

*Pasover 2012:
The Tallit and the
Tzitzit*

*With His arms He will cover you,
and under the corners of His talit
you will find refuge; His
faithfulness is a shield and
rampart." (Psalm 91:4)*

*"Ha Shem said to Moses: Speak
to the Israelites saying:*

*Throughout the generations to
come, you are to put a blue thread
in the tassels on the corners. And
you shall have the tassel that you*

may look upon it, and remember all the commandments of the Lord to do them, that you may obey them and not yourselves by going after the of your own heart and eyes. Then you will remember to obey all my commandments and to be holy for your God. I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: I am the Lord your God.

Numbers 15:37-41

"You shall make for yourselves twisted threads on the four corners

of your garment with which you cover yourself." (Deuteronomy 22:12)

The word tallit is pronounced TAH-LISS by those who use the East European Hebrew dialect. The plural, "tallesim," is pronounced as TAH-LAY-SIM." The more modern Israeli pronunciation you will hear most often, is "TAH-LEET." The plural is "tallitot." Pronounced as TAHLEE-TOHT." The fringes on the talit are "tzitzit." And you say this as "TSI-TSIT."

The term Tallit, or talith is two

Hebrew words, "TAL, meaning "tent" and ITH, meaning "little."
The tallit, when wrapped around the shoulders and pulled over the head, forms for the owner a "little tent" or "prayer closet where he may meet privately with God. The Psalmist writes:

*I will dwell in your tent for all ages;
I will take refuge in the shelter of
the corners of your Tallit."*

Bound in the threads of the fringe of the tallit or "prayer shawl," is SHEMA found in Deut. 6:4, in which God commands: *"Hear O Israel, the Lord your God is one Lord."*

How do we know this? The Hebrew words Yevovah Echad, meaning "God is one;" are numerically formed by the number of knots and wrappings in the tzitzit or fringe, which God said to "look at," and remember His laws and not to sin against Him.

The knots and wrappings themselves, also spell out SHEMA. Messiah Yeshua, the God manifest in the flesh, is the garment or tallit of our souls. In Romans 13:14 we read: "...Put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its desires." When we receive His forgiveness, and obey His commands we are wrapped in the shekinah glory of God. We are sons of light, filled with God's "light." Yeshua said: *"He who has seen Me has seen the Father..."*

(John 14:9)

The tzitzit with it's the blue thread represents first of all that God is one! Messiah is not an appendage. The great God Himself, robed Himself in the flesh of Messiah. Through proper relationship with God, through the atoning of Messiah Jesus, God's precious Lamb, which takes away the sins of the world, (Romans 3:23-26, Romans 6:23, Acts 2:38, 2 Cor. 10:3-7, I John 2:2, I John 2:1, 4:10,) we walk in His power and authority.

The Talith

Numbers 15:39 And it shall be unto you for a fringe, that ye may look upon it, and remember all the commandments of the LORD, and do them; and that ye seek not after your own heart and your own eyes, after which ye use to go a whoring.

The Wedding ring is a symbol of the Marriage Vows.

It is a silent witness and every time you look at it, it reminds you

that you are a married person.

It reminds you that you are not alone. It reminds you that you belong to someone else.

It reminds you that you cannot just do what you please - someone else must be taken into consideration.

BUT most important it reminds you that someone loved you so much that, someone made a promise to share his or her life with you forever!

The Bible calls us the Bride of Christ.

Just as we today, wear a wedding ring to remind us that we belong to another, so the Children of Israel had something to remind them that they belonged to GOD.

That something was the Talith also called the Talis or Talit in Hebrew - The Prayer Mantle!

GOD is merciful and does not wish for the death of any person and now for this reason, HE

commanded Israel to do something to help them remember HIS laws and Commandments.

Numbers 15:38-39 Speak unto the children of Israel, and bid them that they make them fringes in the borders of their garments throughout their generations, and that they put upon the fringe 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 of the LORD, and do them; and that ye seek not after your own

heart and your own eyes, after which ye use to go a whoring.

