

## Tzitzit, Fringes, Tassels, תְּצִיֵּזִית FAQ

Disclaimer *a priori*: Target audience is those Torah followers who accept Yeshua as Messiah ben Yosef and Messiah ben David. Every attempt is made to be true to scriptural, rabbinic, traditional and modern interpretations. But note well that opinions are not universally homogeneous, even among a well defined group.

God's instructions to us in the Torah provide the discipline and self-control that are key to human happiness. It wants to guide us into taking the fork in the road that leads to the fullness of life, both here and hereafter, not the wrong road on which we would find suffering, frustration, evil and the suppression of our highest and most noble aspirations. It gives us the tools with which to prevent our eyes and our hearts from enticing us into thinking that life is the pursuit of pleasure – the pursuit of beauty and physical things.

The sages teach us that, “*He who carefully observes the commandment of Tzitzit will be able to receive [one says grab] the Divine presence*”<sup>1</sup> because God does not want us to “*explore after our heart and our eyes, after which we go astray.*” As Rashi says, “The eye sees, then the heart desires, and then the body sins.” But God does not want us to be misled by our eyes and our hearts. Therefore he has given us a visible reminder of Himself and His Laws. *Tzitzit*, which means to “appear in visible form” (Hirsch), remind us that the animal in us seeks gratification only from physical things which can be seen and felt, while our truest, greatest and most meaningful attainments and relationships are with or from God, who is unseen and invisible.

### What does Scripture say about tzitzit?

*Speak to the sons of Israel, and tell them that they shall make for themselves tassels (תְּצִיֵּזִית) on the corners of their garments throughout their generations, and that they shall put on the tassel of each corner a cord of blue. “It shall be a tassel for you to look at and remember all the commandments of the LORD, so as to do them and not follow after your own heart and your own eyes, after which you played the harlot, so that you may remember to do all My commandments and be holy to your God. “I am the LORD your God who brought you out from the land of Egypt to be your God; I am the LORD your God. (Numbers 15:38-41)*

*You shall make yourself tassels (תְּצִיֵּזִית) on the four corners of your garment with which you cover yourself. (Deuteronomy 22:12)*

*He stretched out the form of a hand and caught me by a lock (תְּצִיֵּזִית) of my head; and the Spirit lifted me up between earth and heaven and brought me in the visions of God to Jerusalem,<sup>2</sup> . . . (Ezekiel 8:3)*

*Thus says the LORD of hosts, ‘In those days ten men from all the nations will grasp the skirt of a Jew, saying, “Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.” (Zechariah 8:23) Referred to in Mas. Shabbath 32b, “‘Skirt’ is regarded as referring to the fringe.”*

*And a woman who had been suffering from a hemorrhage for twelve years, came up behind Him and touched the fringe of His cloak; (Matthew 9:20)*

*and they implored Him that they might just touch the fringe of His cloak; and as many as touched it were cured. (Matthew 14:36)*

*But they do all their deeds to be noticed by men; for they broaden their phylacteries and lengthen the tassels of their garments. (Matthew 23:5, on negative characteristics of scribes and Pharisees)*

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1. Mas. Menachoth 43b

2. Cited here because it provides insight into just what תְּצִיֵּזִית are: a group of strands, hair or cords

## What does Talmud say about tzitzit (fringes)?

The Soncino Talmud<sup>3</sup> interprets the word צִיצִית as fringe(s), which is mentioned 63 times, mostly in Mas. Menachoth. Here are a few selected quotations.

