



*Shepherds need to know the Biblical Meaning of “Restrained” “Nakedness”
“Vision” “Leadership” “Covering” & “Crafty”*

Part One of Three

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NOTE: *If you haven't already done so, please be certain to read the Introductory Comments to this series before reading on. It is found on the [Shepherds Need to Know Shepherds Need to Know](#) page. Thank you!*

So Aaron[Aharon] said, "Do not let the anger of my lord become hot. You know the people, that they are set on evil. For they said to me, "Make us gods that shall go before us; as for this Moses[Moshe], the man who brought us out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him." And I said to them, "Whoever has any gold, let them break it off." So they gave it to me, and I cast it in the fire, and this calf came out."

*Now when Moshe saw that the people were **unrestrained** (for Aharon **had not restrained them**, to their shame among their enemies), --"*

Exodus 32: 22-25 NKJV

This verse first caught my eye as I did my regular Scripture reading. It seemed so significant to shepherding a community because of the implications for danger for the people when not led well, but also because of the many quite reluctant leaders we have found among Messianic groups. (We've been "there", too.) But what does it really mean to "**restrain**"? This can sound like a frightening concept and could certainly be misused.

Moshe saw that "the people were **unrestrained** for Aharon had not restrained them to their shame among their enemies" when he came down from the intense time with YHWH. He was so angry with what he saw that he broke the tablets. He went straight to Aharon, who had presumably been left "in charge" during his absence. When the people despaired of seeing Moshe alive again, they went to Aharon and he cooperated with them in the golden calf incident. Moshe seems to clearly attribute this to Aharon's lack of leadership and failure to re-direct the restless people back to faith and patience waiting for YHWH to act.

Then [Moshe] said to [Aharon], “What did this people do to you, that you have brought such great sin upon them?” Exodus 32: 21 NASB

Like Adam before him, Aharon resisted accepting responsibility. He said that “the people” whom Moshe knew to be “set on evil” had determined this needed to be done. He downplayed his role of gathering and forming the gold ornaments, implying that the gold was just thrown in the fire and of its own accord came out formed as a calf. We do not know what kind of threats or fears Aharon experienced that led to this event but we can see that he followed their leading rather than establishing their direction in the strength of his own faith and confidence in YHWH and Moshe.

Moshe, Aharon and Miriam were YHWH’s chosen and established leaders during this time period. When they functioned together they did well, despite rebellion among the people. Unfortunately, that rebellion even erupted between them on one recorded occasion. Still, we know that all of these events of the first exodus were for our edification, as those who are living in the end times, so it seems very important to glean what lessons we can from their experiences. This track of study, beginning with “restraint”, leading through various terms throughout all of Scripture from the narrowest sense to the broadest is so enlightening for us today.

Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.
(1 Cor. 10: 11; in context of 1-13) NKJV

Definition of Restrain

Greater understanding of Scriptural concepts seems to involve being clear about what we understand words mean in our modern sense. This allows us to examine what we may have assumed was intended in the Scriptures, and then track it back to the contextual meaning of the Hebrew culture. Many times, we will find that our understanding needs to be adjusted away from the modern usage and back to the Hebraic concepts understood by the writers of Scripture in order to correctly understand what is being taught.

Merriam-Webster online dictionary has this for “restrain”:

Main Entry:

re·strain 

Pronunciation:

\ri-'strān\
ri-'strān

Function:

transitive verb

Etymology:

Middle English *restraynen*, from Anglo-French *restreindre*, from Latin *restringere* to restrain, restrict, from *re-* + *stringere* to bind tight — more at [STRAIN](#)

Date:

14th century

1 a: to prevent from doing, exhibiting, or expressing something <*restrained* the child from jumping> **b:** to limit, [restrict](#), or keep under control <try to *restrain* your anger>**2:** to moderate or limit the force, effect, development, or full exercise of <*restrain* trade>**3:** to deprive of liberty ; *especially* : to place under arrest or [restraint](#)

— **re-strain-able**  \-ˈstrā-nə-bəl\ *adjective*

— **re-strain-er** *noun*

synonyms [RESTRAIN](#), [CHECK](#), [CURB](#), [BRIDLE](#) mean to hold back from or control in doing something. [RESTRAIN](#) suggests holding back by force or persuasion from acting or from going to extremes <*restrained* themselves from laughing>. [CHECK](#) implies restraining or impeding a progress, activity, or impetus <trying to *check* government spending>. [CURB](#) suggests an abrupt or drastic checking <learn to *curb* your appetite>. [BRIDLE](#) implies keeping under control by subduing or holding in <*bridle* an impulse to throw the book down>.¹

This modern definition is what I expected to find; a sense of holding something or someone back with additional understanding of “to prevent or moderate something.”

