



Tallit Katan

Dressing as a Jew

דַּבֵּר אֶל-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵהֶם וְעָשׂוּ לָהֶם צִיצִית עַל-כַּנְפֵי בְגָדֵיהֶם לְדֹרֹתָם וְנָתַנּוּ עַל-צִיצִית הַכֶּנֶף פְּתִיל תְּכֵלֶת: וְהָיָה לָכֶם לְצִיצִית וּרְאִיתֶם אֹתוֹ וּזְכַרְתֶּם אֶת-כָּל-מִצְוֹת יְהוָה וַעֲשִׂיתֶם אֹתָם וּלֹא-תִתְּרוּ אַחֲרֵי לִבְבְּכֶם וְאַחֲרֵי עֵינֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר-אַתֶּם זֵנִים אַחֲרֵיהֶם:

Speak to the people of Israel, and tell them to make tassels on the corners of their garments throughout their generations, and to put a cord of blue on the tassel of each corner. And it shall be a tassel for you to look at and remember all the commandments of the LORD, to do them, not to follow after your own heart and your own eyes, which you are inclined to whore after. - Numbers 15:38-39

IN ANCIENT EGYPT priests wore fringes on the bottom of their robes to indicate their chosen status, but when Adonai delivered the Jewish people from their oppression in Egypt, He commanded them to likewise wear such “fringes” (*tzitzit*) (Numbers 15:38-9) -- to indicate *their* priestly status before Him as “a kingdom of priests”.



However, since most modern Jew’s do not wear robes around, a special piece of clothing called the *Tallit Katan* (the little tallit) was developed to allow them to fulfill the commandment given in the Torah.

The Tallit Katan is a piece of rectangular cloth (with a hole large enough for your head to go through) that has tzitzit (hanging threads) on each of the four corners. Traditional Jews wear it like a T-shirt under their clothing (but *not* directly next to their skin). Highly observant Jews will not take four steps without wearing the tzitzit because it is a mitzvah to wear it all the time.

Before putting on the tallit katan, examine the tzitzit and recite:

בְּרוּךְ	אַתָּה	יְי	אֱלֹהֵינוּ	מֶלֶךְ	הָעוֹלָם,	אֲשֶׁר	קִדְּשָׁנוּ
ba-rukḥ	at-tah	Adonai	e-lo- hei -nu	me-lekh	ha-'o- lam	'a-s ^h er	kid-de- sha -nu
Blessed	You	LORD	our God	King of the universe		who	sanctifies us
בְּמִצְוֹתָיו,	וְצִוָּנוּ	עַל	מִצְוֹת	צִיצִית.			
be-mits-vo-tav	ve-tsi-va-nu	al	mits- vat	tst-tsit			
with his mitzvot	and	regarding	the commandment of the	tzitzit			
commanded us	us						

Blessed art Thou, LORD our God, King of the universe, who has sanctified us with his commandments and commanded us regarding the tzitzit.



Transliteration:

*Barukh attah Adonai, eloheinu melekh ha-olam, asher kiddeshanu
bemitzvotav, al mitzvat tzitzit.*

Next, put the tallit katan on and recite:

בְּרוּךְ kid-de-sha nu sanctifies us	אֲשֶׁר 'a-sher who	הָעוֹלָם, ha-'o-lam King of the universe	מֶלֶךְ me-lekh our God	אֱלֹהֵינוּ e-lo-hei nu LORD	יי Adonai You	אַתָּה at-tah Blessed
בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, bats-tsi-tsit in tzitzit				לְהִתְעַטֵּף le-hit-at-tef to wrap ourselves	וְצִוָּנוּ ve-tsi-va nu and commanded us	בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, be-mits-vo-tav with his mitzvot commanded us

*Blessed art Thou, LORD our God, King of the universe, who has sanctified us with his
commandments and commanded us to wrap ourselves in the tzitzit.*

Transliteration:

*Barukh attah Adonai, eloheinu melekh ha-olam, asher kiddeshanu
bemitzvotav, vetzivanu lehitatef batzitzit.*

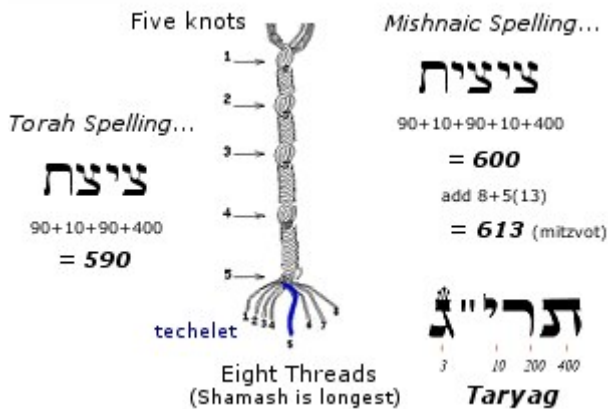
Customs:

1. According to Jewish Halakhah (legal rules), the Tallit Katan must be at least twenty-four inches long and eighteen inches wide.
2. The Tallit Katan is also referred to as “arba kanfot” - four corners.
3. In some Jewish traditions, the Tallit Gadol (large tallit) is not worn until the man is married (though the tallit katan may be worn even by young boys).
4. Tallit Katan may be worn at all times, even under the Tallit Gadol. However, if you are going to wear the Tallit Gadol during the morning prayers (*shacharit*), you should not say the blessing for Tallit Katan but rather wait to say the blessing for the Tallit Gadol.
5. There are many customs about the proper method of tying the tzitzit (tying tzitzit is a Jewish art, a form of macrame that often has Kabbalistic associations).



Tzitzit and 613 Commandments?

Rashi notes that the word tzitzit (צִיצִית) has the numerical value of 600 (in its Mishnaic spelling - which adds another Yod to the Torah's spelling) which, when combined with the five knots of eight threads yields a total of 613, the supposed number of the commandments (taryag mitzvot) listed in the Torah as enumerated by some of the Jewish sages:



But what about the Hebrew value of the word (צִיצִת) that adds only to 590? Some of the sages have said that since the word לצִיצִת appears once, and since Lamed (ל) equals 30, it “makes up for” the three times in the Torah when tzitzit is spelled without the Yod... The four corners (of the tallit) represent the four expressions of redemption from Egypt: “I will take you out; I will save you; I will redeem you; and I will take you as my own.”