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A Talit With Tzitzith

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[I. Introduction 1](#_Toc71750613)

[Our Obligation 3](#_Toc71750614)

[Inside or Outside? 4](#_Toc71750615)

[II. Analysis 4](#_Toc71750616)

[Adjacent Verses 5](#_Toc71750617)

[Word Analysis 9](#_Toc71750618)

[Word Association 9](#_Toc71750619)

[III. What are Tzitzith? 10](#_Toc71750620)

[Peyotes 10](#_Toc71750621)

[Tzitzith Root Meaning 11](#_Toc71750622)

[IV. Shatnez 11](#_Toc71750623)

[V. Tekhelet 12](#_Toc71750624)

[VI. In The Tanakh 15](#_Toc71750625)

[Four Corners - Wings 15](#_Toc71750626)

[David and Saul 16](#_Toc71750627)

[HaShem’s Tzitzith 16](#_Toc71750628)

[Adam’s Tzitzith 17](#_Toc71750629)

[VII. In The Nazarean Codicil 18](#_Toc71750630)

[A Great Sheet 18](#_Toc71750631)

[Capital Punishment 18](#_Toc71750632)

[A Tzadik with a Talit 18](#_Toc71750633)

[Healing in His Wings 21](#_Toc71750634)

[A Priestly Tzadik 22](#_Toc71750635)

[The Shema 22](#_Toc71750636)

[The Triumphal Entry 23](#_Toc71750637)

[Coat of Many Colors 24](#_Toc71750638)

[Public Torah Reading 24](#_Toc71750639)

[The Prayer Closet 24](#_Toc71750640)

[The Head Covering 25](#_Toc71750641)

[Pride 25](#_Toc71750642)

[“Tentmakers” 26](#_Toc71750643)

[VIII. The Talit Katan 26](#_Toc71750644)

[IX. In The Talmud 26](#_Toc71750645)

[Exemptions 26](#_Toc71750646)

[Protection From Sin 27](#_Toc71750647)

[X. In the Midrash 27](#_Toc71750648)

[Mordecai 27](#_Toc71750649)

[Judah and Tamar 28](#_Toc71750650)

[Noach 28](#_Toc71750651)

[The Proselyte 28](#_Toc71750652)

[Tzitzith and the Dead 29](#_Toc71750653)

[XI. Customs 30](#_Toc71750654)

[Kinyan – Acquisition 31](#_Toc71750655)

[XII. Mystical Understanding 32](#_Toc71750656)

[In The Zohar 33](#_Toc71750657)

[XIII. Redemption 34](#_Toc71750658)



# I. Introduction

My understanding of the Talit I received from my [teacher](teacher.html), Hakham Dr. [Yosef](joseph.html) ben Haggai.

Originally the word *talit* meant "gown" or "cloak".

In this paper I would like to examine the [mitzva](cmds613.html) to have tzitzith, fringes, on any [four](four.html) cornered garment that we wear. If a man puts on a garment having [four](four.html) corners during the day he is commanded to put tzitzith, fringes, in its corners, as it says:

***Bamidbar (***[***Numbers***](nchart.html)***) 15:37-40*** *And* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *spake unto Moses, saying,* [*Speak*](mashal.html) *unto the children of Israel, and bid them that they make them tzitzith* (fringes) *in the borders of their garments throughout their* [*generations*](toldot.html)*, and that they put upon the tzitzith of the borders a ribband of blue: And it shall be unto you for a fringe, that ye may look upon it, and remember all the* [*commandments*](cmds613.html) *of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, and do them; and that ye seek not after your own* [*heart*](body.html) *and your own* [*eyes*](body.html)*, after which ye use to go a whoring: That ye may remember, and do all my* [*commandments*](cmds613.html)*, and be holy unto your God. I [am]* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *your God, which brought you* [*out of the land of Egypt*](thebirth.html)*, to be your God: I [am]* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *your God.*

Additionally, the Torah [commands](cmds613.html) that whenever we wear a [four](four.html)-cornered garment we are obligated to tzitzith:

***Devarim (Deuteronomy) 22:12*** *Thou shalt make thee tzitzith upon the* [*four*](four.html) *quarters of thy vesture, wherewith thou coverest [thyself].*

Clearly, tzitzith serve [two](two.html) functions: as a reminder of all [613 mitzvot](cmds613.html) ("[commandment](cmds613.html)," from the [Hebrew](hebrew.html) root which means "to connect") recorded in Torah, and also as a buffer against the evil inclination. The words “after your [heart](body.html) and after your [eyes](body.html),” our sages say, refer specifically to sexual temptation:

***Menachoth 42b*** *And for what purpose do the Rabbis use the expression ‘That ye may look upon it’? — They require it for the following* [*teaching*](teacher.html)*: ‘ That ye may look upon it, and remember’, that is, look upon this precept and remember another precept that is dependent upon it, namely, the reading of the* [*Shema*](shema.html)*’. As we have learnt: From what* [*time*](time.html) *in the morning may the* [*Shema*](shema.html)*’ be read? From the* [*time*](time.html) *that* [*one*](one.html) *can distinguish between blue and white. Another [Baraitha]* [*taught*](teacher.html)*: ‘That ye may look upon it, and remember’, that is, look upon this precept, and remember another precept that is next to it, namely, ‘the* [*law*](law.html) *concerning mingled stuffs, for it is written, Thou shalt not wear a mingled stuff, wool and linen together’. Thou shalt make thee twisted cords. And another [Baraitha]* [*taught*](teacher.html)*: That ye may look upon it, and remember all the* [*commandments*](cmds613.html) *of the Lord: as soon as a person is bound to observe this precept he must observe all the precepts. This is in accordance with R. Simeon's view that [the tzitzith] is a precept dependent on* [*time*](time.html)*. And another [Baraitha]* [*taught*](teacher.html)*: ‘That ye may look upon it and remember all the* [*commandments*](cmds613.html) *of the Lord’: this precept is equal to all the precepts together. And another [Baraitha]* [*taught*](teacher.html)*: ‘That ye may look upon it and remember . . . and do them’: looking [upon it] leads to remembering [the* [*commandments*](cmds613.html)*], and remembering leads to doing them. R. Simeon b. Yohai says, Whosoever is scrupulous in the observance of this precept is worthy to receive the Divine presence, for it is written here, ‘That ye may look upon it’, and there it is written, Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and Him shalt thou serve.*

*R. Eliezer b.* [*Jacob*](israelja.html) *said, Whosoever has the* [*tefillin*](tefillin.html) *on his* [*head*](body.html)*, the* [*tefillin*](tefillin.html) *on his arm, the tzitzith on his garment, and the* [*mezuzah*](mezuzah.html) *on his doorpost, is in absolute security against sinning, for it is written, And a threefold cord is not quickly broken; and it is also written, The* [*angel*](angels.html) *of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them.*

Since it is not possible, however, for a person to fulfill all of the 613 [mitzvot](cmds613.html) every day, some of them for reasons beyond his control, [HaShem](hashem.html) gave us [one](one.html) [mitzva](cmds613.html), the [mitzva](cmds613.html) of tzitzith, as a representation of all the [mitzvot](cmds613.html). For by its observance, we are reminded every day of all the [mitzvot](cmds613.html) that we have taken upon ourselves to fulfill. Considering that to [HaShem](hashem.html) a commendable resolve to act is like the action itself, by our very remembering and thinking daily of the 613 [mitzvot](cmds613.html) of [HaShem](hashem.html), it is as if we are fulfilling them every day.

The [Midrash](orallaw.html) echoes this [connection](connection.html) of the tzitzith and the [commandments](cmds613.html):

[***Midrash***](orallaw.html) ***Rabbah -*** [***Numbers***](nchart.html) ***XVII:6*** *THAT YE GO NOT ABOUT AFTER YOUR OWNHEART AND YOUR OWN* [*EYES*](body.html) *(XV, 39). The* [*heart*](body.html) *and the* [*eyes*](body.html) *are the touts of the* [*body*](body.html)*, for they lead the* [*body*](body.html) *astray. THAT YE MAY REMEMBER, AND DO ALL MY* [*COMMANDMENTS*](cmds613.html) *(ib. 40). This may be illustrated by the case of* [*one*](one.html) *who has been thrown into the water. The captain stretches out a rope and says to him: ‘Take hold of this rope with your* [*hand*](fourteen.html) *and do not let-go, for if you do you will lose your life! ' In the same way the Holy* [*One*](one.html)*, blessed be He, said to Israel: ‘As long as you adhere to the* [*commandments*](cmds613.html)*, then, Ye that did cleave unto the Lord your God are alive every* [*one*](one.html) *of you this day’ (Deut. IV, 4). In the same strain it says, Take fast hold of instruction, let her not go; keep her, for she is thy life (Prov. IV, 13). AND BE HOLY UNTO YOUR GOD (XV, 40). When you perform the* [*commandments*](cmds613.html) *you are sanctified and the fear of you lies upon the idolaters. But if you part from the* [*commandments*](cmds613.html) *you become profaned. The Holy* [*One*](one.html)*, blessed be He, said to Israel: ‘In this* [*world*](worlds.html)*, owing to the influence of the Evil Inclination, you keep away from the* [*commandments*](cmds613.html)*, but in the* [*time*](time.html) *to come I shall eradicate it from you’; as it says, I will take away the stony* [*heart*](body.html) *out of your flesh... and I will put My spirit within you, etc. (Ezek. XXXVI, 26 f.).*

## Our Obligation

The Torah says that when we see the tzitzith that we will be reminded about the [mitzvot](cmds613.html). How do tzitzith remind us of the [mitzvot](cmds613.html), the [commandments](cmds613.html), of [HaShem](hashem.html)?

To answer this question we will need to examine some of the details of the tzitzith. There is great significance in all of the particulars of the tzitzith.

To make tzitzith, we take [four](four.html) strings and pass them through a hole in the corner of the talit, our [four](four.html)-cornered garment. These [four](four.html) strings are therefore doubled and hang down as [eight](eight.html) strings. We then make a double knot followed by windings, followed by another double knot, followed by more windings. We repeat this sequence until we have [five](five.html) double knots and [four](four.html) sets of windings.

Rashi [taught](teacher.html) us that the numerical value of the [Hebrew](hebrew.html) word ,tzitzith*,* is 600; when we add the [eight](eight.html) strings and [five](five.html) double knots we arrive at a total of 613, a reminder of the 613 Torah [commandments](cmds613.html).

From the juxtaposition of tzitzith next to [Korach’s](qorach.html) rebellion and the [Shabbat](sabbath.html) desecration, in the Torah, we learn that tzitzith is compared to all the [mitzvot](cmds613.html), rendering tzitzith unique among the [mitzvot](cmds613.html). We will look at this relationship in greater detail, later in this paper.

The [Midrash](orallaw.html), Tanna D'Bai Eliyahu Rabba, Chapter 26 recounts the following conversation between [HaShem](hashem.html) and Moses:

*"Said the Holy* [*One*](one.html) *Blessed be He to Moses, What it is the cause for this violation of the* [*Shabbat*](sabbath.html)*? (referring to the gathering of sticks on the* [*Shabbat*](sabbath.html) *mentioned just prior to the mention of tzitzith) He said to Him, 'I don't* [*know*](daat.html)*." Said the Holy* [*One*](one.html) *Blessed be He to him,' I will tell you,* [*six*](six.html) *days of the week the Israelites have* [*tefillin*](tefillin.html) *on their heads and* [*arms*](body.html)*, they see them and are careful of what they do. But on the* [*Shabbat*](sabbath.html) *when they haven't them, they therefore violate the* [*Shabbat*](sabbath.html)*. Then The Holy* [*One*](one.html) *Blessed be He said to Moses, Go and clarify for them the* [*mitzvah*](cmds613.html) *that they will be accustomed to fulfill on* [*Sabbaths*](sabbath.html) *and Holy Days, this is the* [*mitzva*](cmds613.html) *of tzitzith."*

The [five](five.html) knots remind us of the [five](five.html) books of Moshe that make up the Torah. Wherever we turn, Torah is there.

The word tzitzith has the same root as the word Tzutz, meaning "to look." tzitzith are therefore something to look at. The torah says of the tzitzith, "You shall see them, and not stray after your [heart](body.html) and after your [eyes](body.html), which have led you to immorality." The [Talmud](orallaw.html) explains that the injunction not to stray "after your [eyes](body.html)" refers to visual sexual stimulation. Clothing in general acts as a natural barrier to such arousal, and the tzitzith serve to reinforce this barrier.

The [mitzvah](cmds613.html) of tzitzith is unique in that it is the only positive [mitzva](cmds613.html) that relates to our clothing.

A righteous man should endeavor to wear a [four](four.html)-cornered garment because this will obligate him to wear tzitzith, fringes, especially during his [prayers](prayer.html), since the Torah makes all the [commandments](cmds613.html) depend on the [commandment](cmds613.html) about the tzitzith, as it says:

***Bamidbar (***[***Numbers***](nchart.html)***) 15:39*** *"And you shall see it and remember all the* [*commandments*](cmds613.html) *of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*".*

The above pasuk indicates that the reason we wear tzitzith is to be reminded of the [commandments](cmds613.html) of [HaShem](hashem.html). It is like tying a string around ones finger to remind him to do a task.

All [Jewish](gen-jew.html) men are obligated to tzitzith if they wear a [four](four.html)-cornered garment. [One](one.html) only [needs](needs.html) to wear Tzitzith during the daytime; therefore it is a positive [time](time.html)-bound [commandment](cmds613.html). For this reason women are exempt from wearing them:

***Menachoth 43a*** *Our Rabbis* [*taught*](teacher.html)*: All must observe the* [*law*](law.html) *of tzitzith,* [*priests*](priests.html)*, Levites, and Israelites, proselytes, women and slaves. R. Simeon declares women exempt, since it is a positive precept dependent on a fixed* [*time*](time.html)*, and women are exempt from all positive precepts that are dependent on a fixed* [*time*](time.html)*.*

*The Master said, ‘All must observe the* [*law*](law.html) *of tzitzith,* [*priests*](priests.html)*, Levites, and Israelites’. Is not this obvious? For if* [*priests*](priests.html) *and Levites and Israelites were exempt, then who would observe it? — It was stated particularly on account of* [*priests*](priests.html)*. For I might have argued, since it is written, Thou shalt not wear a mingled stuff, wool and linen together, and [it is followed by,] Thou shalt make thee twisted cords, that only those who are forbidden to wear mingled stuff must observe the* [*law*](law.html) *of tzitzith, and as* [*priests*](priests.html) *are permitted to wear mingled stuff they need not observe [the* [*law*](law.html) *of tzitzith]; we are therefore* [*taught*](teacher.html) *[that they, too, are bound], for although while performing the service [in the* [*Temple*](temple.html)*] they may wear [mingled stuff] they certainly may not wear it when not performing the service.*

*R. Simeon declares women exempt’. What is R. Simeon's reason? — It was* [*taught*](teacher.html)*: That ye may look upon it: this excludes a night garment. You say it excludes a night garment, but perhaps it is not so, but it excludes rather a blind man's garment? The verse, when it says, Wherewith thou coverest thyself, clearly includes a blind man's garment; how then must I explain the verse, That ye may look upon it? As excluding a night garment. And why do you choose to include a blind man's garment and to exclude a night garment? include a blind man's garment since it is looked upon by others, whilst I exclude a night garment since it cannot be looked upon by others.*

In the Shulchan Arukh we find that if [one](one.html) wears a [four](four.html)-cornered garment, then he is obligated to wear tzitzith. However, there is no requirement to wear a [four](four.html)-cornered garment.

During shacharit (morning) [prayers](prayer.html), the custom is to wear a large rectangular garment with tzitzith (talit gadol) and [pray](prayer.html) while wrapped in it. There are different customs as to when this is done. Most Ashkenazic men will begin wearing the talit when they get married. In Sephardic and some Ashkenazi [communities](community.html), a boy will put on a talit when he becomes a bar ­mitzvah ([thirteen](thirteen.html) years old).

The talit is worn only during morning [prayers](prayer.html) except on [Tisha B’Av](tishabav.html) [fast of the [fifth](five.html) month], when it is donned at the afternoon service. The exception to this rule is with regard to the [one](one.html) who is called to read from the Torah. Generally, if this person does not have a talit, he is asked to borrow [one](one.html) while reading, regardless of the [time](time.html) of day.

## Inside or Outside?

The Arizal ruled that we are to wear tzitzith of the talit katan inside our clothing rather than outside? The [Pshat](remez.html) meaning of Bamidbar 15:39 tells us we are to look upon them and see them...so why did the Arizal rule otherwise?

