



## DVAR TORAH CHAYEI SARAH



By: Rabbi Noach Peled

### Efron's Rise- The Torah's Perspective on Power

When Avraham came to purchase Sarah Imeinu's burial site from Efron, the Torah states (Bereishis 23:10) "Efron was sitting (yoshev - present tense) among the people of Cheis". The word 'yoshev' is written without the letter vav. It could therefore be read as "he just sat down" (yashav - past tense).

Rashi explains that this grammatical modification teaches us an important fact. On the very day that Avraham came to negotiate with Efron, Efron had been appointed governor of the city. He rose to power and began governing on that very day.

Why was this so? Rashi tells us that this was no coincidence: "In honor of Avraham who needed him, Efron rose to a position of leadership."

Until that day, Efron was just another commoner, a regular citizen. But now Hashem had Efron appointed to a position of authority and power so that when Avraham came to acquire the burial plot, he would be dealing with a man of prominence.

Political pundits of that time, along with Efron himself and his fellow citizens, surely developed strategic, sociological, and political theories to explain Efron's rise to power. Yet, says Rashi, the real reason Efron came to power, replacing the incumbent and causing whatever other political ripples or waves, was for Avraham's sake, to honor Avraham's dignity.

This is because the world was created for the sake of Avraham and Avraham's offspring - Klal Yisrael who serve Hashem (Bereishis Rabah 12:9). It therefore revolves around our needs, and things are designed with our benefit in mind.

The result of the recent NYC mayoral elections may leave many Jews feeling worried or disadvantaged. Don't fall prey to the talk of today's politics. We must remember the Torah's message that "a Ruler's heart is like water in Hashem's hand, He guides it wherever He pleases" (Mishlei 21:1). Hashem appoints the various national and regional leaders, and like with a remote control toy, Hashem programs and controls their thoughts, attitudes, and decisions, with Klal Yisrael's constant best interest in mind.

We may rest assured that Hashem's plan will ultimately bring only good upon Klal Yisroel. Of course as for us, we must maintain Avraham Avinu's ideals and way of life, with that we remain his authentic offspring, and inherit the reality that the world runs for our sake.

But there's a second point here as well. We must know that as Jews, we are not any less safe in NYC now, than we were before this fellow became mayor. We were not any more safe beforehand. We must know that before, after, and ALWAYS, we are protected by Hashem Yisborach, and must exclusively rely and call upon Him for our safety.

Interestingly (no pun intended), in explaining the parameters of the mitzvah prohibition of ribis (not to borrow/lend with paying/charging interest), the Kli Yakar offers a novel and relatable approach. He writes: "The main reason for the prohibition of ribis is because it erodes the midah of bitachon. Anyone engaged in other forms of parnasah lifts his eyes towards Heaven, as he is unsure whether or not he will make a profit. Not one who lends with interest, his profits are set and known, and as such he will rely on that certainty, and remove his heart from Hashem. The borrower also violates this mitzvah, because he causes the lender to sin and erode his midah of bitachon." (Kli Yakar Vayikra 25:36)

From this Kli Yakar we see the importance of relying exclusively on Hashem Yisborach, and not to allow that proper reliance to be rivaled or compromised by any false sense of security. The result of the NYC mayoral elections reminds us that we must rely ONLY on Hashem Yisborach.



By: Rabbi Aryeh Gitlin

# HALACHA CORNER

## YARMULKES



**Does one have to wear a yarmulke while playing ball?**

**Does one have to wear a yarmulke by the pool?**

**If one says a bracha without a yarmulke, does he need to repeat the bracha?**

The Gemara teaches that wearing a head covering brings one to have yiras shamayim.<sup>1</sup>[In fact, the word yarmulke stands for yarei malka – fear of the King, Hashem] Additionally, the Gemara<sup>2</sup> teaches that it is rude to walk around without a head covering.

The Shulchan Aruch<sup>3</sup> rules that it is forbidden to walk four amos (6–8 feet) with an uncovered head. This applies both indoors and certainly under the open sky. It is considered a pious act to wear a head covering even when going less than four amos, and one should train young children to do so as well.<sup>4</sup> There is a dispute whether this is an actual transgression<sup>5</sup> or a deeply rooted custom, but in either case, one should not be lenient about it.<sup>6</sup>

Playing ball: Rabbi Moshe Dovid Lebovits quotes Rav Yisroel Belsky zt”l as saying, “While playing ball or engaged in any sport, chas v’shalom that he should remove his yarmulke, for this leads to lightheadedness and stems from a lightheaded attitude. One who fears that his yarmulke might fly off should attach it with a bobby pin.” Seemingly, his attitude is that it is not appropriate to remove the symbol of one’s fear of Hashem to chase after a ball. Plan ahead for your head.

By the pool: A person should wear their yarmulke by the pool until they are about to go into the water, and should put it back on as soon as possible after leaving the pool.<sup>7</sup> However, while one is actually swimming, it is not necessary to wear a yarmulke.<sup>8</sup>

Repeating bracha: One’s head must be covered to say a blessing. Using one’s own hand does not suffice, since it is part of one’s body, but someone else’s hand or the sleeve of one’s shirt can serve as a covering.<sup>9</sup> If someone said a blessing without a head covering, b’dieved the blessing is valid and does not need to be repeated.<sup>10</sup>

- 1. Shabbos 156b
- 2. Kiddushin 33a
- 3. O.C 2:6
- 4. M.B 2:10-11
- 5. Taz O.C 8:3
- 6. Igros Moshe O.C 1:1
- 7. Orchos Rabbeinu 1:104
- 8. Sha'arei Teshuva 2:6
- 9. S.A O.C 9f:3-4, M.B 2:12
- 10. Igros Moshe O.C 4:40[24]

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