



# Head-coverings for Messianic Men: Tradition or Torah ?

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In recent months there has arisen much controversy over “head-coverings” or the *kippah* for men in Messianic Congregations. Many from Ephraim claim it is only tradition dictated by the Talmud or Jewish tradition, while others, including this rabbi, believe that it is permitted, if not commanded by Yahweh for men to be cover their heads in prayer and worship. This article is a Scriptural word study from the Hebrew and Greek in the *TaNak* and *Brit Chadasha* to present the evidence for the use of a head covering. Let me make my position very clear: IT DOES NOT HAVE TO BE A *KIPPAH* BUT IT MAY ALSO BE A CAP OR HAT FOR A MAN.

## In The Beginning

Let us go back to the Beginning (Beresheet) 1:26 when Elohim created man in His likeness and image. Originally man was covered with Elohim’s garment of light or *kavod* (glory) for excellency and splendour as proclaimed in Tehillim 104:1-2. Adam was first clothed with light and after the fall partook of flesh or skin.

- “You [Yahweh] have put on excellency and splendour, covering Yourself with light as a garment...”

We know this because there are two Hebrew words used for “naked” in Beresheet. Before the fall of man the word *‘arom* is used in Gen.2: 25 meaning a partially naked state. AFTER eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in Gen.3: 7 the Hebrew word *‘erom* meaning nudity or complete nakedness. Something happened to man after he ate of the fruit of that tree. He lost the “covering” he had from Elohim in the creation. Yahweh clothed them in a substitute covering in Gen.3: 21 that He provided.

- Garments of skin ( עֹר ) – originally these were garments of light ( אֵר ) and not skin. (This is according to the rules of *temurot* (exchange of letters). This was the supernal light that illuminated Gan Eden. The Zohar 2:229b)

At the present time mankind is the likeness of corruptible flesh (Rom.8: 3). We are no longer perfect as our Master commanded us to be (Matt.5: 48) because of *Chawah’s* and Adam’s sin. ONLY YAHSHUA IS IN THE TRUE IMAGE AND LIKENESS OF YAHWEH AT THIS TIME (1 Cor.11: 7; 1 Cor.15: 49; Rom.8: 29). At the resurrection we shall be once again clothed in His image and likeness as a son of Elohim, after putting off this corruptible flesh and putting on the incorruptible body of light, like Yahshua’s.

## Moshe Our Example

Moshe Rabbeinu is one of our examples in the Torah. In Shemot 3:4-5, Yahweh commanded him to remove his shoes as he was on set-apart ground. Moshe being a shepherd in the desert of Midian surely wore some type of covering or cloth over his head (even as the shepherds do today in the Middle East) to protect him from the blistering sun and heat. Yahweh NEVER commanded him to remove any head covering when Moshe stepped onto Holy ground.

After the Exodus from Egypt Yahweh told Moshe to set-apart the first-born as *Kohenim* (priests) to Him (Ex.13: 1-2, 19:3-24, 24:4-8). This changed after the “golden calf” incident and Yahweh chose the sons of *Lewi* to be the *Kohenim* after the “First-born” had sinned against him. They disqualified themselves from the office of *Kohen* by idol worship. Yahweh commanded them to REMOVE the “ornaments” from them by Mt. *Horev*. This word is *‘adiy* or finery, trappings, headstall or headpiece. By stripping them of their “headpieces” Yahweh removed them from their office as *Kohenim*.

The “glory, honor, and splendour” was removed from them and given to the tribe of *Lewi*. The Aaronic or Levitical priesthood was commissioned to minister directly to Yahweh in the *Mishkan* (Tabernacle) according to **Shemot 28:1; Bemidbar 8:16**. The *Mishkan* was the tent where the presence of the Shekinah was found. The *Kohenim* not only wore turbans but also ministered in the Tabernacle without sandals on their feet.

### Priesthood Garments

The priestly garments were given to the priests and *Lewites* for “esteem (glory) and for comeliness (beauty)” **Shemot 28:2**. We also read in **Yeshayahu 61:3-7**, “... the garment of praise...and YOU [Yisrael-all of Yisrael not just the *Lewites*] shall be called PRIESTS OF YAHWEH, SERVANTS OF OUR ELOHIM shall be said to you...instead of your shame and reproach [or nakedness] they rejoice a second time in their portion...” In the Kingdom all Yisrael shall be priests to Yahweh as He said in **Shemot 19:6**. I believe these are the Sons of *Tzadok* (righteousness) in **Yechezqel 44:15** and **Revelation 20: 6**. According to the *Brit Chadasha*, because of Messiah, we are NOW all priests (**1 Kepha 2:5; Rev.1: 6**). Yahweh has provided for us, as *Kohenim*, garments to cover our nakedness or shame in order to reflect His esteem (glory), splendour, and comeliness (beauty)- the tallit and head covering.

