

02-28-26 Message to Roeh Israel Abilene – *T'tsaveh* (You [Moshe] shall command)
Torah Portion; Exodus 27:20 – 30:10
Haftarah: Ezekiel 43:10-27
Suggested Acheron K'tuvim: Revelation 13

Demonic Deception – Part 5 – Signs and Wonders

Central question of this message: Will you be deceived by the signs and wonders performed by Satan and his angels?

This parasha is called *T'tsaveh* which means “You [Moses] shall command [the sons of Israel].” Its name comes from the fourth word in the English and the second word in the original Hebrew.

Ex 27:20-21

20 "And you shall charge the sons of Israel, that they bring you clear oil of beaten olives for the light, to make a lamp burn continually. 21 In the tent of meeting, outside the veil which is before the testimony, Aaron and his sons shall keep it in order from evening to morning before the Lord; it shall be a perpetual statute throughout their generations for the sons of Israel.

וַיָּקָחוּ וַיֹּאמֶתָהּ תִּצְוֶנָה אֶת־ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
 that they bring And thou shalt command Israel, the children of
3947 3478 1121 853 6680 859

נֵר אֵלֶיךָ שֶׁמֶן זַיִת זָךְ כִּתִּית לַמָּאֹר לְהַעֲלֶתָהּ
 the lamp thee oil olive pure beaten for the light, to cause to burn
5216 5927 3974 3795 2134 2132 8081 413

תָּמִיד:
 always.
8548

בְּאֶהֱלָהּ מוֹעֵד מִחוּץ לַפָּרֹכֶת אֲשֶׁר עַל־
 In the tabernacle of the congregation without the veil, which is before
168 4150 2351 6532 834 9999 5921

הָעֵדוּת יִעֲרֹךְ אִתּוֹ אַהֲרֹן וּבָנָיו מֵעֶרֶב עַד־
 the testimony, it shall order Aaron and his sons from evening to
5715 853 175 1121 6153 5704

בֹּקֶר לִפְנֵי יְהוָה חֻקַּת עוֹלָם לְדֹרֹתָם
 morning before the Lord: it shall be a statute for ever unto their generations
1242 6440 3068 9999 2708 5769 1755

מֵאֵת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: ׀
 on the behalf of the children of Israel.
854 1121 3478

Before we get into the next installment in our series of Demonic Deception, I want to address something that is found in our parasha which addresses, at least in part, a common practice among Jewish people today. That practice is the covering of the head.

We find in our parasha today a command that certain Jewish people cover their heads. I am aware of strong differing opinions and those leading to a considerable level of confusion and division among people in the body of faith regarding the covering of the head in worship, prayer or otherwise.

I will not address the entirety of the issue today, but will point out a couple of things just to begin to address the matter. I have a more extensive teaching on it that I will give you supporting my halacha (ruling) on the practice in our congregation. But since our parasha for today opens the issue, I at least wish to address it for now.

Ex 28:3-5

3 And you shall speak to all the skillful persons whom I have endowed with the spirit of wisdom, that they make Aaron's garments to consecrate him, that he may minister as priest to Me. 4 And these are the garments which they shall make: a breastpiece and an ephod and a robe and a tunic of checkered work, a turban and a sash, and they shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother and his sons, that he may minister as priest to Me.

The Hebrew word here translated as “turban” is *mitsnepheth*.

OT:4701 מִצְנֶפֶת **mitsnepheth**
(mits-neh'-feth); from OT:6801; a
tiara, i.e. official turban (of a king or
high priest):

This word signifies a cloth that is placed on the head, and suggests wrapping, as a turban. A bit later on in the parasha, there is a command to make head coverings for Aaron's sons as well.

Ex 28:40-42

40 "And for Aaron's sons you shall make tunics; you shall also make sashes for them, and you shall make caps for them, for glory and for beauty. 41 And you shall put them on Aaron your brother and on his sons with him; and you shall anoint them and ordain them and consecrate them, that they may serve Me as priests.

The Hebrew word translated in this passage as “caps” is *migba'ah*.

