

Headcoverings

Abiding Under the Shadow of the Almighty

By William Schnoebelen

He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. – Psalm 91:1

Many Believers today (men and women) have begun following the tradition of wearing Kippot, or yarmulke, as a sign of submission to Yahushua Messiah (Jesus Christ's Hebrew Name¹). However, some question this practice and wonder if it isn't a tradition better left to religious Jews. Let me elaborate, and bring a Biblical perspective into this discussion.

I was gloriously saved in 1984 by the Blood of the Lamb. My testimony is available on many DVDs and books. Yahushua is my Lord and Savior. There are many Jews, like me, who believe in Yahushua. In fact, there are more than 175,000 of us all over the world.

I have been in the Natzarim ²(Messianic) movement since the late eighties and have worn a head covering since about 2001. I 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**.
 - a. 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)
 - b. 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 leader 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.

² NATZARIM is the earliest term used to describe followers of Yahushua. It comes from a Hebrew root that can mean "branch." In **Isaiah 11:1**, the Messianic prophecy of "a branch" (H#5342 in Strong's - NTzR – *Netzer*). Our Master said He was the vine and that we are the branches (**John 15:5**). Even today, the Hebrew word for "Christian" is NOTZER

- c. 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**).
- d. Thus, by wearing it, I remind myself, *I am under the ATONING BLOOD of the Lamb*.
- e. The Kippah also serves to me as a reminder of the Helmet of Salvation (part of the heavenly armour). (**Eph. 6:17**)
- f. The Kippah also refers to the crown and covering worn as part of the priestly garments. Remember, in the apostolic Scriptures Peter tells us that we are ALL part of a “holy priesthood” now (**1 Peter 2:5**)! Thus, we Natzarim are *all* priests before Yahuwah. This is a wonderful Bible truth we need to embrace!
 - i. **Ex. 29:9** and **39:28** refer to the “bonnet” (King James Version³) as part of the commanded garments of the priesthood.
 - ii. 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)
 - iii. Thus, the head covering worn by the priests in the Torah was a shaped like half a sphere. Very much like the hat you see me wearing in most of my more recent DVD teachings, OR the hat worn by many Jews.
 - iv. **Lev.10:6** says that priests should not uncover their heads, even when mourning, **“lest ye die, and lest wrath come upon all the people.”**
- g. Some people claim this was invented by the rabbis and not in the Torah. Let me just share some observations:
 - i. It is true that Torah never explicitly says that all Israelites should wear Kippot.⁴
 - ii. The Torah only says that priests (*Kohanim*) and the High Priest (*Kohen ha Godol*) should wear them (see references above).
 - iii. But, as mentioned before, we are now **ALL** priests according to Peter. **This is a game changer.**

³ Some other translations say turban, unfortunately. This conjures up images of Arabs or swamis. Not always a good thing!

⁴ Kippot is the plural of Kippah.

- iv. Now, because of Yahushua, we can ALL come boldly before the throne of grace (**Hebrews 4:16**). This no longer just applies to the high priest! But remember, boldness should never be construed as disrespect.
- h. *Others* see the pope, bishops and cardinals of the Roman church wearing skullcaps.⁵ They claim it is a pagan Roman custom from ancient Rome that the rabbis adopted. But there is little or no historical basis for that claim! Here are the facts on that:
 - i. Historical resources on pagan Roman and Greek customs say: “A sacrifice was made to Saturnus, a false el (g-d) in his temple with UNCOVERED HEAD according to the Greek observance⁶.”
 - ii. Most scholars acknowledge that the Romans borrowed almost all of their religious deities and practices from the Greeks.
 - iii. 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 masters⁷ ... 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.⁸

- i. Do I think all Believers should be wearing this sort of hat? That is between you and the Holy Spirit. But...
 - i. Remember, we are all priests ministering before the Most High. And He is everywhere!
 - ii. We are told in the Bible that priests should have their heads covered when they do this.

⁵ It is actually called a “*zuchetta*.” Bishops wear purple ones, cardinals wear scarlet and of course the pope wears a white one.

⁶ Savine Ostwalt, THE CONCISE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF GREEK AND ROMAN MYTHOLOGY, p. 261.

⁷ Bill’s note: are we not bondservants of Yahushua? Are we not **always** in His presence?