Since [two](two.html) talitot are worn, the outer [one](one.html), the talit gadol, is considered to be "ohr makif" (the surrounding light outside a vessel) and the inner (talit katan) is "ohr pnimi" (the inner light) and therefore not seen from the outside. Additionally, many consider the talit katan to be the "beged Shechina", the garment of the Shechina and therefore in [exile](galuyot.html) or hidden from view, so to [speak](mashal.html).

# II. Analysis

Chazal, our Sages, [teach](teacher.html) us that we can understand pasukim, verses, in the Torah by understanding how they are connected to the passages immediately before and after. We can also gain clarity by examining the words and their structure as used elsewhere in the Torah. We will use both of these techniques to broaden our understanding of tzitzith.

## Adjacent Verses

Chazal, our Sages, [teach](teacher.html) us that we can understand passages in the Torah by understanding how they are connected to the passages immediately before and after. The following table shows these pasukim:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **BEFORE**  Bamidbar 15:32-36 | **TZITZITH**  Bamidbar 15:37-40 | **AFTER**  Bamidbar 16:1-35 |
|  |  |  |
| [Gathering](gather.html) sticks on [Shabbat](sabbath.html) yields the death penalty. | See the tzitzith and remember the [commands](cmds613.html) of [HaShem](hashem.html) | [Korach’s](qorach.html) rebellion yields the death penalty. |

From the juxtaposition of tzitzith next to [Korach](qorach.html)’s rebellion and the [Shabbat](sabbath.html) desecration, in the Torah, we learn that tzitzith is compared to all the [mitzvot](cmds613.html), rendering tzitzith unique among the [mitzvot](cmds613.html).

[Korach](qorach.html) rebelled against Moses saying "for all the [community](community.html), all of them are holy." But the tzitzith idea of holiness (which appears in the paragraph above the [Korach](qorach.html) story) differs from that of [Korach](qorach.html). The tzitzith concept of holiness is [one](one.html) to be strived for, it is a goal; while [Korach](qorach.html) believes it is something that is granted. [Korach](qorach.html) has absolved himself of responsibility; he boasts that he is a member of a holy [nation](nations.html), even though he is contemptible. Are the people holy or do they become holy through their actions and performance of certain tasks? Our tzitzith affirm that we become holy through our actions[[1]](#footnote-1).

Ibn Ezra [connects](connection.html) the incident of gathering sticks and the tzitzith:

“The episode of the man gathering sticks (on the [Sabbath](sabbath.html)) is mentioned because he acted presumptuously. And owing to G-d's great mercy upon Israel the passage of tzitzith is recorded here as a reminder that a person should not act presumptuously, or that he should not forget.”

Hakham [Yaakov](israelja.html) Culi in Meam Loez, makes this [connection](connection.html) between the gathering of sticks and the [mitzva](cmds613.html) of tzitzith:

"Have you seen how he had desecrated the [Sabbath](sabbath.html)!" said God to Moses after the episode of the Mekoshesh, the man who [gathered](gather.html) sticks.

But Moses replied, "Let not his desecration of the [Sabbath](sabbath.html) appear so damning in Your [eyes](body.html). The Israelites have just emerged [from Egypt](thebirth.html), where until now they did not have the responsibility of fulfilling any [commandments](cmds613.html); since they have not yet become deeply grounded in their observance, their adherence to the Torah is weak.   
  
"It is particularly true in this case. Throughout the week, the [phylacteries](tefillin.html) they don serve as a [sign](signs.html) that reminds them of their faith; but on the [Sabbath](sabbath.html) they do not put on [phylacteries](tefillin.html) ([tefillin](tefillin.html)) and thus they forget the [commandments](cmds613.html) of the Torah. They work as on any weekday, as a carry-over of what they had been accustomed to do in Egypt. Thus, it is not willful desecration of the [Sabbath](sabbath.html) for which they should be held to account, but merely forgetfulness."

Thereupon God said to him: "I will give you a special [commandment](cmds613.html), and every day including on the [Sabbath](sabbath.html), they will carry on their persons this [sign](signs.html) to remind them of the [commandments](cmds613.html), and they will thus no longer be unmindful of them."

Accordingly the Torah says, "And when you see them, you shall remember all of God's [commandments](cmds613.html) so as to keep them." Explained, therefore, is why the present chapter immediately follows the chapter dealing with the [gathering](gather.html) of sticks.

Hakham Culi goes on to explain why the portion on [Korach’s](qorach.html) rebellion immediately follows the [command](cmds613.html) of tzitzith:

This portion begins with the words "Vayikach [Korach](qorach.html)," literally, "[Korach](qorach.html) took." It refers to the all-blue wool talit that [Korach](qorach.html) had taken with him when he presented himself to Moses and asked him whether such an all-blue talit required the attachment of fringes. When Moses declared that fringes were indeed obligatory in this case, they began to mock and ridicule.

Moses had just been [teaching](teacher.html) the Israelites about the [commandment](cmds613.html) of tzitzith. So when [Korach](qorach.html) returned home and his wife asked him what [new](new.html) things were brought up by Moses in the course of that day's assembly, he replied, "Today he instructed us in a [new](new.html) [commandment](cmds613.html), that of putting on fringes of blue-wool."

"What does this [commandment](cmds613.html) of blue wool mean?" asked his wife. And [Korach](qorach.html) replied, "He told us in God's [name](name.html) that we must affix fringes on each of the [four](four.html) corners of a [four](four.html)-cornered garment: [three](three.html) threads of white wool and [one](one.html) of blue wool."

"He is playing games with you, that [one](one.html)," said she. "Every day he comes to you with something [new](new.html) and says that God had so commanded him. But in fact, all these things he says on his own as they come to him on the spur of the moment.

"If blue wool is so potent that with [one](one.html) thread the obligation is fulfilled, let me make for you and for all those with you, [prayer](prayer.html) shawls (talitot) entirely of blue-wool. Take them to Moses and ask him what [law](law.html) applies to such a talit, whether or not it too must have fringes attached to it. You will see what answer he gives you!

"Then you will realize that everything he told you was of his own invention, designed to make himself great, a king no less, and to have his brother [appointed](settimes.html) [High Priest](priests.html) and his nephews priestly deputies. …

"How can this be!" cried [Korach](qorach.html). "When [one](one.html) thread of blue wool is sufficient to exempt an entire talit that is made of a different material and render it fit for wearing, how can it be that a talit which is entirely of blue-wool should not exempt itself?"

They then proceeded to ask him another question. "What of a house that is filled with sacred volumes; need a [mezuzah](mezuzah.html) scroll be attached to it or not? And when Moses told them that a [mezuzah](mezuzah.html) was required, they again began mocking him.

"How can it be?" they queried. "If the [two](two.html) chapters comprising the [mezuzah](mezuzah.html) [scroll](letters.html)---the [Shema](shema.html) and "V'hayah im shamoa"--- suffice for a house that is empty of books when but placed on the doorpost, should not a house full of sacred books including the [five](five.html) books of Moses with all their 275 chapters, be exempt from a [mezuzah](mezuzah.html)? It only proves that the [commandments](cmds613.html) are at your invention."

Provided here is an explanation why the chapter relating to [Korach](qorach.html) immediately follows the chapter that dealt with the [commandment](cmds613.html) of tzitzith. It [teaches](teacher.html) us that the beginning point of [Korach](qorach.html)'s revolt was related to the subject matter of tzitzith. In other words, "[Korach](qorach.html) took---he took the talit which was made entirely of blue-wool, and came before Moses to begin quarrelling with him.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **BEFORE**  Devarim 22:11 | **TZITZITH**  Devarim 22:12 | **AFTER**  Devarim 22:13-21 |
|  |  |  |
| Shatnez – Don’t mix wool and linen in the same garment. | Tzitzith required on [four](four.html)-cornered garment. | A wife is hated and must prove her virginity. |

The following [insight](insights.html) into the above relationship is provided by Rabbi Mordecai Kornfeld. His Eminence assumes familiarity with the following [Talmudic](orallaw.html) passages:

***Yevamot 4a*** *Because it is written, Thou shalt not wear a mingled stuff . . . Thou shalt make thee twisted cords, and R. Eleazar said, ‘Whence is the rule of proximity [of texts] derived from the Torah? As it is said, They are established for ever and ever, they are done in truth and uprightness.’*

***Yevamot 4b*** *Similarly in the case of zizith, if you wish I might reply: Because [there the deduction] is obvious. And if you prefer I might reply: Because [there the text] is superfluous. ‘If you prefer I might say: Because [there the deduction] is obvious’, for otherwise, the All Merciful should have written [the precept] in the section of zizith; with what other practical rule in view has he written it here? ‘And if you prefer, I might reply: Because [there the text] is superfluous’, for observe: It is written, Neither shall there come upon thee a garment of* [*two*](two.html) *kinds of stuff mingled together. What need then was there for stating, Thou shalt not wear a mingled stuff? Hence it must be concluded that the object was to provide a superfluous text.*

*But [surely] both these texts are required? For if the All Merciful had only written, Neither shall there come upon thee it might have been assumed that all kinds of ‘putting on’ were forbidden by the All Merciful, even that of clothes dealers, hence the All Merciful, has written, Thou shalt not wear a mingled stuff, [showing that the ‘putting on’ must be] of the same nature as that of wearing for personal comfort. And if the All Merciful had only written, Thou shalt not wear it might have been assumed that only wear [is forbidden] because the pleasure derived therefrom is great, but not mere ‘putting on’, hence the All Merciful has written, Neither shall there come upon thee! — If so, the All Merciful should have written, ‘Thou shalt not wear a mingled stuff’ what need was there for adding, ‘Wool and linen’? For observe: It is written, Neither shall there come upon thee a garment of* [*two*](two.html) *kinds of stuff mingled together, and in* [*connection*](connection.html) *with this a Tanna of the School of R. Ishmael* [*taught*](teacher.html)*: Whereas garments generally were mentioned in the Torah, and in* [*one*](one.html) *particular case Scripture specified wool and linen, all must consequently be understood as having been made of wool and linen, what need, then, was there for the All Merciful's specific mention of wool and linen? Consequently it must be concluded that its object was to provide a superfluous text.*

*But the text is still required [for another purpose]! For it might have been assumed [that the limitation applies] only to ‘putting on’, where the benefit is not great, but that in respect of wear, the benefit from which is great, any* [*two*](two.html) *kinds were forbidden by the All Merciful, hence has the All Merciful written, ‘wool and linen’! — If so, Scripture should have omitted it altogether and [the* [*law*](law.html) *would have been] deduced [by analogy between] ‘mingled stuff’ and ‘mingled stuff’ [the latter of which occurs in* [*connection*](connection.html) *with the* [*law*](law.html)*] of ‘putting on’.*

*As to the Tanna of the School of R. Ishmael, is the reason [why ‘mingled stuff’ is permitted in zizith] because the All Merciful has written ‘wool and linen’, but if He had not done so, would it have been assumed that the All Merciful had forbidden* [*two*](two.html) *kinds of stuff in the zizith? But, surely it is written, And they shall make them fringes in the corners of their garments and a Tanna of the School of R. Ishmael [*[*taught*](teacher.html)*]: Wherever ‘garment’ [is written] such as is made of wool or flax [is meant], and yet the All Merciful said that in them ‘purple’ shall be inserted, and purple, surely, is wool. And whence is it deduced that purple is wool? Since linen is flax, purple must be wool. — [The text] was necessary; for it might have been assumed [that the interpretation is] according to Raba. For Raba pointed out a contradiction: It is written, the corner, [which implies that the fringes must be of the same] kind of [material as that of the] corner, but then it is also written, wool and linen. How then [are these texts to be reconciled?] Wool and linen discharge [the obligation to provide fringes] both for a garment of the same, as well as of a different kind of material, while other kinds [of material] discharge [the obligation for a garment made] of the same kind [of material] but not for* [*one*](one.html) *made of a different kind [of material].*

*But the Tanna of the School of R. Ishmael, surely, does not hold the same view as Raba! — [The text] is still necessary; for it might have been assumed that Raba's line of argument should be followed: ‘The corner’ [implies that the fringes must be made of the same] kind of [material as the] corner, and that what the All Merciful meant was this: ‘Make wool [fringes] for wool [garments] and linen ones for linen; only when you make wool fringes for wool garments you must dye them’; but no wool fringes may be made for linen or linen fringes for wool, hence the All Merciful has written ‘wool and linen’ [to indicate] that even wool fringes [may be] made for linen garments or linen fringes for woolen garments.*

The [Gemara](orallaw.html) in Yevamot 4a says that we learn that a positive [commandment](cmds613.html) overrides a negative [commandment](cmds613.html) from the fact that the Torah permits a mixture of wool and linen, shatnez, for the [mitzva](cmds613.html) of tzitzith. Thus, the positive [commandment](cmds613.html) of tzitzith overrides the negative [commandment](cmds613.html) of shatnez. Asks Tosafot, perhaps a positive [commandment](cmds613.html) **never** overrides a negative [commandment](cmds613.html), not even the positive [commandment](cmds613.html) of tzitzith. The only reason why [one](one.html) may make tzitzith out of shatnez is because the prohibition of shatnez was **never said** with regard to a garment that is obligated in tzitzith!

It must be that there is no such thing as the Torah making an exception to a prohibition. Rather, the prohibition exists, but it is outweighed by the positive [commandment](cmds613.html).

The Chavot Yatr defends Rashi's explanation. Rashi did not mean that whenever the Torah explicitly states an exception to a prohibition (such as in the case of using shatnez to make tzitzith) that we understand it to mean that the prohibition never applied in such a situation. Rather, when the Torah states both the prohibition and the exception in the **same place**, **then** we say that the prohibition indeed does not apply. In the case of using shatnez to make tzitzith, the words from which we learn that tzitzith may be made of shatnez[[2]](#footnote-2)) were not written as an explicit exception to the rule of shatnez (Devarim 22:11). The prohibition of shatnez and the [commandment](cmds613.html) to make tzitzith are [two](two.html) separate verses; it is merely from the proximity of the verses that we learn that shatnez is outweighed by the [mitzva](cmds613.html) of tzitzith.

"Do not wear a forbidden mixture, in which wool and linen are together [in a single garment]." This forbidden mixture is [known](daat.html) as shatnez. The Torah goes on to state, "You shall make tzitzith on the [four](four.html) corners of the garment with which you cover yourself." **Because these verses are contiguous, we deduce that tzitzith may be made of shatnez.**

\* \* \*

Why are tzitzith adjacent to a disfavored wife?

Chazal [teach](teacher.html) us that the primary purpose of clothing is to be a barrier to lust. It seems to me that the tzitzith are especially favored for this purpose. In addition to being a [physical](physical.html) barrier, they also have a reminder built in. Now the wife who has fallen out of favor with her husband may be disliked because he has his eye on another woman. This juxtaposition suggests that the tzitzith are a preventative and maybe even an antidote for this problem.

## Word Analysis

The passage on tzitzith (Bamidbar 15:37-41) is familiar to most of us because it [one](one.html) of the passages read daily in the [Shema](shema.html). Never the less, since we often become complacent about familiar things and therefore are not sensitive enough to the questions that arise from a close [study](study.html) of these verses. Lets look at a few interesting points:

**1)** The pasuk does not begin with the usual formulation, "[HaShem](hashem.html) [spoke](mashal.html) (*vayyidabber*) to Moshe, saying," rather with the less common and exceptional formulation, "[HaShem](hashem.html) said (*vayyomer*) to Moshe as follows."

**2)** The last verse, which serves as the concluding formulation, is also exceptional: it begins and ends with the formulation, "I, [HaShem](hashem.html) [am] your G-d." Now this phrase occurs in Tanakh countless times at the beginning, middle, or end of a verse, but nowhere else does a verse begin and end with this formulation.

3) Most of the verses in this passage (39-41) are addressed to the Israelites and spoken in the second person: That shall be **your** tzitzith, ... **you** shall look at it, ... etc. But at the beginning of the passage (v. 38) Moshe is commanded to [speak](mashal.html) to the Israelites, the contents of the message being in the [third](three.html) person: instruct **them** to make for **themselves** ... on **their** garments...

