

Clothing and Head Coverings

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As a part of us looking at what makes one a Karaite Jew from examining the Tanakh, we will be looking for commands, customs, or even indications of something would support a specific dress in the Tanakh. We will look at what is the Hebrew used to describe clothing in the Tanakh and also look at the idea of Karaites must wear a head covering.

The first word we will look at is Beged (Bet-Gimmel-Dalet) and reference number 889. It is a masculine noun and found on pages 185-186 in the NEHC and starts on page 93 in the BDB. It is a cloth that hides as one may see from its verb bagad 898, which talks of deceit. We are not going to examine all reference by just a few key ones.

Bereshit/Genesis 24:53 (52-52)

52 When Abraham's servant heard their words, he bowed low to the ground before the LORD. 53 The servant brought out objects of silver and gold, **and garments (uv'gadim וּבְגָדִים)**, and gave them to Rebekah; and he gave presents to her brother and her mother.

This is clothes which was used to cover one.

Bereshit/Genesis 27:15

15 Rebekah then took the best **clothes (big'dei בְּגֵדֵי)** of her older son Esau, which were there in the house, and had her younger son Jacob put them on;

Again this is the covering cloth. The idea of this was that the scent of Esav was on it to deceive his father into giving him a blessing.

Bereshit/Genesis 38:14

14 So she took off her widow's **garb (big'dei בְּגֵדֵי)**, covered her face with a veil, and, wrapping herself up, sat down at the entrance to Enaim, which is on the road to Timnah; for she saw that Shelah was grown up, yet she had not been given to him as wife.

Here Tamar removes her widows clothing or covering. We will be looking more at this verse later.

Bereshit/Genesis 39:12 (11-12)

11 One such day, he came into the house to do his work. None of the household being there inside, 12 she caught hold of him by his garment (bavig'do בגְּדוֹ) and said, “Lie with me!” But he left his garment (big'do בגְּדוֹ) in her hand and got away and fled outside.

Yosef let his covering garment behind.

Shemot/Exodus 28:2

2 Make sacral vestments for your brother Aaron, for dignity and adornment.

We won't go into all the garments made for Aharon and his sons here. You can read about these in Shemot chapters 28-29.

You can see that beged is a common word in Hebrew for clothing. I found nothing that would indicate a specific kind of dress other than the clothing for Aharon and his sons and Tamar with the widows' clothes.

There are other words for clothes in the Tanakh so we will continue with these. The next word is Simlah (Sin-mem-lamed-hey) and its reference number is 8071. It is found on page 1210 in the NEHC and page 971 in the BDB. It is a feminine noun.

Bereshit/Genesis 35:2

2 So Jacob said to his household and to all who were with him, “Rid yourselves of the alien gods in your midst, purify yourselves, and change your clothes (sim'loteykhem שְׂמֹלֹתֵיכֶם).”

Here Yaaqov tells them to change their clothes, which would mean they had more than one also.

Bereshit/Genesis 41:14

14 Thereupon Pharaoh sent for Joseph, and he was rushed from the dungeon. He had his hair cut and changed his clothes (sim'lotayv שְׂמֹלֹתָיו), and he appeared before Pharaoh.

Here Yosef was made to change his clothes while in the prison to acceptable clothes to present to the Pharaoh.

Bereshit/Genesis 45:22

22 To each of them, moreover, he gave a change of **clothing** (**שמלות** semalot); but to Benjamin he gave three hundred pieces of silver and several changes of **clothing** (**שמלות** semalot).

Here Yosef gave his brothers change of clothes but is younger he gave 5. We are showing that indeed simlah and beged refer to clothing in general and are different Hebrew words that speak to that.

Shemot/Exodus 3:22

22 Each woman shall borrow from her neighbor and the lodger in her house objects of silver and gold, **and clothing** (**ושמלות** us'malot), and you shall put these on your sons and daughters, thus stripping the Egyptians.”

Here the women were to get from the Egyptians articles of clothing.

Shemot/Exodus 22:26

25 If you take your neighbor's **garment** (**שלמת** sal'mat) in pledge, you must return it to him before the sun sets; 26 it is **his only clothing** (**כסותו** Kesuto), the sole **covering** (**שמלתו** sim'lato) for his skin. In what else shall he sleep? Therefore, if he cries out to Me, I will pay heed, for I am compassionate.

We see that simlah and kesut are also related to clothing. We will be looking at that word after this.

Devarim/Deuteronomy 22:5, 17

5 A woman must not put on man's apparel, nor shall a man wear woman's clothing; for whoever does these things is abhorrent to Yehovah Eloheykha.