⁸ Alfred Eidersheim, JESUS THE MESSIAH, pp. 426-431.

- iii. I believe it is a matter of being more respectful when before the throne of Yahuwah.
- II. Some may object, what about what Paul says in **1 Cor. 11:3-4** where he seems to say that a man 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.** ⁴**Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoureth his head.**
 - a. First of all, this is primarily talking about **spiritual** headship. What is being said is: **(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.
 - i. So, **Messiah's head is Yahuwah. The husband's head is Messiah. The wife's head is her husband.**
 - ii. What Paul is saying here is that no one else can come between the headship of a husband and Yahushua, not even a pastoral leader.
 - iii. For a husband to submit *totally* to the authority of a pastoral leader would be dishonorable.
 - iv. This is why some Christian "discipleship" movements such as were popular in charismatic circles in the 1970's and 1980's are *not* scriptural.
 - v. Thus, the primary meaning of the passage is not about headgear, but about spiritual headship.
 - b. 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.
 - c. Remember, Paul was preaching to the Corinthians.
 - i. Corinth was a very pagan culture. It was very similar to today's San Francisco.
 - ii. Cross-dressing was common in pagan Greece, both for sexually perverse reasons and for religious (or cultic) reasons.
 - iii. Because of this, Paul is saying here that a man should not be wearing the veil of a woman!
 - iv. He was not talking about Kippot.
 - d. How do we know this? **Because Yahuwah 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.

- i. As a student of Gamaliel⁹ (**Acts 22:3**), Paul would have had to have memorized the entire Torah and studied it for years.
 - ii. Paul knew the Torah like the back of his hand, and he would know better than to contradict it.
 - iii. Remember, even at the end of his ministry, he still called himself a Pharisee (**Acts 23:6**)
- e. Remember, when there is an APPARENT contradiction in the Bible, the problem is not with the Bible, but with our *understanding* of the Bible.
 - f. 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.

Now, in the light of all this – presented in easy outline form - where does the Kippah fit into our spiritual warfare and devotional life? I can only tell you that it seems to offer a measure of protection that I did not seem to possess before. Not that the little hat itself has any “magical” power to protect in and of itself. No, of course not. That would be *superstition*!

No, it is not the item itself, but what the item *represents*! The Scriptures are full of symbols like this, from the more tangible ones like the Ark of the Covenant (a symbol of Yahuwah’s abiding Presence with Israel) or the sacrifices of the Sanctuary (symbols of our needing atonement for our sins). Of course, there is the blood on the doorpost on Passover and the subsequent annual ordinance of *Pesach* – *rich* in symbols!

In the Gospels we see Yahushua giving us the bread and wine of the Table of Yahuwah as a symbol of His sacrifice on Calvary. Or there is the water of Baptism. Can anyone deny these symbols have the **power** to bless? Well, the Kippah is a less obvious example of the same dynamic. Like any such symbol, it reminds us of a deeper spiritual truth!

As mentioned, it reminds us of the helmet of salvation and – by extension – the rest of the armor mentioned throughout the Bible. When I cover my head, it gives me a tangible reminder of the abiding COVERING that is over me as a servant of Yahushua. Remember, covering the head back then was a symbol of

⁹ Gamaliel was arguable one of the most respected, learned rabbis of his generation.

being a servant. When I cover *my* head, it reminds me that I am “**under the authority**” of the Most High Creator of the Universe!

This is incredibly important when you are a ministry leader, because sometimes it is an occupational hazard to get an inflated ego. The Kippah reminds me that I am just His bondservant, plain and simple. It is a solid reminder of Yahushua’s authority over me!

In practical terms, I can tell you this – as I have followed the leading of the Holy Spirit in this, I have found that especially my sleep has been much more restful. As you may imagine, with my background in the occult and witchcraft, I tended to have a **LOT** of creepy nightmares. That is because often dreams are a way the mind has to relieve stress and traumatic memories.

Since my obedience to the Spirit, I have found that my terrifying dreams have been cut down to almost nothing! *HalleluYAH!* Nor am I alone in this. Over the years, we have received *many* phone calls and emails from both men and women who have reported relief from night terrors and even worse things simply by prayerfully covering their heads!