4) The key word in the passage is tzitzith, fringes, which appears [three](three.html) times here, and only once elsewhere in all of Scripture: "And took me by the [hair](hair.html) ([Hebrew](hebrew.html): *tzitzith*) of my [head](body.html)" (Ezek. 8:3), where it means a bunch of [hair](hair.html), perhaps the forelock. But this meaning for the word *tzitzith*, a bunch of woven threads or [one](one.html) braided thread, can only make sense in verse 38: "instruct them to make for themselves a bunch of fringes ... let them attach a cord of blue to the bunch of fringes at each corner." In other words, the fringes were to be mostly white, but [one](one.html) of them was to be blue[[3]](#footnote-3). When we come to verse 39, "That shall be your fringe," this meaning for *tzitzith* no longer suits. Nor does it matter whether the antecedent of "that" is the "corner fringe" (*tzitzith hakkanaf*) or the "blue thread" (*petil tekhelet*); the phrase is a bit unclear.

## Word Association

The [Shema](shema.html) (Devarim 6:4-9, 11:13-21, and Bamidbar 11:13-21) is the quintessential [Jewish](gen-jew.html) declaration of the Oneness of [HaShem](hashem.html). We declare His Oneness during our morning and evening [prayers](prayer.html) and before going to [sleep](mashal.html). The [third](three.html) paragraph of the [Shema](shema.html) is a recital of Bamidbar 15:37-41, the Torah passage regarding tzitzith.

It is customary for worshipers wearing a talit to hold the [four](four.html) fringes in the left [hand](mashal.html) while reciting the [Shema](shema.html). In the [third](three.html) paragraph of the [Shema](shema.html), when the word tzitzith is said [three](three.html) times and when the word *emet* is said at the end, it is customary to [kiss](mashal.html) the tzitzith as a [sign](signs.html) of affection for the [mitzvot](cmds613.html).

The [third](three.html) paragraph of the [Shema](shema.html) contains [two](two.html) word associations with the story of the spies, in Bamidbar 13. The [one](one.html) is the word *ureitem*, the other is the word *taturoo*.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Ure'item** | **taturoo** |
| **Spies** | Ure'item et ha'aretz - see the land | latur et ha'aretz - to spy out the land |
| **Tzitzith** | Ure'item oto - see it | velo taturu acharei levavechem - don't wander after your hearts |

From the word associations, it may be that the [mitzvah](cmds613.html) of tzitzith is for us to see and concentrate on the [mitzvot](cmds613.html) and not let our hearts wander off into other things. The spies had taken their [eyes](body.html) off the [Land of Israel](city.html), that [HaShem](hashem.html) given, and allowed other considerations to take over.

Now what makes us stop and pause over this understanding is the comments of our Sages on:

***Micah 7:15*** *According to the days of thy* [*coming*](coming.html)[*out of the land of Egypt*](thebirth.html) *will I shew unto him marvelous [things].*

Thus we [know](daat.html) that our [future](future.html) [redemption](redemption.html) will be like the [redemption](redemption.html) [from Egypt](thebirth.html). We will effect a [tikkun](tikkun.html) as we work backwards through the sequence of [events](feasts.html). This suggests that the tzitzith will be part of the [tikkun](tikkun.html) of the [sins](sin.html) of the spies… in the [future](future.html)!

# III. What are Tzitzith?

We use the English word fringes to translate what the Torah calls tzitzith.

Each fringe is made of [four](four.html) threads and is passed through a point between [one](one.html) and [three](three.html) thumb-breadths away from the corner of the garment so that the [eight](eight.html) ends of the threads hang evenly from the corner and are at least [four](four.html) thumb-breadths long; [one](one.html) of the threads is wound around the others and knotted. If possible, [one](one.html) of the threads (which must be of wool) should be dyed with a special blue dye, as it says "And they shall put on the fringe a blue thread"; the other threads should be of the same color as the garment.

Sefardim tie the tzitzith to reflect the gematria of [HaShem](hashem.html)’s [name](name.html), as illustrated:

vuvh ([HaShem’s](hashem.html) [name](name.html), AKA the tetragrammaton, AKA YHVH)

h = 10

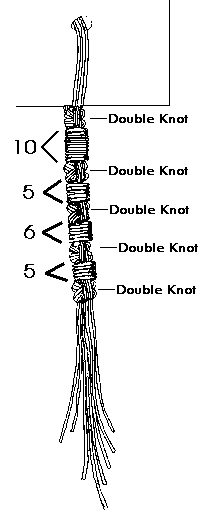
v = 5

u = 6

v = 5

Thus we have a double knot followed by [ten](ten.html) windings, a double knot followed by [five](five.html) windings, a double [know](daat.html) followed by [six](six.html) windings, ending with a double knot followed by [five](five.html) windings followed by a double knot.

Tzitzith tied according to Nusach Sefard:



Each of the tzitzith has a strand longer than the others; this is called the shamash. The significance of the [number](nchart.html) of times that the shamash is spiraled around the strands is vital to the understanding of this [mitzva](cmds613.html).

When we tie tzitzith on a [four](four.html)-cornered garment we make the Brakhah or say the following:

*"L'shem mitzvat tzitzith"*

("For the sake of the [commandment](cmds613.html) of tzitzith").

The [four](four.html) tzitziot (fringes) of the Talit represent the Divine Presence and the Torah in the [Four](four.html) Corners of the [world](worlds.html).

## Peyotes

We have seen that tzitzith are associated with “corners” (kanfot). Tzitzith are also used in an unusual way as pertaining to the [head](body.html). Do heads have corners?

***Yahezekel (Ezekiel) 8:3*** *And he put forth the form of an* [*hand*](fourteen.html)*, and took me by a lock* (tzitzith) *of mine* [*head*](body.html)*; and the spirit lifted me up between the earth and the* [*heaven*](heaven.html)*, and brought me in the visions of God to* [*Jerusalem*](city.html)*, to the door of the inner gate that looketh toward the north; where [was] the seat of the image of jealousy, which provoketh to jealousy.*

In the above pasuk, the Prophet is telling us that tzitzith apply to [head](body.html). The translator has translated “tzitzith” as “lock”. So, are the tzitzith on the [head](body.html) associated with corners too?

***Yayikra (Leviticus) 19:27*** *Ye shall not round the corners* (peah) *of your heads, neither shalt thou mar the corners* (peah) *of thy* [*beard*](hair.html)*.*

***Yayikra (Leviticus) 21:5*** *They shall not make baldness upon their* [*head*](body.html)*, neither shall they shave off the corner* (peah) *of their* [*beard*](hair.html)*, nor make any cuttings in their flesh.*

Thus we see that the [head](body.html) does indeed have corners and that these corners also have tzitzith!

Peah is the [Hebrew](hebrew.html) word used to define the edges or borders of the [head](body.html). Peah is also used to define the corners of a field which must be left for the poor.

## Tzitzith Root Meaning

The Torah tells us to "gaze" at the tzitzith, in Bamidbar 16:39. Interestingly, the word tzitzith itself comes from the [Hebrew](hebrew.html) root *tzatz*, meaning "to peer" or "to gaze." This is seen in:

***Shir HaShirim (Song of Songs) 2:9*** *My Beloved is like a gazelle or a young deer. [I thought He had abandoned me forever, but] behold, He was near the entire* [*time*](time.html)*,* [*standing*](mashal.html) *behind our wall, supervising from the windows, peering (me-tzitz) through the lattices.*

We will see next in this [study](study.html) that the tekhelet, which is blue in color, is to be gazed at, in order to be reminded of [HaShem](hashem.html).

# IV. Shatnez

**Ramban’s Commentary for: Vayiqra (Leviticus) 19:19** Similarly, in respect of that which the Rabbi [Rashi] wrote with reference to combing, that [the wool and linen] must also be compressed and twisted together, and in a similar manner he also wrote in his commentaries to the [Gemara](orallaw.html),[[4]](#footnote-4) other scholars,[[5]](#footnote-5) have already commented that Rashi's interpretation is not in accord with what the Rabbis have said [in the following text of the [Talmud](orallaw.html)]:[[6]](#footnote-6) "You must deduce from this[[7]](#footnote-7) that the upper knots[[8]](#footnote-8) in the Fringes are required by Scriptural [law](law.html). For if you should think that they are not required by Scriptural [law](law.html), why then did the Merciful [One](one.html) have to state a [special] permission for using mingled stuff of wool and linen in Fringes! Do we not hold the [law](law.html) to be established that if [one](one.html) fastens [two](two.html) pieces together with only [one](one.html) stitch, it is not considered joined!" [[9]](#footnote-9) Thus the Rabbis [of the [Talmud](orallaw.html)] have revealed to us that a garment made of linen, in which woolen fringes have been tied with [two](two.html) knots, constitutes diverse kinds by [law](law.html) of the Torah, even though they have not been compressed and twined together!

A cardinal principle in Torah [law](law.html) is that, subject to certain general exceptions, any duty of fulfilling a positive [commandment](cmds613.html) overrides a negative [commandment](cmds613.html) (see juxtaposition of these [two](two.html) verses: You will not wear a mingled stuff, wool and linen together You will make twisted cords upon the [four](four.html) corners of your covering, wherewith you cover yourself (Deuteronomy 22: 11-12). The closeness of the [two](two.html) verses intimates that the [commandment](cmds613.html) of Fringes overrides the prohibition of sha'at neiz, so that the Fringes may be made with threads of wool even if the garment itself is of linen. The [Gemara](orallaw.html) now argues on the basis of the second principle mentioned, that we must say that the upper knots [formed at the lower edge of the garment] after the [four](four.html) threads are passed through the opening and doubled, are obligatory by [law](law.html) of the Torah, "for should you think etc."

**Targum Pseudo-Jonathan for: Devarim (Deuteronomy) ‎‎22:11-12** You will not clothe nor warm yourselves with a garment combed (carded) or netted, or interwoven with wool and linen mixed together. 12. Nevertheless on a robe of linen thread you may be permitted to make fringes of wool upon the four extremities of your vestments with which you dress in the day.

JERUSALEM: Fringes of threads will you make upon the four edges of your vestments with which you dress.

# V. Tekhelet

[One](one.html) of the threads, of the tzitzith, should be the color of tekhelet, which is a blue-green dye made from a specific aquatic animal, the Chalizon. Nowadays we are unsure of the identity of the Chalizon and the process of making tekhelet, which is why all the strings of our Tzitzith are white.

The commentators call the Chalizon a `fish' since it lives in the water. It appears, though, that the Chalizon is not a normal `fish,' but has a shell and is actually a [type](types.html) of snail. It ascends to the land very rarely, only once every 70 years.

Over [time](time.html), the exact identity of Chalizon became obscure for various reasons: [One](one.html) reason was its extreme rarity. Because of this, its cost was prohibitive: [Ten](ten.html) to [twenty](twenty.html) times its weight in gold. Another reason: In the 4th century Rome decreed that only `blue-blooded' royalty could wear tekhelet. Although some modern-day Torah scholars maintain that they have re-discovered the Chalizon, their opinion is not universally accepted.[[10]](#footnote-10)

The [Talmud](orallaw.html) spends a great deal of ink discussing this blue thread:

***Menachoth 42b*** *Abaye enquired of R. Samuel b. Rab Judah, How do you dye the blue thread? He replied, We take the* [*blood*](body.html) *of Chalizon together with other ingredients and put them all in a pot and boil them together. Then we take out a little in an eggshell and test it on a piece of wool; and we throw away what remains in the eggshell and burn the wool.* [*One*](one.html) *can infer* [*three*](three.html) *things from this: [i] that the dye used for testing is unfit; [ii] that the dyeing must be for the specific purpose [of the precept]; and [iii] that the dye used for testing renders the rest unfit. Are not the rules that the test quantity is itself unfit and that the dyeing must be for the specific purpose [of the precept] identical in meaning? — R. Ashi answered,* [*One*](one.html) *states the reason for the other, as much as to say: Why is the test quantity itself unfit? Because the dyeing must be for the specific purpose [of the precept]. This, however, is a matter of dispute between Tannaim, for it has been* [*taught*](teacher.html)*: The test quantity is itself unfit, for it says, All of blue. So says R. Hanina b. Gamaliel. But R. Johanan b. Dahabai says, Even the second dyeing is valid, for it says, And scarlet.*

*Our Rabbis* [*taught*](teacher.html)*: There is no manner of testing the blue thread; it should therefore be bought only from an expert. The* [*tefillin*](tefillin.html) *can be tested; nevertheless they should only be bought from an expert.* [*Scrolls of the Law*](law.html) *and* [*Mezuzot*](mezuzah.html) *can be tested, and may be bought from anyone.*

*Is there then no manner of testing the blue thread? But R.* [*Isaac*](isaac.html) *the son of R. Judah used to test it (mnemonic* [*sign*](signs.html)*: with Ge Shem) thus: He used to mix together liquid alum, juice of fenugreek, and urine of a* [*forty*](forty.html)*-day old child, and soak [the blue thread] in it overnight until the morning; if the color faded it is invalid, but if not, it is valid. Moreover, R. Adda stated the following test before Raba in the* [*name*](name.html) *of R. ‘Avira:* [*One*](one.html) *should take a piece of hard* [*leavened*](chametz.html) *dough of barley meal and bake it with [the blue thread] inside; if the color improved it is valid, but if it deteriorated it is invalid; and in order to remember this, think of the phrase ‘a false change, a true change!’ — The statement ‘There is no manner of testing the blue thread’ refers to the test quantity.*

***Menachoth 43a*** *Mar of Moshke once obtained in the* [*time*](time.html) *of R. Ahai some blue thread; on testing it by the test submitted by R.* [*Isaac*](isaac.html) *the son of R. Judah its color faded, but on testing it by R. Adda's test its color improved. He was about to declare it invalid when R. Ahai said to him, This is neither genuine blue nor imitation blue! We must therefore say that* [*one*](one.html) *test supplements the other thus: if the test of R.* [*Isaac*](isaac.html) *the son of R. Judah had been applied and the color had not faded it is certainly valid, but if its color had faded we should then test it by R. Adda's test by [baking it in] a hard piece of* [*leavened*](chametz.html) *dough; if its color improved it is valid, but if it deteriorated it is invalid. A message was sent from there [Palestine] saying, The tests supplement each other.*

*Mani was most particular when buying [the blue thread]. In accordance with the restrictions of the above Baraitha; whereupon a certain old man said to him, Those who long preceded you acted so, and they were successful in their business.*

According to the [Talmud](orallaw.html) the blue-green color is a reminder of the sea, which reflects the [heavens](heaven.html), and [HaShem's](hashem.html) Throne of Glory. Therefore wearing Tzitzith is a constant reminder of [HaShem](hashem.html)'s Presence in the [world](worlds.html). Thus blue strand has the ability to inspire people to heavenly thoughts.

***Menachoth 43b*** *It was* [*taught*](teacher.html)*: R. Meir used to say, Why is blue specified from all the other colours [for this precept]? Because blue resembles the color of the sea, and the sea resembles the color of the* [*sky*](heaven.html)*, and the sky resembles the color of [a sapphire, and a sapphire resembles the color of] the Throne of Glory, as it is said, And there was under his* [*feet*](heel.html) *as it were a paved work of sapphire stone, and it is also written, The likeness of a throne as the appearance of a sapphire stone.*

Rabbi Moshe Feinstein suggests an interesting lesson based on this understanding of the blue strand. Just as the tekhelet reminds us of [HaShem](hashem.html) through a progressive stage process (sea, [heavens](heaven.html), throne of glory), so too our [spiritual](physical.html) growth should be through a step-by-step process. The most productive way to genuinely grow closer to [HaShem](hashem.html) is through gradual development.

***Menachoth 44a*** *Our Rabbis* [*taught*](teacher.html)*: The Chalizon resembles the sea in its color, and in shape it resembles a fish; it appears once in* [*seventy*](seventy.html) *years, and with its* [*blood*](body.html)[*one*](one.html) *dyes the blue thread; and therefore it is so expensive.*

Tekhelet was also a key ingredient in the identity of a lady in the Nazarean Codicil:

***II Luqas (Acts) 16:12-15*** *And from thence to Philippi, which is the chief* [*city*](city.html) *of that part of Macedonia, [and] a colony: and we were in that* [*city*](city.html) *abiding certain days. And on the* [*Sabbath*](sabbath.html) *we went out of the* [*city*](city.html) *by a river side, where* [*prayer*](prayer.html) *was wont to be made; and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted [thither]. And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple* (tekhelet)*, of the* [*city*](city.html) *of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard [us]: whose* [*heart*](body.html) *the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. And when she was baptized, and her* [*household*](househld.html)*, she besought [us], saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide [there]. And she constrained us.*

While many assume that Lydia sold purple cloth, the text actually just says “purple”. This purple dye was used to dye the single thread a blue[[11]](#footnote-11) color. When the purple dye was exposed to ultraviolet light (like the [sun](hachama.html)) it dyes the string a beautiful sky blue!

