

# TK TORAH KEEPERS

Encouraging Believers in a Torah Observant Life

Frequently Asked Questions:

## HEAD COVERINGS

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One of the most frequently asked questions involves the practice of head coverings for both men and women. I would like to address this question on two levels. First we will look at the issue of authority and then secondly we will look at the actual practice of wearing a physical head covering.

**1 Corinthians 11:3** *But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Messiah; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Messiah is Elohim. <sup>4</sup> Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoureth his head. <sup>5</sup> But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven. <sup>6</sup> For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered. <sup>7</sup> For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of Elohim: but the woman is the glory of the man. <sup>8</sup> For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. <sup>9</sup> Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man. <sup>10</sup> For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels. <sup>11</sup> Nevertheless neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord. <sup>12</sup> For as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman; but all things of Elohim. <sup>13</sup> Judge in yourselves: is it comely that a woman pray unto Elohim uncovered? <sup>14</sup> Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him? <sup>15</sup> But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering. <sup>16</sup> But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the assemblies of Elohim.*

Within this teaching the Apostle Shaul is establishing the proper order of authority within the believing community and especially within the context of marriage and family. Throughout his writings Shaul makes the distinction between the carnal man and the spiritual man.

**Romans 8:5** *For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. <sup>6</sup> For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. <sup>7</sup> Because the carnal mind is enmity against Elohim: for it is not subject to the law of Elohim, neither indeed can be. <sup>8</sup> So then they that are in the flesh cannot please Elohim.*

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**1 Corinthians 2:14** *But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of Elohim: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*

**Romans 7:14** *For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.*

**Romans 8:9** *But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of Elohim dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Messiah, he is none of his.*

**Romans 8:13** *For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.<sup>14</sup> For as many as are led by the Spirit of Elohim, they are the sons of Elohim.*

The spiritual man is a man submitted to the direction and teaching of the Spirit of Messiah. Let us here remember the promise of the Messiah.

**John 14:16** *And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;<sup>17</sup> Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.*

**John 14:26** *But the Comforter, which is the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.*

**John 16:13** *Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.*

Here Yeshua is telling us that the Spirit of the Holy One will not teach anything contrary to what Yeshua has already imparted to his talmidim.<sup>1</sup> In other words the same Spirit that proclaimed the pure Torah in Yeshua will now teach the pure Torah to and through his followers, if they submit to the same Spirit.

We should also remember that Yeshua came to fulfill the Torah and not destroy it, either by adding to it or subtracting from it. Yeshua was perfectly submitted to the Father's word and did not create or teach his own ideas, statutes, ordinances or commandments. The Torah is clear that it is forbidden to add to or subtract from the Torah. Messiah Yeshua was likewise clear that he was here to do his Father's will, work, and word.

**Deuteronomy 4:2** *Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of YHWH your elohim which I command you.*

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<sup>1</sup> Talmidim is the Hebrew word for disciples

**Deuteronomy 12:32** *What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it.*

**Matthew 5:17** *Think not that I am come to destroy the Torah, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.*

**John 4:34** *Yeshua saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.*

**John 5:17** *But Yeshua answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.*

**John 5:19** *Then answered Yeshua and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.*

**John 5:30** *I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.*

**John 5:43** *I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive.*

**John 6:38** *For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.*

**John 7:16** *Yeshua answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me.*

Clearly Messiah was submitted to his Father as Shaul has stated. Yeshua condemned the practice of his adversaries who saw fit to usurp the Father's authority and lord it over other believers by teaching their own commandments and reforms as being authoritative.

**Mark 7:6** *He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. <sup>7</sup> Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. <sup>8</sup> For laying aside the commandment of Elohim, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do. <sup>9</sup> And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of Elohim, that ye may keep your own tradition. <sup>10</sup> For Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother; and, Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death: <sup>11</sup> But ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, It is Corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; he shall be free. <sup>12</sup> And ye suffer him no more to do ought for his father or his mother; <sup>13</sup> Making the word of Elohim of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye.*

**Matthew 23:1** *Then spake Yeshua to the multitude, and to his disciples, <sup>2</sup> Saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: <sup>3</sup> All therefore whatsoever he <sup>2</sup> bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not. <sup>4</sup> For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers.*

<sup>2</sup> According to the Hebrew Matthew it is "he" and not "they"

Yeshua warned his talmidim against the mixture of man made customs and the Torah, as well as against the attitude of lording over others as the religious and secular leaders of their day were fond of doing.

