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Tzit-tzit and Blue Thread

15: 37-41

Tzit-tzit and blue thread DIG: Is there any connection between these mitzvot in this chapter and the rebellion stories in Numbers 11-14? What was the purpose of wearing tassels? What does the color blue signify? How can the tassels be worn today? Should they, or shouldn't they? Explain.

REFLECT: What creative reminder can help you remember God's grace to you? How would such tassels fulfill their stated purpose (Deuteronomy 6:4-9)? What "tassels" do you put before you to remember what God wants in your fellowship with Him? Did Yeshua wear tassels? What is your proof?

The tzitzit represents a standard of behavior and a code of morality.

Following right on the heels of the Shabbat incident (**to see link click [Ck](#) - The Sabbath-Breaker**), is a teaching about wearing **tassels**, or **the tzit-tzit**. There is an obvious connection and reason for this placement. When we see this connection, we will catch a refreshing glimpse into the grace and mercy of our **Loving Father**. To understand the context **Moshe** created here, we need to ask ourselves, "Would **the Sabbath breaker** have violated **God's** mitzvah if he were wearing **tzit-tzit**?" Of course, that is an impossible question to answer. But it helps to bring out the point of the text. **ADONAI** taught **the children of Isra'el** that **they** should put **tzit-tzit on the four corners of their garments**.²⁹² Which, like **the Challah** (see **[Ci](#) - The Challah**), were designed to help prevent **the Israelites** from straying from **Ha'Shem**. This is one of the more popular signs of Orthodox Judaism, Messianic Judaism, and the fake Gentile Hebrew Roots movement (see the commentary on **[Galatians Ak](#) - The Hebrew Roots Movement: A Different Gospel**).²⁹³



Tassels on garments (15:37-38): ADONAI spoke to Moshe saying: **Speak to the people of Isra'el, instructing them to make, through all their generations, tzit-tzit (tassels) on the four corners of their garments, and to put a blue thread on each corner of the tzit-tzit** (see the commentary on [Deuteronomy Dz - Twisted Threads](#)). In today's world where **four-cornered garments** are not usually worn, **the sages developed small four-cornered garments usually worn under the clothes so that only the tassels show**. They function like a string tied to a finger - **they** are visible . . . touchable reminders to obey the mitzvot, to keep hearts and minds on **the Holy One**, and to walk as redeemed people.

In the ancient world, it was common for the hem of **the garment** to be lavishly embroidered. **The tassels** were actually just natural extensions of the hem. Ancient Near Eastern hems were the most ornate and extravagant part of **the clothing**. The most expensive threads and colors were woven and embroidered into the hem. As such, the hem of one's **garment** made an important fashion statement about social rank, wealth, status, and prestige. The fancier the hem, the more important the person must have been. It served as a unique ID badge of sorts. Cuneiform tablets (logo-style writing used in several languages of the Ancient Near East) sometimes used the phrase "to cut off the hem" to refer to cutting someone off. A husband signified the divorce of his wife by cutting off the hem of her **robe**. The great significance of the hem of **the garment** certainly sheds light on the story in **First Samuel** where **David** cut off the hem from **Sha'ul's robe** (see the commentary on [The Life of David Bj - David Spares Sha'ul's Life](#)).

The tzit-tzit were decorative extensions of the threads of the hem. Their significance is that **they** were a sign of nobility. Dyes were very expensive, especially those derived from the

gland of the murex snail. Each snail produced only the smallest quantity of dye. An entire **garment** made from the very expensive blue dye was far beyond the means of the ordinary Israelite, but probably anyone could afford a few threads worth of it. After the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD (see the commentary on [The Life of Christ Mt - The Destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple Remembered on Tisha B'Av in 70 AD](#)), the blue dye production was lost to the majority of Judaism. By the Middle-Ages, **the blue thread** had disappeared altogether. Thus, **tzit-tzit** were worn white for some fifteen hundred years. In the last century, Hasidic Jews (a special movement within Orthodox Judaism) began to produce **the blue thread** again by producing dye from the murex snail. **The blue thread** is commonly used by Messianic Jews today.