*The four threads are inserted into the corner of the garment and, having been folded to form a fringe of eight threads, they are joined (by winding one of the threads round the others) into one twisted cord which extends over a section of length and is then separated again into eight separate threads. (Mas. Yevamoth 5b)*

*Our Rabbis taught: Who is an 'Am ha-arez? Whoever does not recite the Shema' morning and evening with its accompanying benedictions; such is the statement of R. Meir. The Sages say: Whoever does not put on the phylacteries. Ben Azzai says: Whoever has not the fringe upon his garment. R. Jonathan b. Joseph says: Whoever has sons and does not rear them to study Torah. (Mas. Sotah 22a)*

*Each fringe is in part wound around with thread (גָּדָל), and in part hangs loose (הָעָנָה). After the threads have been inserted in the hole at the corner of the garment and folded over double, one thread is taken and wound around the others, and after several windings a knot is made and then the windings begin over again. Each series of windings is called a joint (דְּוָלֵיט), and at the end of each joint a knot (קֶשֶׁר) is made to prevent the windings from becoming undone. (Mas. Menachoth 38b)*

*R. Huna said in the name of R. Shesheth who said it in the name of R. Jeremiah b. Abba who said it in the name of Rab, If the greater part of the fringe was wound around, it is still valid. And even if only one joint was made, it is valid. It is most becoming, however, for the fringe to be wound around for a third [of its length] and the remaining two thirds [to hang loose] as locks. (Mas. Menachoth 39a)*

*Our Rabbis taught: In a garment that is entirely blue [threads of] any colour fulfil [the precept of zizith], except imitation blue. An objection was raised: Only threads of the same colour as the garment fulfil the precept; but in a garment that is entirely blue one should insert blue threads and threads of some other colour, except threads of imitation blue; if, however, these were inserted, it is, nevertheless, valid!*

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

*R. Huna said, Four [threads] must be [inserted in the garment] within [the distance of] four [fingerbreadths from the corner], and they must hang down for four [fingerbreadths]. Rab Judah said, Three [threads] must be inserted within three [fingerbreadths from the corner], and they must hang down for three [fingerbreadths]. R. Papa said, The law is: Four [threads] must be inserted within three [fingerbreadths from the corner], and they must hang down for four [fingerbreadths]. (Mas. Menachoth 41b)*

## What were tzitzit? What are tzitzit?

In the ancient Near East the traditional garment<sup>4</sup> was a rectangular piece of woven cloth, nearly twice the length of the wearer, with a hole cut near the center for the head. Bundles of ends of the

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3. In case you are unaccustomed to using the Talmud as a source reference, remember that the Rabbis have had the mission of making Torah relevant to mankind for centuries, yes millenia, with the goal of enhancing the relationship between God and man. Few specific details are provided in Torah, and culture has erased or irreversibly changed much about life. Therefore interpretation is necessary for us to be able to live Torah.

*Baruch Hashem* for the sages who spent their lives bridging the gap of understanding.

4. Easily made without a sewing machine.

weaving warp (as opposed to the perpendicular woof) were typically tied off to prevent the garment from unraveling, creating fringes at the bottom of the garment. The “extra” tassels or fringes that hung from the four corners were specially tied there to fulfill the positive mitzvah, “On the affixing of *tzitzit*.”<sup>5</sup>

As long as such traditional garments were worn, definition of the proper *tzitzit* was quite straight forward, interpreted by the Talmud as cited above. As sewing made more form fitting clothing practical, those four corners disappeared from the usual daily attire. If one has no four-cornered garment, he cannot keep the commandment of the tassels or fringes. Therefore, in a serious, spiritual attempt to guard the commandment, Judaism created a four-cornered undershirt called a *tallit katan*, טלית קטן,<sup>6</sup> or small cloak, still in vogue today among Orthodox Jews and others. Some men let *tzitzit* hang out so that long strings hang from under their shirts. Others wear the strings tucked into their pants. Each method has its detractors, of course. One reason to wear the tassels exposed is to bear witness to HaShem.<sup>7</sup>

In addition to the *tallit katan*, Jewish men began to wear a large, four-cornered prayer shawl, טלית גדול, *tallit gadol*, or large cloak, during morning prayers. Orthodox and most Conservative Jewish men don a *tallit* today for morning prayers.

