmarried girls who artificially aggrandized their hair by turning it into a grossly enlarged creation. This was so detrimental that it aroused *Hashem*'s wrath with Jewish girls in particular and the Jewish people in general, and contributed towards the *churban habayis*. It is all the more unfitting when a married woman, from whom *Hashem* expects extra modesty, exhibits an inflated eye-catching hair covering. When she does so, she drives away and even expels the *kedusha* that she would have infused into the community through the *mitzva* of *kisuy sa'aros*, which is a central feature in *tznius* and *kedushas Yisroel*.

(c) The distressing association between the wig and foreign cultures: Even the names given to some styles of *sheitels* e.g. “Girly”, “Bahama”, “Fiji”, “Little Rascal”, “Rapture” (and some names that are too repulsive to quote) reflect the low standard of morality prevalent in today's society. Although these names may be designed to attract the non-Jewish market, advertising them under these names in the Jewish press and in Jewish *sheitel* stores (and in some cases even in a home with children around, when the mother sells *sheitels* from the house) associates *sheitels* with the fashion houses of Paris rather than *kedushas Yisroel*. It is difficult to remain silent when experiencing how שפחה כי תירש גברתה - “a low maidservant replaces her mistress” (*Mishlei* 30:23). The wig worn by *nochrrios* replaces the *sheitel* worn by the *Bas Yisroel*. We have abandoned an item which radiates *tahara* and depicts inner qualities - an item that is the splendor of *N'shei Yisroel*.

(d) A *sheitel* refined on one woman might not be refined on another: It should be noted that a *sheitel* which looks refined on one person might

look unrefined or even girl-like on a second person. Some styles suit a broad face not a narrow face, whilst others are just the opposite. The same applies to the length of any particular *sheitel*. A certain length might look fine on a rounder face but very unrefined or have a girl-like appearance on a longish face, and so on. Accordingly, a woman should be cautious and not buy a *sheitel* of a certain style just because it looks perfect on her friend, since the result might be quite different when she tries it on herself. She should likewise not be led astray by poster pictures of women wearing wigs since that *sheitel* might look quite different when it is on her head.

4. A SHEITEL SO WELL MADE THAT IT IS BARELY DETECTABLE:

(a) **It should be immediately apparent that the hair is covered:** In our day and age, it has become necessary to stress something which is of a most elementary nature. This is that it is totally incorrect and against the will of the Torah for a woman to wear a *sheitel* that has been manufactured to such perfection that to an onlooker (who does not know she is married) she appears to be an unmarried girl. As is well known, many custom-made *sheitels* are made to this level of undetectability.

Wearing such a *sheitel* contravenes the commandment that a married woman must cover her hair, which the *Poskim* say is so that men other than her husband are not attracted to her when she is an *eishes ish* - see *Trumas Hadeshen* No. 10 and *Rosh, Kesubos* 72a. See also *Mekoros* 28:1-2. It is therefore obvious that it should be immediately evident that she is wearing a *sheitel*, and that the *chein* which is apparent is due to a *sheitel* not to her true hair. To circumvent and outwit this Torah obligation completely violates the spirit of the law and is forbidden.

The following is written in *Responsa Chesed L'Avraham*, E.H. No. 87:-
 האיסור בגילוי שיער משום פריצות שהיא מתנאית לבני אדם, מה לי שיער עצמן או שיער נכרית שנראין כשערות עצמן, תורה אחת להם ואסור מן התורה - loosely translated this means, "Since it is *ossur* to uncover hair because she thereby displays her beauty to people, what difference does it make whether she reveals her own hair or displays a wig which looks as if it were her own hair?"

There are actually some young women who look more "girl-like" in their *sheitels* than real girls. [See *Gemara (Nazir* 28b) that there is a way of making a wig to such perfection that it has as much *chein* and beauty as true hair - see *Bigdei Shalom V'emets*, page 43.] This could not be further from the will of *Hashem* Who has indicated that a married woman is to conceal

some of her beauty from the public eye by covering her hair. *Rashi* writes (*Kesubos* 72a s.v. *Azhara*) that the hair of the *sotah* was uncovered in *Beis Din* because כמו שעשתה להתנאות על בועלה - "it is presumed that [if she was *mezaneh*] this is what she did in order to beautify herself in the eyes of her suitor." This *Rashi* is clear proof that a girl with her hair uncovered is more attractive than a married woman with her hair covered. Otherwise, why should it be assumed that the *sotah* uncovered her hair? Therefore, for a married woman to cover her hair in a way that she looks as attractive as a girl violates the essence and character of this *mitzva*.

Apart from the above, there is an obvious reason why it should be immediately apparent that a woman is married and no longer a girl. Although it is forbidden for a man to study the features of a married woman due to the *issur* of *v'lo sosuru acharei eineichem* (*Biur Halacha* 225 s.v. *Afilu*) it is permissible to study the features of an unmarried girl if it is for the sake of marriage. A prospective *chasan* may look at a girl to see if he likes her (*Kiddushin* 41a) and so may a father looking for a *shiduch* for his son, a brother looking for a *shiduch* for his younger brother or anyone who is busy with *shiduchim* (*Avos d'Rebi Nosson* 2:5). All such people may look at the girl's countenance, observe how she talks to people and watch how she reacts to certain situations, since all this is needed to form a true impression. Since looking and studying is permitted in the case of an unmarried girl but not with a married woman, it should be immediately obvious that someone is married and no longer available for a *shiduch*.

See also *sefer, Machanecho Kadosh* No.16 who records that married women in *Yerusholayim* wore longer dresses than girls in order to immediately distinguish between them. It was also to protect the married women with an extra measure of *tznius*, just as the Torah commands her to cover her hair in public - see *Mekoros* 21:3-5.