OT:4021 מִגְבָּעָה **migba`ah**
(mig-baw-aw'); from the same as
OT:1389; a cap (as hemispherical):

It is derived from another Hebrew root, *gib`ah*.

OT:1389 גִּבְעָה **gib`ah** (ghib-aw');
feminine from the same as OT:1387;
a hillock: -hill, little hill.

This word signifies the rounded shape of a little hill. There is a small hill-shaped cap that is worn by observant Jews (as well as those who consider themselves to be grafted-into the Hebrew olive tree according to Romans 11, and that is called a *kippah* (Heb. covering), or a *yarmulke*, which is the Yiddish term for the same cap. This is the sole mention in the Tanach of a head covering.

The *kippah* is discussed in ancient Jewish writings dating back to the Babylonian captivity in 598 B.C. When Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah were thrown into the fiery furnace in Babylon, (Daniel 1:7), the head covering was already in use by Jewish men, for the account tells that they were thrown into the fire with the head coverings upon them. As we look to later Scriptures, we see that heads were covered by King David and those who went up with him to the Temple in a mourning procession. II Samuel 15:30.

The general practice of Jewish men outside the priesthood also wearing a *kippah* became more established during the Talmudic times (the writing

beginning with the destruction of the 2nd Temple, and continuing for another 400+ years).

Some revered Rabbis such as Rav Huna (216 -297 CE) said that covering the head identified oneself as G-d-fearing. The significance of the *kippah* in the last few thousand years is to demonstrate publicly that one is “a slave to G-d.” According to Maimonides (1135 – 1204 CE), a man is required to cover his head during prayer. It is in honor of this *halacha* that orthodox synagogues expect men (Jewish or otherwise) to don a *kippah* upon entering the synagogue.

Men who approach the Western Wall of the Temple Mount in Jerusalem are given a small paper *kippah*, if they don’t already approach wearing one. That is because the environs of the Western Wall are for our people an open-air synagogue. This is as close as our people are allowed to assemble to the actual site of the coming Temples.

Today, the *kippah* is worn by observant male Jews within the synagogue but also at other times. They don a *kippah* also while praying in any location, and while attending Jewish funerals and weddings. The *kippah* is also customarily worn by male visitors to a synagogue as a sign of

respect to the *halacha* of that synagogue. For weddings and holy days such as Passover and Yom Kippur, a white *kippah* is worn.¹



It is generally not appropriate to wear a white *kippah* except for those special occasions. During a funeral, or visiting mourners during their period of mourning for the dead, it is appropriate to wear a black *kippah*. On all other occasions the guidelines are simply, be tasteful and age-appropriate in your choice of *kippah*.²

¹ For some weddings, the groom will give identical kippot to his attendants, which can be of any color he chooses. Otherwise, white is always appropriate, since this event is considered to be a holy assembly.

² Some kippot have sports themes, others cartoon characters, and some have phrases in English or Hebrew. A simple, tasteful design would be better for an adult than a sports-themed or cartoon-themed *kippah* during a solemn

It is a common practice for Jewish men who are wearing a tallis at a time of private personal prayer, to place the tallis over their head, and fold the sides inward front of their face, fully enclosing the head. This creates a type of head covering, as well as a private space for prayer, closing-out all distractions.

It is appropriate when approaching the Ark, the Bima, and the Torah to wear both a tallis and a *kippah*. In some synagogues the men cover their heads with their tallis, even though they are also wearing a *kippah*. This is a demonstration by them that they recognize the deep holiness of the place where the Torah rests and is read aloud to the people. Because of the lack of men capable or willing to come up to the Bima in our congregation, I have not been strict on this *halacha*. But I do hope that this will eventually be remedied.

Our congregation is open to Jews of all stripes, and we have had some Jews come to us already. I can tell you that if an observant Jew were to join us, and see a man approach the Bima without a tallis and *kippah*, he would likely be horrified and our witness would be damaged in the Jewish community. That would be a big setback for us in this place.

assembly. Likewise it would be inappropriate to have a *kippah* on which has the 4-letter Name on it, or Yeshua, either in Hebrew or English, in the presence of Jews who would likely be offended by this action.