Lydia was a seller of the rare dye used to make tekhelet and assist the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) people in the performance of the [mitzva](cmds613.html) of tzitzith.

Hakham Hirsch

Hakham Shimshon Hirsch understands many aspects of this [mitzvot](cmds613.html) to be osot, symbols [HaShem](hashem.html) uses to convey certain concepts and priorities to the core of each [Jew](gen-jew.html). He finds the role and function of each of these components of the human condition alluded to in the [mitzvah](cmds613.html) of tzitzith in [two](two.html) different ways: in the color of the strings in the tzitzith, and in their [number](nchart.html). In `Collected Writings' (Volume III page. 126) Hirsch comments:

We find only [three](three.html) terms to encompass the colors of the spectrum: adom for red, yaroq for yellow and green, and tekhelet for blue and violet....

Red is the least refracted ray; it is the closest to the unbroken ray of light that is directly absorbed by matter. Red is light in its [first](one.html) fusion with the terrestrial element: adom, related to adamah [footstool, earth as man's footstool -- M.B.] Is this not again man, the image of G-d as reflected in [physical](physical.html), earthly matter: `vatichsareihu me'at mi'Elokim' (Tehillim. 8,6).

The next part of the spectrum is yellow-green: yaroq.

Blue-violet is at the end of the spectrum: tekhelet.

The spectrum visible to our eye ends with the violet ray, tekhelet, but additional magnitudes of light radiate unseen beyond the visible spectrum. Likewise, the blue expanse of the sky forms the end of the earth that is visible to us. And so tekhelet is simply the bridge that leads thinking man from the visible, [physical](physical.html) sphere of the terrestrial [world](worlds.html), into the unseen sphere of [heaven](heaven.html) beyond....

Tekhelet is the basic color of the [sanctuary](mikdash.html) and of the [High Priest](priests.html)'s vestments; the color blue-violet representing [heaven](heaven.html) and the things of [heaven](heaven.html) that were revealed to Israel... no other color was as appropriate as tekhelet to signify G-d's special relationship with Israel. A thread of tekhelet color on our garments conferred upon all of us the insignia of our high-priestly calling, proclaiming all of us: `And you shall be holy men to Me' (Shemot. 19:6).

If we now turn our attention to the pisil tekhelet on our tzitzith, we will not that it was precisely this thread of tekhelet color that formed the krichot, the gidil, the thread wound around the other threads to make a cord. In other words, the vocation of the [Jew](gen-jew.html), the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) awareness awakened by the [Sanctuary](mikdash.html), that power which is to prevail within us, must act to unite all our kindred forces within the bond of the [Sanctuary](mikdash.html) of [HaShem's](hashem.html) [law](law.html).

# VI. In The Tanakh

The [command](cmds613.html) to wear tzitzith is found in the Torah. Throughout the rest of the Tanakh we see that tzitzith are the norm.

## [Four](four.html) Corners - Wings

The Torah tells us that the tzitzith are to be on the [four](four.html) corners:

***Devarim (Deuteronomy) 22:12*** *Thou shalt make thee fringes upon the* [*four*](four.html) *corners of thy vesture, wherewith thou coverest [thyself].*

What is interesting is that the [Hebrew](hebrew.html) word for corners, ,upbf (kanfot), is the same [Hebrew](hebrew.html) word translated as wings in:

***Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) 19:4*** *Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and [how] I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself.*

This same word, kanfot, is also translated as wings when it belongs to a [HaShem](hashem.html):

***Rut (***[***Ruth***](ruth.html)***) 2:12***[*HaShem*](hashem.html) *recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust.*

This same word, kanfot, is also translated as wings when it belongs to a man:

***Rut (***[***Ruth***](ruth.html)***) 3:9*** *And he said, Who [art] thou? And she answered, I [am]* [*Ruth*](ruth.html) *thine handmaid: spread therefore thy skirt over thine handmaid; for thou [art] a near kinsman.*

****

Thus we learn that the talit’s corners are also [known](daat.html) as wings. When viewed from behind, as in the above picture, the talit makes the man appear as if he has wings folded against his back.

These wings, according to the Prophet, have healing associated with them:

***Malachi 4:2*** *But unto you that fear my* [*name*](name.html) *shall the* [*Sun*](hachama.html) *of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall.*

This healing we will see again in the Nazarean Codicil.

The [four](four.html) corners of the talit are also the [four](four.html) corners of the earth:

***Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 11:12*** *And he shall set up an ensign for the* [*nations*](nations.html)*, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and* [*gather*](gather.html) *together the dispersed of Judah from the* [*four*](four.html) *corners of the earth.*

There is a sense that when we take hold of the [four](four.html) tzitzith on the corners of the talit that we are taking hold of the [four](four.html) corners of the earth. This [connection](connection.html) is effectively made for us in the words of the Siddur, in the shacharit service:

*“and* [*gather*](gather.html) *us in peace from*

*the* [*four*](four.html) *corners of the earth”.*

At this point we [gather](gather.html) the [four](four.html) corners of ourtalit, the tzitzith**,** and hold them in [one](one.html) [hand](fourteen.html), in preparation for the [Shema](shema.html). This signifies the [coming](coming.html) together of the [four](four.html) corners of the earth. This is also an expression of the complete unification of [HaShem](hashem.html). The [Shema](shema.html) is also an affirmation of [HaShem](hashem.html)'s oneness.

Again, we find our word for the corners of the talit to be the same [Hebrew](hebrew.html) word for the [four](four.html) corners of the earth – kanfot, in the above pasuk from Yeshayahu.

## David and Saul

[His Majesty](yeshua.html) King Saul was chasing the heir to the throne with the intent to kill him. At [one](one.html) point in the chase, [His Majesty](yeshua.html) came under the power of David:

***1 Sh’muel (Samuel) 24:4-5*** *And the men of David said unto him, Behold the day of which* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *said unto thee, Behold, I will deliver thine enemy into thine and, that thou mayest do to him as it shall seem good unto thee. Then David arose, and cut off the skirt of Saul's robe privily. And it came to pass afterward, that David's* [*heart*](body.html) *smote him,*

*because he had cut off Saul's skirt.*

David cut off the corner of the king’s robe to show that he had the power to kill the king. After David cut off the corner, he realized that he had taken a [mitzva](cmds613.html), with it’s blessing, from the king.

The [Talmud](orallaw.html) sees David’s treatment of Saul’s garment as the root for troubles later in David’s life:

***Berachoth 62b*** *Then David arose and cut off the skirt of Saul's robe privily. R. Jose son of R. Hanina said: Whoever treats garments contemptuously will in the end derive no benefit from them; for it says, Now King David was old and stricken in years; and they covered him with clothes, but he could get no heat.*

In the Yemenite[Midrash](orallaw.html) Gadol, on the same verse, we read: For Saul persecuted David and it would have been permissible for David to killhim, but he was punctilious about the [commandment](cmds613.html) to wear tzitzith, as it is said:

***I Sh’muel (Samuel) 24:4*** *Then David arose, and cut off the skirt of Saul's robe privily. And it came to pass afterward, that David's* [*heart*](body.html) *smote him, because he had cut off Saul's skirt.*

He said, "Woe is me, for I have prevented him from observing the [mitzva](cmds613.html) of tzitzith for a short [time](time.html)"--for the [mitzva](cmds613.html) requires the presence of all [four](four.html)tzitziyot [and David had cut off [one](one.html) corner].

## [HaShem](hashem.html)’s Tzitzith

Chazal, Our Sages, [teach](teacher.html) us that just as we enwrap ourselves in a talit, so also does [HaShem](hashem.html) enwrap Himself in a talit. Whereas ours is made of cloth, His is made of light:

***Tehillim (***[***Psalm***](psalms1.html)***) 104:1-2*** *Bless* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, O my soul.* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *my God, thou art very great; thou art clothed with honour and majesty. Who coverest [thyself] with light as [with] a garment: who stretches out the* [*heavens*](heaven.html) *like a curtain: …*

We said earlier that the purpose of the tzitzith was to remind us of the [613 mitzvot](cmds613.html) of [HaShem](hashem.html). We also said that the numerical value of the word tzitzith is 600; when we add the [eight](eight.html) strings and [five](five.html) double knots we arrive at a total of 613 - a reminder of the 613 Torah [commandments](cmds613.html).

This suggests that the Tzitzith = Torah. Now we [know](daat.html) from previous studies that [Mashiach](mashiach.html) = Torah. We can also see this concept embodied in:

***Yochanan (John) 1:1*** *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*

Therefore, we can conclude that:

**Tzitzith = Torah =** [**Mashiach**](mashiach.html)

This suggests that [HaShem](hashem.html) enwraps Himself in His [Mashiach](mashiach.html) who is light:

***Mishle (Proverbs) 6:23*** *For the* [*commandment*](cmds613.html) *[is] a lamp; and the* [*law*](law.html) *[is] light; and reproofs of instruction [are] the way of life:*

Our Sages [teach](teacher.html) us that [HaShem](hashem.html) also enwraps Himself in a talit with tzitzith. This talit is used like a reader of the Torah uses his talit:

[***Rosh Hashana***](teruah.html)***h 17b*** *And ‘the Lord passed by before him and proclaimed [etc.]. R. Johanan said: Were it not written in the text, it would be impossible for us to say such a thing; this verse* [*teaches*](teacher.html) *us that the Holy* [*One*](one.html)*, blessed be He, drew his robe round Him like the reader of a congregation and showed Moses the order of* [*prayer*](prayer.html)*. He said to him: Whenever Israel* [*sin*](sin.html)*, let them carry out this service before Me, and I will* [*forgive*](forgive.html) *them.*

The [Zohar](orallaw.html) echoes this understanding that Torah is [HaShem](hashem.html)’s garment:

***Soncino*** [***Zohar***](orallaw.html)***, Bereshit, Section 1, Page 23b*** *Certainly God created nothing which was not required.’ What is more, the created Torah is a vestment to the Shekinah, and if man had not been created, the Shekinah would have been without a vestment like a beggar. Hence when a man* [*sins*](sin.html) *it is as though he strips the Shekinah of her vestments, and that is why he is punished; and when he carries out the precepts of the* [*Law*](law.html)*, it is as though he clothes the Shekinah in her vestments. Hence we say that the fringes (tzitzith) worn by the Israelites are to the Shekinah in captivity like the poor man's garments, of which it is said, “for that is his only covering, it is his garment for his skin, wherein shall he* [*sleep*](mashal.html)*?” (Ex. XXII, 26).*

[***Midrash***](orallaw.html) ***Rabbah - Genesis I:6*** *AND GOD SAID: LET THERE BE LIGHT (I, 3), and the manner of this, too, is not explained. Where is it explained? Elsewhere: Who coverest Thyself with light as with a garment (Ps. CIV, 2).*

[***Midrash***](orallaw.html) ***Rabbah - Genesis III:4*** *AND GOD SAID: LET THERE BE LIGHT, etc. R. Simeon b. R. Jehozadak asked R. Samuel b. Nahman: ‘As I have heard that you are a master of* [*Haggadah*](haggada.html)*, tell me whence the light was created?’ He replied: ‘The Holy* [*One*](one.html)*, blessed be He, wrapped Himself therein as in a robe and irradiated with the lustre of* [*His majesty*](yeshua.html) *the whole* [*world*](worlds.html) *from* [*one*](one.html) *end to the other.’ Now he had answered him in a whisper, whereupon he observed, ‘There is a verse which states it explicitly: Who coverest Thyself with light as with a garment (Ps. CIV, 2), yet you say it in a whisper!’ ‘Just as I heard it in a whisper, so have I told it to you in a whisper,’ he rejoined.*

In our morning [prayers](prayer.html) we enwrap ourselves in the talit with tzitzityot. Before we don this majestic garment, we check the tzitzith to make sure that there are no [tears](mashal.html) or breaks. While checking the tzitzith before donning the talit, we say:

*"Bless* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, O my soul!* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, my God, You are very great; You have clothed Yourself with majesty and splendor; cloaked in light as with a garment, stretching out the* [*heavens*](heaven.html) *like a curtain."*

The garment of the talit, then, is compared to a garment of light by our Sages, and the tzitzith are compared to the [heavens](heaven.html) stretching and hanging downward. Thus we learn that the tzitzith we wear are comparable to [HaShem](hashem.html)’s garment of light.

## [Adam](adam.html)’s Tzitzith

There is a tradition says that the clothes [HaShem](hashem.html) made for [Adam](adam.html) and Chava were tzitzith[[12]](#footnote-12).

Our clothing serve as a barrier against the evil inclination, and the lust it engenders, which drives us away from [HaShem](hashem.html) and spirituality, and the [613 mitzvot](cmds613.html) protect us from a breakdown of our relationship with [HaShem](hashem.html). And that is why we wear a reminder of the 613 [mitzvot](cmds613.html) on our clothing: to remind us of why [HaShem](hashem.html) made clothing for man.

# VII. In The Nazarean Codicil

The Nazarean Codicil is replete with many direct and indirect examples of the talit with tzitzith. Here are a few of them:

## A Great Sheet

Peter’s vision in II Luqas is often used by the foolish to “prove” that unkosher [food](food.html) can be [eaten](eating.html) by the Christian. The truth could not be further out of their grasp. This vision was given to prove that [Gentiles](gen-jew.html) were [clean](purity.html) according to Hakham Tzefet’s own interpretation in II Luqas 10:28:

***II Luqas (Acts) 10:9-16*** *On the morrow, as they went on their* [*journey*](stages.html)*, and drew nigh unto the* [*city*](city.html)*, Peter went up upon the housetop to* [*pray*](prayer.html) *about the* [*sixth*](six.html) *hour: And he became very hungry, and would have* [*eaten*](eating.html)*: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance, And saw* [*heaven*](heaven.html) *opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the* [*four*](four.html) *corners, and let down to the earth: Wherein were all manner of* [*four*](four.html) *footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and* [*eat*](eating.html)*. But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never* [*eaten*](eating.html) *any thing that is common or unclean. And the voice [spake] unto him again the second* [*time*](time.html)*, What God hath cleansed, [that] call not thou common. This was done thrice: and the vessel was received up again into* [*heaven*](heaven.html)*.*

***II Luqas (Acts) 10:28*** *And he said unto them, Ye* [*know*](daat.html) *how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a* [*Jew*](gen-jew.html) *to keep company, or come unto* [*one*](one.html) *of another* [*nation*](nations.html)*; but God hath showed me that I should not call any man common or unclean.*

The identity of this great sheet as a talit is taken from its identification by “[four](four.html) corners” and by its effect upon its contents, namely the [Gentiles](gen-jew.html).

The purpose of a talit is to enwrap its contents, usually a man, in the [commandment](cmds613.html)’s of [HaShem](hashem.html). Thus were the [Gentiles](gen-jew.html) enwrapped, in this pasuk. The goal was to enwrap the [Gentiles](gen-jew.html) in the [613 mitzvot](cmds613.html) – to bring them under the Torah.

## Capital Punishment

***II Luqas (Acts) 22:22-23*** *And they gave him audience unto this word, and [then] lifted up their voices, and said, Away with such a [fellow] from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live. And as they cried out, and cast off [their] clothes, and threw dust into the air,*

They cast off their tzitzith when they gave a capital punishment judgment. At this point the whole Sanhedrin has to be disbanded because they are a killing Sanhedrin.

## A Tzadik with a Talit[[13]](#footnote-13)

Lets take a look at the talit of a Tzadik, a righteous man:

***Marqos (Mark) 5:22-24*** *Then* [*one*](one.html) *of the* [*synagogue*](synagog.html) *rulers, named Jairus, came there. Seeing* [*Yeshua*](yeshua.html)*, he fell at his* [*feet*](heel.html) *And pleaded earnestly with him, "My little daughter is dying. Please come and put your* [*hands*](fourteen.html) *on her so that she will be healed and live." So* [*Yeshua*](yeshua.html) *went with him. A large crowd followed and pressed around him...*

Keep in mind that Yair, Jarius, is a prominent Rabbi on the bet din of a large [synagogue](synagog.html) in a large [city](city.html). He is a very prominent man who is held in high esteem by many people. Yet, notice that he acknowledges the superiority of the Torah wisdom of [His Majesty](yeshua.html) King [Yeshua](yeshua.html).

Now [His Majesty](yeshua.html) is being asked to lay [hands](fourteen.html) – that is, to take the source of blessing, the [hands](fourteen.html) sanctified by washing, and use them to bring the blessing of healing to the daughter of this Torah Sage.