**Matthew 16:6** *Then Yeshua said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.*

**Matthew 20:25** *But Yeshua called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them.<sup>26</sup> But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister;<sup>27</sup> And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant:<sup>28</sup> Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.*

Here Yeshua demonstrates for us exactly what it means to be submitted to one's head or authority. Yeshua did not come to live for himself or fulfill his own will and ambitions, but submitted himself completely to the will of the Father even though it required of Yeshua a great price.

**Philippians 2:5** *Let this mind be in you, which was also in Messiah Yeshua:<sup>6</sup> Who, being in the form of Elohim, thought it not robbery to be equal with Elohim:<sup>7</sup> But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:<sup>8</sup> And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.*

Shaul teaches that the believing husband is to submit himself completely to the Spirit of Messiah. The husband is not to pray or teach by any other authority than the Spirit of Messiah.

The question we must now answer is this; why was the husband given the authority to be the head of the household? To answer this question we must return to the story of creation. The Torah makes it very clear that Adam or man was to be in the image of Elohim. We know from Messiah, however, that Elohim is spirit and not corporal.

**John 4:24** *Elohim is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.*

**Numbers 23:19** *Elohim is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?*

**1 Samuel 15:29** *And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent: for he is not a man, that he should repent.*

**Job 9:32** *For he is not a man, as I am, that I should answer him, and we should come together in judgment.*

While we often speak of the Creator in anthropomorphic<sup>3</sup> terms this is for our own convenience and understanding. In truth the Creator is Spirit and has no body to limit him in time or space. Therefore we must understand that when the Torah tells us that Adam or man was created in the image of Elohim it is not referring to the way he looks. Instead the Torah tells us that Adam was to be in the image of Elohim in the manner in which he exercised dominion over creation, especially the animal realm, and in the manner in which he created life.

**Genesis 1:26** *And Elohim said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.*  
<sup>27</sup> *So Elohim created man in his own image, in the image of Elohim created he him; male and female created he them.* <sup>28</sup> *And Elohim blessed them, and Elohim said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.*

Clearly the unique calling upon man was to be the image of the invisible Creator. Adam, as created, would receive the necessary knowledge and understanding by direct revelation from the creator. The Spirit of Elohim would communicate with the spirit of Adam which would inform his soul how to see things, how to think about them, how to understand them, and how to feel about them. Adam's soul would then inform his body how to interact with the world around him. In this manner, Adam would submit to the revelation of the Creator and thereby manifest the image of Elohim in the world around him. Eve was created to help Adam bear this image.

**Genesis 2:20** *And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him.* <sup>21</sup> *And the YHWH Elohim caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof;* <sup>22</sup> *And the rib, which the YHWH Elohim had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man.* <sup>23</sup> *And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.*

This is what Shaul was referring to when he stated above that the woman came from the man and was created for the man.

**I Corinthians 11:8** *For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man.* <sup>9</sup> *Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man.*

Eve's calling was to help Adam manifest the direct revelation and image of the Creator in the world. In part, though not exclusively, Eve would fulfill this calling in childbirth by helping Adam create life. When Eve ate of the forbidden fruit of the tree of knowledge and then gave her husband to eat with her, she failed in her divine calling. Instead of being submitted to Adam she submitted herself to her self will and her animal nature. By childbearing Eve was able to redeem

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<sup>3</sup> Anthropomorphic a compound Greek word. Anthropos= man, Morphe= form, Anthropomorphic means “in the form of man”.

herself somewhat from this failure by thus helping her husband create life and restore the image of the Creator. This is what Shaul is referring to in his letter to Timothy.

**1 Timothy 2:14** *And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression. <sup>15</sup> Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety.*

Since Eve claimed to be beguiled by the serpent the Creator placed Adam over her as a covering to guide, protect and direct her.

**Genesis 3:13** *And the YHWH Elohim said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.*

**Genesis 3:16** *Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.*

The authority of the husband and father over his household is later substantiated in the teachings on vows in the Torah.

