

# You Will Wear Fringes

By Sha'ul bayn Yahukhenun ha Yahudah

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The Way of the Most High

“Exalting belief in our Father, the Most High **וְיָשָׁרְתָּ** (YaHUAH), through His Turah, the 5 scrolls of M'shih (Moses).”

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## YOU WILL WEAR FRINGES

As we mull on the thoughts of our bodies as the tents of the Most High, one of the most important points about Scriptural attire is the wearing of fringes or "tsitsat" as the Aibreit (Hebrew script) reads. For most of the world today, the commandments of Numbers, Leviticus and other ancient writings are not a concern. But we are preparing for a New World Order. Oh no, not the one that most people think about when they hear "New World Order." Rather, we are talking about the age to come, of the abiding Presence of YaH and His Sovereignty. In training for the age that is to come, an age without end, we believe we must be obedient to the ancient paths of Scripture as far as we are able to. Part of that is to wear the fringes which the Most High commands us to make in B'medbayr (Num.) 15:38-40.

"Speak to the sons of Y'shr'Al (Israel), and **tell them to make tassels (tsitsat) on the edges of their garments** throughout their generations, and to **place into the fringes** in the edges of their garments **a thread of indigo blue**. It will exist for you as a tassel, so that **you will see it and you will remember all the commandments** of אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתִי (YaHUAH), and fulfill them; so that you do not wander after your own heart and your own eyes, going after what you commit adultery with; so that you will give heed and remember for yourself to fulfill all My commandments and come to be set-apart for your Mighty One."

There are a number of issues that make this commandment a little complicated. But having studied this issue of tsitsat (fringes) for a long time and re-examining it on several occasions, we should have gained enough to make a well-rounded and short analysis on it. There is the exact colour of the fringe referred to as "takalat" (commonly "techelet") in this text. Then there is the use of the word "kanoop" which is a toss up between the English words "corner" or "edge." Other than these two issues the command is pretty simple, that we must wear a tassel with a thread of special colour in it, to remind us of the commandments of the Most High, to guard them and not wander after our own heart and eyes.

### WHAT COLOUR IS TAKALAT?

The original word for "**indigo blue**" in B'medbayr (Num.) 15:38-40 is "takalat" ('techelet') defined as "violet" or "blue" depending on which source is consulted. The truth is, takalat is **a cross between violet and blue, a deep royal colour**. In fact, Re'uben Prager explains that it is for this "royal appearance" that Emperor Hadrian, in 135CE, forbade Y'shr'Al (Israel) to wear their fringes (at the time of the bar Kochba revolt).<sup>1</sup> This special colour can be obtained from the indigofera tinctoria plant. The colour was reserved for royalty because this plant was mostly raised in warm climates like China and India. It was then imported by the rest of the world at great expense. Depending on the amount of dips and time used in dyeing from indigofera tinctoria dye, you can get a dark and deep coloured blue or a light blue. It really does look royal.

In order to get the natural indigofera tinctoria dye, we suggest ordering from Earth Hues via our *Links* page of our website. You will need to be familiar with the process of mordanting, dyeing and making your own tassels. This is often challenging for people.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/125705>.

We have pamphlets on mordanting and dyeing if one is in need of such information. It contains a lot of stuff which we found impossible to find on the internet or in typical books on dyeing. Once a person has dyed indigo thread, they will be prepared to make their own fringes using different methods.

There are lots of ways to tie tsitsat (fringes) that can be found on the internet, but I have not been able to boy-scout my way through them. If you are great at that sort of thing you might find one to your liking that you can accomplish, such as the ones on [www.techelet.com](http://www.techelet.com).<sup>2</sup> I adopted a simple method shown to me by a friend, but it is too complicated to explain here.

Getting back to the topic of the actual colour takalat, there is only one other option we should relate. If you talk to the average rabbi or Yahudi (Jew), they may tell you that takalat is not derived from the indigofera tinctoria plant. This is because their traditions, commentaries and teachings tell them that "One of the strings of each fringe is to be dyed turquoise with the blood of an aquatic creature known as *chilazon* (*Rashi*)" (*The Stone Edition Tanach*, 366). Generally speaking, this *chilazon* or sea creature is identified as *murex trunculus*, a sea mollusk. The majority of those who wear fringes are wearing ones made with a dyed thread of this **unclean mollusk**. I don't see the Turah (Law) advising us to use unclean animals for clothing or eating and we are told not to touch their dead carcasses (Lev. 11:11). Our preference is obviously using a natural plant dye to gain the takalat colour, rather than **killing a sea mollusk and placing its uncleanness upon our garments... or pillaging the seas** more than they already are.

## ORTHODOX JEWISH NEGLECT

In most cases, Yahudim (Jews) do not even bother with the thread of indigo blue in their fringes. In fact, they mostly do not show them at all. They wear a "tallit," which is basically like a poncho-undershirt. This has four **WHITE** fringes on each corner. This tallit and its white fringes are not even seen most of the time. It is usually an undershirt. Thus, they are not attempting to fulfill the commandment according to the Turah (Law) at all.