Suddenly, we have an interruption to our story:

***Marqos (Mark) 5:25-34*** *And a certain woman, which had an issue of* [*blood*](body.html)[*twelve*](twelve.html) *years, And had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse, When she had heard of* [*Yeshua*](yeshua.html)*, came in the press behind, and touched his tzitzith. For she said, If I may touch but his clothes, I shall be whole. And straightway the fountain of her* [*blood*](body.html) *was dried up; and she felt in [her]* [*body*](body.html) *that she was healed of that* [*plague*](plagues.html)*. And* [*Yeshua*](yeshua.html)*, immediately* [*knowing*](knowledge.html) *in himself that virtue had gone out of him, turned him about in the press, and said, Who touched my tzitzith? And his disciples said unto him, Thou seest the multitude thronging thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me? And he looked round about to see her that had done this thing. But the woman fearing and trembling,* [*knowing*](knowledge.html) *what was done in her, came and fell down before him, and told him all the truth. And he said unto her, Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy* [*plague*](plagues.html)*.*

This woman who had been with a flow of [blood](body.html) (from malfunctioning ovaries – the source of life with the medium of life, the [blood](body.html)) for [twelve](twelve.html) years, signifying a problem related to justice [twelve](twelve.html) relates to government – the [twelve](twelve.html) [tribes](tribes.html) – which exists solely to dispense the justice of [HaShem](hashem.html).

This anonymous woman touches the tzitzith, the symbol of Torah, the wings with healing in them, on [His Majesty](yeshua.html) the Living Torah:

***Malachi 4:2*** *But unto you that fear my* [*name*](name.html) *shall the* [*Sun*](hachama.html) *of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall.*

The tzitzith, as an extension of the very [body](body.html) of [His Majesty](yeshua.html), when touched can be felt just as we can feel the touching of any of our [bodies](body.html).

The woman who’s life, the [blood](body.html) the symbol of life, even as Torah is the symbol of life, has been ebbing out of her, is healed when she comes under the talit, under the [authority](authority.html) of the Torah. The Torah that she grasps now gives her life and the outflow of her life fluid now ceases.

She placed herself under the discipline of the Master and of the Torah. Mida kneged mida (measure for measure) – She had some minor [sin](sin.html) that needed to be rooted out. It could be a very minor problem – yet to get correction we must go back under the [authority](authority.html) of the Torah. Her [sin](sin.html) was in not being under Torah [authority](authority.html).

Her faithful obedience to place herself under [authority](authority.html) of the Torah had healed her.

However, because she has touched [Yeshua](yeshua.html), he has become unclean. The virtue going out of [Yeshua](yeshua.html) is just another way of saying that He had become unclean. He will no longer be able to lay [hands](fourteen.html) on the daughter of Yair because He has become unclean. So, the story picks up where it left off before the interruption:

***Marqos (Mark) 5:35-43*** *While* [*Yeshua*](yeshua.html) *was still* [*speaking*](mashal.html)*, some men came from the house of Jairus, the* [*synagogue*](synagog.html) *ruler. "Your daughter is dead," they said. "O Why bother the* [*teacher*](teacher.html) *any more?" Ignoring what they said,* [*Yeshua*](yeshua.html) *told the* [*synagogue*](synagog.html) *ruler, "Don't be afraid; just believe." He did not let anyone follow him except Peter, James and John the brother of James. When they came to the home of the* [*synagogue*](synagog.html) *ruler,* [*Yeshua*](yeshua.html) *saw a commotion, with people* [*crying*](mashal.html) *and* [*wailing*](mashal.html) *loudly. He went in and said to them, "Why all this commotion and wailing? The child is not dead but* [*asleep*](mashal.html)*." But they laughed at him. After he put them all out, he took the child's father and mother and the disciples who were with him, and went in where the child was. He took her by the* [*hand*](fourteen.html) *and said to her, <"Talitha koum!"> (which means, "Little girl, I say to you, get up!"). Immediately the girl stood up and walked around (she was* [*twelve*](twelve.html) *years old). At this they were completely astonished. He gave strict orders not to let anyone* [*know*](daat.html) *about this, and told them to give her something to* [*eat*](eating.html)*.*

Note the juxtaposition of the key phrases between these [two](two.html) stories:

Your faith has healed you – fear not only believe.

Note also that the [three](three.html) greatest (in Torah learning) disciples (Tsefet, Ya’aqov, and Yochanan the brother of Ya’aqov) are forming a Bet Din. These Hakhamim (Rabbis) in training are learning on the job.

It is also necessary that we understand that a child under [twelve](twelve.html) normally takes refuge under the talit of the Hakham (Rabbi) when he does the Aaronic benediction, in the [synagogue](synagog.html). This [teaches](teacher.html) us that those under [twelve](twelve.html) are under the [authority](authority.html) of their [fathers](fathers.html) and Hakhamim who are their teachers. They grasp his tzitzith whilst he gives the blessing.

*A pre-pubescent* [*female*](male+female.html) *is* [*known*](daat.html) *as a Talitha.*

Children under the age of [twelve](twelve.html) are called to come under the talit of the Hakham when he does the Aaronic benediction. A menstruating woman over the age [twelve](twelve.html) – is no longer under the talit of the father or Hakham.

Why does he tie her [hands](fourteen.html) with the talit and lay the talit over the girl? A talit does not become unclean because it is touched by something unclean. A talit always maintains its [purity](purity.html) as long as the tzitzith are intact. We must not worry about becoming unclean, because our cleanliness is ONLY for the benefit of others. We are [clean](purity.html) for a purpose. We must not worry about performing a [mitzvah](cmds613.html) because it makes us unclean. [Mashiach’s](mashiach.html) [hands](fourteen.html) were unclean, therefore he could not touch the little girl. Therefore, He tied her [hands](fourteen.html) without touching her. This tying was the same as the binding in:

***Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 8:16-20*** *Bind up the testimony, seal the* [*law*](law.html) *among my disciples. And I will wait upon* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, that hideth his* [*face*](body.html) *from the* [*house of Jacob*](israelja.html)*, and I will look for him. Behold, I and the children whom* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *hath given me [are] for* [*signs*](signs.html) *and for wonders in Israel from* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *of hosts, which* [*dwelleth*](dwelling.html) *in mount Zion. And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? For the living to the dead? To the* [*law*](law.html) *and to the testimony: if they* [*speak*](mashal.html) *not according to this word, [it is] because [there is] no light in them.*

Binding the tzitzith to the [hands](fourteen.html) means that the person comes under the [authority](authority.html) of the Torah, and the Torah always brings life!!! Laying the talit, further, over the girl’s [head](body.html) is the same as the little children [coming](coming.html) under the talit of the Hakham giving the Aaronic benediction.

The Peshitta does not contain this ending: ‘Damsel (I say to thee), arise.’ My [teacher](teacher.html) translates this verse as:

*41 (YbH) and, having tied the* [*hands*](fourteen.html) *of the child (with his tzitzith), said to her: ‘Talitha Qumi;’ [which is, being interpreted, ‘She that is under the Talit arise’].*

The greatest form of [teaching](teacher.html) is to bind the Torah on his talmidim. Sickness is just death by degrees. The root cause is a misalignment between the life of the individual and the exactness of Torah.

He charged them not to spread the word that He was a miracle worker – rather He wanted to be [known](daat.html) as a Torah [teacher](teacher.html). The ministry of [Mashiach](mashiach.html) ben [Yosef](joseph.html) is to bring people closer to the Torah.

***Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 61:1*** *The spirit of the Lord* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *[is] upon me; because* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to [them that are] bound;*

\* \* \*

The story of the woman with the flow of [blood](body.html) is also described in Matityahu 9 and Luqas 8. In Matityahu 9:20, and Luqas 8:44, the Greek word, translated “hem”, is:

2899 kraspedon, kras'-ped-on; of uncert. der.; a margin, i.e. (spec.) a fringe or tassel:-border, hem.

## Healing in His Wings[[14]](#footnote-14)

In the book of Malachi, we read:

“But to you who fear My [Name](name.html) the [sun](hachama.html) of righteousness/generosity will arise with healing in His wings.” (Malachi 3:20 or 4:2)

Many Christians accurately see a reference to the [Messiah](mashiach.html) in this verse. Judaism also recognizes this as a messianic prophecy:

“Moses asked: ‘Will they remain in pledge for ever?’ God replied: ‘No, only until the [sun](hachama.html) appears’, that is, till the [coming](coming.html) of the [Messiah](mashiach.html); for it says, But unto you that fear My [name](name.html) will the [sun](hachama.html) of righteousness arise with healing in its wings.” ([Exodus](exodus.html) Rabbah 31:10, Soncino Press Edition)

Examining Malachi 3:20 in [Hebrew](hebrew.html), is most interesting, for there we read:

“But to you who fear My [Name](name.html) the [sun](hachama.html) of righteousness/generosity will arise with healing in His wings **(kanaf).”**

In the books of Bamidbar ([Numbers](nchart.html)) and Debarim (Deuteronomy), the Torah uses the word **“kanaf”** for the [commandment](cmds613.html) of the tzitzit (fringes):

*Bamidbar 15:38, Debarim 22:12 Again* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)[*spoke*](mashal.html) *to Mosheh, saying, “*[*Speak*](mashal.html) *to the children of Israel: Tell them to make* ***צִיצִת עַל-כַּנְפֵי******tassels (tzitziyot) on the corners (kanaf)*** *of their garments throughout their* [*generations*](toldot.html)*, and to put a blue thread in the tassels of the corners.”*

The **“kanaf”** of a garment was the corner, edge, or “hem.” The Strong's Concordance defines **kanaf** as:

**כּנף** Kanaf (kaw-nawf');

Noun Feminine, Strong #: 3671

Wing, extremity, edge, winged, border, corner, shirt

- Wing

- Extremity skirt, corner (of garment)

The Greek word for “border” is **κράσπεδον** **kraspedon**, corresponding to the [Hebrew](hebrew.html) word “kanaf,” as Strong's Concordance notes:

**κράσπεδον** Kraspedon (kras'-ped-on)

Noun Neuter, Strong #: 2899

The extremity or prominent part of a thing, edge, skirt, margin

- The fringe of a garment

- In the NT a little appendage hanging down from the edge of the mantle or cloak, made of twisted wool

- A tassel, tuft: the [Jews](gen-jew.html) had such appendages attached to their mantles to remind them of the [law](law.html)

A question for many arises as to why this woman was intent in taking hold of the Tzitzith of the Tallit of the Master and just touch him. With regards to this question Marcus[[15]](#footnote-15) comments:

“… the woman touches only [Jesus](yeshua.html)’ garment in order to avoid passing her ritual [impurity](purity.html) to him. But although [impurity](purity.html) contracted through contact with clothes is less serious that [impurity](purity.html) contracted through contact with flesh (cf. Leviticus 15:7), it is still defiling; otherwise the instruction to wash [one](one.html)’s clothes would be senseless (cf. Lev. 15:11, 21-22. Etc.; cf. Mishnah Kelim 27-28 on the [impurity](purity.html) of clothes).”

This is in part true. [First](one.html), any unclean person touching the Tzitzith of a Tallit does not render the Tallit unclean for greater is the holiness of the Tallit than any uncleanness it can come into contact with. The only way to tamper with the holiness of the Tallit is to destroy or cut its Tzitzith. Nevertheless, if an unclean person touches the Tzitzith of a person wearing it, the Tallit remains ceremonially [clean](purity.html) but the person wearing it looses his ceremonial status as [clean](purity.html).

And this is exactly what we are being told in v.30!

**v. 29 - And immediately was the fountain of her** [**blood**](body.html) **dried up, and she** [**knew**](daat.html) **in the** [**body**](body.html) **that she had been healed of the** [**plague**](plagues.html)**.**

Rabbis and Paqidim, like all human beings are full of imperfections and even [sin](sin.html). Nevertheless, in general, Rabbis and Paqidim do [sacrifice](korbanot.html) much in the pursuit of Torah justice and for the good of others, and do take much care to remain relatively in a state of cleanliness ([physically](physical.html) and [spiritually](physical.html)). Further, as we have seen from the rationale of the lady in question the aim was to touch the Tzitzith of a great rabbi, the primary emphasis being the Tzitzith rather than the “great rabbi.” So, if we match the holiness of the Tzitzith with the living holiness of the Master we have a most powerful healing combination.

The result was evident: the lady not only was healed but she felt in herself that she was healed from this malady that had afflicted her for the past 12 years. The efficacy of the state of ritual cleanliness of the Master in combination with the holiness power of the Tzitzith in which the [name](name.html) of G-d is inscribed by means of knots causes an “immediate” healing reaction.

Further, all Orthodox [Jews](gen-jew.html) during the recitation of the [Shema](shema.html) twice a day (morning and evening) do [kiss](mashal.html) their [four](four.html) Tsitsiyot at certain points when reciting this key [prayer](prayer.html) of our sacred liturgy. Why? At least for [three](three.html) important reasons, (a) as a [sign](signs.html) of respect and devotion for the [name](name.html) of G-d and what it represents, (b) for the healing and [spiritual](physical.html) cleanliness of the person [praying](prayer.html) and that of his dependents, and (c) to become a conduit of G-d’s power for the healing of this [world](worlds.html).

In this regard it is important to remember the statement of Zechariah the Prophet, when he said in the [name](name.html) of Ha-Shem, most ble He:

***Zechariah 8:23*** *“Thus says* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *of hosts: In those days it will come to pass, that* [*ten*](ten.html) *men will take hold, out of all the languages of the* [*Gentiles*](gen-jew.html)*, will even take hold of the Tzitzith of him that is a* [*Jew*](gen-jew.html)*, saying: ‘We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.’”*

There is a note of humour in this verse of Zechariah. It says that the [Gentiles](gen-jew.html) will state: “we **have heard** that God is with you.” But the [Jew](gen-jew.html) does not need to [speak](mashal.html) and tell anyone that “G-d is with him,” for he constantly wears a Tallit Qatan (Small Tallit) that has [four](four.html) knotted fringes which numerically spell G-d’s Holy [Name](name.html)! It would have been more appropriate for the [Gentiles](gen-jew.html) to have said “for we **see** that G-d is with you (i.e. you wear the [Name](name.html) of G-d in your Tzitzith)”! Nevertheless, the verse is correct and G-d does not make errors! The [Gentiles](gen-jew.html) in this verse probably came to this conclusion after reading the Bible or [hearing](mashal.html) some say that G-d, the Creator of the universe is to be found with and amongst His [Jewish](gen-jew.html) people!

Let me reiterate that wearing a Tallit is something very serious. For not only [one](one.html) has pledged unconditional and absolute loyalty to G-d and His people, but [one](one.html) also has pledged to unconditionally bring healing to this [world](worlds.html).

## A Priestly Tzadik

A Righteous person is called a tzadik in [Hebrew](hebrew.html). To be a tzadik, all that is required is that you obey all of the [commandments](cmds613.html) that apply to you. We see that Zechariah the [Priest](priests.html), is a tzadik in:

***Luqas (***[***Luke***](luke.html)***) 1:5-6*** *There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judea, a certain* [*priest*](priests.html) *named Zacharias, of the course of Abia: and his wife [was] of the daughters of Aaron, and her* [*name*](name.html) *[was] Elisabeth. And they were both righteous before God,* [*walking*](walking.html) *in all the* [*commandments*](cmds613.html) *and ordinances of the Lord blameless.*

Thus we see that the Nazarean Codicil declares that Zechariah is a tzadik. We therefore understand that Zechariah was wearing tzitzith on his talit because this was [one](one.html) of the [commandments](cmds613.html) which applied to a man.

Hakham Shaul is also described as a tzadik:

***Philippians 3:6*** *Concerning zeal, persecuting the* [*church*](church.html)*; touching the righteousness which is in the* [*law*](law.html)*, blameless.*

This suggests that Hakham Shaul also wore tzitzith.