**Numbers 30:1** *And Moses spake unto the heads of the tribes concerning the children of Israel, saying, This is the thing which YHWH hath commanded. <sup>2</sup> If a man vow a vow unto YHWH, or swear an oath to bind his soul with a bond; he shall not break his word, he shall do according to all that proceedeth out of his mouth. <sup>3</sup> If a woman also vow a vow unto YHWH, and bind herself by a bond, being in her father's house in her youth; <sup>4</sup> And her father hear her vow, and her bond wherewith she hath bound her soul, and her father shall hold his peace at her: then all her vows shall stand, and every bond wherewith she hath bound her soul shall stand. <sup>5</sup> But if her father disallow her in the day that he heareth; not any of her vows, or of her bonds wherewith she hath bound her soul, shall stand: and YHWH shall forgive her, because her father disallowed her. <sup>6</sup> And if she had at all an husband, when she vowed, or uttered ought out of her lips, wherewith she bound her soul; <sup>7</sup> And her husband heard it, and held his peace at her in the day that he heard it: then her vows shall stand, and her bonds wherewith she bound her soul shall stand. <sup>8</sup> But if her husband disallowed her on the day that he heard it; then he shall make her vow which she vowed, and that which she uttered with her lips, wherewith she bound her soul, of none effect: and YHWH shall forgive her. <sup>9</sup> But every vow of a widow, and of her that is divorced, wherewith they have bound their souls, shall stand against her. <sup>10</sup> And if she vowed in her husband's house, or bound her soul by a bond with an oath; <sup>11</sup> And her husband heard it, and held his peace at her, and disallowed her not: then all her vows shall stand, and every bond wherewith she bound her soul shall stand. <sup>12</sup> But if her husband hath utterly made them void on the day he heard them; then whatsoever proceeded out of her lips concerning her vows, or concerning the bond of her soul, shall not stand: her husband hath made them void; and YHWH shall forgive her. <sup>13</sup> Every vow, and every binding oath to afflict the soul, her husband may establish it, or her husband may make it void. <sup>14</sup> But if her husband altogether hold his peace at her from day to day; then he establisheth all her vows, or all her bonds, which are upon her: he confirmeth them, because he held his peace at her in the day that he heard them. <sup>15</sup> But if he shall any ways make them void after that he hath heard them; then he shall bear her iniquity. <sup>16</sup> These are the statutes, which YHWH commanded Moses, between a man and his wife, between the father and his daughter, being yet in her youth in her father's house.*

Here we see that a father and or husband have been given the authority to confirm or annul the vows of his young daughter and his wife. If a young or minor daughter living in her father's house makes a vow the father can, on the day he hears of it, let it stand or annul it. If however, this daughter is an adult woman living on her own her father cannot annul her vow. Single adult women living on their own are NOT under their father's covering. A married woman likewise is no longer under her father's covering but that of her husband. We should note that a divorced woman or a widowed woman has no one to annul their vows and therefore must fulfill them, just as it is true for men. Clearly divorced women and widowed woman are treated the same as men. Just as the father had the authority to annul or confirm a daughter's vow in her youth, so now the husband has this same authority in the marriage relationship.

I want to be very clear that MEN DO NOT HAVE AUTHORITY OVER WOMEN. The idea that all men have all authority over all women is a gross misapplication of the scriptures. Men do not have authority over women. Husbands have authority over their wives and fathers have authority over their children. It is vitally important that we understand the difference between being a man and being a husband and father. My wife is not to submit to every man she meets or that seeks to dominate her. The scriptures are clear that she is to submit only to her husband.

***Ephesians 5:22*** *Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.*

***Colossians 3:18*** *Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord.*

Clearly we see the teaching of Shaul rooted in the Torah. Adam was to be submitted to the Spirit of Messiah while Eve was to be submitted to her husband. The idea that somehow now believers are to submit themselves to the authority of the rabbi, pope, preacher or pastor is WRONG! Shaul is quite clear that the head of every man is Messiah not the clergy. This system of elevating one man as the authority over a whole congregation of unsuspecting believers is called Nicolaitanism. The Greek word "Niko" means to conquer. The Greek word "Laos" means people. As a compound word "Nicolaitanism" means to conquer the people. The idea that all of Yeshua's followers are now to submit themselves to the professional religious leader is a pagan practice. In fact it is a practice that the resurrected Messiah hated.