### Turbans or Bonnets

**Shemot 29:9 and 39:28** uses the word turban or bonnet as a part of the commanded garments of the *Kohen*.

- TURBAN-#4021; *migba'ah*: from #1389 a CAP (as a hemispherical) bonnet. The HEMI-means half, SPHERE means globe, ball, and round. Hence the *migba'ah* was shaped as a half a ball. It comes from #1389 –*gib'ah* meaning a hillock, hill, and little hill.
- #1389 comes from #1387 –*Geba'* which comes from #1375-*GeBiYa'* an unused root meaning to be convexed, a goblet, the calyx of a flower, cup, pot. **The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible Vol.1 page 532** tells us that, “the cap of the priest was a conical-shaped object of finely woven linen tied on the head of the priest as a SIGN of his investiture. The CAP was a distinctive item of the priestly vestments.”
- **Webster's New World Dictionary** says that convex means “a vaulted arch, curving outward like the surface of a sphere.”

If we were to take the two convexo-convex pieces of linen material and sew them together, you would have the exact, small hilled, convex cap every priest wore when they served Yahweh. You can see that this design would be very similar as the modern “*kipphah*” now worn.

The mitre (or official turban) of the *Kohen HaGadol* is called a *mitsnepheth* in Hebrew.

- According to Philo and Josephus it consisted of an ordinary priest's cap with a turban of dark blue color over it. **Josephus (Antiq.111.vii.3, 6)** says that the headgear of the priests was seamed at the folds and so became a cap.
- **Clarke's Commentary, Vol. 1, page 445** tells us that; “the *mitsnepheth* comes from the root –to roll (*tsanaph*) or wrap around, it evidently means that covering of the head so UNIVERSAL in the Eastern countries which we call a turban which encompasses and binds the head...” Note: only the High Priest wore the Turban or mitre, while the regular priests wore the cap!

The *Brit Chadasha* tells us we are a set-apart priesthood offering up spiritual sacrifices to Yahweh **1 Kepha 2:5**. Should we not have on some type of head covering as we minister as a priest before Yahweh? Remember, this is a part of Torah not a tradition or Talmud.

It is interesting that, according to the Torah, the *Kohen HaGadol* could NEVER UNCOVER HIS HEAD EVEN IN MOURNING FOR THE DEAD (**Lev.21: 10-11**). Yahshua is now our High priest after the order of Malkitzedek (**Ivrim 6-8; Tehillim 110:4-6**). Surely He wears some type of head covering as our High Priest as he ministers in the heavenly *Mishkan*.

## The Bridegroom

**Yeshayahu 61:10** in the KJV says, "... As a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments..". Here the word ornaments is *pe 'er #6287 from #6286 and means* an embellishment, i.e. a fancy headdress, BEAUTY, goodly ornaments, tire, and bonnet. Note that this verse says that a bridegroom wears a head covering on His wedding day! Yahshua is coming back as a BRIDEGROOM to marry Yisrael after the tribulation for the marriage supper of the Lamb. He will be wearing some type of fancy headcovering as the bridegroom!

## King David

David the *Melek* Yisrael, a man after Yahweh's heart, worshipped with a head covering and his prayers were answered! According to the inspired account in **2 Shemu'el 15:30-37** David went up to the Mount of Olives (just as Yahshua did) weeping, barefoot, and having his head covered. And ALL the people covered their heads and went up weeping...and David said, "O Yahweh, I PRAY YOU..." David was seeking Yahweh's face and supplicating Him for help in a time of trouble. Yahweh answered David's prayer. Therefore we know Yahweh hears us when we pray with our heads covered! That is a truth that has never changed!

## The Book of Dani'el

*Chananyah, Misha'el, and Azraryah* were three Yehudites taken captive in Babylon between 598-582 BCE. All the people of rank, laws, judgments, and proper dress codes were also taken to Babylon according to **2 Melakim 24:14**. Dani'el and these three Hebrews served in the court of Nebukadnetsar. They REFUSED to defile themselves with Babylonian ways! In **Dani'el 3:21**, were told these three that REFUSED TO BOW TO THE BABYLONIAN GODS AND WAYS were thrown with their "TURBANS" on into the fire! We know the Babylonians also wore a headcovering in their daily life, AS DID THE YEHUDITES. The fact that they did, DOES NOT NEGATE THE USE OF HEAD COVERINGS FOR YISRAEL. We know in most Middle Eastern countries men wear turbans or caps. The Yehudites carried this into the Babylonian exile. They did not pick it up in Babylon and carry it back to the Land as some claim.