לֹא־יְהִיָּה כְּלִי־גֵבֶר עַל־אִשָּׁה וְלֹא־יִלְבַּשׁ גֵּבֶר שְׂמֹלֶת אִשָּׁה כִּי
תֹעֲבַת יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ כָּל־עֲשֵׂה אֵלֶּה:

Lo yi'yah keliy gever al-ishah velo yil'bash gever sim'lat ishah kiy to'avat Yehovah Eloheykha kol oesh eleh.

Not shall stuff of warrior on woman and no put on warrior clothing of woman because its abornent/hated Yehovah Eloheykha all making this.

You can see that in the Hebrew his has a very different meaning than in the English translation. Gever is a warrior but in most cases is a male thus they use male. The prohibition is as the warrior to disguise himself as a woman. At least that is my take on this. But the Simlat here is clothing again.

17 so he has made up charges, saying, 'I did not find your daughter a virgin.' But here is the evidence of my daughter's virginity!" And they shall spread out **the cloth** (**hasim'lah** **הַשְּׂמֵלָה**) before the elders of the town.

Here the cloth is to be used not as a covering but to show evidence of virginity. Thus Simlah is more generally used as cloth also.

Yehoshua/Joshua 7:6

6 Joshua thereupon rent **his clothes** (**sim'lotayv** **שְׂמֹלְתָיו**). He and the elders of Israel lay until evening with their faces to the ground in front of the Ark of Yehovah; and they strewed earth on their heads.

Here Yehoshua tore his clothes. That which he covered himself. We can see that Sim'lah is also clothing. I searched all of these references and did not find anything that would indicate a type of commanded use except for the male warrior.

The next word in Hebrew we will look at is Kesut (Kaf-Samech-Vav-Tav) and it is reference number 3682. It is found on page 608 in the NEHC and on page 492 in BDB. It is a feminine noun and from the verb Kasah which we will look at next.

Shemot/Exodus 21:10

10 If he marries another, he must not withhold from this one her food, **her clothing** (**kesutah** **כְּסוּתָהּ**), or her conjugal rights.

Here we see that must continue to provide to his wife her clothing.

Shemot/Exodus 22:26

26 it is **his only clothing** (**Kesuto** **כְּסוּתוֹ**), the sole **covering** (**sim'lato** **שְׂמֹלְתוֹ**) for his skin. In what else shall he sleep? Therefore, if he cries out to Me, I will pay heed, for I am compassionate.

We read this before but it does show this as a cloth also.

Devarim/Deuteronomy 22:12

12 You shall make tassels on the four corners of the **garment** (**kesut'kha** כְּסוּתְךָ) with which **you cover** (**tekhasah** תִּכְסֶה) yourself.

Here we see both the noun and the verb used in the same verse.

Iyov/Job 24:7

7 They pass the night naked for lack of **clothing** (**kesut** כְּסוּת), They have no covering against the cold;

Here we see that cloth was covering for the person.

The verb for Kesut is Kasah (Kaf-Samech-Hey) and is reference number 3680. It is found on page 607-608 in the NEHC and on page 491 in the BDB. It means to cover/conceal.

Bereshit/Genesis 7:19

19 When the waters had swelled much more upon the earth, all the highest mountains everywhere under the sky were **covered** (**vay'khusu** וַיִּכְסֹּוּ).

This is showing the water covered everything under the sky.

Bereshit/Genesis 18:17

17 Now Yehovah had said, "Shall I **hide** (**ham'keseh** הֲמִכְסֶה) from Abraham what I am about to do,

The verb is used to denote that one might hide something with is done through covering.

Bereshit/Genesis 24:65 (64-65)

64 Raising her eyes, Rebekah saw Isaac. She alighted from the camel 65 and said to the servant, "Who is that man walking in the field toward us?" And the servant said, "That is my master." So she took her veil and covered herself (vatiqach hatza'iyf vatit'kas – and took the vail she covered וַתִּקַּח הַצְעִיף וַתִּכְסֶה).

We see that the viel was another form of clothing that was used and as seen here is was acceptable. The only other place tza'iyf is used is in...

Bereshit/Genesis 38:14, 19

14 So she took off her widow's garb (big'dei בגדי), covered her face with a veil (vat'khas betza'iyf – and covered in veil ותכס בצעיף), and, wrapping herself up (vatit'alaf 5968 – and she laid/fainted ותתעלף), sat down (vateshev 3427 stay in place or dwell וישב) at the entrance to Enaim, which is on the road to Timnah; for she saw that Shelah was grown up, yet she had not been given to him as wife.

The word Alaf is in most cases used for fainted but in one case used for laid as in jewels laid. They use this and try to say she wrapped herself but it might better say she laid herself. The word teshev is yashav which means to stay in a place or dwell. While this does not indicate what she covered the veil was just her face or her whole body. We know that in both examples they say both covered with a veil. Was it a head to toe veil or just a face veil?