This Daas Torah is expressed in a statement that appears in *Mekoros* 28:14 signed by the great *Poskim*, Hagoan Harav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach *zt'l*, *lehibodel l'chayim*, Hagoan Harav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv *shlita*, Hagoan Harav Shmuel HaLevi Vosner *shlita* and Hagoan Harav Nissim Karelitz *shlita*). They write particularly bitterly about this matter, as they consider it as a fundamental disloyalty to the *mitzvos* of the Torah. This was also the view of Maran Hagoan Harav Yaacov Yisroel Kanievsky *zt'l*, the Steipler Gaon - see his letter in *K'reina D'igrsa* 2:124. This ruling is also to be found in earlier *Poskim* - see *Responso Maharil Diskin, Kuntres Acharon* 213 and *Responso T'shuras Shai* 1:570.

Moreover, see 5:D:2(h) above for reasons culled from *Chazal* for this special *mitzva*. In the light of those reasons it is obvious that it should be fully recognizable to the public that she is a married woman and that she is not being seen in her natural hair.

(b) Lack of pride in a *mitzva* demonstrates a lack of appreciation: To those who know that she is a married woman and can therefore detect that she is in fact wearing a *sheitel*, this barely recognizable *sheitel* demonstrates that she does not deem it a privilege to fulfill this *mitzva*, as she is trying to suppress and neutralize it as far as possible.

Women who wear the *sheitels* mentioned would in fact feel highly embarrassed if their grown up sons walked around with a small, barely noticeable *yarmulke* perched somewhere on the back of their heads so that it did not interfere with their handsome appearance. Similarly, they would feel terrible if for aesthetic reasons their husbands decided one day to embed all *mezuzos* around the house into their respective door posts, so that one could hardly tell that the entrances had *mezuzos*. These women would surely confront their sons and husbands with the argument that a *Yid* should gladly and openly do the *mitzvos* just as a soldier proudly displays the medals a king has given him. (See M.B. 8:26 what the *Chofetz Chayim* has to say about those who go out of their way to totally hide every trace of their Tzitzis). Yet, these very same women camouflage their own “article of *mitzva*” and do everything in their power to disguise it and hide it to ensure they look as natural and as pretty as possible.

A further potent comparison is the following. How would a woman feel if her son had a *yarmulke* made for himself that was like a miniature *sheitel* - gauze on the inside and short man-like hair covering it from on top? When he wears it, his head is of course covered. However, to everyone who sees him, he has nothing on his head (see M.B. 2:12). We can well imagine what his distraught mother would say when trying to convince him that it is wrong to brush one’s religion under the carpet. The answer he gives, that when out on the street he is ashamed to show that he is a *Yid* and therefore hides it, will of course find very little sympathy with his mother. However, little does his mother realize that she is doing exactly the same as her son. She, with many of her friends, are ashamed or hurt by the fact that *Yiddishkeit* requires them to cover their hair and that they cannot look as perfect and as natural as a girl. They therefore have a *sheitel* made which looks exactly as their own hair. With it they successfully hide a major part of their *Yiddishkeit*, much to the chagrin of all *erlicher Yidden*.

The following incident was related by the Mashgiach Harav Hagaon R' Don Segal *shlita* in his speech he gave in *Bnei Brak* on *Rosh Chodesh Sivan* 5755. "Thirty years ago I was speaking to Hagaon Harav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach (*shlita*) about the prevailing fashions of *sheitels*. He said to me the following, 'If a woman would have turned up in *Yerusholayim* fifty years ago wearing a *sheitel* she would have been stoned (as they followed the opinions which forbade *sheitels*) and in those days *sheitels* were straw-like and could not be confused with real hair. Nowadays, women come to speak to me and I cannot tell whether it is their natural hair that is visible or whether it is a *sheitel*. To me this is absolutely despicable! It is comparable to a person eating kosher meat who does everything in his power to make it appear as if he is eating *treife* meat. So too, these women want to do the *mitzva* of *kisuy sa'aros* but do everything in their power to give the impression that the hair is uncovered. To me this is extremely abhorrent!' These were the words of the Gaon" (*Mi Yirpeh Lach*, page 174).

A highly experienced *kallah* teacher in the United Kingdom told the author of this *sefer* that occasionally when she meets one of her *kallots* a few weeks after the young lady's *chasuna*, she has momentary difficulty remembering whether the girl is already married or not, even though she personally attended the girl's wedding. The young lady looks exactly as she looked before her marriage, to the point that her teacher is confused for a while about her status. Is this the *Ratzon Hashem*?

On this breach in *Yiddishkeit* should we not lament with the verse, ויצא הדרה - "the Daughter of *Tzion* has lost all her splendor" (*Eichah* 1:6) - she no longer understands the *chein* that accompanies *shemiras hamitzvos*.

5. THE ISSUR TO APPEAR AS IF ONE IS DOING AN AVEIRA: A

person must not do something which gives the impression that he cannot be bothered to do a certain *mitzva* or that he is transgressing one of the laws of the Torah or even just one of the laws enacted by *Chazal*. Although he knows that there will be no truth in the assumption, he is still *halachically* obligated to desist from causing such a misunderstanding, as will be explained.

(a) The obligation of וְהִייתֶם נְקִיִּים מֵה' וּמִיִּשְׂרָאֵל: If a custom-made *sheitel* is so well made that women who know her and know she is married would mistakenly think that this is her real hair, she transgresses the *issur* of וְהִייתֶם נְקִיִּים מֵה' וּמִיִּשְׂרָאֵל (*Bamidbar* 32:22) - a person must neither do an

aveirah nor do something which appears to people to be an *aveirah*. The former is an *aveirah* in the eyes of *Hashem* and the latter is an *aveirah* in the eyes of *Yisroel* - hence the two terms *מהי ומישראל* in the verse. Therefore, if local people would think that she is not wearing a *sheitel* she would transgress the *issur* mentioned - see *Mekoros* 30:1-3.