There is a passage in the Brit Chadasha³ which has been cited as authority by some Christians that believers are not to pray with heads covered. It is found at 1 Corinthians 11:3-16. They use this passage to directly contradict Jewish teachings that men should pray with the head covered.

This passage, when taken in context, cannot be interpreted to be speaking regarding the *kippah*, or any particular headgear. I am not going to set out the entirety of the passage here, for the sake of space, but I will want to analyze a part of the passage as a proof that Paul could not have been discouraging the covering of the head by men wearing a *kippah*.

1 Cor 11:1-3

11 Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ. 2 Now I praise you because you remember me in everything, and hold firmly to the traditions, just as I delivered them to you.

There are only two possibilities in the Corinthian congregation regarding wearing a *kippah* for prayer. 1. It was already a tradition among the Jewish people, and the people in Corinth had begun adopting this tradition, or 2. It was not an ongoing practice among the people in Corinth

³ Also known as the “New Testament.”

at this time, and Paul was addressing some other problem that he saw which interfered with their worship and prayer.

If the praying while a head is covered by Jewish men *was* traditional at the time Yeshua walked among us as a man, then Yeshua followed that tradition. Had He not, it would have been written about, since all other departures from Jewish tradition were noted and pointed out by many. There is no writing that Yeshua departed from tradition regarding His clothing – to include a head covering. Paul would have known about that common practice among Jewish men, himself being raised in the higher levels of Jewish observance. And if Paul imitated Yeshua, and suggested that those in Corinth also do so, then that would have probably been part of his *halacha*. And if he taught them the traditions (as he said he did), then the “head covering” instruction by necessity applied to something else that the Corinthians were doing which was inappropriate during their worship and prayer times.

If the wearing of a head covering *was not* a tradition being practiced generally – or specifically in the congregation at Corinth – at the time that Paul wrote these words, then there is no way that Paul could have been condemning a practice that was unknown to these people at that time, and not being carried out by those people there. So, it would have had to be some other practice he was addressing. They knew what the issue was,

Paul knew what the issue was, and we are only allowed to guess at what it might have been, not being familiar with that congregation's particular practices which are being addressed in the letter.

I will not pursue this topic further, but will suggest if you wish to dig deeper you consider my handout on the head coverings, which I am providing as well.

Now, back into the series on demonic deception...

I want to talk about the power that Satan and his demons have in this world.

Matt 24:24-27

24 "For false Christs and **false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect.** 25 "Behold, I have told you in advance. 26 "If therefore they say to you, 'Behold, He is in the wilderness,' do not go forth, or, 'Behold, He is in the inner rooms,' do not believe them.

2 Thess 2:1-12

2 Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together to Him, 2 that you may not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. **3 Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, 4 who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God. 5 Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling you these things? 6 And you know what restrains him now, so that in his time he may be revealed. 7 For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way. 8 And then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming; 9 that is, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders, 10 and with all the**

deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved.

11 And for this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they might believe what is false, 12 in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness.

Revelation 13

And I saw a beast coming up out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads, and on his horns were ten diadems, and on his heads were blasphemous names. **2 And the beast which I saw was like a leopard, and his feet were like those of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. And the dragon gave him his power and his throne and great authority.** 3 And I saw one of his heads as if it had been slain, and his fatal wound was healed. And the whole earth was amazed and followed after the beast; **4 and they worshiped the dragon, because he gave his authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast, and who is able to wage war with him?"** 5 And there was given to him a mouth speaking arrogant words and blasphemies; and authority to act for forty-two months

was given to him. 6 And he opened his mouth in blasphemies against God, to blaspheme His name and His tabernacle, that is, those who dwell in heaven. 7 **And it was given to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them; and authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation was given to him.** 8 **And all who dwell on the earth will worship him, everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain.** 9 If anyone has an ear, let him hear. 10 If anyone is destined for captivity, to captivity he goes; if anyone kills with the sword, with the sword he must be killed. Here is the perseverance and the faith of the saints.