On the corners of their clothes - a tassel or fringe each one having a blue cord.

This would help them to remember all the Laws and Commandment of the LORD! The blue cord would help them to remember that their help comes from the LORD.

The Prayer Shawl that I have here today does not have the blue cord in the Tzitzit - the tassel for the

simple reason that when the Temple was destroyed by the Romans in 70 AD – the source of the Blue Dye disappeared:

THE BLUE FRINGE:

According to divine command, each tassel of fringe was to have "*a blue thread.*" In bible times, this hue was one the most expensive to produce. It was obtained from a species of snail called Murex trunculus, or Chilazon. It took some 12,000 of these to fill a thimble with blue dye. This small

animal's body contains a gland. Once the gland is removed and exposed to oxygen, the liquid within the gland goes through a chemical reaction in which it is transformed from its original clear color, to yellow, then green, to a turquoise color, aquamarine, then blue and finally deep purple. The liquid was dried and became a powdered dye. In scripture, Lydia, a resident of Thyatira; being a seller of purple, would have been a wealthy and influential woman. The clients who purchased

garments or fabric from her, were the very rich. (Acts 16:14-16:40)

This color was so expensive, that all but royalty were to wear it. When Yeshua haMashiach returns riding in the heavens on His majestic white war horse, he will have "glorious" kingly garments.

Who is this that comes from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? This glorious in His apparel, traveling in the greatness of His strength? I that speak in

righteousness mighty to save.
(Isaiah 63:1)

For God to place the command in scripture, commanding his people to make the fringes with the blue thread, He was saying in effect: You are a kingdom of priests to Me. This is echoed in Rev. 1:6: *"He has made us a kings and priests (lit. "a kingdom of priests") unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever."* The scriptures also teach that it was a violation ordinarily for

one to mix two fibers such as wool and linen. The fringes were to be made of wool, but this blue thread was to be made of linen. So only in this instance, did God allow this to be done.

Each tzitzit has seven strands of white, representing the purity and holiness of all God's commandments (seven is the number of completeness) and one strand of blue, representing the

Messiah, who is the only One capable of fulfilling God's commandments perfectly. Each tassel is called a Tzitzit (say seet'-seeth) but when the blue strand is included, the tassel is called a G'dil (say ga-deel'), meaning *Tassel of Greatness*.

This garment is really all about the tzitzit ... and the blue strand. Just like the Bible is really all about God's commandments ... and the Messiah. The Torah commands that we follow the Messiah

(Deuteronomy 18:15) and the Messiah commands that we follow the Torah (Matthew 5:19).

From days of old, the blue strand was made with a dye that could only be obtained from the glands of a snail that was found in the Mediterranean Sea ... after being exposed to the air, the dyed material becomes the most vibrant color of blue imaginable. Dark, yet very brilliant and known for its quality of never fading, this dye was always associated with

royalty.

Now, here is where it gets interesting! Ironically, soon after the Messiah was crucified, the snails became extinct and the dye was no longer available! For centuries the blue strand was not to be seen in the tassels ... until 1996 when the snails were discovered once again -- a *sign* that some say is evidence of the approaching Second Coming of Messiah! The blue strand is called the Shamash (say sha-mosh') ... it

is used to wrap the white strands in very meaningful numerical sequences and is just *beginning* to appear in the tassels of Jewish prayer shawls, once again, for the first time in some 1,500 years!

Today, the Prayer Shawl with its fringes in this country is worn only at religious services and then only by Orthodox Jews, but in Bible Times and in the time of Jesus it was worn every day. But why was the wearing of the Prayer Shawl - the Mantle with its fringes so very important?

The Hebrew word for Talit is almost the same as the word Talith which means a Lamb or a young sheep.

Psalm 23:1-2 The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

The LORD is the Good Shepherd and we are HIS sheep.

Furthermore, the word Talith consists of 2 Hebrew words: TAL

which means Tent and ITH which means Small.

