**YESHIVAT HAR ETZION**

**ISRAEL KOSCHITZKY VIRTUAL BEIT MIDRASH (VBM)**

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**Deracheha: Women and Mitzvot**

**Head-Covering 2: Rationale and Meaning**

What explanations for the mitzva of head-covering emerge from the sources? What other meanings might a woman find in the mitzva?

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In our last installment, we discussed the halachic basis for head-covering – and Halacha remains the primary reason for a married woman to cover her head. But what is the reasoning behind the mitzva? And what are the personal, social, and spiritual implications of head-covering?

In this installment, we explore the range of meanings associated with head-covering in traditional sources. While some may appear difficult to connect with, others may still resonate with the experience of contemporary women.

## Why should we dwell on the significance of head-covering? Isn't Halacha enough?

*The main and most significant reason for a married woman to cover her head is because Halacha requires it. When a woman covers her head after marriage, she is showing her willingness and readiness to submit to Halacha, even if she does not find additional meaning in this specific act.*

*Discussing possible rationales behind head-covering and its potential significance can be important, though, because many women find it difficult to observe this mitzva. A woman may feel that her head-covering is uncomfortable or that it makes her less attractive. A head-covering also may openly identify a woman as a religious Jew, making a public statement to others, a statement that the woman herself cannot fully control and with which she may not feel comfortable.*

*Even a woman committed to this mitzva may appreciate learning about what it means to others in ways that might enrich her own observance. Exploring these explanations shouldn't take the place of learning the Halacha, but it can complement it.*

*The first part of this series establishes that there is a strong halachic basis for covering one's head, regardless of what meanings one might assign to it. Changing conceptions of head-covering don't undermine the mitzva. Rather, they challenge us to consider what elements of older ideas may retain relevance, and to seek out alternative ideas that can enhance observance.*

# **Rationale: Dignity**

The Talmud's discussion of head-covering seems to point to dignity as a rationale for the mitzva. In order to understand what the Talmud is saying, it is important first to note that, in Talmudic times, women's head-covering was a near-universal practice.

*Nedarim* 30b

Men sometimes cover their heads and sometimes bare their heads, but women always cover [their heads].

Head-covering was so widespread that it was seen as a matter of basic respectability or propriety, and an uncovered head was considered to be a disgrace.[[1]](#footnote-1)

A woman's head covering was so fundamental to her own dignity in public that the Mishna lists the forced uncovering of a woman's head as a paradigmatic act of humiliating another person:

Mishna, *Bava Kama* 8:6

One who boxes his fellow['s ear] gives him a *sela* (four *zuz*). Rabbi Yehuda says in the name of Rabbi Yose Ha-gelili: A *maneh* (100 *zuz*). [If] he slapped him, he gives him 200 *zuz*. With the back of his hand, he gives him 400 *zuz*. Pulled his ear, pulled out his hair, spit and his spittle reached him, removed his outer garment from him, uncovered the head of a woman [in the marketplace], he gives him 400 *zuz*.

According to this mishna, removing a woman's head covering is legally equivalent to the act of deliberately spitting on someone or of removing their outer garment. All these acts entail the willful disgrace of another, for which the perpetrator, in addition to seeking forgiveness, is liable for 400 *zuz*.

To put that sum in context, consider that the Mishnah in *Pe’a* lists 200 *zuz* as the amount of assets someone would need on hand to be considered disqualified from receiving agricultural gifts to the poor, the amount that raises a person over the poverty line.[[2]](#footnote-2) This penalty is double that amount.

In Talmudic times, a respectable woman would not have appeared bare-headed in public. Removing her head covering was considered an assault on her dignity, which Jewish law protects.

**In Halachic Discussion**

The primary halachic sources for the obligation of head-covering further demonstrate how a woman's head covering was considered essential to her dignity.

As we saw in the previous [installment](https://www.deracheha.org/head-covering-1-halachic-basis), the *sota* ordeal includes the uncovering of the *sota*'s head.[[3]](#footnote-3) The Mishna describes this as a fitting punishment for the woman's own alleged behavior:

Mishna *Sota* 1:7

With the measure that a person measures [we] measure [against] him. She adorned herself for transgression; God defaces her…

The woman has presumably adorned herself inappropriately to attract her forbidden lover. Thus, her hair is uncovered in punishment, measure for measure. The uncovering leaves her unadorned and disgraced. Uncovering the *sota's* hair shames her; that implies that a Jewish woman otherwise covers her head, as a matter of dignity or honor.

