



Tallit

The Tallit (also sometimes spelled Tallith) is a Prayer Shawl worn by Jewish men and women (Orthodox women do not wear Tallit) after they reached their Bar Mitzvah (13th Jewish Birthday) for boys or Bat Mitzvah (12th Jewish Birthday) for girls. The Tallit is used during the morning prayer, on all weekdays including Sabbath and other holydays. It is not worn for afternoon and evening prayers.

The Tallit itself is a white rectangular piece of fabric, which is usually made of wool, but sometimes is made of cotton, polyester or silk. On each of the four corners of the Tallit are special knots called Tassels (Tzitzit) in fulfillment of the biblical commandment. The purpose of the Tallit is to hold the Tassels, so the Tallit itself has no religious meaning. The purpose of the Tzitzit (according to the Torah) is to remind us of God's commandments. Many Tallit have blue or black stripes woven in along the shorter ends. They also commonly have an artistic motif (also called Atarah or crown) of some kind along the top long end (the part that goes against your neck). There is no particular religious significance to the Atarah, it simply shows which side of the Tallit should be up.

The Tallit must be long enough to be worn over the shoulders (as a shawl), not just around the neck (as a scarf), to fulfill the requirement that the Tzitzis be on a "garment." The Tallit may be made of any material, but must not be made of a combination of wool and linen, because that combination is forbidden on any clothing.

In the Bible it is said that one should insert a blue thread into each corner of the Tallit. This particular blue is known as Techailis and can only be obtained from an animal known as the Chilazon, since we no longer know the identity of this animal we are unable to use Techailis however a Tallit which does not contain the blue thread is perfectly valid.