In other words a Small Tent. Why a small Tent? - Remember the Tabernacle in the

Wilderness: Exodus 26:1-

4 Moreover thou shalt make the tabernacle with ten curtains of fine twined linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet: with cherubims of cunning work shalt thou make them. The length of one curtain shall be eight and twenty cubits, and the breadth of one curtain four cubits: and every one of the

curtains shall have one measure. The five curtains shall be coupled together one to another; and other five curtains shall be coupled one to another. And thou shalt make loops of blue upon the edge of the one curtain from the selvage in the coupling; and likewise shalt thou make in the uttermost edge of another curtain, in the coupling of the second.

The Tabernacle could not accommodate all of the Nation of Israel and for this reason each person was commanded to make

his own Little Tabernacle or Tent -
the Prayer Shawl.

Remember the Words of
Jesus: Matthew 6:6 *But thou,
when thou prayest, enter into thy
closet, and when thou hast shut
thy door, pray to thy Father which
is in secret; and thy Father which
seeth in secret shall reward thee
openly.*

By pulling the Mantel – the Prayer
Shawl over one's head - one could
enter your very own private closet
or Tabernacle to commune with

GOD.

Paul reminds us: 1 Corinthians 6:19 *What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?*

The Apostle Paul was a Pharisee and therefore he would have worn a Mantle - Prayer Shawl. We read that he was a Tent Maker by Trade - Is it not possible that instead of making Tents that he made Prayer Shawls or Mantels -

Tallits instead?

But let's delve a little deeper.

In Hebrew each letter does not only form part of the Alphabet but it also has a numerical value.

Each Hebrew word therefore has a numerical value.

The numerical value of a Hebrew word is almost as important as the meaning of the word itself.

The study of the numerical value of Hebrew words is called:
Gematria.

The numerical value or the Gematria of the word Tzitzith is 600, and if you add the 5 double knots and the 8 cords or strings which make up the Talis or Tzitzith the sum total is 613.

$$600+5+8=613.$$

What is the significance of 613 - 613 is the number of laws and commandments found in the Torah - the first five Books of our Bible - The Books of Moses ! The total number of laws and commandments that Israel was required to keep and remember.

The Talis is made up of 8 cords with 5 double knots and between the knots we have what is called the WINDINGS - 4 in total. In Biblical Times these winding were done with the blue cord.

The first windings consisted of 7 windings

The second winding consisted of 8 windings.

The third winding consisted of 11 windings.

The forth winding consisted of 13

windings.

$7+8+11+13$

These numbers are of great significance.

The Name of the LORD in Hebrew is represented in our Bible by the letters: YHWH - the numerical value or gematria is $10+5+6+5 = 26$ ($2+6=8$)

The first two letters make up the first part of the name of the LORD YAH in our Bibles - Gematria $10+5 = 15$

The first two windings are $7+8$
 $=15$

The last two letters that make up
the Name of the LORD WH -
Gematria of $6+5 = 11$

The Third winding is 11 Thus the
first three windings remind us of
the Name of the LORD!

But, the fourth winding with 13
windings - What is its
significance?

The word ONE has a gematria or
numerical value of 13!

The Tzzitzit with its windings has a message: The Name of the LORD is ONE !

Did you notice something - Three winding - The Name of the LORD and yet ONE!

The Trinity!

The Windings have still further deeper meaning –

First Winding - 7

The 7 Blessings bestowed on Abraham in Genesis 12: 2-3, The

7 Feasts to be kept in Leviticus
23,

In the Book of Revelation - the 7
Churches - the 7 Crowns - the 7
Trumpets, etc.

Second Winding - 8 On the 8th
Day after birth circumcision was to
take place.

But 8 is the Number of the
Messiah. The Messiah was to be
of the seed of David. David was
the 8th Son of Jesse (1 Samuel
16:10-11) Jesus rose from the

dead on the 8th day!

Remember the Tzitzit is made up of 8 cords. The Prayer Shawl has 4 corners = $8 \times 4 = 32$. What is important about the number 32? 32 is the numerical value or gematria of the word Heart.

At the very heart of the Tzitzit is the Messiah! (“I will write the commandments on your heart.”)