Some men who desire to take spiritual advantage of the benefits of *tzitzit* have adapted them to belt loops.<sup>8</sup> Worn inside the pants or outside, they serve the purpose given by God for wearing them: for us to “to look at and remember all the commandments of the LORD, so as to do them . . .” Detractors argue that belts do not have four corners. Does the round earth have four corners?<sup>9</sup>

Of course the Torah does not specify how to make *tzitzit*. Rabbinic law requires that they be composed of four strings made either of wool or exactly the same material as the *tallit*,<sup>10</sup> each string made of two threads that are tightly twisted together. One-third of the *tzitzit* (the *gedil*) must consist of windings, and the other two-thirds (the *anaf*) of loose strings. It is the custom to have five double knots in the *tzitzit*, with four groups of windings separating the knots. Accepted practice is for the first, or upper, group to be made with seven windings, the second with eight, the third with eleven, and the fourth with thirteen.

### When are *tzitzit* worn?

Torah does not specify an answer to this question, among many others.<sup>11</sup> Continually? During waking hours? When outside the home? While *davening*, praying? During Torah study? During feast days? When desiring to commune with God? Is wearing a *tallit* once per day adequate to fulfill the commandment, whose stated objective is for us to “to look at and remember all the commandments of the LORD, so as to do them . . .”?

One could argue that, because they were to be put on the outer garment originally, they should be worn during waking hours. And Orthodox Judaism so maintains. A very distinguishing mark of an

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5. An associated negative mitzvah of the 613 enumerated, is “Not to go astray after one’s heart and eyes.”

6. Available from many online vendors, in both the USA and Israel. Search for *tallit katan* and evaluate their blue threads.

7. But be aware of the increased responsibility for living a circumspect life. Otherwise you may be guilty of “*Chillul HaShem*,” “desecrating God’s name.” *Tzitzit* may seem like simple strings, but they can affect an individual’s entire lifestyle.

8. Available from [www.joinedtohashem.org/](http://www.joinedtohashem.org/)

9. *And He will lift up a standard for the nations And assemble the banished ones of Israel, And will gather the dispersed of Judah From the four corners of the earth.* (Isaiah 11:12)

10. Because of the law of *שֵׁט*, sha’atnez: “You shall not wear a material mixed of wool and linen together.” (Deuteronomy 22:11)

11. Just because Torah is not specific enough to satisfy our Greek mentality does not mean we can not and should not attempt to satisfy the intent of our instructions. Therefore the need to inquire of the sages, our spiritual leaders, and our hearts as to the proper course of action to delight HaShem.

Orthodox Jew today, anywhere in the world, are the *tzitzit* hanging from under his shirt or jacket.

Near universal adoption of the prayer shawl, with its *tzitzit* as implementation of the commandment, lends toward the interpretation of wearing them only while in morning prayers, either in private or in synagogue.

And one can argue that, in order to fulfill the purpose God provided, *tzitzit* should be worn continually during waking hours. Some men wear *tzitzit* today even when sleeping.

In second Temple times Yeshua and His disciples wore the ancient four-cornered garments, at least during their waking hours, and therefore *tzitzit* tied to their four corners, as dedicated Torah lovers. Folks grabbed Yeshua's tassels for miraculous healing.<sup>12</sup> While He disagreed with the ostentatious attitudes of some regarding their *tzitzit*, He did not disagree with their, or His, wearing them.<sup>13</sup>

### Should women wear *tzitzit*?

Again Torah does not specify an answer to this question, among others. The Hebrew for "speak to the sons [children] of Israel" (*b'nei Yisrael*) is דַּבֵּר אֶל-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בֶּן (ben) literally means son. The plural בְּנִים (*banim*), or בְּנֵי (*b'nei*) in this usage, literally means sons, but is sometimes translated as children. So was God saying, "Speak to the sons" or "Speak to the children," including females? We don't know, because of the primitive nature and small vocabulary of the Hebrew language.

