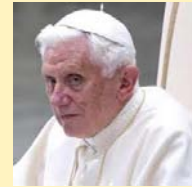


Why I Wear a Kippa

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A whaa...?

A kippa – on my head. Y’know a yarmulke, a skullcap, the beanie looking thing. Yes, like the pope wears – although his is NOT meant as a bonafide Jewish head covering. (I will attempt to sort that out later.)



Sorry, first things first. Kippa is Hebrew, yarmulke is Yiddish (you can Google that word on your own) and beanie is English. I hear you anxiously interrupting, “So, did Moses wear a beanie...I, I mean a kippa? What about Jesus...I mean, he...ahh, he was a Jew—right? So, did he or they?”

Which is it he or they? Okay, okay...I’ll be nice and answer. NO. Neither did. Turbans back then and now are a big fashion item, for religious types or not. *Me?* I never do turbans. They would make me stand out too much. (But then again, I don’t own one either.) Also, where I live a turban would send a message. Such as, I’m Muslim, Sikh, (Google that on your own) Hindu or something equally foreign. No, where I live, my kippa



immediately identifies me as a Jew – a rare sighting in these parts!

Oh, back to turbans for a moment. If Jesus *had* worn a turban, I’m sure there’d be a controversy concerning the Shroud of Turban! (My apologies.)



My home, Spokane, Washington has a population of 480,000. The number of Jews living here is not a secret, it’s just unknown. Our first Jewish Pride Day parade is still only a whim in somebody’s Yiddish noggin. Such an event might help number the local descendants of the Hebrew patriarch Abraham. Until then let me say, we are very few. (Emphasis on “very few.”)

In the last three years I’ve seen one other man wearing a kippa in public. In the last 31 years...maybe only three and a half total. Why a half? Possibly a ski cap – it snows here, okay!

Over the last few years I’ve noticed a couple dozen women wearing non-Jewish, traditional religious head coverings and the Islamic full burqa, only a few times. Oh, let’s not forget Catholic Nuns – been there, done that!

Back to me and my head – head covering, that is. The stereotypical Jew is not me. My nose is not large and my interest in holding on to every dime is small. Contrary to a popular misconception, neither I nor any of my relatives can be held directly responsible for the death of Christ some 2,000 years ago.



People around here have rarely seen, spoken to or heard a Jewish man. I'm not an orthodox Jew who wears black clothes, sports a bushy, long beard and wears a brimmed style, black hat. BTW under those hats usually sits a kippa! No, I wear regular clothes.

Though my spiritual tip-off be rather small, it's clear a religious person has entered the room. Meaning, wherever I go in public, I am the Jew "there." Meaning, I am the only visible Jew. At the market, I am the "Jew." At the gas station, I am the "Jew." On the freeway - well you get it.

When someone is with me and we are about to enter somewhere (a store let's say) I'll tell them, "You will be with the Jew at Wal-Mart." There's never a second, kippa-capped, covered cranium - ever.

To be continued...