Third Winding - 11

Of the 12 Disciples of Jesus only 11 remained faithful - Are you

among the faithful ?

Fourth Winding -13 The
Numerical value for the Word
ONE: The LORD is ONE!

Although the Mantle or Prayer
Shawl can be made of any
material it is normally made of
Wool and was weaved from top to
bottom without a seam or joining -
in one piece.

The Talit reminds us of the Name
of the LORD and HIS law ! It

remind us of the Promises of
GOD.

Exodus 15:26 And said, If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the LORD that healeth thee.

Malachi 4:2 But unto you that fear

my name shall the Sun of
righteousness arise with healing in
his wings; and ye shall go forth,
and grow up as calves of the
stall.

This is a prophecy that points to
the Messiah – Jesus.

Psalm 91:1 He that dwelleth in the
secret place of the most High shall
abide under the shadow of the
Almighty. Shadow of HIS wings -
The small Tent of the LORD - The
corners - the Tzitzit is a symbol of
the wings of the LORD.

Now remember: Luke 8:42-44 For he had one only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she lay a dying. But as he went the people thronged him. And a woman having an issue of blood twelve 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 stanch'd. She touched the Hem of HIS garment - HIS Tzitzit - and she was healed!

Remember the windings =
remember how many?

7+8+11+13 add them up = a total
of 39 windings!

Jesus received 39 lashes of the
cruel Roman whip!

Isaiah 53:5 But he was wounded
for our transgressions, he was
bruised for our iniquities: the
chastisement of our peace was
upon him; and with his stripes we
are healed.

The Prayer Mantle with its Talit - is

a Testimony that the LORD is able to heal all who look to HIM ! The promises of GOD are sure.

Remember, I started with the Wedding Ring:

Ruth 1:16-17 Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the LORD do so to me,

*and more also, if ought but death
part thee and me.*

In the Book of Ruth we also
read: Ruth 3:9 *And he said, Who
art thou? And she answered, I am
Ruth thine handmaid: spread
therefore thy mantle over thine
handmaid; for thou art a near
kinsman.*

Messianic congregations have a
Chorus they sing in Church:

Cover me, Cover me, Extend the

Border of thy mantle over
me Because Thou art my nearest
Kinsman Cover me, cover me,
cover me.

Next week we celebrate Passover,
which speaks of Death - the Death
of our LORD.

Death - Did you know that it was a
Bible custom for a person to be
buried with his Prayer Mantle with
its Talis, covering his face?

*John 20:4-8 So they ran both
together: and the other disciple did
outrun Peter, and came first to the*

sepulchre. And he stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in. Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulcher, and seeth the linen clothes lie, And the napkin, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself. Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulcher, and he saw, and believed.

When Peter saw the Prayer
Mantle with its Talis neatly folded
up by itself - He believed!

Passover also reminds us that
Jesus is returning!

Revelation 19:13 *And he was
clothed with a vesture dipped in
blood: and his name is called The
Word of God.*

JESUS will return wearing HIS
Prayer Mantle dipped in HIS
Blood.

(Adapted from a message by
Pastor CSJ Claassen

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SOUTH AFRICA

Tassels shema The great
commandment. Deut. 6:4-5 / Lev.
The Tallit: Spiritual Significance

The commandment to attach
fringes to garments was invested
with deep theological meaning.

By Rabbi Abraham Millgram

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The *tallit* was to remind the Jew of the commandments of the Torah. How do the fringes of the *tallit* remind one of the commandments? The Jews' search for a logical correlation between the *tallit* and the commandments of God was rewarded with intriguing discoveries. The numerical value

of the word *tzitzit* (fringes) is 600. Each of the fringes contains 8 threads and 5 knots, making a total of 613. This number corresponds to the 613 commandments contained in the Torah.

It was also noted that in making the fringes one winds the long thread around the other threads between the 5 knots 7, 8, 11, and 13 times respectively. The first three numbers equal 26, which is the numerical value of the Tetragrammaton. The remaining

number equals the numerical value of the word *ehad* ("one")-- the last word in the opening verse of the Shema. The fringes of the *tallit* thus not only remind the Jew of the 613 divine commandments, but also underscore the central doctrine of Judaism, that the Lord is one.