***Revelation 2:6*** *But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.*

***Revelation 2:15*** *So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.*

Immediately after the giving of the Ten Commandments the Torah contains a teaching about the Hebrew bond servant. Within this teaching is the provision for a Hebrew servant that so loves his master that he chooses to remain a servant in the master's house even after his legal obligation of servitude is completed.

***Exodus 21:2*** *If thou buy an Hebrew servant, six years he shall serve: and in the seventh he shall go out free for nothing.<sup>3</sup> If he came in by himself, he shall go out by himself: if he were married, then his wife shall go out with him.<sup>4</sup> If his master have given him a wife, and she have born him sons or daughters; the wife and her children shall be her master's, and he shall go out by himself.<sup>5</sup> And if the servant shall plainly say, I love my*

*master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free:<sup>6</sup> Then his master shall bring him unto the elohim; he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the door post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an aul; and he shall serve him for ever.*

Many believers have seen a shadow picture of Yeshua the Messiah in this teaching. Yeshua is the servant who loved his master so much he allowed himself to be pierced. While these teaching may seems to be a very positive and loving provision, the truth of the matter is that those who would avail themselves of this practice were looked down upon. The children of Israel were slaves and servants in Egypt. YHWH went to great lengths to set them free from such bondage. Therefore any man who would rather submit himself in servitude to another man rather than YHWH was seen as rejecting the headship of YHWH in favor of the headship of a mere mortal.

We may use this example to help us understand the words of Shaul concerning a man praying with his head covered. Shaul clearly states that man has the honor of living directly under the authority of the Messiah. Man has the ability to receive direct revelation from the Holy One through prayer and study. Therefore, for a man to choose not to be in direct relationship with the Holy One through the Spirit of Messiah, but to receive his authority, knowledge and understanding from some other man, is seen as shameful and insulting to the Holy One. Man was to walk directly under the Messiah. To choose some other head, is to reject the Messiah's leadership, direction, protection, blessings, and calling. Since man was created to be directly under the headship or authority of the Messiah it is a shame for a man to pray or prophesy by any other authority. Believing men should not place themselves under the authority of rabbi, pope, preacher, pastor, or their wives. To seek some other head than the Spirit of Messiah is to place oneself in the company of those who rebelled in the wilderness,<sup>4</sup> those who rejected YHWH for an earthly king,<sup>5</sup> and those who sought help and council from earthly nations rather than seeking counsel from the Holy One.<sup>6</sup>

Wives have a divine calling to help their husbands manifest the revelation of YHWH Elohim in the world. If wives are to fulfill their calling to be a help to their husbands, then they must submit themselves to the one receiving the revelation. For this reason women are under the covering of their husbands, who are under the covering of Messiah. Here we must answer an important question; can and do wives receive direct revelations from the Holy One through the Spirit of Messiah? The answer is clearly yes. But, that which is received must be shared with the husband she was called to help and support. Even though the wife may have received some profound understanding from her prayer and study she must still submit to her husband's authority. In other words it is quite common for wives to study and share knowledge with their husbands. But ultimately it is the husband that has the authority to allow or disallow the application of this information. I want to be very clear that there is nothing in the Torah or the writings of Shaul that teaches that women are to be servants of men, or that they are only good for cooking, cleaning, and making babies. Women and especially wives should have a rich prayer and study life. For wives, this prayer and study is to be under the authority, protection and guidance

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<sup>4</sup> Numbers 12:1ff, 14:1-4, 16:1ff

<sup>5</sup> 1 Samuel 8:1-7

<sup>6</sup> Isaiah 30:1-2, 31:1-3

of their husbands, for the purpose of supporting and helping their husbands fulfill their calling to be the image of YHWH in the world.

I also want to be very clear here that the nature of this headship and authority are not to be done in a lording, domineering, humiliating, demeaning or oppressive fashion. Both Yeshua and Shaul are clear about the manner of leadership among believers.