*Sifrei Bemidbar Naso* 11

Just as she did not have mercy on the honor of God, so too we don't have mercy on her honor.

The association with the *sota* may indicate that the threshold for dignity was higher for a married woman than for a single woman; with marriage would come a change in status. While the dignity explanation features prominently in halachic sources, it can be hard to relate to today, when head-covering is not universal and an uncovered head is generally not considered undignified.

How should we relate to perceptions about head-covering that no longer seem to apply?

*Many modern societies no longer associate women's head-covering with dignity or even modesty. Female dignitaries appear bareheaded at even the most formal events. In many circles, sheitels nearly indistinguishable from natural hair are often considered more dignified, or professional, than hats or scarves.*

*Why, then, should these Talmudic discussions resonate with us? If the Talmudic understanding of head-covering seems out of date, what does that say to us about the mitzva?*

*These are good, important questions. Norms of head-covering* have *changed a great deal over the past century. Even so, they have not changed entirely. The Queen of England still arrives at affairs in hats, and the rest of the royal family often follows suit. Even outside Jewish circles, there is a residual sense that head-covering, like a particularly elegant hat, can add to or reflect a person's dignity, whether or not it is essential to it. To this day, some people perceive women's head-covering as an act that dignifies the wearer.*

*The Talmudic discussions are still of interest because they teach us that respecting women's dignity can be a primary frame of reference for how to relate to head-covering and that our sages' approach to the Halacha reflected respect for women.*

# **Rationale: Modesty**

In addition to respecting women's dignity, preserving modesty may have been a rationale for head-covering. As [we've seen](https://deracheha.org/head-covering-1-halachic-basis), halachic authorities starting from the Mishna categorize head-covering for married women as a form of [*dat yehudit*](https://www.deracheha.org/head-covering-1-halachic-basis), Jewish women's customary modest behavior.

*Mishneh Torah Ishut* 24:11

What is *dat yehudit*? The modest behavior practiced by the daughters of Israel.

A married woman was expected to adhere to high standards of modesty.

Additionally, a woman's hair, at least once she is married, may be have a status akin to [*erva*](https://www.deracheha.org/head-covering-1-halachic-basis), nakedness, which would interfere with a man's ability to recite *Shema*. In contexts when this applies, covering hair could be seen as an act of modesty, like an extension of covering *erva* itself.[[4]](#footnote-4)

Maharal teaches that modesty and dignity are closely related:

Maharal *Netivot Olam Tzeni'ut* I

Whoever is not *tzanu'a*, disgrace and shame befalls him, in accordance with the attribute he is drawn to, for it [immodesty] is far from honor [*kavod*].

Modest behavior sets a boundary of propriety between public and private. The ability to maintain this type of boundary demonstrates self-respect and invites the respect of others.[[5]](#footnote-5) Conversely, immodest behavior can lead to disrespect.

Though standards of modesty can sometimes change, some measure of modesty is a prerequisite to being dignified. For this reason, the sources about *dat yehudit* and *erva* contribute to the broader idea that our sages view head-covering as signifying a woman's dignity. Rabbanit Oriya Mevorach articulates this aspect of head-covering:[[6]](#footnote-6)

Rabbanit Oriya Mevorach, "Why Do I Love my Head-Covering?"

Covering the head every day anew creates a healthy distinction for me between home and outside, between private and public, between mine and everyone’s. This is a distinction that in our day has utterly faded, in a culture that constantly tells us: "Belong to everyone; put it on display; show off your looks; seek approval and get a 'like;' even at home, take a selfie and distribute it all over." There is a difference between a woman who thinks beauty is improper and therefore obscures her beauty, and one who loves beauty, but wants to channel a part of it to realms that are exclusively hers. By the way, I would not be able to find this meaning in head-covering if I experienced it – God forbid – as something that makes me ugly.

# **Meaning: Marital Status**

While dignity and modesty emerge from traditional sources as rationales for the obligation for a married woman to cover her head, women have found other types of meaning in the act of head-covering, some of them inspired by rabbinic texts. For example, head-covering functions as a sign of a Jewish woman's marital status. This is a corollary to the halachic obligation to cover the hair, and *not* a source or rationale for it. Even so, many find it particularly meaningful.