19:8 / Mark 12:29 Hear, O Israel

Yisra El: Yahwey our Elohim is one (ECHAD) Yahweh:

1 8 4 / 10, 5, 6, 5. 5

And thou shalt love Yahweh thy
Elohim with all thine heart, and
with all thy soul, $7+8+11+13=39$
(13= ECHAD is one 4 8 1 =13)

$10+5+6+5=26$

26=YOD, HEY, WAW,
HEY (JHVH)

39 = the thirty nine strips He bore
for our Torah violations:

*Isaiah 53:5 5 But he was
wounded for our transgressions,
he was bruised for our iniquities:
the chastisement of our peace*

was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

8 = a new beginning The tzitzit is to remind us of the shema. 90, 10, 90, 10, 400 = 600 + 5 knots + 8 strings = 613

365 Thou shalt nots + 248 Thou shalts (the number of days after all sabbaths are taken out) = 613

Braid of blue (tekhelet): Murex trunculus mollusk (sea snail).

The band width of this color blue is 613 nanometers.

Rev.19:13 And he was clothed
with a vesture tallit (2440)
himatiom dipped in blood: and his
name is called The Word of
Elohim.

"Wherever He entered, into villages, cities, or the country, they laid their sick in the marketplaces and begged Him that they might just touch the border of His garment. And as many as touched Him were made whole. (Mark 6:56)

And suddenly a woman who had a flow of for 12 years came from behind and touched the hem of His garment." (Matthew 9:20)

...Came from behind and touched

the border of His garment. And immediately her flow of stopped.
(Luke 8:44)

The Jewish New Testament Commentary explains about this passage:

"A woman who had . . . a hemorrhage approached him from behind and . . . touched his tzitzit. (Fringe of His prayer shawl)

She was in a state of ritual impurity because of her

hemorrhage, and, she had touched the holiest part of Yeshua's garment.

No wonder she approached from behind -- she was afraid; this is also why she hesitated to answer Yeshua's question, "*Who touched my clothes?*" (Mark 5:29-33)

For normally the impure defiles the pure (see Haggai 2:11-13; also the Talmud, Toharot.)

But in this case, the opposite happened: the purity of Yeshua the Messiah and of his tzitziyot

("tassels," or "fringes, of Yeshua's prayer shawl.") remained uncompromised, while instead the cause of the woman's impurity was instantly removed!

According to this express Old Testament law of commandment, the woman with the issue of blood was ceremonially "unclean." If she touched anyone, they would be unclean. And it would have been perfectly natural for the Jewish people to view Messiah as "unclean" if she reached out and touched Him. They would not have

expected that such a man would be performing miracles by the power of God. Unless this woman reached out by revelation, to touch Messiah, she would not have wanted to touch Him. But she did...She pressed through the crowd to receive her healing. In spite of all those in the crowd pressing around Him, Messiah perceived the instant that she reached forth her hand. It was faith He perceived! He turned and spoke. saying: Who touched me? This taught a lesson to the

observers.

It took as great faith for this woman who had just been healed, to step out and say in front of this crowd: I did! For in by the custom of the law, she had committed sin. But Messiah said to her: "Daughter your faith has made you whole, go in peace; and be whole of your plague." He did not condemn her.

Thus says the Lord of Hosts: In those days, it shall come to pass that 10 men will take hold out of all

languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying: We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you."

Again, this phrase "skirt of him that is a Jew," speaks of the "wing" of the tallit.

This phrase "God is with you," is similar to the concept of Immanuel, meaning "God with us."

Yahshua never rebuked anyone for touching His Tzitzit.