Strong’s # 6544, is the Hebrew word, “para” or “prah” translated in NKJV as “unrestrained” meaning ‘To loosen,’ by implication “to expose,” “to dismiss,” but there was the added concept of “to uncover,” which seemed altogether different to me.

Moshe saw that the people were **uncovered** for Aharon **had not covered** them to their shame....?

When I compared another translation, NASB, to the NKJV I had used, there was confirmation of the meaning that matched well with Strong’s and with Clark’s Etymological Dictionary of Biblical Hebrew which was: “losing complete control”, “loosen, disarrange.”

Aharon said, ‘Do not let the anger of my lord burn; you know the people yourself, that they are prone to evil. For they said to me, “make a god for us who will go before us for this Moshe, the man who brought us up from the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.” I said to them, “Whoever has any gold, let them tear it off, So they gave it to me and I threw it into the fire and out came this calf.”

*Now when Moshe saw that the people were **out of control**, for Aharon had **let them get out of control** to be a derision among their enemies—“*

Exodus 32: 22-25 NASB

¹ Merriam-Webster Dictionary Online; <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/restrain>, June 16, 2009.

I was therefore somewhat surprised to check another translation, KJV, only to find what seemed to me to be an entirely different concept, but related to that last “to uncover” note in Strong’s.

And Aharon said, Let not the anger of my lord wax hot; thou knowest the people, that they are set on mischief. For they said unto me, Make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moshe, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him. And I said unto them, Whosoever hath any gold, let them break it off. So they gave it to me; then I cast it into the fire, and there came out this calf.”

*And when Moshe saw that people **were naked**; (For Aharon **had made them naked** unto their shame among their enemies—“
Exodus 32: 22-25 KJV*

Being “made naked” seems to relate to “uncover”, so we are back again to the picture that Aharon had not “covered” them. (This phrase is commonly found in association with a phrase about the shame of nakedness, too.)

A modern but informal use of “**cover**” is similar.

cover up for sb(v) :to avoid telling or expressing the truth in order to save a person from punishment, blow, etc.²

In this colloquial use, to “cover” for someone is to protect them in some way through not being completely honest. Aharon basically “uncovered” the people while apparently attempting to accomplish something else. Instead of looking out for the people, and “covering” them, he “made them naked.” Aharon tried to “cover” for himself with the people by avoiding telling them that what they wanted to do was wrong. Perhaps he thought he was saving himself from some kind of punishment. This would be what I refer to when I speak of a “fear bond;” when an individual bases an action on fear of consequences rather than knowledge of what is right and wrong.

But then, he “covered” for himself again with Moshe’s question, seeming to blame the people for the act. Did he not yet know that nothing can be hidden or “covered up” from YHWH? Or was he really more afraid of the people than he was of YHWH? (You may want to check out my article for further information on this subject. [How Can I Tell if My Faith is "Fear Based" or "Love Based?"](#))

TWOT has this to say: “It was Aaron who was culpable in the golden calf incident (Ex. 32:35). One hears a note of insincerity in his protest, “I cast it (i.e. the people’s gold) into the fire, and out came this calf.” (Ex. 32:24)”³

² The Dictionary of Informal, Colloquial, Slang and Idiomatic Phrases Online, <http://www.geocities.com/informalenglish/C.html>, June 16, 2009

Now we have: Moshe saw that the people were **loose, out of control, uncovered and naked**, because Aharon had **loosed them, lost control of them, and left them uncovered or naked**.

“Lost control” of them would move us in the direction of understanding that authority was not implemented in this situation. Is this the same as saying that Aharon didn’t “cover” for them with Moshe and YHWH? In other words, he didn’t try to protect them from danger while he was striving to protect himself? Aharon did not act as the authority. He did not control or “restrain” the people from their behavior which was counter to what they had just promised to do. This failure to “control” or “cover” them, left them open to be shamed among their enemies as they stood there next to Mount Sinai. Little wonder that Moshe was hot with anger, at their idolatry and Aharon’s failure to lead, as he came to the end of his intense intimate time with our Creator.