(b) The *issur* of *chillul Hashem*: Furthermore, by wearing such a *sheitel* she will be responsible for making a considerable *chillul Hashem*. People will say that the emphasis placed by others on covering hair is overstressed and exaggerated, as there are some *frum* young ladies who do not bother to cover their hair at all. Lessening the severity of an *issur* in the eyes of people is a distinct form of *chillul Hashem*, as the Torah of *Hashem* is thereby being profaned (*Yuma* 86a) - see *Mekoros* 9:1.

It may seem that nowadays undetectable custom-made *sheitels* have become so widespread in some communities that everyone in those circles knows that a lady could be wearing a *sheitel* even though they cannot detect it. Should this be correct, neither of the two *issurim* just mentioned would apply (but the two points explained in 5:D:4 would, of course, still apply). The truth of the matter is, however, that at present only a small number of custom-made *sheitels* are so perfect that they are really undetectable. Therefore, when someone has a really undetectable *sheitel* it would still be natural for people to suspect her of not having covered her hair at all.

Furthermore, this can lead to individuals who lack *Yiras Shomayim* taking advantage of custom-made *sheitels* and not covering their hair at all, knowing that they will be able to “get away with it” as people will think they are surely wearing a high-class custom-made *sheitel*. Such deception is recorded in *Chazal* - see *Bava Metziah* 61b and *Rashi, Bamidbar* 15:41 that people who lacked *Yiras Shomayim* would sometimes color a thread of their *tzitzis* with a color that was very similar to *techeiles*, to deceive people into thinking that they had applied true *techeiles* as the *Torah* commands.

To demonstrate just how far removed the ideals and aspirations of those who wear the *sheitels* mentioned are from the attitudes of the *Torah* as portrayed by *Chazal*, it should be noted that *Rashi* writes in *Kesubos* 72a that a married woman feels disgraced when people see her hair. Similarly, *Rashi* writes in *Bamidbar* 5:18 in the name of *Chazal*, *מכאן לבנות ישראל*, - “[From the fact that the hair of the *sotah* is exposed] it is apparent that it is a disgrace for a married woman to have her hair displayed.” It is therefore incredible that some married women do everything in their power to cause people to think that the hair which is visible is in fact

their own hair. If this is not making a “sham and farce” of the Holy Torah, what is?

(c) Many early *Poskim* were worried that *sheitels* would be misused:

It should be noted that over the last four centuries many *Poskim* have maintained that it is *ossur* to wear a *sheitel* altogether (unless concealed under a cover) because it can be mistaken for real hair and the wearer appears not to have her head covered (See *Be'er Sheva* 18, *Divrei Chayim* Y.D. 1:30, 2:59, *Teshuva Meiahava* 48). Even to this day, quite a number of communities do not allow *sheitels* due to the many *Poskim* who forbid it. This was also the *minhag* of the old *yishuv* of *Yerusholayim*. The *Poskim* who nevertheless permitted them were of the opinion that it is immediately apparent that a woman is wearing a *sheitel* and no misunderstanding could occur (*Magen Avraham* 75:5, M.B. 75:15. *Responsa Shnos Chayim* 316 - see *Otzar HaPoskim* 21:24:5). Their *heter* is, of course, invalid if the *sheitel* is made so expertly that it passes for real hair.

(d) Many who do wrong, do so quite innocently: Many who perpetrate these and other wrongdoings are certainly totally unaware of how wrong these misdeeds are, and the negative image they project by behaving in these ways. It could even be that some people will feel offended by the harsh terms that have been used, when in fact, they have done these deeds and worn these garments in total innocence and ignorance. However, the wrongdoings themselves must be condemned in most forthright terms, even though the perpetrators very likely do not deserve such censure. This has to be done because only by exposing the offenses and showing the attitude they project, and by revealing the conscious or subconscious thoughts of those who started off these wrongdoings, will people truly understand how incorrect these ways of dress are, and how detrimental they are to the delicate fabric of *kedushas Yisroel*.

6. THE ISSUR TO WEAR A “WINDOW SHEITEL”: We must place on record a most unpleasant *pirtza bechomas hadas* - breach in the fortress of *Yiddishkeit*. This is the “window *sheitel*”, which is a *sheitel* with a hole in it. Through it the woman pulls out a section of her own hair. This she mingles with the hair of the *sheitel* that is in the majority, claiming that although her hair improves the appearance of the *sheitel*, her hair is annulled in the majority of synthetic hairs (בטל ברוב). Some do the same without having a hole in the *sheitel*, by drawing some of their hair out from under the side or the back of the *sheitel* and then brushing it over the *sheitel* to give it a “more

natural” look. This exposure of hair is totally and absolutely forbidden for the reason just explained. Apart from this, the very desire to ensure that the *sheitel* has a more “natural look” and could pass as her true hair is a *treif* concept. It is totally against the spirit of this *mitzva* and has been roundly condemned by our *Gedolim* - see 5:D:4 above and *Mekoros 27:1-5*.

This conduct, in which the person pounces on any apparent loophole to circumvent the laws of the Torah, reeks of a dislike for this *mitzva*. The *mitzva* of covering hair was given to the daughters of *Yisroel* to bolster their dignity and esteem. Unfortunately, that which is a badge of honor and distinction is looked down upon and is viewed as a sign of enslavement to an age-old ritual. Let us take courage and halt this steady erosion of true Jewish values!

It must be emphasized that women have a pivotal and exalted role in the Torah-life of our communities. When they display a love and affection for *Yiddishkeit*, it does wonders to the whole fabric of Jewish society. Whereas, if they react with apathy and lethargy to central features of our heritage, it is calamitous and sows seeds of estrangement in society as a whole and is particularly harmful to their own children and families.