In Mark 5:35-43 we read:

Then Yahshua “took the child by the hand, and said to her, “Tallita kumi.” The text says this Hebrew phrase is to be interpreted, “Damsel, I say to you arise.” It seems this interpreting phrase may have been added to the gospel at a later time in an attempt to interpret “*Tallita kumi.*” The reason for believing this is that *Tallita* is not Hebrew for damsel or young girl. A more accurate translation of *Tallita kumi* is “ Arise to my *Tallit* or Arise even as my *Tallit.* A dramatic picture of

Yahshua lifting her up with one hand and raising his *Tallit* heavenward with the other which is a customary way of prayer.

The *tallit* (also spelled *talit*; Yiddish *tallis*; plural *talitot*) is a prayer shawl worn by Jews during weekday morning services, on the Sabbath, and on holidays.

During Sabbath and holiday evening prayers, only the cantor

(prayer leader) and Torah reader wear a *tallit*.

The *tallit* is normally made of wool and has special twined and knotted fringes (*tzitziot*) attached to each of its four corners. The *tallit* is thus sometimes called the *arba kanfot*, "four corners."

The purpose of the tallit is to bear the fringes (*tzitziot*) commanded by God in Numbers 15. The *tzitziot* are therefore far more important than the tallit itself. The *tzitziot* at the four corners of the tallit are

tied into knots using a complex procedure with number-related symbolic meaning

Blue is the most popular color for tallit embroidery. This is in part because of the general symbolic significance of blue in Judaism, but also because the biblical command of the fringes also specifies, "let them attach a cord of blue to each corner" (Numbers 15:38). A blue thread is no longer added because the blue dye specifically referenced in Numbers is no longer known; instead blue is

incorporated into the stripes.
However, some talitot have black stripes instead of blue because some rabbis have taught it would be improper to try to duplicate the unknown blue.

When and How the Tallit is Worn

The *tallit* is worn during weekday morning services, on the Sabbath, and on holidays. During Sabbath and holiday evening prayers, only the cantor (prayer leader) wears a *tallit*.

The *tallit* is generally worn only during the day because the biblical command on which the *tallit* is based requires that the fringes be seen. One exception is Yom Kippur, on which *tallit* are worn in the evening because of the great

holiness of the holiday. But even then, the *tallit* is donned before sundown.

For those who wear both tefillin and *tallit*, rabbinic law prescribes that the *tallit* should be donned first. This is because it is a general rabbinic principle that one should begin with the more commonly practices mitzvah first, and tefillin are not worn on the Sabbath and holidays.

As with all Jewish rituals, there is a prescribed blessing to say while

donning the tallit:

Blessed are You, our God, Creator of time and space, who enriches our lives with holiness, commanding us to wrap ourselves in the tallit.

As mentioned above, this blessing is usually embroidered in Hebrew on the *atarah*. Some Jews say this blessing with the *tallit* draped over their heads, a custom which is based on the Talmudic statement that "It is customary for scholars and their students not to pray without first wrapping themselves

in their prayer shawls" (Tosefta, Tohorot 4:1).

When one is called up to read from the Torah, it is customary to place a corner of the *tallit* on the first word to be read, then kiss the *tallit* corner.

As mentioned above, it is common for the *atarah* (neckband) to be printed with the *tallit* blessing. Because of this, it is improper to wear the *tallit* into the bathroom (sacred writings cannot be brought into the bathroom). Thus many synagogues have a *tallit* rack outside the bathroom.

What's the reason for the black stripes on the tallit and tzitzit?

By Moshe Miller

Firstly, it should be clear that the black stripes on the *tallit* and/or *tzitzit* are not mandatory. Many have other colors on their *tallits*, and many have completely white ones. Nevertheless, it is traditional in many communities to wear a *tallit* and *tzitzit* which sport black stripes.

Some suggest that the stripes are to remind us of the blue techelet.1

Indeed, some communities have the custom of using (dark) blue stripes, not black. For those whose custom it is to use black stripes, perhaps this is so that one should not erroneously believe that real *techelet* was used. (Because if we would have *techaillet* we would use it to dye the *tzitzit* strings with it, not the garment).

Also, the Zohar² explains that white represents *chesed* (Divine Benevolence) and the blue (black, dark) stripe represents *gevurah*

(G-d's severity).