Near Eastern cultures were and, to a large extent, are male oriented, not to discriminate but . . . (that's another topic). Biblically, historically and traditionally men have been the head of the household, been responsible for the family's relationship with God, and therefore did the communicating with Him, praying to Him, and sacrificing to Him. Judaism has maintained men as focus with regards to gender. For example, the *minyan* traditionally necessary for certain prayers consists of ten Jewish men – not women. Today's religious cultural sensitivities probably indicate that women should not wear *tzitzit* similar to those of men. However, "*Rab Judah attached fringes to the aprons of [the women of] his household;*"<sup>14</sup> (Mas. Menachoth 43a)

Both the traditional טלית קטן, *tallit katan*, and גדול, *tallit gadol* are currently viewed as men's clothing among Jewish communities. Wearing of either *tallitot* by women would most probably be considered as a breach of Torah's commandment regarding transvestitism.<sup>15</sup> But how can a woman with a heart for wearing *tzitzit* do so without offending God or man? She can affix them to a scarf, shawl, or other article of female clothing. And female jewelry containing blue threads, and maybe even "tassels," on four corners of, say, a bracelet, is available, even among the Orthodox of the Old City. Does a bracelet have four corners? Again, does the round earth have four corners?<sup>9</sup>

### Why wear *tzitzit*?

First, wearing *tzitzit* is a commandment of God. Enough said?

Second, He said the purpose of wearing them is for us "*to look at and remember all the commandments of the LORD, so as to do them and not follow after your own heart and your own eyes, after which you played the harlot, so that you may remember to do all My commandments and be holy to your God.*" So wearing *tzitzit* is a way of guarding our lives against evil inclinations. Do other ways of guarding exist? Sure, but why not take every advantage offered to us? Why turn down a gift? Especially from God?

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12. Matthew 9:20, 14:36

13. Matthew 23:5

14. "For he held that women are also bound to wear zizith."

15. *A woman shall not wear man's clothing, nor shall a man put on a woman's clothing; for whoever does these things is an abomination to the LORD your God.* (Deuteronomy 22:5)

Third, if we would be more like Yeshua,<sup>16</sup> we will wear *tzitzit*, as He did.

Fourth, the sages teach that God showed Moses how to cover his head when praying. “*And ‘the Lord passed by before him and proclaimed [etc.]. (referring to Exodus 34:6) R. Johanan said: Were it not written in the text, it would be impossible for us to say such a thing; this verse teaches us that the Holy One, blessed be He, drew his robe round Him like the reader<sup>17</sup> of a congregation and showed Moses the order of prayer. He said to him: Whenever Israel sin, let them carry out this service before Me,<sup>18</sup> and I will forgive them.’*”<sup>19</sup>

Fifth, if we love God, we will keep His commandments.<sup>20</sup>

Sixth, to be ready to spiritually lead in times to come. Let me explain. Israel’s special mission is to bear witness to God. “*You are My witnesses,*” declares the LORD, “*And My servant whom I have chosen, . . .*”<sup>21</sup> Whether you are in Israel as a biological Jew or a grafted-in Hebrew,<sup>22</sup> although you should constantly fulfill this mission, the main time of its fruition will be in the Messianic Age to come. When all Israel is brought back to God by *Mashiach*, they will in turn influence all mankind in this direction.<sup>23</sup> From Isaiah we learn that Israel will be in a unique position of moral and spiritual leadership in the Messianic Age. But who among Israel will be in a position to exert such leadership? Who will be the ones deemed capable of spreading God’s word to the rest of the world?

The sages teach us that it will be those individuals who are careful to observe the commandment of *Tzitzit*.<sup>24</sup> “*In those days, ten men of each nation will grasp the corner of [a garment containing tzitzit, worn by] a Jewish man, and they will say, ‘Let us go with you as we have heard that God is with you.’*”<sup>25</sup>

Seventh, to be holy. “. . . so that you may . . . be holy to your God.”<sup>26</sup> The word *holy* means two things: First that we are close to God, and second, that we are separated, set apart, from things that are ungodly. We wear *tzitzit* as a sign of our special relationship with God, as the ones who accepted and accept His Torah. He reiterates the concepts of this relationship when He says, *Thus you are to be holy to Me, for I the LORD am holy; and I have set you apart from the peoples to be Mine.*<sup>27</sup>

Eighth, if we allow *tzitzit* to be a constant reminder, keeping us from being misled by worldly temptations, we will form the habit of remembering God’s commandments. This in turn will ultimately lead us to become holy; that is, immersed in the Godly, rather than in our worldly desires.