Hagaon Harav Yosef Lis *zt'l*, a close associate of the holy Brisker Rav *zt'l*, mentions in one of his letters a remarkable statement by the great Gaon Harav Yaacov MiSlutzk *zt'l* (the author of the *Ridvaz* on the *Yerushalmi*). He said the following words, וכן להיפך, אצל כלל ישראל, - “All general improvements in the *Yiras Shomayim* throughout the history of the Jewish people and all general declines in *Yiras Shomayim* that have occurred, all started with women” (*Yosef Daas*, letter 18). Women have a far more central position in the history and development of the Jewish people than they readily appreciate!

E. TIECHELS AND OTHER HAIR COVERINGS

1. TIECHELS:

(a) **Communities in which women wear only a *tiechel* not a *sheitel*:** It has been mentioned in 5:D:1 above that some communities are particular that women do not wear *sheitels*. They follow opinions which consider a *sheitel* an inappropriate cover as it displays hair, and the Torah requires that a married woman does not display hair. The fact that a *sheitel* is not her true hair is immaterial according to their opinion. Those who wear a *tiechel*, either for the reason mentioned or because they wish to wear the original

head-wear of the Jewish woman, demonstrate that they happily accede to covering their hair as *Hashem* wants them to. They are not perturbed by the fact that covering hair in this manner is only practiced by Orthodox Jewry and is otherwise totally unheard of in the outside world.

(b) Even a *tiechel* can be worn in an unrefined manner: Although this is so, women who wear *tiechels* and similar hair coverings are not exempt from the *yetzer horah* of unrefined and even ostentatious head-wear. They must therefore take care that the color and the style of the *tiechel* is calm and *b'cheint*, not loud and coarse. Particular mention must be made of the color fuchsia which is a deep very rich pink that is commonly very bright and eye-catching. Neither a *tiechel* (that is to be seen by others) nor a dress that is of this very bright pink should be worn.

Some styles of *tiechels* and ways of wearing *tiechels* have evolved that stem from a desire to look sophisticated and be noticed, such as those secured by an exceptionally large, elaborate and eye-catching bow situated at the side of the head. The head has a lopsided look due to the gigantic sized bow which is situated on one of its sides. It is unfitting for the otherwise noble bearing of *N'shei Yisroel* to wear such an unrefined head-covering. It is also *ossur* for a woman to dress in a way which causes men to look at her. A woman may, however, cover her hair with a colorful *tiechel* or other type of head-covering which is very *b'cheint* but not eye-catching. Provided it covers her hair fully, a cheerful head-covering is fine.

(c) Strange, lopsided creations are eye-catching and unrefined: It should be noted that in the irregular and turbulent world in which we live, lopsided creations are often considered pretty. This is in line with modern art which has no symmetry whatsoever and is nevertheless admired. For example, between the *umos haolom* there are strange types who adorn themselves with a large earring on the one ear and nothing on the other. Also, there are girls who have distinctly long hair on the one side of the head and short hair on the other side. Likewise, there are those who will appear with a sweater in which one arm and half the body is black or some other dark color while the other arm and half the body is white or similar light color. Everything of this nature looks very strange and wrong to anyone who is not used to it, because it is distinctly uneven and unbalanced.

In contrast we find in the Torah that when something is lopsided it is considered blemished and damaged. See verse *Vayikra* 21:18 where the Torah states that a *Kohen* who has one large and one small eye, or any other irregularity between corresponding limbs is a *ba'al mum* and may not do

Avoda in the *Beis Hamikdash*. On the other hand the beautiful maiden described in *Shir Hashirim* is praised for the perfect symmetry of her teeth and other parts of her body - (see verse 4:2 and 4:5).

Whilst there is of course a great difference between the body itself and adornments of the body, as the latter need not be perfectly symmetrical e.g. women have rings, bracelets, brooches etc. on the one side and not on the other, nevertheless, when an adornment gives the wearer a totally lopsided and irregular look, it is foreign to *Am Yisroel*. Such an item is in fact not an adornment at all, as it has no true *Chein* and serves only to attract attention, since the person looks unusual. To us Yidden attracting attention is always wrong, and in the case of a girl or woman is a form of *pritzus*.

People who have seen unfitting and unsymmetrical modes of dress for some time become used to them and sometimes can no longer see why they are considered unrefined. It is therefore fitting at this point to mention a general guide for defining refined and unrefined modes of dress: A mode of dress which when seen for the first time looks distinctly unpleasant and even detrimental to the person's appearance (rather than just unusual) is usually an unrefined way of dress. It has been created so that its wearer stands out and is noticed by all and sundry, and it is just with the passage of time that people have become used to it and no longer find it unsightly.

(d) A *tiechel* should not be drab, somber and cheerless: Having warned against overly conspicuous and flamboyant *tiechels*, it is important to stress that a *tiechel* should also not be drab and dreary. Firstly, a woman must at all times look appealing to her husband, and head-wear has an enormous bearing on the woman's general appearance. Secondly, it is wrong for her to give the impression that *Yiddishkeit* is restrictive, somber and gloomy, when in fact *Yiddishkeit* is a most delightful and joyous way of life.

2. CROCHETED HAIR COVERINGS: Some women wear crocheted head-coverings which have large holes throughout and do not cover the hair adequately. To make them Kosher, many are lined with a light colored inner lining. With this type of lining, it is recognizable to everyone that the hair is fully covered. Such hair coverings are therefore acceptable, (provided the lining is not see-through because if the hair can be somewhat seen through, the cover is inadequate - see *Mekor Chayim* O.C. 75:2 in *Kitzur Halachos*).

Some line their crocheted head-coverings with a dark-colored lining which is colored exactly like their own hair and is therefore not noticed. This gives the impression that the woman's hair is showing through. It appears

that she is transgressing the *halacha* which states that in public a woman's hair must be totally covered and to cover just the majority is inadequate.