## The [Shema](shema.html)

The [Zohar](orallaw.html) in Parshat Shelach says that [one](one.html) who recites the [Shema](shema.html) without tzitzith is giving false testimony about himself, for he reads the [commandment](cmds613.html) of tzitzith and is not fulfilling it. Therefore we [know](daat.html) that [Yeshua](yeshua.html) was wearing tzitzith when he [taught](teacher.html) this pasuk:

***Marqos (Mark) 12:28-30*** *And* [*one*](one.html) *of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him, Which is the* [*first*](one.html)[*commandment*](cmds613.html) *of all? And* [*Yeshua*](yeshua.html) *answered him, The* [*first*](one.html) *of all the* [*commandments*](cmds613.html) *[is], Hear, O Israel;* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *our God is* [*one*](one.html)*: And thou shalt love* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *thy God with all thy* [*heart*](body.html)*, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this [is] the* [*first*](one.html)[*commandment*](cmds613.html)*.*

## The Triumphal Entry

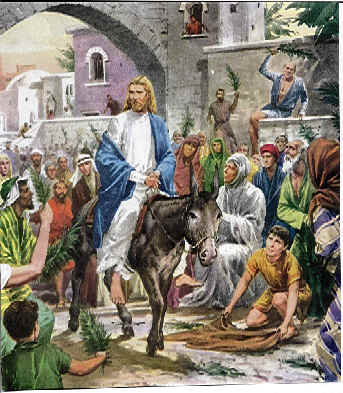
***Marqos 11:7-10*** *And they brought the colt to* [*Yeshua*](yeshua.html)*, and cast their garments on him; and he sat upon him. And many spread their garments in the way: and others cut down branches off the trees, and strewed [them] in the way. And they that went before, and they that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna; Blessed [is] he that cometh in the* [*name*](name.html) *of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*: Blessed [be] the kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the* [*name*](name.html) *of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest.*

***Marqos (Mark) 11:8*** *And many spread their garments in the way: and others cut down branches off the trees, and strewed [them] in the way.*

+-------------------------------------------------+

3598 hodos, hod-os'; appar. a prim. word; a road; by impl. a progress (the route, act or distance); [fig](bethphag.html). a mode or means:-[journey](stages.html), (high-) way.

Many Christians view the above pasuk as:



An observant [Jew](gen-jew.html) would never have such a view, it would be sacrilegious.

[Jewish](gen-jew.html) [law](law.html) forbids putting a talit with its tzitzith on the ground. Therefore, this outer garment with tzitzith would not have been laid on the ground.

A [Jew](gen-jew.html) also knows that the [Mashiach](mashiach.html) is the living embodiment of the Torah. They also [know](daat.html) that a [Torah scroll](letters.html) never goes out in public without being covered by a Chupa, the same canopy used at a [wedding](wedding.html). The folks were then using their talits to make a chupa to spread over the Living Torah. Here is a picture of [Jews](gen-jew.html) escorting a [Torah scroll](letters.html) under a chupa:



***Matityahu (Matthew 21:7)*** *And brought the* [*ass*](chamor.html)*, and the colt, and put on them their clothes, and they set [him] thereon.*

When do we get in a chupa? When we move a [Torah scroll](letters.html) publicly.

***Yochanan (John) 1:1*** *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*

[Mashiach](mashiach.html) and the torah are the same. Therefore we need a chupa to proclaim the [Mashiach](mashiach.html) publicly.

***II Luqas (Acts) 11:5-6*** *I was in the* [*city*](city.html) *of Joppa* [*praying*](prayer.html)*: and in a trance I saw a vision, A certain vessel descend, as it had been a great sheet, let down from* [*heaven*](heaven.html) *by* [*four*](four.html) *corners; and it came even to me: Upon the which when I had fastened mine* [*eyes*](body.html)*, I considered, and saw* [*four*](four.html) *footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air.*

The [Gentiles](gen-jew.html) were made [clean](purity.html) by being enwrapped in a tzitzith which is the [613 commands](cmds613.html).

***1 Corinthians 11:4*** *Every man* [*praying*](prayer.html) *or prophesying, having [his]* [*head*](body.html) *covered, dishonoureth his* [*head*](body.html)*.*

He who [prays](prayer.html) shacharit (the morning service) without a talit over his [head](body.html), dishonors his [head](body.html).

***Luqas 8:43-44*** *And a woman having an issue of* [*blood*](body.html)[*twelve*](twelve.html) *years, which had spent all her living upon physicians, neither could be healed of any, Came behind [him], and touched the border of his garment: and immediately her issue of* [*blood*](body.html) *stanched.*

Her [blood](body.html) flow stopped because she touched the [name](name.html) of [HaShem](hashem.html), which is represented by the knots of the tzitzith. She was healed because she was at oneness with [HaShem](hashem.html).

## Coat of Many Colors

[His Majesty](yeshua.html) King [Yeshua](yeshua.html) wore a talit similar to [Yoseph’s](joseph.html) talit that was given to him by [Yaakov](israelja.html):

***Yochanan (John) 19:23-24*** *Then the soldiers, when they had crucified* [*Yeshua*](yeshua.html)*, took his garments, and made* [*four*](four.html) *parts, to every soldier a part; and also [his] coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots. These things therefore the soldiers did.*

This exceptional garment was of such fine character that it was not divided.

## Public Torah Reading



A person called to receive an aliyah, should wrap himself in a talit according to the Shulchan Arukh chapter 9, [law](law.html) 11. Here we see [Yeshua](yeshua.html) receiving an aliyah to the Torah:

***Luqas (***[***Luke***](luke.html)***) 4:16*** *And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the* [*synagogue*](synagog.html) *on the* [*Sabbath*](sabbath.html) *day, and stood up for to read.*

So, when [Yeshua](yeshua.html) receives an aliyah to the Torah He would have been wearing a talit.

\* \* \*

***II Luqas (Acts) 12:8*** *And the* [*angel*](angels.html) *said unto him, Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals. And so he did. And he saith unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me.*

## The [Prayer](prayer.html) Closet

During certain [prayers](prayer.html), like the [Amidah](amida.html), [Jews](gen-jew.html) put the talit over their [head](body.html) and “shut the doors”. This is the [prayer](prayer.html) closet spoken by Matityahu:

***Matityahu (Matthew) 6:5-6*** *And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites [are]: for they love to* [*pray*](prayer.html)[*standing*](mashal.html) *in the* [*synagogues*](synagog.html) *and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door,* [*pray*](prayer.html) *to thy Father which is in* [*secret*](sod.html)*; and thy Father which seeth in* [*secret*](sod.html) *shall reward thee openly.*

This next picture shows a group of men in their [prayer](prayer.html) closet performing the Aaronic benediction:



## The [Head](body.html) Covering

Many Christians are convinced that men should not wear a [head](body.html) covering. They usually base that on a mistaken understanding of this pasuk:

***1 Corinthians 11:4*** *Every man* [*praying*](prayer.html) *or prophesying, having [his]* [*head*](body.html) *covered, dishonoureth his* [*head*](body.html)*.*

During Shacharit an observant [Jewish](gen-jew.html) [male](male+female.html) will pull his talit over his [head](body.html) to form a [prayer](prayer.html) closet. It would be uncomfortable to do this if he were wearing a [hat](hair.html). Therefore, we do not wear a [hat](hair.html) during shacharit. We always pull the talit over our [head](body.html) when the Torah is taken out of the ark.

In the mincha (afternoon) and arbit (evening) [prayers](prayer.html), however, we do not lift the talit over the [head](body.html) so it is common for men to wear [hats](hair.html) during mincha and maariv.

## Pride

Pride causes us do things that will cause us to be noticed by men:

***Matityahu (Matthew) 23:1-7*** *Then spake* [*Yeshua*](yeshua.html) *to the multitude, and to his disciples, Saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, [that] observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not. For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay [them] on men's* [*shoulders*](body.html)*; but they [themselves] will not move them with* [*one*](one.html) *of their* [*fingers*](body.html)*. But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their* [*phylacteries*](tefillin.html)*, and enlarge the borders (tzitzith) of their garments, And love the uppermost rooms at* [*feasts*](festival.html)*, and the chief seats in the* [*synagogues*](synagog.html)*, And greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi.*

What is interesting about this passage is that the tzitzith are enlarged. Since we have [halachic](walking.html) requirements as to their length, those who were enlarging their tzitzith were going outside the bounds of halachic [law](law.html):

***Menachoth 41b*** *Our Rabbis* [*taught*](teacher.html)*: How many threads must* [*one*](one.html) *insert? Beth Shammai say,* [*Four*](four.html)*; but Beth Hillel say.* [*Three*](three.html)*. And how far must they hang down? Beth Shammai say,* [*Four*](four.html) *[fingerbreadths]; but Beth Hillel say,* [*Three*](three.html)*. And as for the* [*three*](three.html) *[fingerbreadths] stated by Beth Hillel each must measure* [*one*](one.html)[*fourth*](four.html) *part of the handbreadth of an ordinary person. R. Papa said, The handbreadth of the Torah is equal to* [*four*](four.html) *times the width of the thumb, or* [*six*](six.html) *times the width of the little finger, or* [*five*](five.html) *times the width of the middle finger.*

*R. Huna said,* [*Four*](four.html) *[threads] must be [inserted in the garment] within [the distance of]* [*four*](four.html) *[fingerbreadths from the corner], and they must hang down for* [*four*](four.html) *[fingerbreadths]. Rab Judah said,* [*Three*](three.html) *[threads] must be inserted within* [*three*](three.html) *[fingerbreadths from the corner], and they must hang down for* [*three*](three.html) *[fingerbreadths]. R. Papa said, The* [*law*](law.html) *is:* [*Four*](four.html) *[threads] must be inserted within* [*three*](three.html) *[fingerbreadths from the corner], and they must hang down for* [*four*](four.html) *[fingerbreadths].*

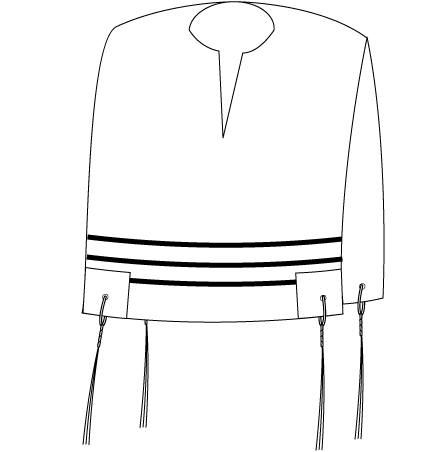
## “Tentmakers”

Paul, and a couple of his friends, were “tentmakers”:

***II Luqas (Acts) 17:33 – 18:3*** *So Paul departed from among them. Howbeit certain men clave unto him, and believed: among the which [was] Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them. After these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth; And found a certain* [*Jew*](gen-jew.html) *named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla; (because that Claudius had commanded all* [*Jews*](gen-jew.html) *to depart from* [*Rome*](edom.html)*:) and came unto them. And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, and wrought: for by their occupation they were tentmakers.*

Now, a “tentmaker” is not [one](one.html) who makes a a canvas [dwelling](dwelling.html) place, as most of us would envision. A “tentmaker”, according to my [teacher](teacher.html), is [one](one.html) who makes talitot. This suggests that Hakham Shaul was making [Jewish](gen-jew.html) garments for [Jews](gen-jew.html). Why is a talit maker called a “tentmaker”? Because a tent is a [dwelling](dwelling.html) place and THE [dwelling](dwelling.html) place of the righteous is with [HaShem](hashem.html) in his [prayer](prayer.html) closet. Except we are privately alone and communing with [HaShem](hashem.html), we are not [dwelling](dwelling.html) in the [dwelling](dwelling.html) of the righteous.

# VIII. The Talit Katan



The talit katan, the small talit, is also [known](daat.html) by its [Hebrew](hebrew.html) [name](name.html): Arba Kanfot, “[Four](four.html) Corners”.

The Talit Katan consists of a simple rectangle of cloth, with a hole for the [neck](body.html). The Talit Katan should be at least a cubit (or Amah) square on each side.

It is good and proper for every person to be careful to wear a "talit katan" [the small garment with tzitzith that is worn under a shirt] all day, in order that he remember the [commandment](cmds613.html)[s] every second.[[16]](#footnote-16)

# IX. In The [Talmud](orallaw.html)

The [Talmud](orallaw.html) is part of the [oral law](law.html). The [Talmud](orallaw.html) presumes that an observant [Jewish](gen-jew.html) [male](male+female.html) will wear a talit. Lets look at some of the more interesting example used in the [Talmud](orallaw.html) that did not seem to fit anywhere else:

## Exemptions

***Menachoth 40a*** *Our Rabbis* [*taught*](teacher.html)*: A linen garment is, according to Beth Shammai, exempt from tzitzith; but Beth Hillel declare it liable. The Halakhah is in accordance with Beth Hillel. R. Eliezer son of R. Zadok said, Is it not a fact that any* [*one*](one.html) *in* [*Jerusalem*](city.html) *who attaches blue threads [to his linen garment] causes amazement? Rabbi said, If that is so, why did they forbid it? Because people are not versed in the* [*law*](law.html)*.*

## Protection From [Sin](sin.html)

***Menachoth 43b*** *"Whoever wears* [*Tefillin*](tefillin.html) *on his* [*head*](body.html) *and arm, Tzitzith on his clothes, and has a* [*Mezuzah*](mezuzah.html) *on his door can be assured he will not* [*sin*](sin.html)*, since he has many reminders. They are the* [*angels*](angels.html) *who prevent him from sinning, as [*[*Psalms*](psalms1.html) *34:8] declares: 'The* [*angel*](angels.html) *of G-d camps around those who fear Him and rescues them.'"*

The [Gemara](orallaw.html) tells us about a student of Rabbi Meir who had far too much money for his own good. He once heard there was a harlot in [Rome](edom.html) who was an outstanding in every way:

***Menachoth 44a*** *It was* [*taught*](teacher.html)*: R. Nathan said, There is not a single precept in the Torah, even the lightest, whose reward is not enjoyed in this* [*world*](worlds.html)*; and as to its reward in the* [*future*](future.html)[*world*](worlds.html) *I* [*know*](daat.html) *not how great it is. Go and learn this from the precept of tzitzith. Once a man, who was very scrupulous about the precept of tzitzith, heard of a certain harlot in* [*one*](one.html) *of the towns by the sea who accepted* [*four*](four.html) *hundred gold [denars] for her hire. He sent her* [*four*](four.html) *hundred gold [denars] and* [*appointed*](settimes.html) *a day with her. When the day arrived he came and waited at her door, and her maid came and told her, ‘That man who sent you* [*four*](four.html) *hundred gold [denars] is here and waiting at the door’; to which she replied ‘Let him come in’. When he came in she prepared for him* [*seven*](seven.html) *beds,* [*six*](six.html) *of silver and* [*one*](one.html) *of gold; and between* [*one*](one.html) *bed and the other there were steps of silver, but the last were of gold. She then went up to the top bed and lay down upon it naked. He too went up after her in his* [*desire*](needs.html) *to sit naked with her, when all of a sudden the* [*four*](four.html) *fringes [of his garment] struck him across the* [*face*](body.html)*; whereupon he slipped off and sat upon the ground. She also slipped off and sat upon the ground and said, ‘By the Roman Capitol, I will not leave you alone until you tell me what blemish you saw in me. ‘By the* [*Temple*](temple.html)*’, he replied, ‘never have I seen a woman as beautiful as you are; but there is* [*one*](one.html) *precept which the Lord our God has commanded us, it is called tzitzith, and with regard to it the expression ‘I am the Lord your God’ is twice written, signifying, I am He who will exact punishment in the* [*future*](future.html)*, and I am He who will give reward in the* [*future*](future.html)*. Now [the tzitzith] appeared to me as* [*four*](four.html) *witnesses [testifying against me]’. She said, ‘I will not leave you until you tell me your* [*name*](name.html)*, the* [*name*](name.html) *of your town, the* [*name*](name.html) *of your* [*teacher*](teacher.html)*, the* [*name*](name.html) *of your school in which you* [*study*](study.html) *the Torah’. He wrote all this down and handed it to her. Thereupon she arose and divided her estate into* [*three*](three.html) *parts;* [*one*](one.html)[*third*](three.html) *for the government,* [*one*](one.html)[*third*](three.html) *to be distributed among the poor, and* [*one*](one.html)[*third*](three.html) *she took with her in her* [*hand*](fourteen.html)*; the bed clothes, however, she retained. She then came to the Beth Hamidrash of R. Hiyya, and said to him, ‘Master, give instructions about me that they make me a proselyte’. ‘My daughter’, he replied; ‘perhaps you have set your* [*eyes*](body.html) *on* [*one*](one.html) *of the disciples?’ She thereupon took out the script and handed it to him. ‘Go’, said he ‘and enjoy your acquisition’. Those very bedclothes which she had spread for him for an illicit purpose she now spread out for him lawfully. This is the reward [of the precept] in this* [*world*](worlds.html)*; and as for its reward in the* [*future*](future.html)[*world*](worlds.html) *I* [*know*](daat.html) *not how great it is.*