Modern clothing is no longer conveniently rectangular-shaped with **four corners**. Therefore, observant Jews and Messianic Gentiles remember this mitzvah by affixing several threads tied in a sequence of knots onto **the four corners** of a ritual **garment** called a tallit. The tallit is the traditional prayer shawl that Jewish men wear during morning prayer. The tallit katan is a sort of **four cornered**, square undershirt. Either one of these (or both) constitute an acceptable, biblically-based expression of the mitzvot. There are some other considerations tough.²⁹⁴

The blue color was the same as **the high priest's robe** (see the commentary on [Exodus Ey - Make the Robe of the Ephod](#)). Today, **Orthodox Jews** eliminate the color **blue** on their **tzitzit** because **they** say that the exact fish cannot be identified. **They** contend that when Elijah the prophet comes he will clear up this problem. **In addition, Rabbi Rashi said that the word tzitzit has the numerical value of 600, but there are eight threads and five knots which gives us a total of 613, and there are 613 commandments in the Torah.**

To look at (15:39-41): Is wearing **the tallit** once a day adequate to fulfill the mitzvot? The Torah does not specify how often **the tzit-tzit** must be worn, but it does say that the **tassels** are there **for you to look at and thereby remember all of ADONAI's mitzvot and be holy to your God, so that you won't go around wherever your own heart and eyes** (the windows of the soul) **lead you to prostitute yourselves.** Thus, less than once a day might be considered remiss. For the same reason, many choose to wear them continually because **it will help you remember and obey all of God's mitzvot and be holy for Him.**

Seeing/feeling **the tzit-tzit** is supposed to safeguard you against **going around** doing **whatever your own heart and eyes lead you.** The tassels are reminders of **the**

commandments. They are to remind one of **their** holy position among **the people of God. They** are to remind you not to look at things you shouldn't be looking at. But sometimes you are innocent, you can't unsee what you've seen. But then **the tzit-tzit** is there to remind you not to take *the second* look. **David** found that out the hard way. **The sages defined going around wherever your eyes lead you to primarily mean a lustful urge.**

How can **the tzit-tzit** deter against lust and immorality? They are supposed to be a visible reminder of one's identity. To forget one's identity makes it easier to sin. When a person forgets who they are, they feel free to indulge themselves. Every army knows the psychological power of uniforms. A standard uniform dress code serves to enforce group identity. The soldier dressed in a uniform, acts like a soldier. When off-duty in civilian clothes, he takes on the persona of a civilian. His military discipline vanishes. This concept is easily illustrated at school or in the workplace. People behave according to the way they are dressed. When dressed formally, people are more polite, professional, and formal. When dressed casually, they are more relaxed. In the same way, **tzit-tzit** enforces the group identity within Orthodox Judaism, or for some, Messianic Judaism. **They** represent a standard of behavior and a code of morality. In that sense, **they** are also like the uniform of the Torah. **They** also keep **the Jews** a distinct people.²⁹⁵

The section ends with an emphatic restatement of **God's** self-description that appears first at the head of the Ten Commandments in **Exodus 20:2. I am ADONAI your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, in order to be your God. I am ADONAI your God.** This concludes the whole series of mitzvot – not with a mitzvah, but with an important affirmation of the continuing relationship between **God** and **His people**.²⁹⁶

Yeshua's tassels: Most people don't realize that **Yeshua** wore **the blue tassels** just as **Moshe** taught. In **Matthew 9:20** and **14:36** we are told that certain people were healed by merely touching **the tassels** (Greek: *kraspedou*) **of his garment.** Why did **Messiah** wear **tzit-tzit**? Was it because **He** needed reminders to follow the Torah? Hardly! Was it because He needed help to keep **His heart and eyes** from **going after** things **they** should not pursue? Heaven forbid!

I can suggest **three reasons** why **He** wore **them.** **First,** because the Torah teaches it. Since **Yeshua** never violated the Torah, then it was only natural for **Him** to obey **the written Word**, so as not to contradict **Himself** and to wear **them.** **Secondly,** **He** was always perfectly sanctified. He was always set apart from sin. Moreover, **He** represents a whole community of innumerable people whom **He** has sanctified. Since the Torah teaches that **the tassels** are a symbol of the sanctified people, the Holy Community, how appropriate,

then, would it have been for **the Head** of that Community to wear **the tzit-tzit**. **Thirdly**, the reason why **Yeshua** wore **the tassels** was because the Torah taught **put a blue thread on each corner of the tzit-tzit**. The word blue in this passage is the same **blue** which was worn by the high priest. So, **Messiah** was making a visible statement that **He** was (in **His** earthly ministry), and continues to be, our **High Priest** (see the commentary on **Hebrews Ay - Messiah's Qualifications as our Great High Priest**). Furthermore, it is interesting to note that there were at least some very needy people who saw something more than just **tzit-tzit** when they attempted to grasp those **tassels** worn by **the King of kings**! Perhaps the more people begin to realize their dire spiritual void, the more they can see the majesty of **the Messiah**, as those in **the Gospels** did.²⁹⁷

