



THE LESSER PARTS OF THE TORAH (LAW) *EXPLAINED*

By George Lujack

The lesser parts of the Torah (law) have been declared as burdensome and obsolete by mainstream Christians, and have often been used as an excuse to declare that all of God's 'Mosaic laws' are abolished. In these end times, some Christian ministers have been saying that God's Ten Commandments need to be done away with also. This article will discuss some of the lesser parts of God's laws, explain how they apply to us today, and address how some of these laws have been misinterpreted and incorrectly practiced.

HEAD SHAVING

LEVITICUS 19:27:

You shall not shave around the sides of your head ...

LEVITICUS 21:5:

They shall not make any bald place on their heads...

Tonsure is known as the practice of shaving most of the male scalp and leaving a ring of hair around the head. This was a specific practice within medieval Catholicism, which was abandoned by a papal order in 1972. Tonsure is still practiced today by some religious orders within Catholicism, the Eastern Orthodox Church, Buddhist monks, Islamists, and Hindus.

The purpose of the tonsure head shaved hairstyle is to show a renunciation of worldliness, display humbleness, and devotion to one's religious order.

God has commanded man to not shave around the sides of his head. God does not accept this form of piousness for obvious spiritual reasons. Shaving around the scalp and the sides of the head gives a man a halo image. God's law does not allow for a false image of holiness, a halo effect to be projected upon a man, which constitutes a form of idolatry.

Today, many gay men and lesbian women shave one or both sides of their head to declare their perverted sexual lifestyle and to be identifiable as gay or lesbian by other gay and lesbian prospective lovers.

BEARD TRIMMING

LEVITICUS 19:27:

You shall not shave around the sides of your head nor shall you disfigure the edges of your beard.

LEVITICUS 21:5:

They shall not make any bald place on their heads, nor shall they shave the edges of their beards...

Orthodox Judaism made a ruling on what the sides of the head and edges of the beard were, and declared in their Talmud that it was the sideburns of a man, the hair in front of the ears extending beneath the cheekbone, on level with the nose. It became a custom in certain Jewish circles to let the hair in front of the ears grow and hang down in curls or ringlets, which became known as the payot (peyot).

As the Talmud has erred in many of its teachings, its interpretation of Leviticus 19:27 and 21:5 is also incorrect. Scripture does not command the Jews, or Gentiles, to *grow* the sideburn hair into long ringlet curls or not cut or trim sideburn hair. Scripture states that man should not *shave* (bald) around the sides of the head (*round* the corners of the head) or disfigure the *edges* of the beard (destroy the *corners* of the beard).

EZEKIEL 44:20:

They shall neither shave their heads, nor let their hair grow long, but they shall keep their hair well trimmed.

Growing long payot (peyot) ringlet curls is actually in opposition to the command of Scripture given to Levite priests to keep their hair ‘well trimmed.’ It is neither a requirement for Jews, or Gentiles, to grow their sideburns into long ringlet curls, nor is it a requirement for Jews, or Gentiles, to grow and maintain a beard.

What then of the Leviticus laws that state not to shave the edges of a beard?

In order to shave the edges of a beard, a man must first have a beard. If a man does not have a beard, the command against shaving the edges of a beard does not apply, just as the command is inapplicable to women. But if a man does have a beard, then the command does apply. The command against not shaving the edges of the beard equates to not sporting a goatee style beard. The command against not shaving the head also applies to men.

Many cultures throughout history have practiced head shaving while simultaneously sporting goatee style beards. Egyptian men, whom the Hebrews fled from in the Exodus, commonly had this shaved head and goatee style beard arrangement. In the end times, a common look is for men to shave their heads bald and grow goatee beards.

Satan is often depicted in artistic images with a shaved head and goatee style beard. It is unknown what Satan’s appearance actually is, or why God forbids head shaving and goatee beards, but His commands are eternal and should be obeyed.

A SIGN ON THE HAND AND FRONTLETS BETWEEN THE EYES

DEUTERONOMY 6:6-8:

And these words, which I command you today shall be *in your heart*. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. You shall bind them *as a sign on your hand* and they shall be *as frontlets between your eyes*.