One Talmudic passage reports that a non-Jewish maidservant was known to be free of a quasi-marital bond with a manservant as soon as she went out with her head uncovered to the marketplace, the quintessential public square.

*Sanhedrin* 58b

Rabbi Elazar said Rabbi Hanina said: A Noachide [gentile] that set aside a maidservant for his manservant…from when has he permitted her [again to other men]? Rav Huna said from when she uncovered her head in the marketplace.

This passage implies that as long as she was in the relationship, the non-Jewish woman was careful to cover her head in public, thus making it clear to others that she was unavailable. Head covering itself functioned as a sign of a woman's relationship status.

Head-covering also indicates a Jewish woman’s marital status, but in a slightly different way. The Mishna tells us that a Jewish woman would begin covering her head upon marriage but would *not* uncover her head if she were widowed or divorced. (We discuss the *halachot* of head-covering for a widow or divorcee in the next installment of this series.)Thus, head-covering indicates that a woman either is currently married, or has been married in the past.

Why is this halachically significant? A woman's *ketuba*, wedding contract, awards her a set sum of financial support from her husband upon her marriage's dissolution, a minimum of 200 *zuz* for a virgin bride and 100 *zuz* for other women. A Jewish bride's hair left loose in the public procession to her wedding was a sure sign that she had never been married before.

Witnesses to that procession could thus later establish her entitlement to the *ketuba* amount of a virgin bride.

Mishna *Ketubot* 2:1

The woman who has been widowed or divorced: She says '[I was] a virgin [when] you married me.' And he says, 'No, but [you were] a widow [when] I married you.' If there are witnesses that she went out in a wedding veil and her hair was loose, her *ketuba* is 200 [*zuz*].

Here, loose hair in public firmly establishes that a woman hasn't been previously married. Her head-covering status bears significant halachic weight, with financial implications.

A married woman's uncovering her head could signal to other men that she is available to them, because head covering correlates with marital status. Covering would signal that she is unavailable. Again, this is not the basis for the halacha, but it can be important to a woman observing it.

In the anthology *Hide & Seek*, a woman going by the pseudonym Ruth Ben-Ammi explains why this idea matters to her:[[7]](#footnote-7)

Ruth Ben-Ammi, "Proud in the Golan Heights"

## I have always associated marriage with hair covering…It's just what makes sense to me. I always considered it a powerful notion that the only person who should see your hair is your husband…The moment people see my hat, they know I'm off-limits, and I think that's wonderful. I feel protected. I belong to someone; we belong to each other, it's like a secret that anyone can see. Something covered is always a mystery.

## Why should head covering be a sign of marital status?

*Head-covering could be an effective way for a woman to remind herself and others that she is unavailable. This is especially the case given the severity of the halachic prohibition of a man and woman having relations when she is married to another.*

*The Zohar expresses these ideas in expounding upon the* sota *passage.*

Zohar III *Naso* p. 125b

Rabbi Chizkiya opened, "Your wife is like a fruitful grapevine..." (*Tehillim* 128:3). Just as a grapevine does not receive [grafts] other than its own, so a woman of Israel is like this, that she does not receive anyone but her spouse…. For [she is] "like a fruitful grapevine in the recesses of your house"…Go out and see how many injuries this hair of a woman [exposed to others] causes…

*In the continuation of this passage, Rav Chizkiya enumerates the negative consequences of a married woman's hair being seen by others.*

*This source supports the popular intuition that hair becomes a special part of the marriage relationship, which is honored through its covering.*

*Rabbanit Chana Henkin has suggested that the obligation to cover hair applies only upon marriage in order to counterbalance the uncovering and intimacy that occurs within marriage. This explanation may also help explain why modesty concerns with hair take effect only upon marriage:*

Rabbanit Chana Henkin, "*Mo'adon Ovedot Hashem*"

When a man and woman marry, the barriers of modesty between them fall. This is an expression of the bonding of the couple together as “they became one flesh.” From now on, the members of the couple will stand together on the same side of the barrier of modesty that separates between them and other people. At the same time that Halacha sanctifies the physical connection between the couple, it creates a special barrier around the couple. The same halacha that allows the woman to reveal a handbreadth[to her husband], obligates her to cover a handbreadth [with regard to everyone else]. Halacha says to the woman: things that were forbidden are now permitted. But revealing the head in public – which was permitted – becomes forbidden. Thus a balance is created and holiness is preserved in this new and sensitive situation.

