

Messianic Jews Natsarenes

Dedicated to

The Glory of Yehoshua HaMashiach

**Tassels and Tzitzit
– A Research Study Paper**

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This study paper is released due to the various areas of confusion that the children of Israel (children who live and follow the ways of Yehowah their Elohim) have on the topic of Tassels and Tzitzit. At all times when this paper was written we keep reminding ourselves of one of the most important instruction of Yehowah which is:

"Do not add to the Word which I command you and do not take away from it, so as to guard the commands of Yehowah your Elohim which I am commanding you". (Deuteronomy 4:2)

First we need to investigate the number of times the word Tassels (Strong's concordance word number 1434) and Tzitzit (Strong's concordance word number 6734) appear in the scriptures

Word	Number of times it appears in the scriptures
Tassels	1 (One)
Tzitzit	8 (Eight)

Verses where the words Tassels and Tzitzit appear in the scriptures:

Numbers 15: 38 to 40

Speak to the children of Yisrael and you shall say to them to make **tzitzit** on the corners of their garments throughout their generations, and to put a blue cord in the **tzitzit** of the corners. And it shall be to you for a **tzitzit** and you shall see it, and shall remember all the commands of YHWH (*Yehowah*) and shall do them, and not search after your own heart and your own eyes which you went whoring, so that you remember and shall do all My commands, and be set-apart unto your Elohim.

Deuteronomy 22:12

Make **tassels** on the four corners of the garment with which you cover yourself.

Matthew 9:20 to 21

And see a woman who had a flow of blood for twelve years came from behind and touched the **tzitzit** of His garment. For she said to herself "If I only touch His garment, I shall be healed".

Matthew 14: 35 to 36

And when the men of that place recognised Him, they sent out into all that surrounding country, and brought to Him all who were sick, and begged Him to let them only touch the **tzitzit** of His garment. And as many as touched it were completely healed.

Mark 6:56

And wherever He went, into villages, or cities, or the country, they were laying the sick in the market-places, and begged Him to let them touch if only the **tzitzit** of His garment. And as many as touched Him were healed.

Luke 8:43 to 44

And a woman, having a flow of blood for twelve years, who, having spent all her livelihood on physicians, was unable to be healed by any, came from behind and touched the **tzitzit** of His garment. And immediately her flow of blood stopped.

Matthew 23:5

And they do all their works to be seen by men, and they make their t'fillen wide and lengthen the **tzitzit** of their garments

Tassels (Strong's concordance word number 1434)

Tassels comes from the Hebrew word *ghed-eel'* – which means twisting thread.

Tzitzit (Strong's concordance word number 6734)

Tzitzit (*tsiytsith*) in Hebrew means a floral or wing like projection or lock of hair (*thread*).

From the scriptures it is evident that there are two related words mentioned. The first one is the word tzitzit which means lock of hair (thread) and the other one is tassels which means twisting thread. From the scriptures, it is evident that tassels or what we call Tzitzit is technically interwoven or twisted thread as shown in Figure 1.



Figure 1: Lock of thread that has been twisted together with multiple blue threads.

Colour of Tzitzit (Tassels):

Tassels can be of different colours and the scripture does not say the various colours in which the thread must be made except for one specific colour. But it does say that you **MUST** have a blue thread that would remind you of the commandments of YHWH. Almost all Tassels nowadays have multiple blue threads. But the scriptures specifically say “put a blue cord in the tzitzit”. As you can see the blue thread is singular not plural. Over the years, based on their own traditions, people added more blue threads into it.

Blue Dye (*tekeleth* in Hebrew):

In Hebrew the blue dye is called *tekeleth* (Strong’s concordance word number 8504) and generally represents sky blue (colour of the sky). The question that many people ask is what type of blue colour is to be used. Over the years, traditions of men have argued over the colour blue mentioned in the scriptures. People have said that the tzitzit blue thread needs to be sky blue, navy blue, indigo blue, cobalt blue, cyan blue, or some other form of blue and the argument for this still continues today among Rabbinic Jews. That is why many Jewish people do not use a blue thread on their tzitzit because they do not know what blue colour is to be used.