Furthermore, the mitzvah of reciting the morning Shema begins when it is light enough for one to distinguish between white and *techelet*.³ Since we no longer have the *techelet*, the black stripe in the cloth of the *tallit* can be used to ascertain whether the time for reading the Shema has arrived.

Why do some people have a blue string among their tzitzit fringes?

By Menachem Posner

We read in the Torah:¹ "Speak to the children of Israel and you shall say to them that they shall make for themselves fringes (*tzitzit*) on the corners of their garments, throughout their generations, and they shall affix a thread of *techelet* on the fringe of each corner."

The verse contains two commandments; one it to affix (white) fringes on the corners of a four-cornered garment, and the other is to add a thread of *techelet* to each corner. These two commandments are independent of each other. When *techelet* is available we are enjoined to add a *techelet* fringe to the *tzitzit*, and when unavailable we fulfill the mitzvah with plain white fringes.

Techelet is wool dyed with the blood extracted from a sea animal called the *chilazon*.

So why is it not so common today to have a *techelet* fringe on the *tallit* or *tzitzit*? At a certain point in history, approximately 1000 years ago, the *chilazon*, which was always hard to come by -- to the extent that the Talmud₂ tells us that it only surfaced once every seventy years -- became unavailable altogether. After a while, its exact identity became unknown.

There have been many who have tried to rediscover the identity of the *chilazon*. Most notably among

them were the Radziner Rebbe, Rabbi Gershon Henoch Leiner (1839-1891) and Israeli Chief Rabbi Y.I. Herzog (1889-1959).

Rabbi Leiner maintained that the cuttlefish was the lost *chilazon* and proceeded to produce and distribute dye produced from this fish.

Recently, the marine snail *Murex Trunculus* has been identified as possibly being the elusive *chilazon*, and many use its dye.

Most communities, however, view

the findings of these groups as uncertain, and therefore continue to wear only white fringes, awaiting the coming of *Moshiach* when Elijah himself will guide us in uncovering the identity of the *chilazon*.

The term tzitzit is related to the word "*hatzatzah*," or "Looking at."
For God said:

"You will make these garments, and put fringe on the borders, and you will look at this, and remember that you must not do what your own heart and desires dictate, but remember that I brought you up out of the land of Egypt, and I am the Lord your God."

When the SHEMA was said, the

fringe was grasped in the hand. The SHEMA was a declaration of the nature of God. God is one. He is not like the heathen concept of a plurality of deities in the Godhead. This focus upon God's nature and obedience to His commandments, kept the heart "fixed." The numerical value of the knots and wrappings literally spelled out SHEMA. This was an additional reminder that God is one, and He will never change.

God's instructions in Numbers 15:37-41, were that every prayer shawl was to fringes, and among the fringes; would be blue fringe. This custom figures prominently into many Old Testament and New Testament stories.

THE TALLIT'S SHAMESH:

The blue thread of the fringe, is called the "SHAMESH," meaning "servant." This is similar to the white "servant candle" that stands in the midst of the other candles, and is used to light the menorah.

In this "SHAMESH thread," we see Messiah, our King; as the "Suffering Servant." It was necessary that He suffer as the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. It was as He humbled Himself, becoming obedient, even to on the cross, that God highly exalted Him,

giving Him a name above every name." (Philippians 2:9)

Think of the picture of Messiah Jesus praying at Gethsemane, praying earnestly there, wrapped in His tallit, holding the tzitzit to his face, the tzitzit given to remind us of the Commands of God, the Commands that He had obeyed perfectly as he prayed long into in the night. The tzitzit that were wrapped in the thread of Royal Blue, the color of The King. The The tzitzit knots and cord that remind us of the Shema – “Hear O

Israel, the Lord your God is One in Essence.”

He sweat great drops of blood, agonizing in prayer, the blood mixing with those tears that fell, falling onto the rock at which he prayed, saying: "Father: If you be willing, remove this cup from me...nevertheless, not my will but yours be done." (Luke 22:42)