Ninth, just as the outer garment that originally bore *tzitzit* was wrapped around to provide personal protection from the natural elements, so do today’s *tzitzit*, on whatever garment we choose to wear them – *tallit katan*, *tallit gadol*, belt loops, shawl, scarf, apron, . . . – wrap us in His protection from the spiritual elements (and maybe the natural elements as well), so that we *not follow after [our] own heart and [our] own eyes*.

Tenth, *tzitzit* have healing power. Such healing may be spiritual, mental, physical, . . . Witness the healings via *tzitzit* that are recorded in Matthew. (We only assume they were physical.) *Tzitzit* may

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16. Remember the chorus, “*To be like Jesus, To be like Jesus. That’s all I ask, To be like Him. All through life’s journey, From earth to heaven. That’s all I ask, To be like Him?*”

17. “Lit., ‘emissary’; the one appointed to lead the congregational prayers. It is usual for such a one to draw his robe over his head.”

18. “I.e., read from the Torah the passage containing the thirteen attributes.

19. *Mas. Rosh Hashana* 17b

20. John 14:15

21. Isaiah 43:10

22. Romans 11

23. Isaiah 2:2-4

24. *Mas. Shabbath* 32b

25. Zechariah 8:23

26. Numbers 14:40

27. Leviticus 20:26

seem like simple strings, but they can affect an individual's entire lifestyle, bringing healing in ways we fail to understand, and which we may not even recognize with our frail human minds, unable to understand His ways.

### Why the thread of blue?

Torah doesn't say why the blue thread is included in the tassel, but *It was taught: R. Meir used to say, Why is blue specified from all the other colours [for this precept]? Because blue resembles the colour of the sea, and the sea resembles the colour of the sky, and the sky resembles the colour of [a sapphire, and a sapphire resembles the colour of] the Throne of Glory, as it is said, And there was under his feet as it were a paved work of sapphire stone,*<sup>28</sup> *and it is also written, The likeness of a throne as the appearance of a sapphire stone.*<sup>29 30</sup>

### What about the techelet controversy?

. . . *that they shall put on the tassel of each corner a cord of תְּכֵלֶת, (t'chelet) blue. According to tradition the particular blue, תְּכֵלֶת, (t'chelet), can only be obtained from an animal known as the Chilazon. Because the precise identity of this animal is no longer known, dying the blue thread properly is impossible. With the destruction of the second Temple, the supply of this particular blue dye virtually disappeared. Still, a small supply was maintained by a handful of individuals who knew where to find the Chilazon. It appears that techelet dye was used to a small extent until the 8th century CE.*

The Biblical commandment to wear tsitsit is still observed today, but the prominent blue thread has all but been forgotten. What has remained are passages in the Talmud describing the source of the blue dye - a snail known as the *Chilazon*. This marine creature had a shell, could be found along the northern coast of Israel, and its body was "similar to the sea." The dye's color was "similar to the sky and sea," it was steadfast, extracted from the snail while still alive, and was indistinguishable from a dye of vegetable origin, called *kala ilan* (indigo).<sup>31</sup>

In 1858 the French zoologist Henri de Lacaze-Duthiers found that three Mediterranean mollusks produced purple-blue dyes. One, *Murex trunculus*,<sup>32</sup> was determined by him (and other scientists,

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28. Exodus 24:10

29. Ezekiel 1:26. *And as God sits upon His Throne of Glory He is immediately reminded of the blue thread of the zizith worn by the Israelites, and bestows upon them blessings. Moreover, it is a mark of honour for Israel to wear upon their garments a thread which bears the colour of the Throne of Glory.*

30. Mas. Menachoth 43b

31. <http://tekhelet.com>

32. The evidence for identifying the *Murex trunculus* as the source of *tekhelet* is decisive, and goes beyond merely fitting the general descriptions of the *Chilazon* as found in the Talmud:

\* The Jerusalem Talmud (as quoted by the *Raavyah*) translates *tekhelet* as *porphiron* (the Latin and Greek name for *trunculus*-like shells). Pliny and Aristotle describe these shells as the source of the ancient dyes.

