

# The WildBranch Ministry

...*thou bearest not the root, but the root  
thee. Romans 11:18*

## Headcoverings

### Part 2

Let me begin by summarizing some of my remarks in the first part of this teaching. I believe that the wearing of headcoverings by women, in or out of a gathering, is a useful, decent custom but not a commandment from YHVH. I believe that this subject falls under the 'doubtful disputations' of Romans 14:1-6:

*"Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations. For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs. Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him. Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand. One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto YHVH; and he that regardeth not the day, to YHVH he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to YHVH, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to YHVH he eateth not, and giveth God thanks."*

The context of this section of scripture is Paul's concern for new believers and the subject of doubtful disputations. The English words 'doubtful disputations' are from the Greek words *diakriseis dialogismon*. These words literally say 'arguments about opinions'. In the Hebrew these words are *shaphat* and *chashav*. This would be understood as 'thoughts about particular judgments'. The idea taken from the Hebrew to the Greek is filtered through a Greek culture possessed with philosophy and sophistry. This Greek concept is nowhere found in the Tanakh and is never associated with the Torah. The subject in context are those opinions and judgments outside of the Torah. This is where I believe the subject of the wearing of headcoverings falls. I believe that the apostles were given authority to make these kinds of 'halakhic' decisions during the exile or the scattering of the tribes. I believe the apostle's decision was taught in the following verses. (For a more detailed treatise of these passages, please see our audio series called Messianic Apologetics 1.)

Sha'ul begins 1Corinthians 11 by telling us to follow him as he follows the Messiah and keep the ordinances as he has delivered them to us. So Sha'ul begins by admonishing us to follow him as these 'ordinances' are passed down. The word 'ordinances' here is *paraodosis* in the Greek. This word means to pass something down. It comes from the Hebrew *moser*. a most interesting and well used Hebrew word. This word is used in this context as traditions that are passed down. The word *moser* is a mem, a samekh and a resh. It's three letter verbal root is either '*asar* or *yasar*. All Hebrew grammarians do not agree. This is because these two words are so very, very close in their meaning. Both are from the fundamental subroot *sar*. This word pictographically means to turn someones head. It is translated as to rule by turning another direction. Because of the meaning of the subroot, the cognates *musar*, '*asar*, *yasar*, all basically mean the same thing. The beginning letters of mem, aleph and yud only change the focus and nuance of each word slightly. The traditions (*moser*) that Sha'ul is referring to are cultural behaviors that help turn us from our own ways to His ways. Sha'ul specifically uses this word in 1Corinthians 11 to begin his teaching and not the words commandment, law, statute or precept.

In the Corinthian culture, remember this is a letter to the saints in Corinth, as it was in many cultures, woman wore a headcovering as an outward expression that she was not available, or looking for a man. A veiled woman was generally a woman who was married. To walk about unveiled was a sign that she was not under submission to any man and was 'available'. Someone veiled was a woman under the submission of a husband. The covering used in 1 Corinthians was a *katakalypto*, or a covering that came down over the face. This same word is used in the story of Judah and Tamar in B'reshiyt 38:14-15:

"And she put her widow's garments off from her, and covered her with a veil, and wrapped herself, and sat in an open place, which is by the way to Timnath; for she saw that Shelah was grown, and she was not given unto him to wife. When Judah saw her, he thought her to be an harlot; because she **had** covered her face."

Now, just so things do not get too confusing here, I believe that since this word is used to express the idea of covering the face, and not a particular kind of veil, I believe that Tamar disguised herself as a harlot. Harlots were known to don particular clothing as well. (Yirmeyahu 4:30, Yechezk'el 23:40.) Once again, the word used in 1Corinthians is the general Greek term for covering, as well as the Hebrew (*kasah*), for covering something. The words used in the Tanakh for a veil or dressing concerning the head are *tz'iyph*, or to 'wrap around' (B'reshiyt 24:65); *r<sup>e</sup>diyd*, a thin, almost see through material (Yesha'yahu 3:23); *r<sup>e</sup>'alah*, linen that flutters (Yesha'yahu 3:19); and *mit<sup>e</sup>pachat* or cloak (Ruth 3:15). These refer to specific kinds of coverings of the head, but mostly the face. These are not the words used here, but rather the common term for a covering. This covering was a common expression in the Corinthian culture of separating the genders.

So, what is my point? The 'in your face' commandments given us in the Tanakh point clearly that God's people make a distinction between genders, to separate us from the heathen nations. The commandments concerning clothing, beards and behavior, for example, are designed to make a clear distinction between the appearance of males and the appearance of females, as opposed to many pagan cultures where the lines are blurred. I believe Sha'ul is teaching that there are customs and traditions that aid us in keeping a clear distinction between the genders. They are not commandments, but rather customs. I have decided not to take the time to cover, pun intended, the well established history of headcoverings worn by women in virtually all Middle-Eastern cultures. This is not only true of the Middle East but also some Oriental and Asian cultures. I have neglected to address that fact because it only proves that many people do this and nothing more. Many people in the world have no problem with abortion or sex outside of marriage either. So using the fact that lot's of other people do it is not a case I choose to pursue. The writings of the Talmud and other extra biblical sources are not worthy of mention in my opinion either. Some Rabbinical writings support it, while others do not.

I believe that Sha'ul's point is fairly clear when appropriating Hebrew teaching methods. That is, the meaning of the teaching is found in the beginning and the end. Sha'ul begins by stating that there is a difference between the functions of man and woman in the kingdom. I believe he uses this Corinthian custom as an example of the difference in the exile between men and women. I believe he also uses the natural differences of hair to distinguish between the genders as well. What constitutes long hair in their culture or ours? I think that most of us know the difference between the hair of a man and the hair of a woman. I do not think that our hair should express ambiguity to the world. I do not think that our dress should cause uncertainty as to gender either. I believe that a married woman who chooses not to veil her hair, who is solely devoted to her husband, should do so unto YHVH. I believe that a married woman who is solely devoted to her husband who chooses to veil her hair, should do so unto YHVH. I believe that a woman who has a problem with her sole devotion to her husband should begin to correct that problem by first wearing a veil over her head. This will, perhaps, be what is needed to restore the relationship.

The bottom line of Sha'ul's teaching is that men need to act like men and look like men. Women need to act like women and look like women. I believe we should always fight to maintain that distinction. Sometimes I think we just ought to use good ole common sense. I am not the gender police, but I know a mixed message when I see one. How 'bout you?

Shalom Alecheim!

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