# **Meaning: Awe**

A distinct Talmudic discussion teaches us that a woman's head-covering can also signify awe of Heaven, similar to a man's *kippa*. This, too, is not a rationale for the obligation of head-covering for a married woman, yet a woman may find that it, too, adds meaning to the act of covering her head.

In Talmudic times, men's wearing of a *kippa* throughout the day was a pious practice, not a halachic requirement.[[8]](#footnote-8)

*Kiddushin* 31a

Rav Huna son of Rabbi Yehoshua didn't go four cubits bareheaded. He said, 'The Divine presence is above my head.'

The Talmud singles out Rav Huna for his unusual practice of keeping his head covered at all times, in order to promote mindfulness of the Divine presence above.[[9]](#footnote-9) By reminding a person of God's dominion overhead, as it were, head-covering develops fear of Heaven and inspires prayer. Rambam adds that men's head-covering can be a form of modesty. He lists not fully exposing the head along with not exposing the body as an example of modest comportment:

*Mishneh Torah*, Laws of Character, 5:6

*Talmidei chachamim* (Torah scholars) conduct themselves with great modesty. They do not degrade themselves and do not bare their heads nor their bodies.

Interestingly, another Talmudic tale implies that, at one point in time, married men in particular were careful to cover their heads.[[10]](#footnote-10) Though a man's walking about with his head covered began as a pious, even modest practice, perhaps at one point connected to his marital status, it became a matter of binding custom.[[11]](#footnote-11)

**Reciting God's Name** When keeping one's head covered throughout the day (as with a *kippa*) was still an optional practice for men, head covering when reciting the name of God received distinct halachic attention.[[12]](#footnote-12) Shulchan Aruch cites a ruling obligating head covering when reciting God's name, and notes that some extend the obligation to require head covering when entering a synagogue. A synagogue is a place in which we recite God's name, and such a place itself demands awe:

*Shulchan Aruch* OC 91:3

There are those who say that it is prohibited let a mention of God's name leave one’s lips with his head bare and there are those who say that one should insist that no [one] should enter synagogue bare-headed.

The ruling requiring head covering when saying God's name or entering synagogue explains the common practice in our day of less religiously observant men donning a *kippa* specifically when entering a synagogue or participating in religious ritual. It also can explain the practice of women who wear a hat, kerchief, or lace head-covering specifically in synagogue or even at home alone when making a blessing (as over Shabbat candles).[[13]](#footnote-13)

Indeed, halachic authorities discuss whether the obligation to cover one's head while reciting *berachot* or prayers or learning Torah applies to women as well as to men. Rav Ovadya Hedaya rules that females are obligated in head-covering when learning Torah and saying *tefillot,* because there is no distinction in this matter between men and women, boys and girls.[[14]](#footnote-14) Rav Ovadya Yosef agrees, ruling that women and girls should ideally take care to cover hair when reciting prayers and *berachot*, as men do. However, he does find room for leniency for unmarried women:

Responsa *Yechaveh Da'at* 5:6

…It would seem that they think to distinguish between men, for whom the accepted custom is to cover their heads in front of great [people]… and therefore, if they recite a *beracha* bare-headed it is considered disrespectful of fear of Heaven, which is not the case for single women, whose manner is to always go bare-headed until marriage, they need not cover their heads even when they mention God's name. And this is in combination with the opinion of our sages in France and the Rambam, who considered it permissible to bless bareheaded (even for men)…In any case, it seems more [correct] that ideally it is proper to also teach single girls to cover their heads when reciting *berachot*, and even more when they pray *tefillat Shemoneh Esrei*.

According to Rav Yosef, men often don hats in elevated rabbinic company. Since unmarried Jewish females do not customarily don head coverings in any setting, it must be that it is not offensive at all for unmarried females to go with bare heads. Therefore, an unmarried woman may rely on lenient opinions, and has a halachic basis for keeping her head uncovered even in synagogue. However, he concludes with a stringency that single women, too, should cover for prayer.