Yechezqel, who prophesied just before and after the captivity, was COMMANDED BY YAHWEH TO PUT A TURBAN ON HIS HEAD in **Ezek.24: 15-17** and then he commanded all of them to do the same in verses 20-23!

## Ephraim Rejected!

**Hoshea 4: 6** tells us that Yahweh rejected Yisrael as being a priest before Him because they forgot His Torah and HIS GLORY (ESTEEM) THEY CHANGED TO SHAME! Then He says –as for the priest it is for the people!

It is only when we as Yisrael embrace Yahshua as the Moshiach through belief that we can requalify for the priesthood because of His righteousness. We wrap ourselves in His righteousness and His garment of Salvation .All Yisrael can be that nation of priests! We put that helmet of Salvation upon our head (**Eph.6: 17**). We are once again clothed in His esteem and splendour. The head covering and tallit are physical symbols and reminders of that righteousness. We can as a ROYAL PRIESTHOOD work righteousness (**Ivrim 10:21-27**). In effect we are TRAINING FOR REIGNING AS *KOHENIM* IN YAHWEH'S KINGDOM TO COME!

Yahshua has qualified for the High Priesthood that had been removed from Yisrael by sin (**Ezek.21: 21-27**) and ALL YISRAEL, not just *Lewi*, can be priests after the order of *Malkitzedek* and sons of righteousness (**Ivrim 7:24-28; Ezek.44**). It is a superior priesthood (**Ezek.44: 10-14**) than the Levitical. In effect, they have been "demoted", but still are and will be priests.

## 1 Corinthians 11:4

Let's look at that verse in the Greek and see what it really means. FIRST YOU HAVE TO UNDERSTAND THAT THIS IS A MISTRANSLATION OF THIS VERSE! It is only ONE MISTRANSLATED WITNESS that people try to quote to "prove" head coverings for men are wrong in the eyes of Yahweh.

- **1 Corinthians 11:4** “Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, brings shame to his Head.” *The Scriptures*
- **Complete Jewish Bible** by David Stern, “Every man who prays or prophesies wearing something down over his head...”
- COVERED -#2596 *KATA*- down, about, AGAINST, in OPPOSITION TO, down from (like a VEIL hanging from his head) –**Thayer’s page 327**. This word then can mean 1. To hang down from the head (over the face) like a woman’s veil [which in context makes sense as Rav Shaul is contrasting the worship of men and women, and that men are not to look like women-Rabbi Ed] 2. In opposition to or opposed to.
- HEAD # 2776 *KEPHALE*; *KAPTO* the HEAD (literally or figuratively) supreme, chief, prominent, MASTER page 345 Thayer’s. This is the same word used twice in this verse. Why was one capitalized and the other isn’t? There are no capital letters in the Greek language.

This verse is NOT against head coverings for men. It is against the wearing of a veil by a man over his face, as was the custom of the women of that period! Why does Rav Shaul speak of men wearing long hair or actually adorning the long locks of hair with ornamental jewels as women (the word is #2863 in Greek *KOMAO*- wear long tresses of hair, locks, as ornamental (length is secondary) from #2864-*KOME*). Shaul did not want the men of Corinth (center for male temple prostitutes of Apollo, Poseidon, and other gods) to be mistaken for women in their dress, and hairstyle-other wise NO CROSS-DRESSING. The men were pulling their long locks of hair over their faces as a veil as was the manner of women and imitating their hairstyles and manner in prayer. THIS IS NOT TALKING OF A MAN WEARING A HEAD COVERING IN PRAYER OR WORSHIP BUT A VEIL!

Let me present another interpretation also in light of the real meaning of the word –*KATA* and *KEPHALE*.