Those who wear this type of crocheted head-covering are unaware that we must not do something that gives the impression of being an *issur*. To do so is a transgression of the *halacha* of *מה' ומישראל* - (see 5:D:5 where this *halacha* is explained). Women must therefore cover their hair in such a way that the onlooker can tell that they have complied with the *halachic* requirements of covering their hair properly - see *Mekoros* 30.

Head-coverings should have a band of foam or something similar sewn on the inside to prevent them from slipping back. This is particularly necessary with silk head scarves which are very slippery and easily move out of position if they do not have a grip. It is similarly important to ensure that a head-wear which is held in position by an elasticized band is sufficiently firm around the head to prevent it moving back or to the side with ease.

3. HAIR COVERING THAT EXTENDS FAR DOWN THE BACK: Snoods and other head-coverings that have a long part which hangs far down the back are not recommended, even if they are well made and cover the head completely. The added weight caused by the excessive part hanging down pulls the covering back and can reveal the front of the hair, which is *ossur* as explained earlier. Although with constant care it can be kept in position, it is still far better to wear other safe and trouble-free types of head-coverings.

Moreover, even if a certain woman will be careful at all times to ensure that her hair remains properly covered, the fact that she wears such a hair covering will encourage others also to wear it, and amongst them there will certainly be women who will not be adequately careful. She will therefore indirectly cause a lessening in the fulfillment of the *mitzva of kisuy sa'aros*.

4. UNDERSTANDING THE DAMAGE CAUSED BY AN AVEIRA: The *Chazon Ish* *zt'l* used to say: "One still finds people with *Yiras Hashem*, but very few people have *Yiras Cheit!*" (Harav Hagaon R' Zalman Rotberg *shlita*, *Rosh Yeshivas Beis Meir*, *Bnei Brak*, quoted in *Pe'er Hador* 3 page note 18). With this he meant that there are many G-d fearing people who understand that *Hashem* is aware of all their deeds and that there is a reward for *mitzvos* and punishment for *aveiros*. There are, however, only very few people who appreciate the actual harm caused by an *aveira* (even when transgressed by mistake), the damage it inflicts on the person's *neshama* and

how negatively the *tumah* affects him in general. People who truly have such an understanding are *yorei cheit*. They are, however, few and far between.

A *mitzva* such as *kisuy sa'aros* is best supported with both *Yiras Shomayim* and *Yiras Cheit* - *Yiras Shomayim* to make every effort to fulfill the will of *Hashem* and cover the hair properly, and *Yiras Cheit* to understand the damage caused when men see the hair or say *brachos* under forbidden circumstances. This applies also to general *tznius*. Appreciating the harm caused by a lack of *tznius* will encourage girls to dress appropriately, and will be the criterion by which garments are selected for a wardrobe.

Yiras cheit goes even further. *R' Yochanan* says (*Sotah* 22a) that we can learn *Yiras cheit* - the fear of sin - from a young lady who was overheard praying as follows: בראת של עולם בראת גן עדן ובראת גהינם, בראת צדיקים רבוננו של עולם בראת גן עדן ובראת גהינם, יהי רצון מלפניך שלא יכשלו בי בני אדם - "*Ribbono Shel Olam*," she implored, "You have created *Gan Eden* and You have created *Gehinom*. You create people that become *tzadikim* and You create people that become *reshoim*. May it be Your will that no one stumbles (into the sin of gazing at me and deserves *Gehinom*) because of me."

The meaning of her *tefilla* is as follows: Although there are and there will be sinners amongst *Klal Yisroel* and it is not within her power to prevent this phenomenon, nevertheless, she begs *Hashem* that He protects her that she is not used as a tool by others to sin (by gazing at her). She pleads for this because if she were associated with such an *aveira* it would soil her *neshama* even though she would not be responsible for the sin as she dresses with full *tznius*. This *tefilla* was a feature of true *Yiras Cheit* - she understood the far reaching harm caused by an *aveira*, both to the transgressor himself and to others involved.

F. HATS

1. EXTRA REFINEMENT OF WEARING A HAT OVER THE SHEITEL:

In some communities, an extra refinement is practiced. Women cover their *sheitels* with a hat to prevent anyone mistakenly thinking that the *sheitel* is the woman's real hair and that her hair is uncovered. Women look extremely refined and regal with such double head-wear. The practice of wearing such hats is indicative of the deep feeling these people have for *tznius*. By concealing their hair beyond the requirements of the Torah, they show in a most beautiful way a willingness and pleasure to do this *mitzva*. Some even have a *halachic* basis for wearing such hats. According to them the

obligation to have an upper covering (רד"ד) when going out amongst the public (*Kesubos* 72b) applies even when the lower covering is in itself complete. This is, however, not the opinion of most *Poskim* - see *Responsa Chasam Sofer* O.C. 36. *Apei Zutoh* E.H. 21:9 and *Responsa Teshuva Meiahava* 1:48. See also *Mekoros* 31:1-8.

2. THE UNFORTUNATE TREND OF WEARING EYE-CATCHING HATS:

As is the way of the *yetzer horah* to take advantage of every situation, some have unfortunately misused the concept of hats on *sheitels* and don large, high-standing or turban-like, ostentatious hats that are exceptionally eye-catching. These hats are often heavily adorned with large flowers or bows, or the hats are made with very bright colors. They are so eye-catching that when a woman wearing one of these hats boards a bus, all the women and a large proportion of the men notice her and continue to gaze at her as she walks down the aisle. Is this *tznius*? Wearing such a hat can only be interpreted as a means of obtaining grandeur and admiration. Can it be said about this woman that she has a modest demeanor and a regal bearing? - see *Mekoros* 31:9-10.