# X. In the [Midrash](orallaw.html)

## Mordecai

[***Midrash Rabbah***](orallaw.html) ***- Leviticus XXVIII:6*** *… R. Levi said: When Mordecai saw* [*Haman*](esther.html)[*coming*](coming.html) *towards him leading the horse in his* [*hand*](fourteen.html)*, he remarked: ‘It appears to me that this villain comes for the sole purpose of slaying me.’ His disciples were* [*sitting*](mashal.html) *and learning in his presence. Said he to them: ' Rise and flee, lest you be scorched by my coal!’ They answered him: ‘Whether to be killed or to remain alive, we are with you, and will not desert you!’ What did he do? He enveloped himself in his Tallit and stood before the Holy* [*One*](one.html)*, blessed be He, in* [*prayer*](prayer.html)*, while his disciples sat and learned.*

## Judah and Tamar

[***Midrash Rabbah***](orallaw.html) ***- Genesis LXXXV:9*** *AND HE SAID: WHAT PLEDGE SHALL I GIVE THEE? AND SHE SAID: THY SIGNET AND THY CORD, AND THY* [*STAFF*](staff.html) *THAT IS IN THY* [*HAND*](fourteen.html) *(XXXVIII, 18). R. Hunia said: A holy spirit was enkindled within her. THY SIGNET alludes to royalty, as in the verse, Though Coniah the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah were the signet upon My right* [*hand*](mashal.html)*, etc. (Jer. XXII, 24); AND THY CORD (PETHIL - EKA) alludes to the Sanhedrin, as in the verse, And that they put with the fringe of each corner a thread (pethil) of blue, etc. (Num. XV, 38) AND THY* [*STAFF*](staff.html) *alludes to the royal* [*Messiah*](mashiach.html)*, as in the verse, The* [*staff*](staff.html) *of thy strength the Lord will send out of Zion (Ps. CX, 2). AND HE GAVE THEM TO HER... AND SHE CONCEIVED BY HIM-men mighty like himself and righteous like himself.*

## [Noach](noachide.html)

The talit is associated with the covering that [Shem](priests.html) did for [Noach](noachide.html) his father:

[***Midrash Rabbah***](orallaw.html) ***- Genesis XXXVI:6*** *AND SHEM AND JAPHETH TOOK A GARMENT. R. Johanan said: Shem commenced the good deed, then Japheth came and hearkened to him. Therefore Shem was granted a Tallit and Japheth a pallium. AND LAID IT UPON BOTH THEIR* [*SHOULDERS*](body.html)*. Now since it is said, AND WENT BACKWARDS, do we not* [*know*](daat.html) *that THEY SAW NOT THEIR FATHER'S NAKEDNESS? This, however,* [*teaches*](teacher.html) *that they hid their faces with their* [*hands*](fourteen.html) *and walked backward, giving him the respect due from a son to a father. Said the Holy* [*One*](one.html)*, blessed be He, to Shem: ‘Thou didst cover thy father's nakedness: By thy life! I will reward thee When these men are bound in their cloaks (be-sarbelehon), ' etc. (Dan. III, 21). (R. Judan and R. Huna [differed as to the meaning of ’ be-sarbelehon ‘]: R. Judan said: It means in their* [*prayer*](prayer.html) *cloaks; R. Huna said: It means in their robes of state.) The Holy* [*One*](one.html)*, blessed be He, said to Japheth: 'Thou didst cover thy father's nakedness: By thy life, I will reward thee, for It shall come to pass on that day, that I will give unto Gog a place fit for burial in* [*Israel*](city.html)*’ (Ezek. XXXIX, II). The Holy* [*One*](one.html)*, blessed be He, said to Ham: ' Thou didst bring thy father's nakedness into disgrace: By thy life, I will requite thee: So shall the king of Assyria lead away the captives of Egypt, and the* [*exiles*](galuyot.html) *of Ethiopia, young and old, naked and barefoot, and with buttocks uncovered to the shame of Egypt ‘ (Isa. XX, 4).*

Rashi (9-23) quotes this [midrash](orallaw.html) to tell us that Shem's reward for covering his father in a modest way was that his children received the [mitzvah](cmds613.html) of tzitzith to uphold. Rashi is [teaching](teacher.html) us that the true reward for a [mitzvah](cmds613.html) is another [mitzvah](cmds613.html), as the Tanna says in Avot: The reward of a [mitzva](cmds613.html) is a [mitzva](cmds613.html). The [Talmud](orallaw.html)[[17]](#footnote-17) relates that [one](one.html) who is careful in observing the [mitzvah](cmds613.html) of tzitzith will [merit](merit.html) to see the Shechinah.

## The Proselyte

[***Midrash***](orallaw.html) ***Rabbah -*** [***Numbers***](nchart.html) ***VIII:9*** *Aquila, the proselyte, once went in to R. Eliezer and said to him: ‘All the glory of the proselyte, then, consists in that He "Loveth the proselyte, in giving him* [*food*](food.html) *and raiment"!’ Said the latter to him: ‘Is this such a trifling matter in your* [*eyes*](body.html)*? It is a thing for which that ancestor of ours3 prostrated himself in* [*prayer*](prayer.html)*, saying, And will give me bread to* [*eat*](eating.html)*, and raiment to put on (Gen. XXVIII, 20), and now comes this man and He offers it to him on a tray [lit. " reed "]! ' He [Aquila] came in to R. Joshua, and the latter began to* [*speak*](mashal.html) *consolingly to him. "’Bread," ' he said ‘alludes to Torah; as it says, Come,* [*eat*](eating.html) *of my bread (Prov. IX, 5).4 "Raiment" alludes to the Tallit. If a man is worthy of acquiring Torah he is privileged to perform good deeds. Nay, more; they [the pious proselytes]* [*marry*](marriageact.html) *their daughters into the* [*priesthood*](priests.html)*, and their children's children will offer* [*burnt-offerings*](offering.html) *upon the altar [and so], "bread" refers to the showbread, and "raiment" to the robes of* [*High Priest*](priests.html)*hood.’ This applies to the* [*Sanctuary*](mikdash.html)*. Whence that they have a share in the gifts due to the* [*priest*](priests.html) *from the land? ‘Bread’ refers to the* [*first*](one.html) *cake of the dough, and ‘raiment’ to the* [*first*](one.html) *of the fleece. For this reason the text, AND EVERY MAN'S HALLOWED THINGS SHALL BE HIS is placed in the section dealing with the* [*proselyte*](aliens.html)*.*

## Tzitzith and the Dead

[***Midrash Rabbah***](orallaw.html) ***- Ecclesiastes IX:4*** *FOR THE LIVING* [*KNOW*](daat.html) *THAT THEY SHALL DIE (IX, 5). R. Hiyya Rabbah and R. Jonathan were* [*walking*](walking.html) *in front of the bier of R. Simeon, the son of Jose b. Lekunia, and the Tallit of R. Jonathan dragged upon his coffin. R. Hiyya Rabbah said to him: ' My son, lift up your Tallit so that [the dead] shall not say, "To-morrow they will come to us, and yet they revile us[[18]](#footnote-18)."’ He said to him, My master, is it not written, BUT THE DEAD* [*KNOW*](daat.html) *NOT ANYTHING? He answered, My son, you* [*know*](daat.html) *Scripture but not* [*Midrash*](orallaw.html)*. FOR THE LIVING* [*KNOW*](daat.html) *refers to the righteous who are called LIVING even in their death; BUT THE DEAD* [*KNOW*](daat.html) *NOT refers to the* [*wicked*](wicked.html) *who, even in their lifetime, are called DEAD. Whence do we* [*know*](daat.html) *that the righteous are called living even in their death? As it is said, Unto the land of which I swore unto* [*Abraham*](avraham.html)*, to* [*Isaac*](isaac.html)*, and to* [*Jacob*](israelja.html)*, saying (Ex. XXXIII, 1). It is not stated here "to the patriarchs", but "unto* [*Abraham*](avraham.html)*, to* [*Isaac*](isaac.html)*, and to* [*Jacob*](israelja.html)*"; He said to Moses, "Go and tell them that the oath which I swore to them I have fulfilled," as it is stated, To thee will I give it, and to thy* [*seed*](flower.html) *for ever (Gen. XV, 15). The* [*wicked*](wicked.html) *are called dead, as it is written, I have no pleasure in the death of the dead (Ezek. XVIII, 32). Can "the dead" die! In fact it alludes to the* [*wicked*](wicked.html) *who, even in their lifetime, are called dead.’ [R. Jonathan] said to him, ‘Blessed be he who has* [*taught*](teacher.html) *me* [*Midrash*](orallaw.html)*,’ and kissed him on his* [*head*](body.html)*.*

[***Midrash***](orallaw.html) ***Rabbah - Ecclesiastes VII:16*** *Some* [*time*](time.html) *later Elisha b. Abuyah became ill, and it was told R. Meir that he was sick. He went to visit him and said, ‘Repent.’ He asked, ‘Having gone so far will I be accepted?’ R. Meir replied, ‘Is it not written, Thou turnest man to contrition (Ps. XC, 3), i.e. up to the* [*time*](time.html) *that life is crushed out [the penitent is accepted]?’ Then Elisha b. Abuyah* [*wept*](mashal.html) *and died. R. Meir rejoiced, saying, ‘My master seems to have departed in a mood of repentance.’ When, however, they buried him,* [*fire*](fire.html) *came to burn his grave. They went and told R. Meir, ‘The grave of your master is ablaze!’ He went out, spread his Tallit over it, and said to him, ' Tarry this night (*[*Ruth*](ruth.html) *III, 13) in this* [*world*](worlds.html) *which is wholly night, And it shall be in the morning, if he who is good will* [*redeem*](redemption.html) *thee, he will* [*redeem*](redemption.html) *thee (ib.). What means "And it shall be in the morning"? In the* [*world*](worlds.html) *which is wholly good. [What means] " If he who is good will* [*redeem*](redemption.html) *thee"? It alludes to the Holy* [*One*](one.html)*, blessed be He, as it is said, The Lord is good to all (Ps. CXLV, 9). But if He [i.e. God] will not* [*redeem*](redemption.html) *thee, then will I [Meir]* [*redeem*](redemption.html) *thee, as the Lord liveth; lie down until the morning’ (*[*Ruth*](ruth.html) *loc. cit.). The* [*fire*](fire.html) *was then extinguished.*

*R. Meir's disciples asked him, ' Rabbi, in the* [*World*](futures.html) *to Come should you be asked, " Whom do you want, your* [*father*](fathers.html) *or your* [*teacher*](teacher.html)*? " what would you say? ' He replied, ‘*[*First*](one.html) *my father and then my* [*teacher*](teacher.html)*.’ They said to him, ‘And will they listen to you?’ He answered them, ' Is there not a* [*Mishnaic*](orallaw.html)[*teaching*](teacher.html) *that [in the* [*event*](feasts.html) *of a* [*fire*](fire.html) *on the* [*Sabbath*](sabbath.html)*] the case of a book may be saved with the book and the case of* [*phylacteries*](tefillin.html) *together with the* [*phylacteries*](tefillin.html)*! So may Elisha be* [*saved*](salvation.html) *through the* [*merit*](merit.html) *of his* [*knowledge*](knowledge.html) *of Torah.’*

# XI. Customs

According to Ashkenazic custom, the blessing on tzitzith is *Le'hitatef Ba*-*tzitzit* (to enwrap in THE *tzitzith*). It's interesting to note that the Sephardic custom is to say *Be-tzitzith* (to enwrap in *tzitzith*). According to the Sephardic custom, only if [one](one.html) wears THE authentic tzitzith would he say *Ba*-*tzitzith* (in THE *tzitzith*). Authentic *tzitzith* have not only white strands, but have a strand of blue-*tekhelet* as well. If [one](one.html) can obtain *tekhelet* and puts it on his garment, then the Sephardic custom would be to say *Ba*-*tzitzit*, since he would be fulfilling the [commandment](cmds613.html) in the most perfect manner[[19]](#footnote-19).

\* \* \*

What Torah[*mitzvah*](cmds613.html)([*mitzvah*](cmds613.html) *d'oraita*) is it that, if done [one](one.html) way, [one](one.html) blessing is said, and if done another way a different blessing is said (according to Ashkenazic custom)?

The [*Mitzvah*](cmds613.html)of *Tzitzith*

The Torah [commands](cmds613.html) that if we wear a [four](four.html)-cornered garment (*talit*) we must attach *tzitzith*, fringes, to each corner. When donning a large *talit,* the [type](types.html) worn for [prayer](prayer.html), the blessing is "Blessed are You, G-d... who commanded us to enwrapourselves in *tzitzith*" (*l'hitatef ba'tzitzit*). But when donning a small *talit* (the [type](types.html) which is generally worn under the shirt) the blessing said (according to Ashkenazic custom) is "Blessed are You...who commanded us regarding the [*mitzvah*](cmds613.html) of *tzitzith*" (*al mitzvat tzitzith*).

According to Sephardic custom, *l'hitatef* may be said on the small *talit* as well.

ALTERNATIVE ANSWER: The blessing on [*brit mila*](circumcz.html)is "Blessed are You...who commanded us regarding [circumcision](circumcz.html)" (*al hamila*). But if the father of the child performs the *brit* himself, then according to Rambam the blessing is "...Who commanded us to [circumcise](circumcz.html) the son" (*Lamul et haben*).[[20]](#footnote-20)

\* \* \*

At Shacharit, on [Simchat Torah](simchat.html), a chupa is often made over the Bima by [four](four.html) tall guys with a talit, as the Torah is completed.

\* \* \*

We tie them on our [fingers](body.html) when we say the [Shema](shema.html).

\* \* \*

The minimum size of a *talit* is that which would suffice to clothe a small child able to [walk](walking.html)[[21]](#footnote-21).

\* \* \*

**"It is a great disgrace for a Torah scholar to** [**pray**](prayer.html) **without being wrapped in a Talit"[[22]](#footnote-22)**

\* \* \*

Since talmudic times, it has been customary to bury a [male](male+female.html), clothed in a kittel, in the talit which he had used during his lifetime, after its fringes have been deliberately rendered ritually unfit.

\* \* \*

**No talitot in a cemetery**

Based upon Mishle (Proverbs) 17:5:

***Mishle (Proverbs) 17:5*** *Whoso mocketh the poor reproacheth his Maker: [and] he that is glad at calamities shall not be unpunished.*

Neither talit nor [tefillin](tefillin.html) should not be worn in a cemetery, nor should a [Torah scroll](letters.html) be read there so as not to "shame" the dead who are no longer able to perform these [*mitzvot*](cmds613.html)*[[23]](#footnote-23)*.

\* \* \*

**"It is the way for all Sages and their students to** [**pray**](prayer.html) **only when (unless) wrapped in a Talit"**-- [[24]](#footnote-24)

## Kinyan – Acquisition

The sages of Yemen employed the corner of the talit to make a *Kinyan sudar* (a form of contractual agreement whereby the seller or buyer lifts up an object--often a handkerchief--which the other gives him). Rabbi Y. Kafich, esteemed Yemenite Rabbi and scholar, considers this use of the talit a tradition of ancient times, and this receives some support from Saadia Gaon, for in his commentary on the book of Proverbs, Saadia compares:

***Mishle (Proverbs) 6:1*** *"You have struck your* [*hands*](fourteen.html) *for a stranger"*

To the procedure for a kinyan, remarking that the best garment for this purpose is [one](one.html) that reminds us of the [mitzvot](cmds613.html), [commandments](cmds613.html). The Yemenite practice of using a corner of a talit for a kinyan sudar is therefore most appropriate, since we are told in Bamidbar 15:39 that looking at the tzitziyot should make us "remember all the [commandments](cmds613.html) of [HaShem](hashem.html)."

**How does** [**one**](one.html) **have an *aliyah*?**

The person honored with the aliyah comes forward when called. The reader will open the scroll and point to where s/he will begin reading. The person called to the Torah takes the tzitzith of the talit and touches them to the [first](one.html) word to be read and kisses the tzitzith. The Torah will then be rolled closed and, in many congregations, covered. The [one](one.html) blessing the Torah holds the wooden rollers and recites the [first](one.html) blessing. After the reading completes reading the section for that aliyah, the reader will point out the last word read to the person who is blessing the Torah, who again takes the tzitzith, touches the last word, and kisses the tzitzith. The scroll is again rolled closed, and the person reciting the blessing holds the wooden rollers and recites the second blessing.

The Chupah



The talit is often spread across [four](four.html) poles to form a [marriage](mashal.html) canopy under which [kiddushin](wedding.html) ([marriage](mashal.html)) takes place.

**Birchat** [**Kohanim**](priests.html)



The [kohanim](priests.html) recite the blessing with their talitot drawn forward to cover their [heads](body.html) and their [hands](fourteen.html) stretched out at shoulder height with the palms facing forward. The [hands](fourteen.html) are held touching at the thumbs with the [first](one.html) [two](two.html) [fingers](body.html) of each [hand](fourteen.html) separated from the other [two](two.html), thus forming a sort of fan.