Shepherds, have you ever wanted to cry as you saw the concepts-- like obedience and humility and faithfulness-- you had diligently been teaching and modeling for your people seem to fly out the window as they were distracted by something with more “immediate gratification?” Indeed, the spirit may be willing but the flesh is weak; especially immature and wounded un-submitted flesh! Have you ever struggled with misunderstanding, rebellion, immaturity and even betrayal among your leadership people? I suspect the question would be better framed to ask if there is anyone who **hasn’t** experienced these things!

Shema, Shema! Hear AND obey! Reluctant or not; leaders/shepherds need to grow in Messiah and carry out the tasks they have been called to among their people. It won’t work to try to do this in our immaturity or woundedness, whether individually or in plurality of leadership. We will be found out; “uncovered,” and so will leave our people ‘uncovered.’ The only hope is Messiah and our close relationship with Him so that He is seen and heard through us, acting in quietness and confidence, not refusing any longer to rest in Him. (Isaiah 30:15) Our vision needs to be from Him.

It is really true that all people cannot maintain their focus and their faith alone! It is not good for us to be alone. Every one has not been designed to be a leader/shepherd or even to do well on their own. Many “sheople” really need someone who can be “out in front” showing them the way; walking the walk with them, keeping the vision alive and fresh in front of them. They need someone who will lovingly and clearly set the boundaries of what is right and wrong; clean

³ Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament, (TWOT); Harris, Archer, Waltke, Moody Bible Institute, copyright 1980; page 36; under entry for his name.

and unclean, as we journey along in our pathway to set apartness. It is not that there is lesser or greater importance; just different giftings and qualities. If it were not so, would YHWH have given us these messages about order and authority? Would He have allowed such troubles to erupt if not for their ultimate good and our training up in these last days?

The wisest man who ever lived made an observation that is pertinent to this topic:

*Where there is no vision, the people are **unrestrained** but happy is he who keeps the law.* Proverbs 29: 18 NASB

Where there is no vision, the people are **“uncovered,” “out of control,” “made naked”** but happy is he who keeps the law.

“Vision” is Strong’s # 2378 meaning literally vision or revelation; from the primitive root word Strong’s # 2372 which means “to gaze at”, “mentally to perceive,” “to contemplate (with pleasure);” “specifically to have a vision of; behold, look, prophecy, provide, see.” (It has a sister word, #2373, which means “breast” or “in front.” As I have continued in this Word Study series, particularly this train of exploration, the definition of leadership continues to be clarified, and it does have to do with being “in front.”) The ancient Hebrew Lexicon links Strong’s #2378 to # 1168A and further develops this understanding with these words: “Perceive: the ability to see beyond what is seen in the physical present as a light piercing through the darkness; Vision: a perception beyond the normal experiences.”

So now with just this added quick note and reference it looks like we have:

Where there is **no one with revelation/ability to perceive beyond normal experiences in front**, the people are **“uncovered,” “out of control”, “made naked”**.....

Oh, but there is much more to understand here! Being **“unrestrained”** or **“uncovered”** has to do with **leadership**, His authority; and **“nakedness”** has to do with more than just being exposed and vulnerable as I had always thought. There is a connection between the nakedness of the two in the Garden, the nakedness of the people under Aharon and the nakedness of the Assembly in Laodicea.

Shepherd/leaders need vision so that we walk in a way that encourages and exhorts those who watch us. We need to walk in our authority because we are part of the “covering” for the people. How could we do this if we don’t understand the implications and the importance?

Abba, our Father! Please meet us in our need. Please equip the shepherds You have chosen so that we can stand in our authority in a YHWH fearing way as we mentor and disciple the people you have put with us. We need to be mature in all ways; full of wisdom, understanding, counsel, power, knowledge and awe through the Ruach ha Kodesh. There is no way we can stay with, love and lead the people if we are not fully dependent and submitted to you ourselves. May we not make the same mistake as Aharon, looking to “cover” ourselves first, even at the expense of those with us. Please expose, *fully* expose, anything in us that would result in our own lack of control, uncovering, or nakedness which would then leave our people uncovered, out of control, naked and unrestrained.

Please grant us the strength and resolve and perseverance to work through anything exposed in us and those close to us that we will be able to move through resolution of these things without leaving anyone “uncovered” and put to shame among our enemies.

And we know there is no mistake; we are in the midst of our enemies as long as we are yet here in this time and place. Please grant us Your eyes to see and ears to hear what is needed in every situation so that both we and those with us will be ready through Messiah Yeshua’s finished work on our behalf when He returns for His own. May it be so.

On to [Part 2](#)

Comments are greatly appreciated at info@set-apart-ministries.org

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