Some years ago, a woman contacted us who found herself frequently being sexually assaulted by some sort of evil spiritual being in her bed. She had blessed her home as we had taught her and prayed for the remission of the sin of shedding innocent blood over the land¹⁰. But nothing brought relief. We shared with her about just covering her head and though she found it odd, she was desperate enough to try anything!

She found a scarf and began wrapping her head with it and called us the next week delighted that her nightly attacker was troubling her no more. She is just an example of many such women who were being molested by fallen celestial beings. From time immemorial, such nocturnal infernal predators in human guise have victimized women. This has happened since Noah (**Gen. 6**) and even Paul warns about it:

For this cause ought the woman to have **power** on her head because of the angels. – **1 Cor. 11:10**

Note that the word Paul uses there – “**power**” – is the Greek word *EXOUSIA* that can also mean authority. Remember that having your head covered is a sign of

¹⁰ We have sample prayers for how to deal with these things at www.withoneaccord.org

being UNDER the authority of Yahushua! ARE you under His authority? If so, covering your head is both a testimony to that beautiful fact and a practical reminder of the helmet of *YESHUA* (Hebrew word for “salvation” and very similar to our Savior’s name, **Yahushua**)!

In a different kind of issue, some years later, a man called us who was tormented by compulsions and terrible thoughts. He had been diagnosed as Obsessive Compulsive disorder by a psychiatrist. But psychiatrists do not really understand the human soul or the realities of the spiritual world. We prayed with him and had him cast out the spirit of fear and the spirit of bondage. THEN we told him to just cover his head and pray for the helmet of salvation to protect him.

He called back a few days later and said he had found a watch cap and had begun wearing it all the time since our ministry to him. The thoughts, terrors and obsessions had completely disappeared in just a day or two. HalleluYAH! Remember, this wasn’t because of us. It was simply because he was being faithful and obedient.

In terms of devotion, many have contacted us to say that since they began covering their heads during prayer time – either a prayer shawl (**Tallit**) or some other sort of head covering, they found that they were not so easily distracted in their prayers. Still others say they feel so much closer to Abba since wearing a covering of some sort when they worship and pray. One person emailed me and said they could almost feel Him hug them!

What I have come to do in the past dozen years or so is pray as I wrap myself in my Tallit is to pray through the beginning of **Psalm 104**:

Bless the LORD, O my soul. O LORD my God, thou art very great; thou art clothed with honour and majesty. ² Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment: who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain:

See, Yahuwah has His Tallit of glorious Light. I pray daily as I cover myself that He would cover my wife and loved ones with His Tallit of Light as well. Remember, the premier spiritual warfare psalm of the Bible begins by talking about abiding under the “shadow of the Almighty” (**Ps. 91:1**). I would submit to you that it is – in part – referencing being under the shadow of His spiritual AND physical covering by prayerfully wearing a covering on your head in some fashion.

Being under the Kippah or Tallit **is** truly dwelling in His secret place! The Hebrew word there for “secret place” is *SAYTHER* (H#5643) and its primary meaning IS a cover or covering. When we are in His secret covering, the enemy is blinded to

what we are doing or where we are. That is a definite advantage in any sort of warfare, *especially* spiritual warfare.

Yahuwah willing, we will be doing a DVD teaching on both the Tallit and the Kippah soon – but this will be plenty for you to pray about.

Again, there is nothing intrinsically powerful in the Kippah per se. The power is in the **OBEDIENCE** to the Scripture and being **HUMBLE** enough to acknowledge publically that you are a servant of the Most High YAH and that you serve Him and Him alone! My beloved wife, Mary, has written an excellent article on this but from a woman's perspective that can be read as an additional source of knowledge and inspiration here at this link:

<http://www.withoneaccord.org/assets/images/freedownloads/HEADCOVERINGS%20MARY%20111113.pdf>

Perhaps you are struggling with issues in your life – or know you need true victory over sin. Maybe you simply feel that you need to stoke up the spiritual fires of your zeal for holiness – pray about implementing and deploying this divinely ordained strategy. It may seem like being “old fashioned” or traditional, but a careful study of the Scriptures will reveal that many set-apart men and women did indeed cover their heads out of a deep and profound respect and awe for He Who had taken them under the shadow of *His* wings.

Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the **old paths**, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.

– **Jeremiah 6:16**

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