

## **FA7. Praying & Prophesying with Head Veiled and Unveiled, Covered and Uncovered.**

*Men and women are to dress modestly and appropriately when praying and prophesying.*

This precept is derived from His Word (blessed is He):

### **Key New Testament Scriptures**

#### **1 Corinthians 11:4-13 (CJB)**

*Every man who prays or prophesies wearing something down over his head brings shame to his head, but every woman who prays or prophesies with her head unveiled brings shame to her head- there is no difference between her and a woman who has had her head shaved. For if a woman is not veiled, let her also have her hair cut short; but if it is shameful for a woman to wear her hair cut short or to have her head shaved, then let her be veiled. For a man indeed should not have his head veiled, because he is the image and glory of God, and the woman is the glory of man. For man was not made from woman, but woman from man; and indeed man was not created for the sake of the woman but woman for the sake of the man. The reason a woman should show by veiling her head that she is under authority has to do with the angels. Nevertheless, in union with the Lord neither is woman independent of man nor is man independent of woman; for as the woman was made from the man, so also the man is now born through the woman. But everything is from God. Decide for yourselves: is it appropriate for a woman to pray to God when she is unveiled?*

#### **1 Corinthians 11:4-13 (NKJ)**

*Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonors his head. But every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head, for that is one and the same as if her head were shaved. For if a woman is not covered, let her also be shorn. But if it is shameful for a woman to be shorn or shaved, let her be covered. For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of man. For man is not from woman, but woman from man. Nor was man created for the woman, but woman for the man. For this reason the woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels. Nevertheless, neither is man independent of woman, nor woman independent of man, in the Lord. For as woman came from man, even so man also comes through woman; but all things are from God. Judge among yourselves. Is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered?*

### **Additional New Testament Scriptures**

**1 Timothy 2:9**

### **Related New Testament Mitzvot**

FA15 Women Dressing Modestly and Not Adorning Themselves While in Prayer

FB04 Women Dressing Modestly

## **Supportive Tanakh Scriptures**

### Deuteronomy 22:5

*A woman is not to wear men's clothing, and a man is not to put on women's clothing, for whoever does these things is detestable to ADONAI your God.*

## **Comment**

While probably not the most important of Paul's instructions to the church at Corinth, 1 Corinthians 11:4-13 has to be among the most debated and perhaps among the most confusing and misunderstood of them all. Everyone agrees that Paul is speaking about men and women who are praying and about that which covers them while they are praying and prophesying. The debate involves questions such as: (1) Is "head" in the Scripture referring to the top of the head or to the entire head above the neck? (2) Is "cover" in the Scripture referring to a hat on the top of the head or to some other kind of apparel? (3) Is "head" and "cover" in the Scripture also referring to headship and authority such as in Ephesians 5:23: "*For the husband is head of the wife ..?*"

I have included both the CJB and NKJ translations of 1 Corinthians 11:4-13 because they assume some different things. They agree that the Scripture is referencing headship of men over women and God over men, but they disagree as to what constitutes the anatomical head of a person and the kind of head covering of which the Scripture is speaking. They also do not appear to connect the two seemingly different subjects. Those who favor the NKJ translation are likely to understand the head to be the top of the head and the covering to be a hat that covers the top of the head.

However, it appears that in the First Century (similar to some Middle-Eastern lands today), as a matter of modesty, women in public covered their entire heads from the neck up with a fabric wrap and a veil in the front so they could see and speak. Of course, it would normally be shameful for a man to wear such a female garment, but there is some historical information that heathen men and women embraced vile practices such as cross-dressing when praying to their heathen gods. Were that true, it would explain why God (spoken by Paul) would not want a man to pray with his head covered since "head covered" would have meant veiled as the heathen pray. It would also explain why God would not want a woman to pray with her head uncovered since to do so would have been immodest – also as the heathen pray. What neither Scripture nor historical writings explain adequately (in my opinion) is the connection between physical head coverings and the covering of authority that is woven into the passage of Scripture.

All that has been said thus far refers to cultural norms of dress and prayer that existed in the First Century. Since those norms are different today and, at least in the western world, fully covered and veiled heads are not the way anyone prays, there is no prohibition for men to wear *kippot* (or hats) or women to not wear head coverings (although some do) while praying or prophesying.

Even during the First Century and earlier, a man wearing a *kippah* (although not usual) would probably not have been forbidden. As a matter of fact, the High Priest was required to wear a turban while performing his priestly duties (Exodus 28:4, 37-39, 39:28-31).

**Related Mitzvot in Volumes 1 & 2**

None