**Matthew 20:25** *But Yeshua called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. <sup>26</sup> But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; <sup>27</sup> And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: <sup>28</sup> Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.*

**Ephesians 5:22** *Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. <sup>23</sup> For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Messiah is the head of the assembly: and he is the saviour of the body. <sup>24</sup> Therefore as the assembly is subject unto Messiah, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. <sup>25</sup> Husbands, love your wives, even as Messiah also loved the assembly, and gave himself for it; <sup>26</sup> That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, <sup>27</sup> That he might present it to himself a glorious assembly, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. <sup>28</sup> So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. <sup>29</sup> For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the assembly: <sup>30</sup> For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. <sup>31</sup> For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. <sup>32</sup> This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Messiah and the assembly. <sup>33</sup> Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.*

We should also take note of the significance of the marriage relationship that is given in Shaul's instruction to the Ephesians. In part the reason that the wife submits herself to the authority of her husband is because she is playing a part in a divine shadow picture. The marriage relationship of believers is to be the proclamation of the YHWH'S marriage to the children of Israel. Within the marriage relationship the covenant relationship between YHWH and Israel is embodied. Just as Israel the bride is to submit to YHWH, so to the believing wife submits to her believing husband. Just as YHWH tenaciously loves and forgives Israel so the husband is to love and forgive his wife. Here we see that the marriage relationship between husband and wife is a visible word, a sensual means of daily communicating the mutual love that is to exist between Israel and YHWH.

This brings us to the second part of this teaching the use of physical coverings. While man was created to be primarily a spiritually motivated being living in spiritual communion with the Spirit Elohim, the fall of man changed this. After eating of the fruit of the forbidden Tree of Knowledge

of Good and Evil the eyes of man were opened.<sup>7</sup> From the time of the fall onward, man has become more accustomed to living by his senses than his spirit. For this reason man often seeks various means of expressing spiritual realities in physical fashions. Such is the case with head coverings.

While it is standard practice for Talmudic Jewish men to wear kippahs or yarmulkes when praying, this is simply tradition and not Torah. When Shaul teaches that it is a shame for a man to pray or prophecy with his head “under” (the Greek word is “kata”) he is not so much talking about kippah or tallits but about authority as mentioned above. It is a shame for a man to pray or prophecy by any other authority than that of the Spirit of Messiah. Shaul is also quite clear that there was NOT a practice of men covering their heads with any material thing during prayer.

***1 Corinthians 11:16 But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the assembly of Elohim.***

It was however a cultural practice that a married woman kept her head covered in public as well as during prayer. A married woman's head covering was understood as an act of modesty and respect for her husband. Young single women would allow their hair to be seen, whereas married women covered their glory (hair) and reserved its sight only for their husbands. As Shaul states a woman's long hair was her glory. A young woman looking for a husband would let her glory fly in the breeze in hopes of attracting a husband. Once the young woman was betrothed, however, she would cover her hair lest other's think she was being flirtatious. Thus a woman's head covering was seen as a public declaration that she was now under the covering of her husband. We may see a beautiful example of this declaration in the Torah. When Abraham's servant returned from the East with a wife for Isaac, Rebekah sees Isaac at a distance and asks who he is. When the servant reveals that it is her betrothed, Rebekah steps down from her camel and covers herself.

***Genesis 24:65 For she had said unto the servant, What man is this that walketh in the field to meet us? And the servant had said, It is my master: therefore she took a vail, and covered herself.***

Rebekah had already agreed to be married to Isaac before she had ever seen him. By covering herself she was not merely playing coy. By covering herself under the veil she was declaring to Isaac her willingness to submit to his covering.

Shaul is teaching that there should be a clear distinction in authority in the body of believers. Likewise, if there is to be a symbol of this authority it too should demonstrate the same distinction. Let me be very clear that the issue Shaul is addressing here is a “**custom**” of man made origin and not a **commandment** of YHWH. According to Shaul, men are directly under the Messiah and therefore should not cover their heads when they pray or prophecy to show that there is no

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<sup>7</sup> Genesis 3:5-7

one or nothing between the man and the Messiah; no rabbi, no pope, no pastor, and no preacher. Wives however are under their husbands and therefore should have their heads covered (that is to be under their husband's authority) when prophesying and praying. As the man is a part of the body of Messiah, so the wife is likewise a part of the body of Messiah as she is one flesh with her husband. Shaul teaches that a wife that prays or prophesies without having her head covered (being under her husband's authority) dishonors her head and brings shame upon herself. To pray with her head uncovered would be the same as if she had shaved her head. Shaul goes on to say, that just as the Creator gave the woman long hair as a glorious head-covering in her youth so too has he provided her with a husband to be an honorable head covering in her married life. If a married woman dishonors her spiritual head, it would be the same as if she had shamed herself by having her head shaved, exposing her naked head. Some have erroneously stated that a woman's hair is a sufficient covering to fulfill what Shaul is teaching. I would strongly disagree. Clearly Shaul is teaching that men should not have their heads covered (under another's authority) when prophesying and praying. If hair is considered a covering, then all men would have to shave their heads or go bald to satisfy what Shaul is teaching. Clearly hair is not the covering that Shaul is talking about. Shaul is talking about the issue of authority. If this authority is to be ritually or symbolically demonstrated then it would be done with an actual veil sufficient to cover a woman's hair. Shaul states that men's hair should not look like women's hair. Thus Shaul is confirming that men should neither dress like or act like women, and women should not dress and act like men. This too is found in the Torah.