The eye-catching hats worn by some, have caused a further departure from *tznius'dik* conduct that was the hallmark of these very women until recent times. Amongst the wearers of these ostentatious hats there are quite a few who also have their *sheitels* styled in an unrefined manner. The *sheitel* is done up in a way that a woman from her type of background would never have worn, and only now that she is wearing a hat has such a style become acceptable. These women seem to think that since they are stringent and don a hat over their *sheitel* they have the right to allow themselves the liberty of wearing *sheitels* that are far from refined.

One must, however, acknowledge that these women have a point. A refined *sheitel* covered by an unrefined hat looks rather odd! To even things out, the *yetzer horah* has devised a way by which both the *sheitel* and the hat are in unison. Maybe, an alternative way to regulate things could be recommended. This is to change the prevailing hats, for hats that are *eidel* and befitting *N'shei Yisroel*. Once this has been done, both the *sheitels* and the hats will look refined, and will fit one another perfectly.

3. BEING OTHERWISE 'CORRECTLY DRESSED' IS NO EXCUSE: It must be mentioned that many women who wear these ostentatious hats otherwise dress well and wear garments that cover them entirely. In reality,

being dressed in a “Kosher” way can itself be a ploy by the *yetzer horah* to justify misconduct. It can be part of the same syndrome as the person who keeps Shabbos, does *mitzvos*, gives *tzedaka* etc. and considers himself a *frum* person but at the same time has distinctly immoral papers and magazines mailed to the house. Does his *Yiddishkeit* compensate for the devastation he brings to himself and his family by having such newspapers around?

Not only are her Kosher clothes no excuse, but they actively cause others who are not so perceptive to be influenced and to perpetrate the same misdeed. These women reason to themselves that if a woman from such a background and family, and who dresses with such *tznius*, wears such a hat, there is surely nothing wrong with it, even though it would have seemed to them to be somewhat ostentatious. The same happens whenever a woman dresses in a Kosher manner in all ways except one. For example, all her clothes are refined and of adequate length and her hair is well covered but her hosiery is see-through and most inadequate. All her Kosher clothes serve the negative role of encouraging others to be lax in this area of *tznius*. Since they see that a person who is obviously careful about *tznius* attaches no importance to covering the legs properly, this matter becomes insignificant in their eyes.

Hence, doing wrong has the effect of devaluing everything. When the *yetzer horah* is given a foothold, even the good deeds turn sour and foul. Accordingly, a maxim that dominates our life must be, בכל הדרך אשר צוה ה' - אלוקיכם תלכו - “You shall go in the ways of all the *mitzvos* that *Hashem* has commanded you” (*Devarim* 5:30) because only then are any of the *mitzvos* really complete. By doing all His *mitzvos* we shall be granted to experience the end of the verse, למען תחיון וטוב לכם והארכתם ימים בארץ אשר תירשון - “So that you will merit to live; experience only good; and live long on the land you inherit.” As a result of adhering to all the *mitzvos* without exception, *Hashem* will love us and grant us a long life replete with contentment and happiness.

4. SOMETHING WORN ONLY BY YIDDEN CAN STILL BE UNFITTING:

Some women justify wearing such hats because they are worn only by Jewish ladies. This is a complete fallacy, and the fact that *nochrims* might not wear this head-wear has no bearing on the issue. It neither transforms it into a “Jewish type of dress” nor justifies wearing it in any way whatsoever. As a matter of fact, these hats project the antithesis to *Yiddishe chein*. The word *tznius* means “hidden”, and any form of dress that is eye-catching is devoid

of any element of *tznius* - the emblem of the Jewish woman. The same applies to a *tiechel* which is not worn with fitting modesty. Although an item worn exclusively by Jewish women, if it is unusual and eye-catching it is *treife* - see 5:E:1 above.

It is doubtlessly hurtful to the many women who wear refined and *eidel* hats that such a beautiful and praiseworthy practice has been misappropriated and misused by some. Hopefully, as a result of steadfast adherence to the original custom by the many who wear only modest and refined hats, the appreciation of the original *Yiddishe chein* will quickly find its way back.

5. A REFINED WOMAN IS ADORNED BY HER HEAD-WEAR: The *bracha* of *ברכה בתפארה* - עוטר ישראל בתפארה - “He who crowns *Yisroel* with splendor” - said every morning by men and women alike, refers to head-wear. In the context of male Jewish dress it refers to the hat which naturally completes the person’s dress. It represents the personality of its wearer and a refined person is adorned by his hat as if it were a crown of nobility. With this in mind we thank *Hashem* every morning for “crowning us with splendor.” Similarly, a woman completes her attire with head-wear that is impressive in its refinement, and reflects the regal and virtuous character of *N’shei Yisroel* - see *Mekoros* 32:1.

G. SAYING A BRACHA FACING UNCOVERED HAIR

1. THE ISSUR APPLIES EVEN TO A HUSBAND AND CLOSE FAMILY: As mentioned, since a married woman’s hair must be covered, her hair has the status of *ervah* (שער באשה ערוה). It is, therefore, *ossur* for a man to say a *bracha* etc. when looking at a woman with uncovered hair - (See 4:B:4(a) above). Her hair has the status of *ervah* even to her husband (albeit *ervah shel heter* as he is allowed to see it) because hair attracts and whatever attracts males is *ervah* (O.C. 75:2). The same applies to a father, son or brother who sees the uncovered hair of his married daughter (letter by the *Chofetz Chayim*, *Chofetz Chayim Al HaTorah*, page 322).

2. LOOKING AWAY WHEN SAYING THE BRACHA: If a woman with uncovered hair is seated at the table, ideally the men should face a different direction or close their eyes for *Bircas Hamazon* etc. If it is difficult to do so,

they should at least look down or in a slightly different direction so that she is not in their line of vision - see 6:T below and *Mekoros* 33:1-4.