Aharon and his offspring were commanded to bless the Children of Israel. As in ancient times, the [Kohanim](priests.html) act as a conduit through which [HaShem’s](hashem.html) blessings are bestowed on us. Today, this enduring [mitzva](cmds613.html) seems to be cloaked with special meaning as we envelop our children under the talit while the [Kohanim](priests.html) chant the berachot.

**Blessing the Children on** [**Simchat Torah**](simchat.html)

After all but the [three](three.html) designated adults have been summoned for an aliyah on [Simchat Torah](simchat.html), all the children are invited to the bimah for a ceremony called *Kol Hane’arim* ("all the youngsters"). Enough *talitot* are held over their heads to cover them like a canopy while blessings are recited over the Torah and the children.

Burial:

There is a custom to bury a man with his talit. When the talit is used as a burial garment, the tzitzith are removed or cut to signify that the [commandments](cmds613.html) of Torah are no longer binding on the [one](one.html) who has died.

Upon Arising:

Those that are stringent in their observance of [mitzvot](cmds613.html) do not [walk](walking.html) [four](four.html) amot without wearing tzitzith.

Talit Katan:

Since it is a widely held custom to wear a talit katan, [one](one.html) may not change from the custom of our [fathers](fathers.html). Today, therefore, [one](one.html) is obligated to wear a talit katan all day long[[25]](#footnote-25).

It is proper to wear a talit katan in order to be able to keep the [mitzva](cmds613.html) the entire day.

# XII. Mystical Understanding

When [Yehudah left Tamar](fathers.html), he left with her a [sign](signs.html):

The [Zohar](orallaw.html) says that he left her with talit and [tefillin](tefillin.html). [Tefillin](tefillin.html) is the cover. Talit is the ultimate covering. This was the beginning of bringing [Mashiach](mashiach.html). She was saying you have to cover for me. Everybody [knows](knowledge.html) Boaz was the neshama of Yehudah and [Ruth](ruth.html) was the neshama of Tamar. When [Ruth](ruth.html) said, "And you will spread your wings over your servant", she brought back the talit which Yehudah gave to Tamar and she said, "Now, put it over me."

\* \* \*

Tumah, uncleanness, sticks to the fingertips. It likes to stick on the edges of things, onto the husks of things. This is where it does the most good, clinging to the outer shell of things within this [world](worlds.html).

By placing the tzitzith on the ***corners*** of our material garments, we are protecting them, and ourselves, by way of [HaShem](hashem.html)’s Holy [Name](name.html), and His [613 mitzvot](cmds613.html).

When [one](one.html) is wrapped within the Talit, it is as if he resembles [HaShem](hashem.html) and the [angels](angels.html). He is wrapping himself in garments of majesty and light, the splendor of [HaShem](hashem.html)’s [commandments](cmds613.html).

\* \* \*

The dualism, which marks this passage, is not incidental. The dualism is found in the repetition of expressions:

1) said – saying;

2) fringes on the corners – the fringe at each corner;

3) recall and observe – you shall be reminded to observe;

4) I the Lord am your G-d – I the Lord your G-d.

It is also in pairs of expressions:

1) To make – attach;

2) Recall – observe;

3) [Heart](body.html) – [eyes](body.html);

4) Be reminded – observe. Perhaps to the latter list [one](one.html) could also add: whoring – being holy.

Form and content are not independent entities. There is no content without form, and "form ... is not indifferent to content; it is saturated with content and expresses this content in lasting statements. Thus it is quite possible that the dualistic structure of the passage on *tzitzith* should be tailored to its fundamental idea: [**Two**](two.html) **paths lay before us; each and every day of our lives we are called upon to choose, and the blue fringe on the *tzitzith* symbolizes to us the correct choice.**

\* \* \*

In [Jewish](gen-jew.html) mysticism the [mitzva](cmds613.html) of tzitzith is particularly connected to the [letter](letters.html) u, vav. The Bahir, for examples, says:

*They said to him: But what is Vav? He said: The* [*world*](worlds.html) *was sealed with* [*six*](six.html) *directions. They said: Is not Vav a single* [*letter*](letters.html)*? He replied: It is written[[26]](#footnote-26), "He wraps Himself in light as a garment, [he spreads out the* [*heavens*](heaven.html) *like a curtain]."*

Thus the mystical book, the Tanya, states that he who omits tzitzith blemishes the [letter](letters.html) u, vav, of His [name](name.html). The [letter](letters.html) u has the meaning of a hook and is the common prefix that mean “and”. Thus the u means a [connection](connection.html).

## In The [Zohar](orallaw.html)

***Soncino*** [***Zohar***](orallaw.html)***, Bereshit, Section 1, Page 23b***[*Prayer*](prayer.html) *which is not whole-hearted is pursued by* [*numbers*](nchart.html) *of destructive* [*angels*](angels.html)*, according to the Scriptural expression: “all her pursuers have overtaken her, etc.” (Lam. I, 3). Therefore it is well to preface* [*one*](one.html)*'s* [*prayer*](prayer.html) *with the verse, “but he is merciful and forgives iniquity, etc.” (Ps. LXXVIII, 38). The word “iniquity” signifies Samael, who is the serpent; “he will not destroy” signifies the destroyer; “he turneth his anger away” refers to the* [*demon*](demons.html) *Af (anger); “and doth not stir up all his wrath” refers to the* [*demon*](demons.html) *Hemah (wrath). To these powers are attached many destructive* [*angels*](angels.html)*, which are under* [*seven*](seven.html) *chiefs with* [*seventy*](seventy.html) *under-chiefs, dispersed in every* [*firmament*](heaven.html)*, and under them are myriads of others. When an Israelite wearing fringes and* [*phylacteries*](tefillin.html) *prays with devotion, then the words of the Scripture are fulfilled: “All the peoples of the earth shall see that the* [*name*](name.html) *of the Lord is called upon thee and they shall fear thee” (Deut. XXVIII, 10). We have agreed that “the* [*name*](name.html) *of the Lord” refers to the phylactery of the* [*head*](body.html)*; and when the destructive* [*angels*](angels.html) *see the* [*name*](name.html) *of* [*Tetragrammaton*](hashem.html) *on the* [*head*](body.html) *of him who is* [*praying*](prayer.html)*, they at once take to flight, as it is written, “a thousand shall fall at thy side” (Ps. XCI, 7).*

***Soncino*** [***Zohar***](orallaw.html)***, Bereshit, Section 1, Page 28b*** *In regard to them it is written, “Whoso hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book” (Ex. XXXII, 33), for they are of the* [*seed*](flower.html) *of* [*Amalek*](amalek.html)*, of whom it is said, “thou shalt blot out the memory of* [*Amalek*](amalek.html)*” (Deut. XXV, 19): it was they who caused the* [*two*](two.html) *tablets of the* [*Law*](law.html) *to be broken, whereupon, AND THE* [*EYES*](body.html) *OF BOTH OF THEM WERE OPENED AND THEY* [*KNEW*](daat.html) *THAT THEY WERE NAKED, i.e. Israel became aware that they were sunk in the* [*mire of Egypt*](thebirth.html)*, being without Torah, so that it could be said of them “and thou wast naked and bare”.... Next it says, AND THEY SEWED* [*FIG*](bethphag.html) *LEAVES, that is to say, they sought to cover themselves with various husks from the “mixed multitude”; but their real covering is the fringes of the Tzitzith and the straps of the* [*phylacteries*](tefillin.html)*, of which it is said, AND THE LORD GOD MADE FOR THE MAN AND HIS WIFE COATS OF SKIN AND COVERED THEM; this refers more properly to the* [*phylacteries*](tefillin.html)*, while the fringes are designed in the words AND THEY MADE FOR THEMSELVES GIRDLES.*

***Soncino*** [***Zohar***](orallaw.html)***, Bereshit, Section 1, Page 141a*** *AND* [*ISAAC*](isaac.html) *DIGGED AGAIN THE WELLS, ETC . R. Eleazar said: ‘In digging these wells* [*Isaac*](isaac.html) *acted fittingly, for he discerned from his* [*knowledge*](knowledge.html) *of the mysteries of Wisdom that in this way he could attach himself more firmly to his faith.* [*Abraham*](avraham.html) *likewise made a point of digging a well of water.* [*Jacob*](israelja.html) *found the well already prepared for him, and he sat down by it. Thus they all looked for a well and strove through it to preserve their faith pure and undiminished. And nowadays Israel hold fast to the well through the symbolism of the precepts of the Torah, as when each day every Israelite performs the precept of the fringes in which he envelops himself, and of the* [*phylacteries*](tefillin.html) *which he puts on his* [*head*](body.html) *and on his arm. All these have a deep symbolism, since God is found in the man who crowns himself with the* [*phylacteries*](tefillin.html) *and envelops himself in the fringes. Hence, whoever does not envelop himself in the latter, nor crown himself with the former each day to invigorate himself in faith, makes it appear as though faith does not* [*dwell*](dwelling.html) *within him, and fear of his Master has departed from him, and so his* [*prayer*](prayer.html) *is not as it should be. Hence our ancestors strengthened themselves in the true faith in digging the well, symbolic of the supernal well, which is the abode of the mystery of perfect faith.’ AND HE REMOVED FROM THENCE, AND DIGGED ANOTHER WELL.*

# XIII. [Redemption](redemption.html)

***Bamidbar (***[***Numbers***](nchart.html)***) 15:37-40*** *And* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *spake unto Moses, saying,* [*Speak*](mashal.html) *unto the children of Israel, and bid them that they make them tzitzith* (fringes) *in the borders of their garments throughout their* [*generations*](toldot.html)*, and that they put upon the tzitzith of the borders a ribband of blue: And it shall be unto you for a fringe, that ye may look upon it, and remember all the* [*commandments*](cmds613.html) *of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, and do them; and that ye seek not after your own* [*heart*](body.html) *and your own* [*eyes*](body.html)*, after which ye use to go a whoring: That ye may remember, and do all my* [*commandments*](cmds613.html)*, and be holy unto your God. I [am]* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *your God, which brought you* [*out of the land of Egypt*](thebirth.html)*, to be your God: I [am]* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *your God.*

The [Exodus](exodus.html) represents both a [physical](physical.html) and [spiritual](physical.html) [liberation](freedom.html), but in an important sense, it also involves the [liberation](freedom.html) from domination by [one](one.html)'s sexual appetites. Egypt was [known](daat.html) as a place of extreme sexual immorality. When the [Jews](gen-jew.html) left Egypt, this was [one](one.html) of the things that they were to leave behind (cf. Yoma 75a). In serving to check our passions, the tzitzith tend to reinforce this aspect of the [Exodus](exodus.html)[[27]](#footnote-27).

The end of the above section on tzitzith says, “I am [HaShem](hashem.html) your G-d who took you out of the land of Egypt” (the [exodus](exodus.html) [from Egypt](thebirth.html), which was the beginning and source of all subsequent [redemptions](redemption.html)), [teaching](teacher.html) us that the [mitzva](cmds613.html) of tzitzith is connected with, and hastens, the true and complete [redemption](redemption.html), as it is said:

***Micah 7:15*** *As in the days of your* [*exodus*](exodus.html) *from the land of Egypt, I will show you wonders.*

“The [four](four.html) corners” of the tzitzith correspond to the [four](four.html) terms describing the [redemption](redemption.html): “I will take out,” “I will [save](salvation.html),” “I will [redeem](redemption.html),” and “I will take” (Rashi, end of Parshat Shelach) as found in:

***Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) 6:6-7*** *Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, I [am]* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will* [*redeem*](redemption.html) *you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments: And I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God: and ye shall* [*know*](daat.html) *that I [am]* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *your God, which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.*

Indeed, the [redemption](redemption.html) will also be from “the [four](four.html) corners of the [world](worlds.html).”

\* \* \*

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1. This insight came from Yeshayahu Leibowitz [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. "Gedilim Ta'aseh Licha" (Devarim 22:12) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. [Mishna](orallaw.html) *Menachoth* 4.1 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Yebamoth 5b; Niddah 61b. See my Hebrew commentary p. 122. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Tosafoth. Yebamoth 5b. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Menachoth 39 a. To understand the following text it is necessary to clarify these two points: (a) The commandment of Tzitzith (Fringes) consists of making for each of the four corners of the garment four threads specially woven for that purpose. They are then passed through a hole situated a few thumbs' breadth away from each of the four corners, the threads are doubled, and two knots are then formed at the lower edge of the garment, followed by a series of windings and other double knots (see "The Commandments," Vol. I, p. 22, for precise details). (b) A cardinal principle in Torah law is that, subject to certain general exceptions, any duty of fulfilling a positive commandment overrides a negative commandment (see juxtaposition of these two verses: You will not wear a mingled stuff, wool and linen together You will make twisted cords upon the four corners of your covering, wherewith you cover yourself (Deuteronomy 22: 11-12). The closeness of the two verses intimates that the commandment of Fringes overrides the prohibition of sha'at neiz, so that the Fringes may be made with threads of wool even if the garment itself is of linen. The Gemara now argues on the basis of the second principle mentioned, that we must say that the upper knots [formed at the lower edge of the garment] after the four threads are passed through the opening and doubled, are obligatory by law of the Torah, "for should you think etc." [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. I.e., from the fact that the Torah intimated a special permission showing that the commandment of the Fringes overrides the prohibition of wearing sha'atneiz (see Note 116 (b)). [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. "Knots." The Hebrew is kesher - "knot" in the singular. But Ramban himself further on refers to "two knots" which are made at the lower edge of the garment. Basically, however, it is the first knot with which we are concerned, since if the threads are of wool and the garment of linen, and they are joined together with only one knot. which holds them together. nonetheless the prohibition of sha'atnetz would be incurred by wearing them afterwards, were it not for the fact that in that case the Torah especially permitted it. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Hence if the commandment of the Fringes required merely the passing of the four threads through the hole, and then doubling them, without tying them with a knot. there would have been no need for the Torah to intimate a special permission for sha'atneiz in Fringes, since the woolen threads and linen garment would not be considered "joined together." But if, on the other hand, after the threads are passed through the opening and are doubled they must then be tied with a knot, that constitutes already an act of joining the woolen Fringes and the linen garment together, which ordinarily would render it forbidden to be worn, and then we would understand that in the case of the Fringes, the Torah had to intimate a special permission. Thus far is the reasoning of the Talmud. Ramban now deducts from it, that in order to be included in the prohibition of sha'atnetz it is not necessary that the wool and linen themselves be combed, spun and twisted together, as Rashi had written. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Rabbi Y.M. Tuchashinski, "The Holy City & Temple" 5:5-6

    Rabbi Y.H. Hertzog, `Royal Purple & Biblical Blue' ch.11. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Elsner, Otto *Solution of the enigmas of dyeing Tyrian purple and the biblical tekhlet* *Dyes in History and Archaeology*, 1991, 10, pp11-16. The ratio of indigotin to dibromoindigotin in the purple dye derived from Phyllonotus (Murex) trunculus alters as this mollusc changes its sex. The dye must be vatted, although other shellfish such as Thais (Purpura) haemostoma may be used as direct dyes. A range of shades can be obtained, one of which may be the biblical 'tekhelet' [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Zohar 1:28b [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Much of this section comes from my teacher Hakham Dr. Yosef ben Haggai. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. This section comes from my teacher Hakham Dr. Yosef ben Haggai. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Marcus, J. (2000), The Anchor Bible: Mark 1-8 – A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary, New York: Doubleday, pp. 358-359. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. [Mishnah](orallaw.html) Brurah siman 24 [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Menachoth 43b [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. The Tallit was provided with fringes (v. Num. XV, 38), from which the dead are exempt. R. Hiyya meant that by allowing his fringes to trail over their coffins (or graves) R. Jonathan seemed to be reproaching the dead that they lacked a precept, which he possessed. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Baruch Sterman had this comment [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Shulchan Arukh Chaim 8:5,6; Shulchan Arukh Yoreh Deah 265:1,2; See also Shulchan Arukh Yoreh Deah 305:10 [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Sh. Ar., OH 16:1 [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Mishna Torah / Hilcoth Tzitzith 3:12 [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Sh. Ar., YD 367:2–4 [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. [Mishnah](orallaw.html) Torah, Sefer Ahavah / Hilcoth Tefillah/ Perek Heh [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Moshe Feinstein [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Psalm 104:2 [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. R. Aryeh Kaplan, Tzitzith, NCSY, pp. 43-52 [↑](#footnote-ref-27)