We recommend people to go to Wikipedia, the free encyclopaedia on the internet and enter the key words “Shades of Blue”. There you will see a huge list of the various variation of the colour blue including sky blue, indigo blue, royal blue and other variations.

During the times of Patriarchs (Moses, Abraham etc) people used to identify the colour blue by two main things. First the colour of clear sky and second the colour of sea (surface of the water reflects the colour of the sky). The problem that arises now is what is the exact colour of sky? The colour of sky that is seen over Canada and the colour of sky seen in Israel and a sky seen over in Australia would be different due to various factors like clouds, weather temperature etc. Elohim expects us to use common sense in such matters. As Elohim considers the colour of the sky as blue, we need to ensure that the thread represent the colour blue. Elohim did not make us robots. He gave us the mind to think like Him as we are created in the

image and glory of Elohim. If He had made us robots then He would have specifically said “I want you to use 23% cobalt blue mixed with 34% cyan blue with 43% Egyptian blue”. But He did not say this. So let us learn to live with what He has said and learn to obey what is written in the scriptures rather than using our own interpretations that are based on the traditions of men.

The other question that now arises is “where can I get the blue colour from?”. Do I need to get it from animals, insects, plants, or from other sources? This is the million dollar question.

Jewish Tradition (Traditions of Men and the Oral Law of Rabbinic Jews): Rabbinic (Jewish Rabbis) sources have stated that *tekhelet* (blue colour) comes from a snail called *hilazon*. But *hilazon* isn’t a biological species name, just a rabbinic name. The mystery was figuring out the species to which they were referring.

The search for the answer began in the early 20th century, when Isaac Herzog, who went on to become the first Ashkenazi chief rabbi of Israel wrote a doctoral thesis in which he concluded that a snail called the *Murex trunculus* (the rabbinic name *hilazon*) was the “most likely candidate” for the source of *tekhelet*.

While the Talmud (oral manmade law of Judaism) doesn’t give a full identification of the *hilazon*, it does provide important clues. It was found near Haifa; the colour of its dye is “similar to the sky and the sea”.

Key to Herzog’s conclusion was the fact that archaeological digs uncovered large ancient dyeing facilities close to Haifa, and mounds of *Murex trunculus*. But Herzog’s conclusion had some drawbacks. The snail’s dye was purplish blue, not the pure blue described in the Talmud. It took until the early 1980s for this riddle to be solved. In research unrelated to the search for the biblical dye, Otto Elsner, a professor at Shenkar College of Engineering and Design, near Tel Aviv, noticed that on sunny days, *Murex trunculus* dye became more blue and less purple. It turned out that the missing link between Herzog’s experiments and biblical dyeing methods was ultraviolet light, which transforms the blue-purple colorant to unadulterated blue.

Hexaplex trunculus or Murex trunculus (Hilazon): This species is a “sea snail” that does not have fins or scales

and is classified as a rock snail. According to Wikipedia this sea snail secreted a purple blue indigo dye that ancient Canaanites and Phoenicians used.

Let's take a step back and closely examine what traditions of men actually teach. People should not believe that Elohim would ask us to use an UNCLEAN species (sea snail) to extract blue colour for the tassels. This is an absolute abomination to say that the children of Israel when they came out of Egypt used sea snails to dye their tassels. What does the Holy Scriptures say about unclean water species?

"These you may eat of all that are in the waters: whatever has fins and scales in the waters, in the seas, and in the rivers, that you may eat. All that don't have fins and scales in the seas, and in the rivers, of all that move in the waters, and of all the living creatures that are in the waters, they are an abomination to you, and you detest them. You shall not eat of their flesh, and you shall detest their carcasses. Whatever has no fins nor scales in the waters, that is an abomination to you". (Leviticus 11: 9-12)

What does the word abomination mean? Abomination is used exclusively to describe things that are disgusting, abhorrent and absolutely intolerable and unacceptable to Yehowah Elohim. You could say that the word "abomination" refers to something so horrendous in the eyes of Yehowah that you cannot even go near or touch it.

The Jewish Rabbis want us to believe that Elohim would ask the children of Israel to use snails (Hilazon) to dye their tassels! These Jewish Rabbis who teach this are an abomination to Yehowah for desecrating His holy word and teaching the commandments of men as though they were part of His holy words. What they are actually doing is teaching the traditions of Canaanites to the children of Israel.