H. GIRLS' HAIR STYLES

1. A GIRL'S HAIR STYLE SHOULD BE NEAT AND REFINED:

Unmarried girls must strive to strike the right balance. On the one hand, they should be particular to keep their hair-styles neat and refined and not arrange their hair in extravagant and attention-seeking styles, as there is serious lack of *tznius* in doing so. The damage it can cause is all too evident from the way Yeshaya HaNavi condemned the grossly inflated hair styles that prevailed amongst girls of his times, (as has been recorded in 5:D:3(b) above). On the other hand, a girl must not disregard her appearance and hair plays a major role in the overall appearance of a girl.

Her hair should therefore be neat and tidy and neither be overly long or inflated nor be unkempt and give an untidy impression. Instead of going to either extreme, her hair should be appealing and pleasing, and should make a respectable and even *b'cheint* impression. She is, after all, of royal descent and her appearance should bear witness to that.

2. THE LENGTH AND STYLE OF A GIRL'S HAIR:

(a) **Untied hair should preferably be only shoulder length:** Many *Poskim* maintain that long loose hair that hangs over the shoulders and down the back is unrefined and subject to an *issur d'Rabanan*. According to their opinion, when a girl has hair that is long enough to be braided it should be braided or tied together and not be left to hang wide open. Sporting long loose hair is overly attractive which is inconsistent with *tznius*.

Furthermore, it gives the impression that she wants her beautiful hair to be noticed and admired, and such aspirations are inconsistent with *tznius*. Even if this is not her intention, the impression is still made to her detriment and detriment of others. (*Maharil, Hilchos Nisuin* No. 11; *Magen Avraham* 75:3; *Moir Uketziah* 75; *Responsa Sh'vus Yaacov* 1:103 and *Responsa Shevet Halevi* 6:199 who are stringent in this matter. See also M.B. 75:12; *Otzar HaPoskim* 21:26:1 and *Mekoros* 1:6 and 29 for further opinions). Since many *Poskim* are stringent and girls nowadays tend not to have braids, it is strongly recommended that their hair is no more than shoulder length.

In *Eretz Yisroel* considerable stress is put on girl's hair not being both long and unbraided, as is well known. It is hoped that *frum* girls world-wide follow the example of their *Eretz Yisroel* contemporaries, as this apparently minor point is in fact a foremost detail which adds much to the general refinement of the girl. It is, however, self understood that should a girl wish to have long hair and bind it back or braid it together, she may of course do so. This is in fact the ongoing *minhag* of the old *yishuv* of *Yerusholayim*.

(b) Hair dangling over the face is not a Jewish way of dress: The above refers to long hair which is secured to stay away from the face with a head band, clips etc. Concerning such hair there are diverse opinions in the *Poskim* whether it is right to let it hang loosely over the shoulders and upper back or not, as explained. However, for hair to be totally untied and to hang loosely over the face is not even spoken about in the *Poskim*. This is because allowing the hair to descend down the back of the head or over the face in a casual way was not the done thing and was simply not a Jewish way of dress.

Chazal, in fact, state quite explicitly that hair which is held away from the face is far prettier and *b'cheim* than long loose hair that dangles over the face. On the verse, מבעד לצמתך שערך - "Your hair is held together by a kerchief" (*Shir HaShirim* 4:1 see *Rashi*) the *Midrash* says as follows, האשה הזאת כשמצמת שיערה לאחוריה הוא תכשיט לה - "The female figure is beautified by her hair being tied back" (*Midrash Shir Hashirim*, 4:3).

Moreover, the same verse in *Shir HaShirim* (4:1) sings praise of the Jewish daughter with the words שערך כעדר העזים שגלשו מהר גלעד - "Your hair is like that of a herd of goats as they swiftly descend the slopes of Mount Gilod." The *S'forno* explains: "The hair of the Jewish daughter is like that of goats descending the slopes, with the wind rushing past them and their hair firmly blown back." Thus, it is stated in the *Midrash* and the *S'forno* that a girl's hair is tidily behind her head in a pleasing and noble manner.

Apart from the above, the Gemara (*Shabbos* 95a) relates that Chava, the first woman to be created, was beautified by *Hashem* before bringing her to Adam. *Hashem* did this by plaiting her hair rather than leaving it loose as it was after she was formed. According to present day attitudes one wonders why *Hashem* did not just let her long hair hang loosely down her back and over her shoulders. Evidently, *Hashem* was of the opinion that a woman looks far better when her hair is secured than when it is left to dangle freely.

(c) The strange trend of long hair being left totally untied: Nowadays many adult girls use no hair-bands nor alternative type of accessory to hold down their hair. Due to this, their hair (whether long or short) hangs loosely

in all directions and requires continuous flicking back to prevent it descending and covering part of the face. Girls are so busy flicking, that as time goes on, more and more advanced forms of flicking are being developed. At present this strange hair style is the "in thing", and to leave one's hair untied and totally loose is part of being a sophisticated young lady.

If for the sake of beauty a girl is prepared to undertake the trouble of having to continuously flick the hair back she is evidently indulging in an unnatural form of beautification. It is the same with all other worldly pleasures. For example, if the amount the person eats causes him indigestion he is obviously eating immoderately and if his drinking causes drunkenness the person is obviously over-indulging in drink. Similarly, if high-heeled shoes cause walking difficulties (see 6:O:2 below) or if a hair-style requires continuous tossing the head back, the girl is over-reacting in her pursuit of beautification. See 5:D:3(a) above, concerning *sheitels* with such styles.

Although, it may be hard to change this widely accepted trend (until fashions change) the fact is that this casual hair style lacks refinement and has no *Yiddishe ta'am*. This is compounded by the fact that when the hair is long and loose there is a *halachic* objection according to some opinions, as mentioned above. If only, the aristocratic, refined and uncomplicated forms of dress and hair-styles that were common just a few decades ago were once again appreciated and embraced by our daughters and sisters.