\* The Talmud indicates that true *tekhelet* is indistinguishable from the blue dye of vegetable origin - *kala ilan* (indigo). The dye ultimately derived from *trunculus* is molecularly equivalent to indigo.

\* Extensive marine biological surveys have revealed that the only snails in the Mediterranean which produce stable dyes are those of the *Murex* family. The dye obtained from *trunculus* is very stable and steadfast, which accords with the Rabbinical description of *tekhelet*.

\* Archeologists in Tyre and elsewhere uncovered mounds of *Murex* shells dating from the Biblical period which were broken in the exact spot necessary to obtain the dyestuff. Chemical analysis of blue stains on vats from 1200 BCE reveals patterns consistent with those of modern day *trunculus*.

\* When listing the precious commodities used in building the Mishkan (tabernacle), the Torah consistently includes *tekhelet* along with gold, silver, and other familiar materials, recognized by all for their worth. *Yechezkel* speaks of the *tekhelet* from Tyre and the "Isles of Elisha", and the *Megillah* tells us that in Persia, Mordechai wears royal clothes made of *tekhelet*. Surely, the Torah is referring to that same valuable dye commonly used by royalty throughout the rest of the ancient world.

archeologists and historians) to be the source of the ancient Biblical blue. In 1913 the Chief Rabbi of Ireland, Rabbi Isaac Herzog (later Chief Rabbi of Israel), wrote a doctoral dissertation on the subject of Hebrew Porphyrology (the study of purple - a word he coined). Rav Herzog knew of the work done by Lacaze-Duthiers and others, and realized that all the evidence pointed to *Murex trunculus* as the most likely candidate for the *tekhelet* source. Two problems, however, prevented Rav Herzog from positively identifying that snail with the *Chilazon*. First, the dye obtained from the *trunculus* was purplish-blue, not pure blue as tradition maintained. Second, this snail has an off-white shell with stripes of brown, hardly fitting the Talmudic description of the *Chilazon* as appearing similar to the sea.<sup>31</sup>

Current research has supplied the solutions to these objections. The shell appears off-white with brown stripes when it is out of the water, cleaned and polished. In its natural element, however, *trunculus* is covered with a coat of sea fouling the color of the ocean. Everything in its vicinity is covered with the same fouling, making it almost impossible to distinguish the snail from the sea bed on which it is found. The Talmud's description is of the *Chilazon* in its natural habitat!<sup>31</sup>

The riddle of producing a pure blue color from the snail was serendipitously solved. While researching the methods used by the ancient dyers, Prof. Otto Elsner, of the Shenkar College of Fibers, noticed that on cloudy days, *trunculus* dye tended towards purple, but on sunny days it was a brilliant blue! He found that at a certain stage of the dyeing process, exposure to sunlight will alter the dye, changing its color from purple to blue. To the dye masters of old, working in the bright Mediterranean sunlight, this was certainly no secret.<sup>31</sup>

Rabbinic and traditional interpretation of the blue thread maintains that the commandment of *tzitzit* applies to all generations, even when there is no blue: *they shall make for themselves tassels (צִיצִית) on the corners of their garments throughout their generations . . .* Regarding the commandment of the blue thread, however, the Torah does not say “for generations.” . . . *throughout their generations, and that they shall put on the tassel of each corner a cord of blue.* “When the blue is available, it should be used; but if it is not available, this does not prevent us from fulfilling the commandment of *tzitzit*.”<sup>33</sup>

But recently much has been accomplished to reestablish the *tekhelet* dyeing process. Dr. Irving Ziderman, of the Israel Fiber Institute, has published a number of articles describing the scientific aspects and religious implications of the *trunculus* dye. Rabbi Menachem Borstein has written a book surveying the relevant Jewish legal aspects of *tekhelet*, and Prof. Tzvi Koren, of the Shenkar College of Fibers, has done rigorous chemical analysis of the dye from present day snails as compared with samples from archeological artifacts dating back 3,200 years. Until a few years ago, however, *tekhelet* could be found only in the library or the laboratory.