Haftarah Shlach L'kha: Joshua 2:1-24

(see the commentary on **Deuteronomy Af - Parashah**)

Joshua redeemed the sins of the Exodus generation, who slandered the Land with an evil report, by quietly sending in **two spies (Joshua 2:1)**. Those **two spies** walked the same ground and issued the same kind of report that **Caleb** and **Joshua** gave nearly forty years before. **They** said: **ADONAI has surely given the whole land into our hands; all the people are melting with fear because of us (Joshua 2:24)**. As they scouted out **the Land**, **the spies** encountered a **prostitute** named **Rahab**, who essentially had a Passover experience. **She** hid **the spies** from the Gentile king who was searching for **them (Joshua 2:1-7)**. As **the spies** hid for **three days**, **Rahab** also followed **their** command to put a **scarlet cord in her window (Joshua 2:18)**. **The walls of Jericho** would **fall**, but **Rahab** and those of her household would survive. In fact, **Rahab** ascended to marry into **Isra'el**; **she** became yet another matriarch to enter the line of **the King of kings (Matthew 1:5)**. Only the obedient can rest in the promises of **ADONAI**.

B'rit Cadashah Shlach L'kha: Hebrews 3:7-19

Believers have failed to enter **God's** spiritual rest since the beginning of time. **Adam** failed; **the Exodus generation** failed; **Joshua** failed; even **David** fell short (see the commentary on **the Life of David Dc - David and Bathsheba**). The writer to the **Hebrews** declares in Chapter 3, "Watch out, brothers and sisters, so that there will not be in any one of you an evil heart lacking trust, which could lead you to turn away from the living **God**" (see the commentary on **Hebrews As - Today, If You Hear His Voice, Do Not Harden Your Hearts**). That thought continues in Chapter 4, "Therefore, let us be terrified of the possibility that, even though the promise of entering his rest still

remains, any one of you might be judged to have fallen short of it" (4:1 CJB).

Entering spiritual **rest** is foundational to being imitators of **God**. **By the seventh day God had finished the work He had been doing; so on the seventh day He rested from all His work (Genesis 2:2).** The grand finale admonished believers to enter **God's rest** (see **Hebrews At - A Sabbath-Rest for the People of God**). On **the sixth day, God created the animals and man**; fathers in the wilderness collected **twice as much manna**, and **Yeshua** died, entering **God's rest**, saying: **It is finished** (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ Lv - Jesus' Second Three Hours on the Cross: The Wrath of God**).²⁹⁸

*Dear Heavenly **Father**, Praise **You** for seeking out ways to remind me to love, listen to and obey **You** so that **You** can bless and prosper me. **For ADONAI will again rejoice over you for good, as He rejoiced over your fathers - when you listen to the voice of ADONAI your God . . . when you turn to ADONAI your God with all your heart and with all your soul (Deuteronomy 30:9c-10 a and c). The tallit and the blue thread were ways **You** designed to help the Israelites remember to obey **You**.***

Meditation is an excellent way to keep one's focus on loving and obeying you. This book of the Torah should not depart from your mouth - you are to meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. For then you will make your ways prosperous and then you will be successful (Joshua 1:8). Meditating on Your Word is wise to do often and is so encouraging! It is helpful when problems arise, to meditate on stories of your Almighty power (Revelation 19), your wisdom in knowing and guiding the future (Genesis 41, Daniel 2, 7). Meditating before evening sleep and when waking during sleep, brings peace and comfort. When I remember You on my bed, I meditate on You through the night watches (Psalms 63:7). How comforting it is to remember that **You** are always right there by my side to help and to guide me. For God Himself has said: I will never leave you or forsake you (Hebrews 13:5c). In Messiah Yeshua's holy name and power of His resurrection. Amen