***Deuteronomy 22:5*** *The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so are abomination unto the YHWH thy elohim.*

In its larger context this passage of scripture speaks about a woman usurping her husband's authority and creating chaos and dissension in her family. Shaul likewise is teaching that wives should not pray or prophesy outside of their husband's authority. Husband's should not pray or prophesy under anyone else's authority other than that of the Messiah. Shaul teaches a clear distinction and difference in the manner in which husbands and wives pray and prophecy. If this is to be ritually acted out in some manner then Shaul teaches that men would honor their head by not covering their heads when they pray or prophesy to demonstrate that there is no other authority over them other than Messiah. Wives, on the other hand, would honor their head by covering their heads, to demonstrate that they are submitted to their husbands covering as the Torah teaches. Again we must remember that Shaul is responding to a particular **custom** of the believers in Corinth and not something practiced elsewhere in the body of Messiah.

***1 Corinthians 11:16*** *But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the assembly of Elohim.*

Let us now look at this issue in a very practical manner. Should women pray with an actual physical covering over their heads? Let us remember that Shaul is not addressing a commandment of YHWH but a custom of man. With this said, I believe that Shaul is suggesting

that, if there is to be a custom among a body of believers to physically demonstrate this matter of authority, then a distinction should be made in the manner in which men and wives pray. Shaul therefore teaches that married women should indeed have a covering over their head and hair when praying and prophesying. Please remember, however, that this is custom and not commandment. Should married women wear a covering over their heads at other times? This is a matter of personal choice. There is no where in the Torah or in the teachings of Yeshua where women, married or otherwise, are commanded to wear head coverings. While this may have been an accepted and assumed cultural practice it is not a direct or positive commandment of YHWH. The greater issue is proper authority, honoring ones headship, and modesty in dress and appearance. If, however, a wife desires to honor her husband by wearing a head covering there is no law prohibiting it. Such matters as this should be discussed between the husband and wife. I do not believe that a husband should command his wife to wear a head covering since it is not a commandment of the Torah or the Messiah. If however the Spirit of Messiah convicts the wife of such matter a husband should not discourage it.

Should men pray with their heads covered? There is no where in the Torah where it commands that a man (other than the kohen gadol)<sup>8</sup> must have his head covered when he prays or prophesies. There is no law against wearing hats or head coverings but it is not necessary for a man to have his head covered in prayer. While the kohen gadol is indeed commanded to wear a turban when presiding in the sanctuary, there is no such command for the Israelite to cover his head when praying or teaching. Shaul makes it very clear that there was no such practice or custom as covering one's head for prayer among the community of believers. With this said, I may make an exception for the tallit or prayer shawl. For many, the tallit or prayer shawl, serves not so much as a head covering but as a prayer closet. In today's crowded world there are times when privacy for prayer is difficult to find. The tallit is a reminder of the tabernacle where Israel worshipped in the wilderness. To find solace and solitude indoors beneath the covering of a cabin roof, or a tent would not be considered a head covering. I believe the same may be said of such usages of the prayer shawl or even a simple blanket. I personally like to pray at the beach. I will often take a tallit or blanket with me to shade me from the sun, wind or cold, but also to protect me from distractions. I do not believe that this would meet with any objection from Yeshua or Shaul. The idea that men **must** have their head covered with a hat or piece of cloth, or even a tallit in order to pray is simply the tradition and teaching of the rabbis, and is not Torah. For further insight into this topic I would highly recommend Michael Rood's DVD "[Who is Your Unauthorized Covering?](#)" which is available at [www.michaelroodministries.com](http://www.michaelroodministries.com)

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<sup>8</sup> Exodus 28:4,37,39; 29:6; Leviticus 8:9