In 1985, Rabbi Eliahu Tavger of Jerusalem began researching and writing a book about ritual fringes - the *tsitsit* - and became convinced that authentic *tekhelet* had been discovered. Determined to actualize his newfound knowledge, and after much trial and error, he succeeded in applying the process according to the halakha from beginning to end. Based on Rabbi Tavger's pioneering work, פתיל תכלת, *P'til Tekhelet, A Thread of Blue*, was formed in an effort to provide *tekhelet* to the general public. Today, after more than 1,300 years, *tsitsit* are again being made with the elusive thread of *tekhelet*.<sup>26</sup>

In spite of the fact that during the past century certain venerable rabbis claimed to have identified the *chilazon*, based on its distinguishing features described in the Talmud, and one can often spot people wearing such *tallitot*, many, however, have cast doubts on the re-identification of the *Chilazon*. For example, Rabbi Sholom DovBer, the fifth Rebbe of Lubavitch, maintained that according to the teachings of *Kabbalah* the *Chilazon* will not reemerge until the coming of the Messiah.<sup>34</sup>

Those wishing to procure *tekhelet* blue threads for making *tzitzit* should be cautious of the source. At least two animals are currently being used to produce blue dye for *tzitzit*. One is described above. The

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33. Kaplan, Aryeh. *Tzitzith*.

34. [http://www.chabad.org/library/article\\_cdo/aid/530127/jewish/Techelet-Blue-Thread.htm](http://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/530127/jewish/Techelet-Blue-Thread.htm)

second is made from "Cuttlefish," *Sepia officinalis*, discovered and promoted by Rabbi Gershon Henoch Leiner (1839-90). Cuttlefish are marine animals of the order *Sepiida* belonging to the *Cephalopoda* class (which also includes squid, octopuses, and nautilus). The Radziner Hasidim carry on the tradition today of dyeing *tzitzit* Techelet from Cuttlefish in Bnei Brak, Israel.

### Wrapup

<sup>35</sup> *Tzitzit* join *tefillin* and *mezuzot* in commandment, in worship, in holiness. As we pray twice daily,

*Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one! You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.*

*It shall come about, if you listen obediently to my commandments which I am commanding you today, to love the LORD your God and to serve Him with all your heart and all your soul, that He will give the rain for your land in its season, the early and late rain, that you may gather in your grain and your new wine and your oil. He will give grass in your fields for your cattle, and you will eat and be satisfied. Beware that your hearts are not deceived, and that you do not turn away and serve other gods and worship them. Or the anger of the LORD will be kindled against you, and He will shut up the heavens so that there will be no rain and the ground will not yield its fruit; and you will perish quickly from the good land which the LORD is giving you. You shall therefore impress these words of mine on your heart and on your soul; and you shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. You shall teach them to your sons, talking of them when you sit in your house and when you walk along the road and when you lie down and when you rise up. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates, so that your days and the days of your sons may be multiplied on the land which the LORD swore to your fathers to give them, as long as the heavens remain above the earth.*

*The LORD also spoke to Moses, saying, "Speak to the sons of Israel, and tell them that they shall make for themselves tassels on the corners of their garments throughout their generations, and that they shall put on the tassel of each corner a cord of blue. It shall be a tassel for you to look at and remember all the commandments of the LORD, so as to do them and not follow after your own heart and your own eyes, after which you played the harlot, so that you may remember to do all My commandments and be holy to your God. I am the LORD your God who brought you out from the land of Egypt to be your God; I am the LORD your God."*

14 June 2009

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35. Deuteronomy 6:4-9; 11:13-21; Numbers 15:37-41