11 And I saw another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spoke as a dragon. 12 **And he exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence. And he makes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose fatal wound was healed.** 13 **And he performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down out of heaven to the earth in the presence of men.** 14 **And he deceives those who dwell on the earth because of the signs which it was**

given him to perform in the presence of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who had the wound of the sword and has come to life. 15 And there was given to him to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast might even speak and cause as many as do not worship the image of the beast to be killed. 16 And he causes all, the small and the great, and the rich and the poor, and the free men and the slaves, to be given a mark on their right hand, or on their forehead, 17 and he provides that no one should be able to buy or to sell, except the one who has the mark, either the name of the beast or the number of his name. 18 Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for the number is that of a man; and his number is six hundred and sixty-six.

What is the commonality between all these manifestations of evil in this world (apart from evil)? It seems that evil has immense power to perform signs and wonders in this world, even making a graven image come to life and to speak.

How effective are these “signs and wonders” going to be to deceive people? Sadly, I believe they will be very effective for the vast majority of the population of the Earth.

In a scholarly paper published June 17, 2022, entitled *Persuasion, Science, and Miracles*,⁴ Jeremy Bertomeu and Iv'an Marinovic⁵ write about how “miracles” are effective to persuade people to believe in one way or another.

Their article is very deep, and would not be easy reading for most, but the conclusion at its end is worthy of consideration. They say:

In this paper, we propose a game theoretical model to understand the philosophical underpinning of miracles, relative to scientific evidence. At an individual level, miracles have epistemic⁶ value to learn about the existence of a deity. In fact, learning from miracles goes hand in hand with a better, more precise scientific model where a naturalistic scientist claims certainty about the precise law of nature. This certainty serves to disprove Naturalism and

⁴ <https://www.gsb.stanford.edu/faculty-research/working-papers/persuasion-science-miracles>

⁵ J. Bertomeu is an associate professors at Washington University's Olin Business School in Saint Louis. Iv'an Marinovic is an associate professor at Stanford University. Contact author: invial@stanford.edu. We thank seminar participants at the Formal Philosophy 2021 Conference.

⁶ A term used in philosophy, meaning - relating to knowledge or to the degree of its validation.

correctly distinguish miracles from randomness in nature. Put differently, we show that a strong science is an essential component of learning from miracles.

A critical part of this argument is the idea that the deity may or may not exist but, if he exists, wishes to use miracles to alter the believer's faith. Miracles are thus a tool of persuasion, a way for the deity to manifest to the believer. From this idea, we provide clear empirical predictions about empirical regularities observed by a scientist if the deity exists. We show, in particular, that the deity would choose predictable empirical regularities which would be disproved by subjective experience.

Allow me to boil this down to a single concept: Any spiritual entity can use "miracles" as a tool of persuasion. The first persuasion goal is to establish to the person that this spiritual entity exists. The second persuasion goal is to convince the person that this spiritual entity is to be worshipped because it is supremely powerful.

If the dynamic and domain of miracles is not solely that of the Almighty, and as Scripture clearly declares, miracles fall within the available powers of Satan and his demons, then it becomes clear that as the time for Satan

grows shorter, the believers in the One true G-d must use the highest degrees of discernment in deciding what to believe and how to react to miracles performed by Satan and his demons.

What better method to turn people away from the One true G-d than for Satan and his demons to perform miracles and show great signs of power.

It is my opinion that Satan has begun increasing his deceptive activities in this world, because he knows that his time is growing shorter. I believe that there are a number of things that are happening today that can only be explained by demonic deceptions... and demonic miracles.

We must be closely connected with the Spirit of G-d in these days so that we will not fall victim to the schemes of Satan.

I am convinced that many around us will fall victim. Many believers who have shallow roots will be swept away from the truth. I believe that process has already begun.

Let us all be held fast in our faith by our deep root system – roots well established in the Word.