The last word for clothing was levush (Lamed-Vet-Vav-Shin) and is reference number 3830. It is a masculine noun and from the verb lavash 3847 and means to put on. So this word is telling us of a garment put on. It is on page 632 in the NEHC and on page 528 in the BDB.

Ester/Esther 6:8-9

7 So Haman said to the king, “For the man whom the king desires to honor, 8 let royal garb (levush לבוש) which the king has worn (lavesh 3947 לבש) be brought, and a horse on which the king has ridden and on whose head a royal diadem has been set; 9 and let the attire (halevus הלבוש) and the horse be put in the charge of one of the king's noble courtiers. And let the man whom the king desires to honor be attired and paraded on the horse through the city square, while they proclaim before him: This is what is done for the man whom the king desires to honor!”

Here Haman tells the king to put on the garment he puts on himself on the man he wishes to honor.

The only other cloth which was worn by Israelites was the saq or sackcloth (Sin-Qof) it is reference number 8242 and is a masculine noun. It was a cloth used for mourning primarily. It is found on page 1214 in the NEHC and 974 in the BDB.

Genesis/Bereshit 37:34

34 Jacob rent his clothes, put sackcloth (saq שק) on his loins, and observed mourning for his son many days.

Yaaqov wore the saq in mourning.

Bereshit/Genesis 42:25

25 Then Joseph gave orders to fill their bags with grain, return each one's money to **his sack** (**saq שקו**), and give them provisions for the journey; and this was done for them.

Here the saq is used for its main purpose, which was to hold something. So the material was strong for holding things.

Tehillim/Psalms 35:13

13 Yet, when they were ill, my dress was **sackcloth** (**saq שק**), I kept a fast—may what I prayed for happen to me!

You can see that saq cloth was literally cloth from sacks.

Headcoverings

Now lets look at head coverings. We have been told by some because we are to be a kingdom of Priests. That we should wear headcoverings like the priest did.

Shemot/Exodus 19:6

5 Now then, if you will obey Me faithfully and keep My covenant, you shall be My treasured possession among all the peoples. Indeed, all the earth is Mine, 6 but you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words that you shall speak to the children of Israel."

Here it appears that we are all to be like the priests. But is this literally or should we take this as the way priest are set-apart and holy we are to be the same. If it is literally and the priest had head coverings then should we wear them also and if so should we wear what they wore.

The Priest head covering was a Mitznefet (Mem-Tzadie-Nun-Fey-Tav) and is reference number 4701.

Shemot/Exodus 28:4, 37

4 These are the vestments they are to make: a breastpiece, an ephod, a robe, a fringed tunic, a headdress, and a sash. They shall make those sacral vestments for your brother Aaron and his sons, for priestly service to Me;

36 You shall make a frontlet of pure gold and engrave on it the seal inscription: “Holy to Yehovah.” **37** Suspend it on a cord of blue, so that it may remain on the **headdress**; it shall remain on the front of the **headdress**. **38** It shall be on Aaron’s forehead, that Aaron may take away any sin arising from the holy things that the Israelites consecrate, from any of their sacred donations; it shall be on his forehead at all times, to win acceptance for them before Yehovah.

Shemot/Exodus 29:6

6 Put the **headdress** on his head, and place the holy diadem upon the headdress.

It was put on his head.

The verb for this was 4801 tzanaf (tzadie-nun_fey soft).

Vayiqra/Leviticus 16:4

4 He shall be dressed in a sacral linen tunic, with linen breeches next to his flesh, and be girt with a linen sash, and he shall wear a linen **turban**. They are sacral vestments; he shall bathe his body in water and then put them on.

Yeshiyahu/Isaiah 22:18

18 Indeed, He will wind you about Him as a **headdress**, a **turban**. Off to a broad land! There shall you die, and there shall be the chariots bearing your body, O shame of your master’s house!

A turban is a wrapped headdress. Thus the priest would wear a wrapped headdress like we some in the Middle East would wear like Muslims or Sikhs. So this is not a kippah.

Another word for the head coverings of Aharon’s sons was migba’ah 4021.

Shemot/Exodus 28:40

40 And for Aaron’s sons also you shall make tunics, and make sashes for them, and make turbans for them, for dignity and adornment.

Shemot/Exodus 29:9

8 Then bring his sons forward; clothe them with tunics **9** and wind turbans upon them. And gird both Aaron and his sons with sashes. And so they shall have priesthood as their right for all time.

So we see that they also had wrapped headdress. So again no Kippah.

If one wishes to use the Priest as a reason for a head covering them one must wear that they wore. The kippah does not do the same thing.