Some Jewish Rabbis say that you can use the dye from an unclean snail because you are not eating it. If this logic was true then why don't we wear clothing made of PIG as we are not eating it!

What does Elohim tell about Canaanites in the book of Leviticus? *"Do not follow the practices of the land of Egypt, where you used to live, or follow the practices of the land of Canaan, where I am bringing you. You must not follow their customs"* (Leviticus 18:3).

So what was the blue colour used by the children of Israel when they came out of the land of Egypt? No person at this point in time including the author of this research document can be 100 percent sure unless you ask Father Moses (spokesperson of Yehowah Elohim as Elohim spoke to the children of Israel through Moses). Based on historical information it could be inferred that it "may" have been the colour that is commonly known today as Egyptian blue (see Figure 2). This type of blue is known as calcium copper silicate which is a pigment used by Egyptians for thousands of years. It is considered by many people to be the first synthetic pigment. When Israel was in bondage in Egypt, Egyptians were the most advanced civilization that existed during that time. There was no civilization that was as advanced as the Egyptians.

Moses being the leader of the children of Israel was highly educated. Where did he get this wisdom from? Moses was the adopted son of Pharaoh's daughter and Moses was a member of the royal family of Pharaoh. The ancient Jewish historian Josephus wrote that Moses was heir to the throne of Egypt and that while a young man he led the armies of Egypt in victorious battle against the Ethiopians.

From the scriptures we can confirm that Moses the leader of the children of Israel was raised with both the science and learning of Egypt. The Holy Scriptures confirms this statement *"Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and deeds"* (Acts 7:22).

Keep in mind that the children of Israel were in bondage in Egypt for 400 years (Genesis 15:13). In those 400 years they were learning the customs, skills and knowledge of the Egyptians. Israelites over time studied all their advanced technical skills in building and metallurgy and we need to assume that they recognized how to extract blue colour from materials found in the earth.

In conclusion, we can say confidently that we must NOT use blue colour that is derived from SEA SNAIL or from any unclean animal. As long as the blue colour is from a chemical/pigment dye or even from a plant it should be fine.



Figure 2: Egyptian blue (calcium copper silicate)

Frequently Asked Questions about Tzitzit

1. Do men, women and children need to wear tzitzit?

Yes it is applicable to all, men, women and children. In Israel we mostly see men wearing them and fewer women. Elohim made this ordinance for all as mentioned in Numbers 15:38 where it says “speak to the children of Israel”. It does not say speak only to men. The law is applicable to all.

2. My children are quiet young. Do they also need to wear tzitzit?

It would be good to train children at such a young age even though they don’t understand its meaning at that point in time. By the time they become 4 years they will know that tzitzit represents the laws of our Heavenly Father in heaven provided we (the parents both mother and father) nourish and teach them about Elohim and His ways from a very young age. The best way to teach children about Elohim at a young age is to buy a children’s Bible and read to them as often as possible every day. By doing this they will learn to love and respect their Heavenly Father. This will instil good seeds in them as they grow in the knowledge of our Messiah. If you read the Holy Scriptures, Deuteronomy 6:6-7 says *“And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, 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”*.

3. Why is it expensive to buy a Tzitzit?

There is no reason why someone who sells a Tzitzit needs to make it expensive (after all it is just a thread and is not made of gold or silver). We have seen some people selling tzitzit for as low as \$4.00 to as high as \$55.00. In our experience if you buy a tzitzit from online market places like AMAZON or EBAY you can get them for a low price.

4. Can I make my own tzitzit or can it be made only by certain people?

Yes you can make your own tzitzit. There is no instruction in the scriptures saying that you cannot do this or it has to be made only by certain people. Just make sure that the thread (crochet cotton thread; yarn) you use is of pure material and is not mixed with any other textile material. The reason being Deuteronomy 22:11 instruct us “do not put on a garment of different kinds, of wool and linen together”. So ensure that the thread (yarn) you buy for instance is of pure cotton (100%) or of pure wool (100%) or of pure linen (100%). To make your own tzitzit you need:

- a) A pack of thread (yarn). It can be of any colour. Most people would choose white colour as the blue colour would be more prominent when you use white thread.
- b) A pack (one thread mainly) of blue colour.
- c) Tie them together as twisted thread (see Figure 1) so that you can easily fasten it to your garment, jeans, belt buckles and trouser buckles. Remember there is no special way to tie them or make them twisted as there is no such instruction found in the scriptures on this.

