



Introduction to the Halachot of Yuhara

Sometimes, it is forbidden to do something that is a *midat chasidut* which draws attention even if one's intent is completely for the sake of heaven,¹ since it appears as a show of arrogance. This is called *mechzi k'yuhara*.² Some examples that poskim discuss include: standing up for kriyat hatorah if the rabbi of the shul doesn't do so,³ wearing tefillin for mincha,⁴ wearing Rabbenu Tam tefillin,⁵ and making publically noticeable hand motions while davening Shemonah Esrei, such as raising one's hands above one's head.⁶

1. Maharshal (B"k 7:41) based on Bava Kama 81b writes that anyone who is publically strict about something that is permitted should be excommunicated for yuhara, unless he is well known for being l'shem shamayim. That is codified by the Magen Avraham 63:2, Mishna Brurah 63:6, and Kaf Hachaim 63:5. Shulchan Aruch Hamidot v. 1 p. 125 writes that the explicit implication is that even if one has pure intent, if one isn't known for his piety he isn't allowed to be strict in public.

2. Brachot 17b records the opinion of Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel that it is forbidden for a chatan the night of the wedding to say that he can say kriyat shema with kavana because of yuhara. Also, Bava Kama 59b records a story in which the rabbis punished someone who wore a black hat to mourn over yerushalayim since that wasn't the practice. The concept of yuhara can be found in S"A (17:2, 34:3, etc).

3. Rabbi Schachter (["Inyonei Krias HaTorah" min 55](#)) stated that standing for kriyat hatorah where the shul Rabbi doesn't do so is yuhara. He explained that it is yuhara to be stricter than one's rabbi in his presence. In this vein, Mishna Brurah 63:6 writes that it is yuhara to be strict about something which is accepted as permitted and it is even worse to do so in front of one's rabbi. Halacha Brurah 141:4 cites Kol Eliyahu 1:5 who holds that standing for kriyat hatorah when the entire congregation doesn't do so is yuhara, but quotes Petach Dvir 146:3 who disagrees that it isn't yuhara since it is a dispute if one should stand. Halacha Brurah concurs with the Petach Dvir.

4. Rav Schachter stated (oral communication) that wearing tefillin during mincha in a place where that

isn't the practice is not right. Igrot Moshe OC 4:34 writes that someone who comes from a place where they do wear tefillin at mincha and goes to a shul where they don't it isn't yuhara since people know he is from another community. He implies that if the person comes from a community that doesn't wear tefillin at mincha it is yuhara. Also, Biur Halacha 37:2 s.v. mitzvatan cites the Gra that wearing tefillin all day could be yuhara but one could wear just the tefilin shel yad under one's sleeve so it isn't noticeable. See Keter Rosh n. 15 who quotes the Gra as saying that it isn't yuhara to wear tefillin all day since it is the primary halacha. Rav Moshe Feinstein (Mesoret Moshe v.1 p. 24) thought that quote of the Gra wasn't accurate.

5. Shulchan Aruch 34:3 writes that it is forbidden to wear tefillin of Rashi and Rabbenu Tam because of yuhara. That is also the opinion of Mishna Brurah 34:16 even if some people do it; however, Aruch Hashulchan 34:5 writes that since in some countries it is common to wear them it isn't yuhara anymore. Rav Schachter agrees with the Aruch Hashulchan. Rav Ovadia Yosef (Yabia Omer OC 1:3:6, Halacha Brurah 34:1) similarly holds that once the world was exposed to the Arizal's torah who bolstered the importance of Rabbenu Tam tefillin it isn't yuhara anywhere. Additionally, some poskim say that it is only an issue of yuhara if one wears both simultaneously.

6. Shulchan Aruch Hamidot v. 1 p. 130. He is based on numerous examples of where doing a strange behavior in Shemonah Esrei is yuhara (S"A 90:24, 95:3, 123:3, 127:1).