- In verse 3 Rav Shaul says, the HEAD of every man is Messiah, the HEAD of every woman is man, and the HEAD of Messiah is Elohim. There three HEADS here. The HEAD here is speaking of RULERSHIP or AUTHORITY! Yahshua is HEAD of the Congregation (**Eph.1: 22**).
- Verse 4 therefore CAN MEAN this, “ Every MAN praying or prophesying, that is teaches, refutes, reproves, admonishes, and comforts having OPPOSITION TO HEADSHIP (AUTHORITY) brings shame upon (dishonors) the Messiah, the HEAD of him.”
- If in verse 5 a woman brings shame or dishonor to her HEAD –MAN by being unveiled or *akatakaluptos* or literally without veil down, then a man shames his HEAD-MESSIAH YAHSHUA by having his VEIL DOWN OVER HIS FACE LIKE A WOMAN!
- Verse seven is speaking of Yahshua the HEAD being in the image and esteem of Yahweh as we have shown previously. It should read, “ Now a man truly ought not to cover his HEAD (Yahshua) by hiding and opposing Him, for He (Yahshua) is the image and glory of Yahweh; but the woman is (the expression of) man’s glory (majesty, pre-eminence). The word cover is *katakalupto* –to cover wholly-hide, VEIL.

Verse seven could also read, “For a man indeed should not veil his face, since He (Yahshua) is the likeness and esteem of Elohim, but woman is the esteem of man.”

These verses are all about delegated authority from the HEAD down. Anyone with delegated authority should have a head covering on his or her head. Yahweh is the SUPREME HEAD-then Moshiach-then man-then woman. Only Yahshua is in the image and likeness of Yahweh at this time. Messiah is man’s head and this fact is not to be opposed by man. A man is the head of woman-and she is to acknowledge this fact by wearing a veil upon the hair of her head. Man is under the authority of Messiah the very same way woman is under the authority of her husband. Man also is to show he is under authority in the same manner a woman shows she is under authority- man covers his own head with the ordained head covering of the priesthood.

## A New Revelation

There is new evidence I have found from the *Artscroll complete Siddur page133*. On this page there is a prayer called "PUTTING DOWN THE HEAD". It is a prayer of despair and shame based upon *Tehillim 6*. The prayer is asking Elohim not to rebuke the person in His anger nor chastise him in His rage. The notes on page 132 state:

- "Putting down the Head" is burying ones face in submissive supplication...This portion is recited with the head down and resting on then left arm, and preferably sitting in a position....This posture is an indication of the feelings of despair and guilt that combine with the undying hope that Elohim's mercy will rescue the supplicant, no matter how hopeless the plight."

When I discovered this ancient prayer in the *Siddur*, I began to wonder if this is what Rav Shaul was referring to in 1 Corinthians 11. Is it possible that Shaul knew, because of the finished work of Messiah, there was no need for despair and shame for one's violation of the Torah in the past? I believe this is a possibility and a clue to the true meaning of 1 Corinthians 11.

## Historical Proof

Some people argue that we should not wear a *kippah* because the pope and cardinals wear a facsimile of the *kippah* because they claim to have inherited the Aaronic priesthood. The Roman church strictly FORBIDS the laity to wear this covering because they will tell you that you ARE SUBJECT TO THE Catholic Church! Who will you obey the words of Yahweh or follow the popery of Rome?

Still others claim these set-apart garments came from Babylon. It is true that the laws concerning these garments were taken into Babylon by Yehudah in the exile; but these garments DID NOT ORIGINATE IN BABYLON! They were ordained by Yahweh in the Torah, and came out of Babylon as given by Yahweh with the Yehudim when they rebuilt the Temple of Yahweh.

- According to *The Concise Encyclopedia of Greek and Roman Mythology* by Savine Ostwalt page 261, "A sacrifice was made to Saturnus (S.A.Tan /Hellel) in his temple WITH UNCOVERED HEAD ACCORDING TO THE GREEK OBSERVANCE..."

Alfred Edershiem in his book *"[Yahshua] the Messiah" on pages 426-431* describes the dress of the time period of the Second Temple. He writes:

- "In regard to the covering of the head, it was deemed a mark of disrespect to walk abroad, or to pass a person, with a bared head. Slaves covered their heads in the presence of their masters...The ordinary covering of the head was the *Sudar*, a kerchief twisted into a turban...A kind of light hat was also in use, either of a light material or of felt. The *Sudar* was twisted by rabbis in a peculiar manner to distinguish them from others...We read besides of a sort of a cap or hood attached to some kinds of outer or inner garments...of the outward appearance of [Yahshua]..His headgear would probably be the *SUDAR* wound in a kind of turban or perhaps the *Maaphoreth*, which seems to have served as a covering for the head and to have descended over the back of the kneck and shoulders..." Here from a historical reference we can plainly understand that Yahshua probably wore a head- covering.

This is not to be an exhaustive study on the head- covering for men. It is just a good starting point for the student of the Scriptures to begin his own study on this fascinating topic.

The *kippah*- kippah it on your head!

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