5. How do I know the blue colour in the tzitzit I buy is not from the snail (unclean animal)?

If you buy from shops that call them Kosher certified then you would have to be extra careful. Since they won’t write that the blue colour is from the snail there is no way for us to know. Almost all tzitzit that use the word Kosher on them “may” have the blue colour from the snail (not necessarily all the time. For example, Karaite Jews would never use the

blue colour from the snail). So it is better you buy them from non-Kosher shops or ask them before buying. The easiest way to be 101% sure is to make them yourself as per the instructions of Elohim in Numbers 15:38-40.

6. I have purchased a tzitzit and for some reason it has many threads of blue colour. What do I do?

You can either cut the other blue threads and leave only one blue thread or leave it just as it is.

7. Do you need to wear the tzitzit all the time even at home or is it only when you leave your home to go to work or for any outdoor activities like gardening, sports or recreation?

You are supposed to wear it on the garments you wear. But common sense prevails. For example, you don't wear them with your swimming apparel or sportswear where it can get easily impaired, when doing heavy work with machinery or when handling fire as it could get burnt.

8. At work due to our uniform regulations (police officer, fire fighters, military, hotel staff, hospital staff) I cannot wear a tzitzit? What do I do?

We abide by our work/organisation policies. Many people tie tzitzit under their garments like on a singlet (a singlet is a sleeveless garment worn under a shirt). While you can do this, it "may not" help you as you are not able to see them when worn under your outer garment. As the Torah says, "when you see them it will remind you of My commandments". But for many people something is better than nothing and they wear it under their uniform.

9. Does tzitzit have healing powers?

Tzitzit "itself" does not have any healing powers. But it is the "power of faith/belief" that you have in the law of Elohim and in the true God of Israel that will heal you. When a person wears tzitzit he is a law keeper of Elohim. That is, he lives and walks by the law of Elohim. He or she is ruled by the laws of Elohim.

There is a prophecy in the book of Malachi chapter 4:2 "But to you who fear My name the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings. And you shall go out and leap for joy like calves from the stall". This was a prophecy of the healing powers that Yehoshua the Messiah would have when He was born. Matthew 9:20 says "And see, a woman who had a flow of blood for twelve years came from behind and touched the tzitzit of His garment. For she said to herself, "If I only touch His garment, I shall be healed". But Yehoshua turned, and when He saw her He said "Take courage, daughter, your belief has healed you." And the woman was healed from that hour.

In Mark 6:56 it says "And wherever He went, into villages, or cities, or the country, they were laying the sick in the market-places, and begged Him to let them touch if only the tzitzit of His garment. And as many as touched Him were healed".

When the Kingdom of Elohim gets established on earth it says "...in those days ten men from all languages of the nations take hold, yes, they shall take hold of the edge of the garment of a man, Yehudi (*Jew*), saying , "Let us go with you, for we have heard that Elohim is with you" (Zechariah 8:22). They will catch the edge of the garment (where the Tzitzit is tied) and people will ask the Jewish person "please take us to your Elohim for we know that He is with you".

It is evident from the above scriptures that following the footsteps of the laws of Elohim and doing what He says will heal you.

10. I am travelling overseas, for business or other reasons, to countries that do not recognise Israel as a nation (enemies of Israel) or a country that hates Jews. In such situations what do I do about wearing a tzitzit?

You should not wear it. The scriptures tell us that we must not be foolish. Being foolish can get you arrested or killed. Psalms 30:9 "What gain is there in my blood, When I go down to the pit? Would dust praise You? Would it declare Your truth?" Our Master Yehoshua the Messiah said "Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves" (Matthew 10:16).

11. How long should a tzitzit be in length?

The scriptures do not specify a length. As long as you can see it, that should be sufficient. If it is too long ensure you don't trip over and fall. In such cases you can shorten its length. Some people will make their tzitzit very long just to show other people about their righteousness. Such traditions have no value in the view of God.