DEUTERONOMY 11:18:

Therefore you shall lay up these words of mine *in your heart* and in your soul, and bind them *as a sign on your hand*, and they shall be *as frontlets between your eyes*.

Some religious Orthodox Jews in Israel wear phylactery, a small cube container with Scripture verses strapped to their foreheads and another strapped to their arm, during weekly morning prayers. Deuteronomy 6:6 states, “And these words which I command you today shall be *in your heart*,” and 11:18 says, “Therefore you shall lay up these words of mine *in your heart*.” While Orthodox Jews wear phylactery on their foreheads and arms, if they truly want to be consistent with a literal adherence of the commands of Deuteronomy 6:6-8 and 11:18, they should undergo open heart surgery and insert a phylactery cube in or near their hearts.

Yeshua (Jesus) addressed the Jews who engaged in public displays of phylactery wearing.

MATTHEW 23:5:

But all their works they do to be seen by men. They make their phylacteries broad and enlarge the borders of their garments.

Phylactery-wearing Orthodox Jews have taken the figurative commands of Deuteronomy 6:6-8 and 11:18 and have attached literal applications to them, resulting in the ritual practice of morning phylactery prayers.

EXODUS 13:16:

It shall be as a sign on your hand and as frontlets between your eyes, *for by strength of hand the Lord brought us out of Egypt*.

God’s command for us to have a sign on our hand and frontlets between our eyes are figurative, not literal commands, as Exodus 13:16 shows. God’s commandments (and deeds) shall be *as* (like) a sign on our hand (our works), and *as* (like) frontlets between our eyes (our minds). Scripture never recorded Yeshua (Jesus) as having worn any type phylactery, further showing this practice to be pointless. We, as believers in Yeshua (Jesus) are to walk as He walked (1 John 2:6), and if He never wore phylactery, then we don’t need to either.

TZITZITS

NUMBERS 15:37-40:

YHWH (the Lord) spoke to Moses, saying, “Speak to the children of Israel: Tell them to make tassels on the corners of their garments throughout their generations, and to put a blue thread in the tassels of the corners. And you shall have the tassel, that you may look upon it and remember all the commandments of YHWH (the Lord) and do them, and that you may not follow the harlotry to which your own heart and your own eyes are inclined, and that you may remember and do all My commandments, and be holy for your God.

DEUTERONOMY 22:12:

You shall make tassels on the four corners of the clothing with which you cover yourself.

Tzitzits are specially knotted blue and white fringes or tassels. Tzitzits are traditionally attached to the four corners of a prayer shawl. Recent tzitzit applications have been designed as belt loops that many Messianic and Jewish believers wear when coming together for service at synagogues.

YARMULKES, SKULLCAPS, KIPPAH, BEANIES

The yarmulke (also known as skullcap, kippah, beanie) is a brimless cap commonly worn by Jewish men to cover their heads during prayer and worship as a sign of respect towards God, acknowledging that God is above them. Wearing the yarmulke is a custom of Judaism, not a commandment of God, and in fact goes against Scripture tradition instruction.

1 CORINTHIANS 11:2-7:

Now I praise you, brethren, that you remember me in all things and KEEP THE TRADITIONS just as I delivered them to you. But I want you to know that the head of every man is Messiah (Christ), the head of woman is man, and the head of Messiah (Christ) is God. 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.

Women should cover their heads with a head covering when praying or prophesying, according to Scripture tradition, but not men. It is important to note that Scripture traditions do not necessarily fall under the category of Scripture commandments. Instructions for head coverings are not found in the Torah (law) commandments, but are instructions of custom and tradition, which Paul wrote to his congregation of believers in Corinth to keep and observe.

MODERN DAY APPLICATIONS

None of the lesser parts of the Torah (law) discussed in this article are salvation issues. Obedience to the lesser parts of the Torah (law) are something the more religiously faithful typically practice out of devotion. Yeshua (Jesus) said that not a jot or tittle will pass from even the least of His commandments, and whoever does the least of His commandments and teaches others to do them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 5:18-19).

A believer who wishes to live more righteously for the sake of the kingdom of heaven should not shave his head bald, either side of his or her head bald, or sport a goatee style beard.