(d) Long, loose hair is a spiritual disadvantage: Finally, it must be mentioned that there is a *Kabbalistic* disadvantage in girls leaving their long hair completely open and undone. Human hair, in the mystics of the Torah, is related to *midas hadin* - "it demands a strict rather than lenient assessment of the person's deeds" (*Zohar HaKadosh, Bamidbar* 151). The more the dominance of the hair, the greater the power of the *midas hadin*. For this reason, men, who would be very affected by hair, are advised to keep their hair short (apart from the *payos*). The *Ari HaKadosh* writes in *Sha'ar Ta'amei Hamitzvos* that this is alluded to in the verse, ואיש כי ימרט ראשו, טהור הוא - "And a man whose hair is removed is purified" (*Vayikra* 13:40).

Women, on the other hand, are not affected by having long hair. However, the *Sifrei Kabbalah* write that it should be bound. The binding symbolizes that the *din* is contained and not allowed to extend excessively as is signified by long open hair which has a tendency to "spread out far and wide". It follows that for hair to be bound is an advisable investment, and can bring in its wake great salvation. (See *Ben Yehoyada, Shabbos* 95a, and *Yuma* 47a, by the Sefardi Gaon Rabbeinu Yosef Chayim - the *Ben Ish Chai*.)

(e) **Summary:** To retain clarity it is best to reiterate the main points once again. They are as follows:- (1) The hair, whether long or short, should be secured in a way that it does not hang over much of the face. (2) If the hair is secured not to descend on the face but is otherwise loose, it is best that it is no more than shoulder length which is too short to be braided. (3) If the hair is long it should preferably be braided or held together in some other way.

3. HAIR ACCESSORIES - PRETTY BUT NOT OSTENTATIOUS: Hair accessories such as ribbons, head bands (plastic) and hair bands (cloth) may certainly be pretty and colorful. It was in fact common practice in the times of *Chazal* to have decorations in the hair (*Shabbos* 57b) - see *Mekoros* 63:14. It is, however, incorrect for girls to sport large gaudily-colored bows and hair bands, or massive bows that are quite out of proportion to the head. Similarly, while silver or gold colored head bands are often fine, if they are studded with numerous large colored stones they are sometimes overdone and showy. Such headbands are therefore unfitting for a *Bas Yisroel* even when young and just a school girl. When an adult girl wears a gaudily colored or ostentatious hair band or head band it is particularly unpleasant, since she is evidently showing herself off to everyone.

4. HAIR HAS A CONSIDERABLE POWER OF ATTRACTION: The intense power of attraction and even enticement inherent in a girl and woman's hair is repeatedly highlighted in Torah literature. At the very start of the Torah we find that Chava, the one and only woman in the world, was beautified by *Hashem Yisborach* before he brought her for the first time to Adam. This was done by doing up her hair in an attractive and appealing manner. Although clothes were of no importance at that time, nevertheless, *Hashem* knew that her hairstyle would be so meaningful that He completed the creation of Chava with this additional act of kindness (*Shabbos* 95a).

Likewise, the power of enticement of hair is vividly described in a *Rashi* on the Torah. We are told that whilst Yosef was in the house of his master Potifera, the lady of the house developed a considerable yearning for him. This was caused by Yosef paying excessive attention to his appearance. The verse says ויהי יוסף יפה תואר ויפה מראה. ויהי אתר הדברים האלה ותשא אשת אל יוסף - "Yosef had a beautiful figure and beautiful appearance. After these events, the wife of his master lifted her eyes to Yosef" (*Breishis* 39:6,7). *Rashi* explains that these two statements are put together because, ראה עצמו מושל, התחיל אוכל ושותה ומסלסל בשערו - "When Yosef realized that he was the chief executive of his master's house he

started cultivating his figure - he ate and drank to have a healthier appearance - and he would groom his hair until it looked beautiful.” His improved appearance had such an alluring effect on the wife of his master that from then on she knew no rest. She would prevail upon him and even coax him to show an interest in her. We see from here the effect that hair beautification can have to arouse unwelcome appeal.

Similarly, we are taught in the Torah that a woman who is suspected of having had an illicit affair is assumed to have removed her hair covering and beautified her appearance by uncovering and arranging her hair in a provocative and suggestive manner. She is therefore put to shame by having her hair revealed before all when in the *Beth Din* (*Kesubos 72a Rashi s.v. Azhara*). Here again, hair is viewed as a major means of enticement.

In a comparable vein, the *yefas toar*, with whom the Jewish soldier has become enamored, has her hair cut off to lessen her attraction in his eyes (*Devarim 21:12*). Although her beautiful garments are removed from her and she sits in his house in the drab and dull clothes of a mourner, this alone will not cause him to retract from his intention to marry her. However, with the removal of her attractive hair he will finally submit to the will of *Hashem Yisborach* and find the strength to tear himself away from this woman. In an identical way, a *nazir*, who is in danger of descending into bad ways as a result of his handsome appearance and good-looking hair, is instructed to first let his hair grow long without being groomed and when the *nezirus* comes to an end to cut it all off (*Nedarim 9b*). This is the Torah’s powerful remedy to help bring him back onto an even keel and guarantee the safety of a man who is in spiritual danger.

All this underscores the immense power of appeal and captivation ingrained in hair and particularly in the hair of a girl or woman. It is little wonder that the Torah commands the married woman to conceal her hair from the eyes of strangers so that they are not attracted to her - see *Mekoros 21:3-5*. Accordingly, when a girl wears an unpretentious, refined and genteel hair-style rather than a highly conspicuous one, she presents an image of modesty and self-effacement. Whereas, if she sports a striking hair-style, this is considered *pritzus* and her appearance is shameful to the otherwise cultured and gracious personality of the Jewish woman.