12. What do you mean by the term "corner of the garment" according to the scriptures?

During the time of Patriarchs and Yeshua the messiah, a garment had four corners. If you live in the Middle East or when you watch news you can notice Arabs wear a long dress called thawb. It is a long sleeved one piece dress that covers the whole body. This garment (thawb) allows air to circulate which helps to cool the body during summer months. This is the same garment that today many Christian church priests wear. Because it is a one piece garment, that dress has four corners.

It is to be noted there was also another garment that people used to wear over this one piece garment during the times of Patriarchs and Yehoshua the messiah. This in Arabic is called bisht and in English is called a cloak or a coat. This was an outer cloak made of an expensive material like silk or linen that also had four corners. So on the corner of this garment the tzitzit was tied.

When Yehoshua was crucified the soldiers took His outer garments (plural) and His inner garment and cast lots to see who would take it (John 19:23-24). This clearly shows that during the times of Yehoshua there were outer garments and an inner garment that people used to wear. Today people wear them as a coat, shirt and a trouser. So a tzitzit is fastened on the corners of their trouser which are on the belt loops for visibility.

13. What do you mean by the term "set-apart" according to the scriptures?

When Israel came out of bondage from Egypt the plan of God was to make Israel as reign (kingdom) of priests so that they could teach other nations about the laws of God and about the true Elohim. Exodus 19:6 "...and you shall

be to Me a reign of priests and a set-apart nation". Set-apart means holy or sacred. It comes from the Hebrew word Qadowsh (strong concordance number 6918). When you live by every word of God you become a set-apart person that is holy to God.

14. What are the disadvantages of wearing a tzitzit?

You are a set-apart (to Elohim) person when you walk in the community. This means that people may know that you are a Jew when you walk in your community (tassels are usually associated with Jews). In some cases, people may mock you or even hate you. They will hate you because you are a true follower of Yehoshua the Messiah. John 15:18 says "If the world hates you, understand that it hated Me before it hated you". That is the price we pay for being a true servant of Yehoshua the Messiah. Matthew 7:14 says "how narrow is the gate and difficult the road that leads to life, and few find it". So be of a good cheer children of Israel because great is your reward when our Messiah returns as Kings of Kings and Lords of Lords. This will be the reward of Messiah's faithful people "*Well done, good and trustworthy servant. You were trustworthy over a little, I shall set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master*" (Matthew 25: 23). If we are faithful over little matters that Elohim gives us, great is our reward in the Kingdom of Elohim.

15. If the tzitzit is to remind us of Elohim's laws then isn't that the same duty of the Holy Spirit as per John 14:26?

While it is true that the Holy Spirit reminds us of the commandments of Yehowah it is also true that one of the laws is to wear tassels (tzitzit). God did not suddenly say since I am giving you the Holy Spirit you do not have to wear the tassels. Unfortunately many people use John 14:26 as an excuse not to wear the tzitzit. A simple explanation is: Why does God need to wear tassels? God (Yehoshua) in flesh wore the tassels. He also had the Holy Spirit. But still He wore the tassels. When you read the bible in its "chronological order" you will see the following events: Before Yehoshua's ministry started He received the Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:16-17; Luke 3: 21-22).

During His ministry people touched His tzitzit to be healed because they believed that He was the Messiah and their faith healed them (Matthew 9:20-22; Mark 6:56. Refer to the accurate Bible translation “The Scriptures” published by the Institute of Scripture Research).

So what we can see from the scriptures is that Yehoshua our Master had the Holy Spirit and also wore tzitzit because Yehoshua our Master cannot break His own law that He gave to His people which was to wear tzitzit. We need to walk and live as our Master Yehoshua the Messiah did.

16. I just purchased a tzitzit and I found that there is no blue thread on it?

Many tzitzit purchased from Israel do not have a blue thread. This is due to the manmade traditions/rules that

exist among the orthodox Jews. In such cases all you have to do is tie a blue thread (100% cotton or 100% linen) on it. You can use crochet cotton thread (commonly known as yarn thread) that is widely available. Please make sure that the rest of the threads are also of the same material as of the blue thread.

17. What do you mean by the term “blue cord”?

The blue cord comes from the Hebrew word pathiy! (Strong’s concordance number 6616). It means twine, thread, ribband or a lace.