This stringency has not been widely adopted. Rav Eliezer Waldenberg, among others, provides halachic justification for the common practice of married and unmarried women not to be particular about head covering in a way that parallels men's practice.[[15]](#footnote-15)

Though most halachic authorities do not mandate women's head covering for this purpose, when a married woman covers her head because of the halachic obligation, she can understand that covering as also acknowledging God's dominion over her. Women's head covering can reflect and inspire fear of Heaven.[[16]](#footnote-16)

**Meaning: Identification**

Like a man's *kippa*, head covering can also communicate proudly that a woman is affiliated with the God-fearing community of Jews. This is ironic, since women's head-covering was once universal.

Susan Rubin Weintrob, "Why I Wear a Hat," *Hide & Seek*, 94-95

When I attend Jewish community functions, people know that my hat means I am religious. Just as my hat tells them something about me, their reaction to my hat tells me something about them…I don't wear a hat to stand out or to be different—I wear a hat to link myself to the many generations of women before me.

Rabbanit Mevorach speaks about head-covering as a meaningful identifier as well:

Rabbanit Oriya Mevorach, "Why Do I Love my Head-Covering?"

I'm aware that my full head-covering labels me as a *frum* woman, even though my attitudes might surprise people who have stereotypes about religious people…I am happy for people to see me first of all as a *frum* woman and only afterwards to get to know me deeply and be as surprised as they wish. Declaring that "the internal is what's essential, down with stereotypes" is only meaningful in one direction: it is cogent when said by someone who takes on external signifiers that society stereotypes, and it is not cogent when said by someone who removes external signifiers in order to evade stereotyping…

Rabbanit Mevorach is ready for others to relate to her as a religious Jew, whatever stereotypes that might entail, and she argues that it is specifically her readiness to do so, to own her religious identity, that puts her in position to combat stereotyping.

**Summary** A given woman may connect to her head-covering as a representation of dignity, an expression of modesty, a signifier of marriage, a reminder of fear of Heaven, or a mark of identification with a religious community. Each of these ideas merits careful reflection.

Many factors go into a woman's commitment to cover her head, and for some women, halachic obligation is enough. If a woman covers her hair out of a desire to submit to God’s Will and the halachic system, that in of itself lends meaning and significance to the act, and she need not feel that anything is lacking in her observance. Over time, though, she may find that it takes on new meaning for her.

**Further Reading**

Henkin, Rabbanit Chana. "*Moa'adon Ovedot Hashem*." In *Me-al U-me'ever: Limmud Ve-ha'amaka Be-nosei Kisui Ha-rosh,* edited by Efrat Cohen. Jerusalem: 2011.

Mevorach, Oriya. "Why Do I Love My Head-Covering?" *Makor Rishon* 2.13.19. Available here: <https://www.makorrishon.co.il/judaism/114671/>

Schreiber, Lynn. Hide & Seek: Jewish Women and Hair Covering. Jerusalem: Urim, 2003.

1. Rashi writes that a woman is embarrassed to be seen in public with her head exposed.

   Rashi, *Eiruvin* 100b, s.v. wrapped

   [A woman is] embarrassed to go out with her head uncovered [*paru'a*].

   His comment comes to explain a negative take on the origin of women's head-covering, one that traces it back to Chava, in the aftermath of eating from the Tree of Knowledge:

   *Avot DeRabbi Natan* (Version 2), Chapter 42

   Ten decrees were decreed on the first man and ten on Chava…The ninth—that she go out [to the marketplace with] her head covered like a mourner.

   According to this tradition, as humans exited Eden, God decreed that a woman should cover her head to go out in public. This covering was comparable to that of a mourner, at a time when mourners would wrap their heads in order to display submission to God and Divine judgment.

   Meiri explains:

   *Beit Ha-bechira Mo'ed Katan* 15a

   A mourner is obligated in wrapping of the head so that he not stand bare-headed, rather…that he stand as a person submissive and subjugated [before God]

   Rashi explains that head-covering evolved from a forced act of submission to God into a basic ingredient of respectability in public. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Mishna *Pe'a* 8:8

   Whoever has 200 *zuz* may not take *leket, shichecha,* or *pe'a,* or *ma'aser ani.* [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Although halachic sources make it clear that this is the source for *halachot* of covering and uncovering the head, Rashi (ad loc.) adds, drawing on the interpretation of *"u-fara*" as disheveled, that the Kohen disheveled the *sota*'s hair.