## FOUR LITERAL CORNERS?

Some teachers who have expounded on Scriptural fringes have argued that they were not literally applied to a "four-cornered" garment, but were rather like a round hem-fringe for the hem of a garment. It would have been found around the round hem of a robe they claim. This reasoning is based on D'bayrim (Deut.) 22:12. "You shall make for yourselves twisted threads on the four corners of your garment with which you cover yourself" (*The Stone Edition Tanach*, 479). The original word for "corners" here is "kan'poot." In B'medbayr (Num.) 15:38 the word "kan'pay" is used. Both of these references refer to corner, edge or border in the plural. The only concepts for a "kanup" within the Turah (Law) are fairly vague, but refer to the extremities. In the case of a bird, it refers to its "wings" (B'rasheet (Gen.) 1:21). And in its other use in the Turah (Law), it refers to the edge of a robe (D'bayrim (Deut.) 27:20).

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.tekhelet.com/guide.htm>.

While Scripture often uses the concept of a corner, it does not always use the word "kanup." For example, the **four horned-altar for the Meshkan** (Tent/Dwelling Place - Sh'moot (Ex.) 25:8), described in Sh'moot (Ex.) 27:2-4. While we would enjoy a spherical hem-fringe made with a tape loom or something like that, it is not the way to obey the commandment regarding the four-cornered garment and its fringes in our opinion. YaH would not have specified the corners with the use of the word "four" if it was not literal in D'bayrim (Deut.) 22:12.

A friend of ours, after reading our article, pointed out something that seems to confirm our findings regarding the connection between the wings of a bird known as "kan'poot" and the robe or garment of the ancient Aibree (Hebrew). She spoke with us about what most historians refer to as the "great (gadal) tallit," which was a large outer garment or outer robe. Our family is familiar with this because we wear robes on a regular basis and have researched these matters for ourselves. The outer robe is placed over the head like a poncho, has no sleeves usually and goes down to about the knees. It is sewn roughly from the under-arm at the sides, down to the hip. The front and back from the hip, downwards, would have had two corners in the front and two in the back. Sometimes when I go for a walk, on a windy day, the corners of the garment will fly up or to the side. Our friend stated that this is kind of like the wings of a bird flapping. It is certainly an accurate way to apply the commandment regarding fringes to a literal four-cornered outer robe/garment. It reminds us of the birds wings that use the same word in B'rasheet (Gen.) 1:21.

Getting back to the spherical hem-fringe, if you are able to get a tape loom and make a spherical kind of fringe with a thread of indigo blue, this would definitely be beautiful. You could easily have a spherical hem-fringe as an addition to go around the hem of a robe, shirt, or sleeves, but it is not what the Turah (Law) calls for.

One advantage to using the literal four-corner fringes is that if you are unable to work in a robe, the detachable corner fringes can be placed on pant belt loops or on your shirt if you make holes in the four corners. You would want to have the holes properly sewn if possible. Our encouragement though is to stick with the Scriptural robes, outer garments and proper fringes as much as possible.

## OUR NEED FOR FRINGES

Let's face it, everyone needs a reminder now and again. That's why our modern lifestyle often requires pocket day-timers, "Post-it" notes and calendars. Even though we have things in our minds and hearts, these outward reminders keep us on track. While the Scriptures are to be in our hearts, we still need outward reminders. And if a person recognizes his need for reminders such as day-timers and post-it notes, wouldn't **יְהוָה** (YaHUAH) be wise enough to command us to make reminders for ourselves? Indeed, He was wise enough and He did. This is also exactly why He commanded Y'shr'Al (Israel) to write His commands on the doorposts of their homes (D'bayrim (Deut.) 6:9). When we leave our house and we are wearing the tassels/fringes (tsitsat) on our garments, then throughout the day we will see the tassels on our garments reminding us to live righteously.

As the high priest of Y'shr'Al (Israel) was commanded to place the Name of the Most High on a seal upon his forehead, so also must we have His Name upon us, within our hearts and sealed upon us. We have the wonderful duty of bearing this Name before the

world. Having the Name of the Most High within our hearts, minds and lips first and foremost, we are then able to place His Name into our physical realm via the use of fringes and things like the mezazah (doorpost engraving). This is due to the idea that some instructions on the making of fringes involve the use of 21 knots, 21 being the number of the Name of יהוה (YaHUAH). Such fringes have 10 wraps in the first segment which symbolize the value of the letter Yood (י). The second segment has 5 wraps, which symbolizes the value of the letter Hay (ה). The third segment has 6 wraps which symbolizes the value of the letter Waw (ו). And the fourth segment once again has 5 wraps to symbolize the value of the letter Hay. There is no hard and fast commandment to tie fringes in this way, but it is a beautiful and significant way of doing it.

For those of us who love the Turah (commands, instructions, and teachings) of the Most High, there are plenty of ways in which the Name of יהוה (YaHUAH) can become a part of our physical lives. We wear the Name of the Most High upon the fringes of our garments . . . the Name of the One who commanded Y'shr'Al (Israel) to wear those fringes in the first place!

## Sources

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