

DERECH Update

**It is a *mitzvah* to behave with *yirah*
in a בית כנסת and a בית מדרש.**

בתי כנסיות ובתי מדרשות אין נוהגין בהם קלות ראש וכו' (שלחן ערוך אורח חיים קנא, א)
כי הם נקראים מקדש מעט כמו דכתיב: "ויהי להם למקדש מעט"
ובמקדש כתיב: "ואת מקדשי תיראו שיהא מוראו של השוכן בא עליו. (משנה ברורה שם סק, א)

One must show reverence in a בית כנסת or בית מדרש, both of which represent the dwelling place of Hashem. Alternatively, showing *yirah* in these places helps us to **develop** *yirah* for Hashem.

Following are some ways in which *yirah* is demonstrated:

- Before entering, one should wipe the mud off one's shoes. (ש"ע א"ח קנ"א:ח)
- It is forbidden to engage in gossip or business calculations. (שם סעי' א')
- One may not kiss one's children or grandchildren in *shul*. (שם צ"ח:א)
- One may not use the sanctuary as a shortcut or shelter from the weather. If it is necessary to do so, one should stop and say a word of *Torah* or *tefillah*. (שם קנ"א. מ"ב) (סק"ד. בה"ע סעי' ה')

From a young age, children should be trained to behave in the synagogue with awe and reverence. They should be taught the correct responses to the prayers, as it is stated, "From the time a child replies 'amen,' he has a share in the world-to-come" (או"ח קכ"ד:ז'). Children who run about and cause commotion should be kept at home. (או"ח צ"ח. מ"ב סק"ג)

One of the great *rabbonim* of the seventeenth century, the Tosefos Yom Tov, exhorted that the awful persecutions of 1648-49 resulted from the Jews failing to show proper respect toward their *shuls*.

Rav Chaim of Volozhin, the revered head of the Volozhiner Yeshiva, was known to inspire great trepidation and awe of Hashem in both his students and his congregants.

One Shabbos Shuva, the Sabbath before Yom Kippur, he spoke to the entire Jewish populace of Volozhin in the Great Synagogue of the city.

He began his sermon with the words of King David: "My flesh shuddered from dread of You, and I feared Your judgments..." (Psalms 119:120), and as soon as the words left his mouth, he passed out.

The words of Rav Chaim's sermon were few, but their impact was intense.

[Excerpted from "Tehillim Treasury", p. 260, with permission of Artscroll Publications]

ASK YOUR CHILD!

1. Why must one show *yirah* in a בית כנסת and בית מדרש? How does it benefit us personally?
2. What are the various ways in which one shows *yirah* in these places?

What should you do?

1. It is wet outside and you are about to enter the בית כנסת.
2. You need to get to a *kiddush* in the room next to the sanctuary. You are late and you could save time by using the sanctuary as a short cut.
3. Your friends are talking during *tefillah*. They want you to join them.

DERECH HACHAYIM CARD
"...ידימה אותם בעיניו כמלך..." (ספר חרדים פ"ו)



Dear DERECH Mailbox, _____

I reviewed the mitzvah of "behaving with *yirah* in a *beis knesses* or a *beis medrash*" with

Name: _____ Gr: _____ Parent's Signature: _____

Each signed "postcard" is worth 10 points. 120 points earns you a reward!
Doing the mitzvah earns you אריכות ימים!