   Rashi *Bemidbar* 5:18

   “And he uncovered” - He undoes the braid of her hair in order to disgrace her, and from here [we learn] that the uncovering of the head is a disgrace to the daughters of Israel. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. In our next installment, we discuss how the discussion of *erva* can be consistent with changing conceptions of modesty and with head-covering being obligatory only for married women. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. We will discuss modesty as a concept as well as aspects of modesty related to dress in forthcoming pieces on Deracheha. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Rabbanit Oriya Mevorach, "Why Do I Love my Head-Covering?" *Makor Rishon* 2.13.19. Available here: <https://www.makorrishon.co.il/judaism/114671/>. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Ruth Ben-Ammi, "Proud in the Golan Heights," in *Hide & Seek*, ed. Lynne Schreiber (Jerusalem: Urim Publications, 2006), pp. 148-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. See also here:

   *Nedarim* 30b

   Men sometimes cover their heads and sometimes bare their heads, but women always cover and minors always bare [their heads]. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. In a similar vein, Rav Nachman bar Yitzhak's mother insisted on his head covering.

   *Shabbat* 156b

   The mother of Rav Nachman Bar Yitzhak…didn't let him bare his head. She said to him 'Cover your head so that the fear of Heaven will be upon you and you will pray.' [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. *Kiddushin* 29b

    Rav Chisda praised Rav Hamnuna to Rav Huna, [saying that] he was a great man. He said to him: When he comes to you, bring him to me. When he came, he saw that he did not spread a scarf [over his head]. He said to him: Why don’t you spread a scarf [over your head]? He said to him: because I am not married. He turned his face away from him and said to him: See that you do not see my face until you get married. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. That is how Shulchan Aruch presents it:

    *Shulchan Aruch* *OC* 2:6

    And one should not walk four cubits bare-headed (because of honor of the Divine presence). [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. *Masechet Soferim*, ch. 14

    There are those who say…with his head bare, he is not permitted to let a mention of God's name leave his lips.

    According to this halachic position, head covering is required when saying God's name, as in learning Torah, in prayer, or reciting *berachot*. Invoking God requires an added level of *yir'at shamayim*, awe of Heaven. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. This might also explain the towel that some women place over the head at mikveh immersion. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. <http://www.hebrewbooks.org/pdfpager.aspx?req=965&st=&pgnum=295&hilite>

    *Yaskil Avdi* 7, Omissions, OC 1:5

    From here, after the halachic prohibition to read from the Torah bare-headed has been clarified, there is clearly no room to distinguish between man and woman, boy and girl, for all are equally prohibited. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. An alternate perspective, brought by the Tzitz Eliezer in the name of Chatam Sofer, asserts that men cover their heads nowadays because non-Jews specifically uncover theirs for worship. Female non-Jews do not specifically uncover their heads to worship, so it does not represent the same thing to a Jewish woman, and no comparable law was put into place.

    Responsa *Tzitz Eliezer* 2:13

    I was asked by an important Rav why we are not careful regarding single women who go bareheaded, that they not recite *berachot* or say holy words without covering their hair.… and then it occurred to me to justify the custom of Israel based on what I had seen in the novellae of the Chatam Sofer on *Nedarim* 30b in the mishna…. He writes as follows: “…Rather, this custom was instituted not for reasons of piety but as the basic halacha, as the Taz writes in OC 8, after the idolaters instituted for idolatry to go specifically bare-headed to honor the idol; if so, it is halachically forbidden for us [to bare our heads] …and this custom applies to their males and not to their females; on the contrary, they [non-Jewish women] are careful not to go to the house of worship bare-headed. Therefore, our ancestors were not stringent on unmarried females going bare-headed.” [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Dr. Erica Brown, however, cautions that this thinking can be problematic:

    Erica Brown,"A Crown of Thorns: Orthodox Women Who Chose not to Cover their Hair," *Hide & Seek*, p. 186

    Although this rationale may make women "feel better" about their observance of the mitzva, it is both inaccurate to the sources and can have very dramatic outcomes if taken to its logical extreme. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)