

Why Do I wear a “Beanie?”

By William Schnobelen

We get many questions about why I wear a “beanie” or skullcap. They ask if I have become a Jew or something. Here is the story.

I was gloriously saved in 1984 by the blood of the Lamb. My testimony is available on many tapes, DVDs and books. Yah’shua (Hebrew name of Jesus¹) is my Lord, Master and Savior. Messianic Jews are Jews who believe in Yah’shua. There are around 175,000 of us all over the world.

I have been in the Messianic movement since the late eighties and had worn the head covering since about 2001. I only found out a few years later that I was ethnically Jewish as well. There are several reasons why I wear a skullcap. Here they are in easy outline form:

- i. In Yiddish, the skullcap is called a yarmulke, but the correct Hebrew term for it is KIPPAH.
 1. This is rooted in the Hebrew word KAPAR #3722 which means atonement, literally to cover. (See **Ex.29:33** and **30:10** among many other places)
 2. A variation of the word, KIPPURIM is used in **Lev. 23:27** for the Day of Atonement (YOM HA KIPPURIM).

¹ We believe it is more respectful to call our Savior by His real name. Normally, even today, we do not translate names of foreign people. Out of respect for a culture, we would not call a Spaniard named Jose “Joseph.” Even more so, we would not call a foreign dignitary by his translated name (calling Vladimir Putin “William Putin”). In the same way, we think it is more appropriate to call the most important Foreign Dignitary in history by the name He was called by His family and apostles.

3. Even more critically, the word is also related to the word KAPPHORET (#3727) which we translate as the mercy seat or lid of the ark of the covenant, where the atoning blood was applied every Yom Kippur (see **Ex.25:17**).
 4. Thus, by wearing it, I remind myself, I am under the ATONING BLOOD of the Lamb.
- ii. It also serves to me as a reminder of the Helmet of Salvation that we are to wear. (**Eph. 6:17**)
 - iii. It also refers to the garments of the priesthood. Remember, in the apostolic Scriptures, Peter tells us that we are ALL part of a “holy priesthood” now (**1 Peter 2:5**), thus we are all priests before YHWH.
 1. **Ex. 29:9 and 39:28** refer to the “bonnet” (King James Authorized Version²) as part of the commanded garments of the priesthood.
 2. In Strong’s #4021 we find the Hebrew word for this is MIG-BA’A that means a “hemispherical cap.” It is derived from a different Hebrew word, GIB’A, meaning a *little hill* (#1389)
 3. Thus, the head covering the priests in the Torah were wearing was a shaped like half a sphere. Very much like the hat you see me wearing in most of my DVD teachings, OR the hat worn by many Jews.
 4. **Lev.10:6** says that priests should not uncover their heads, even when

² Some other translations say turban, unfortunately. This conjures up images of Arabs or swamis. Not a good thing!

mourning, **“lest ye die, and lest wrath come upon all the people.”**

- iv. Some people claim this was invented by the rabbis and not in the Torah. Let me just share some observations:
1. It is true that Torah never explicitly says that all Israelites should wear Kippot.³
 2. The Torah only says that priests (*Kohanim*) and the High Priest (*Kohen ha Godol*) should wear them (see references above).
 3. But, as mentioned before, we are now ALL priests according to Peter. This is a game changer.
 4. Now, because of Yah’shua, we can ALL come boldly before the throne of grace (**Hebrews 4:16**). But boldness should never be construed as disrespect.
- v. *Others* see the pope, bishops and cardinals of the Roman church wearing skullcaps.⁴ They claim it is a pagan Roman custom from ancient Rome that the rabbis adopted. Here are the facts on that:
1. Historical resources on pagan Roman and Greek customs say: “A sacrifice was made to Saturnus (false god – Bill) in his temple with UNCOVERED HEAD according to the Greek observance⁵.”
 2. Most scholars acknowledge that the Romans borrowed almost all of their

³ Kippot is the plural of Kippah.

⁴ It is actually called a “*zuchetta*.”

⁵ Savine Ostwalt, THE CONCISE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF GREEK AND ROMAN MYTHOLOGY, p. 261.

religious deities and practices from the Greeks.

3. In addition, the celebrated early Messianic scholar, Alfred Eidersheim wrote:

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 masters⁶... 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 inner or outer garments... of the outward appearance of Jesus [sic]... His headgear would probably be the *SUDAR* wound in a kind of turban or perhaps the *Maaphoreth*, which seemed to have served as a covering for the head and to have descended over the back of the neck and shoulders.⁷

- vi. Do I think all Believers should be wearing this sort of hat? That is between you and the Holy Spirit.

1. But "*it couldn't hurt!*"
2. Remember, we are all priests ministering before YHWH.
3. We are told in the Bible that priests should have their heads covered when they do this.
4. I believe it is a matter of being more respectful before the throne of YHWH.

- b. Some may object, what about what Paul says in **1 Cor. 11:3-4** where he seems to say that a man

⁶ Bill's note: are we not bondservants of Yah'shua? Are we not always in His presence?

⁷ Alfred Eidersheim, JESUS THE MESSIAH, pp. 426-431.

should not cover his head: **But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God. ⁴Every man praying or prophesying, having *his* head covered, dishonoureth his head.**

- i. First of all, this is primarily talking about **spiritual** headship. What is being said is that (in context – remember, a text without a context is a pretext) a man’s spiritual covering ultimately is Messiah (verse 3). If he has any other SPIRITUAL head covering, he dishonors his head.
 1. In other words, **Messiah’s head is YHWH. The husband’s head is Messiah. The wife’s head is her husband.**
 2. What Paul is saying here is that no one else can come between the headship of a husband and Yah’shua, not even a pastoral leader.
 3. For a husband to submit totally to the authority of a pastoral leader would be dishonorable.
 4. This is why some Christian “discipleship” movements such as were popular in charismatic circles in the 1970’s and 1980’s are not scriptural.
 5. Thus, the primary meaning of the passage is not about headgear, but about spiritual headship.
- ii. Also, the word there for covered is KATA (Greek #2596) which means “down from” or “against.” This is more like a veil than a hat.

- iii. Remember, elsewhere, Paul was preaching to the Corinthians.
 1. Corinth was a very pagan culture. It was very similar to San Francisco, today.
 2. Cross-dressing was common in pagan Greece, both for sexually perverse reasons and for religious reasons.
 3. Because of this, Paul is saying here that a man should not be wearing the veil of a woman!
 4. He was not talking about Kippot.
- iv. How do we know this? **Because YHWH does not change!** (**Mal. 3:6, Hebr. 13:8**) He is not going to tell His priesthood to cover their heads in Exodus and Leviticus and then countermand that order through Paul.
 1. As a student of Gamaliel⁸ (**Acts 22:3**), Paul would have had to have memorized the entire Torah and studied it for years.
 2. Paul knew the Torah like the back of his hand, and he would not contradict it.
 3. Remember, even at the end of his ministry, he called himself a Pharisee (**Acts 23:6**)
- v. Remember, when there is an APPARENT contradiction in the Bible, the problem is not with the Bible, but with our *understanding* of the Bible.
- vi. In that light, it makes more sense that Paul was preaching against cross-dressing men; not telling men they should not wear a Kippah during prayer or worship.

⁸ Gamaliel was arguable one of the most respected, learned rabbis of his generation.