

The Tallit Project

Braiding the Generations: Tying-the-Tzitzit Ritual

Readings

Tzitzit-Tying Kavanah [Intention] for a Grandparent

Today we are braiding the generations together. The longest thread of the *tzitzit* is called the *shamash*, which means “helper” or “attendant.” Like the *shamash* candle that offers its light to the other Hanukkah candles, this thread symbolizes the responsibility of each generation to nurture, care for, and teach the next generation.

As I hold this thread in my hand, I feel the sacred honor of passing on Jewish traditions, knowledge, culture, and values *l’dor v’dor*, from generation to generation. As I wrap this thread around the rest, I feel my ancestors here with us today, their light and blessings weaving through us all. May my child [children] and grandchild [grandchildren] always feel tied close to our family, our ancestors, and our traditions. May we be braided together in this sacred ritual.

Tzitzit-Tying Kavanah [Intention] for a B-Mitzvah

By Hila Ratzabi

I am taking up these threads
with the holy intention
of tying *tzitzit*
which will remind me
of God and of my traditions.

Traditional Kavanah [Intention] for Tying *Tzitzit*

L'shem mitzvot tzitzit. In the name of the mitzvah of *tzitzit*.

Holiness at the Edges

by Rabbi Rachel Barenblat

Torah instructs us
to tie *tzitzit* on the corners of our garment
so that we may look upon them
and remember the mitzvot.

Mitzvot are connections
which link us with Torah
and link us with God
and link us with our ancestors.

Tzitzit adorn the edges
of our prayer shawls
as *mezuzot* adorn the edges
of our doorways.

We find holiness at the edges
between day and night
between inside and outside
between childhood and adulthood.

When you wrap yourself in this *tallit*
may you feel enfolded
in the loving embrace
of the Divine.

When you notice your *tzitzit*
may you be reminded
to lead a life of *mitzvot*
and awareness.

Priestly Blessing

Masculine language

יְבָרַכְךָ יי וַיִּשְׁמְרֶךָ

Y'varech'cha Adonai v'yishm'recha.

May God bless you and keep you.

יָאֵר יי פְּנֵי אֱלֹהֶיךָ וַיַּחֲנֶנְךָ

Ya'eir Adonai panav eilecha vichuneka.

May God make God's face shine upon you and be gracious to you.

יֵשָׁא יי פְּנֵי אֱלֹהֶיךָ וַיִּשֶׁם לְךָ שְׁלוֹמִים

Yisa Adonai panav eilecha v'yaseim l'cha shalom.

May God cause God's face to be always before you and bring you peace.

Feminine language

יְבָרַכְךָ יי וַיִּשְׁמָרְךָ

Y'varechech Adonai v'yishmarech

May God bless you and keep you.

יָאֵר יי פְּנֵי אֱלֹהֶיךָ וַיַּחֲנֶנְךָ

Ya'eir Adonai panav eilayich vichunech

May God make God's face shine upon you and be gracious to you.

יֵשָׁא יי פְּנֵי אֱלֹהֶיךָ וַיִּשֶׁם לְךָ שְׁלוֹמִים

Yisa Adonai panav eilayich v'yasem lach shalom

May God cause God's face to be always before you and bring you peace.

And let us say: *Amen.*

Non-binary language

יְבָרַכְךָ יי וַיִּשְׁמָרְךָ

Yivarecheche Adonai v'yishmareche

May God bless you and keep you.

יְאֵר יי פְּנֵי אֱלֹהֶיךָ וַיַּחֲנֶנְךָ

Ya'eir Adonai panav eileche vichuneke

May God make God's face shine upon you and be gracious to you.

יִשָּׂא יי פְּנֵי אֱלֹהֶיךָ וַיַּשֵּׁם לְךָ שְׁלוֹמִים

Yisa Adonai panav eileche v'yasem leche shalom

May God cause God's face to be always before you and bring you peace.

Wrapped in Love: A Grandparent's Tallit Blessing for a Grandchild

by Hila Ratzabi

Today we wrap this tallit around you for the first time

Passing on this mitzvah from generation to generation

Tying the knots in an unbreakable chain of tradition.

But once you become a B-Mitzvah this ritual will be yours

You will add to it your own flair, your own prayers

Making it your own.

Today, though, before you take one step closer to your adult self

We hold you in this moment

In the tallit's embrace.

We hold the memory of cradling you as a baby

We hold you in the glow of childhood

And the wonder of what comes next.

May this tallit remind you that you are always wrapped in love

Safe under the protective wings of the Shechinah

May you remember this moment.

Remember, when you wrap yourself in the tallit,
That we will always be there, holding you,
And you will always be wrapped in our love.

Blessing on Donning a Tallit

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ לְהִתְעַטֵּף בְּצִיצִית.

Baruch atah, Adonai Eloheinu,

Melech ha'olam,

Asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav

V'tzivanu l'hitateif batzitzit.

Praised are you, Adonai our God,
Ruler of the universe,
Who has sanctified us with your *mitzvot*
And commanded us to wrap ourselves in *tzitzit*.

Tomorrow

by Steve Pollack

*Look back only for as long as you must,
Then go forward into the history you will make.
—Alberto Rios*

No need to dwell in the past
those sights and sounds
those stories behind you,

collected memories of a thousand generations
are within you, inscribed in blood and in bone,
inspiration in your ears.

Your birthright renews every breath:
the song of Miriam at the Red Sea,
the voice of thunder atop Mount Sinai

Only good passes through
history's intricate sieve, the most fine.
Yesterday's remembered wrongs must cease,

so, do good this day and tomorrow,
for at this moment, you are
why those who came before ever lived.

Go forward with all the strength
you need, with a passionate light
with a message that reaches for stars.

Go with the hope of heaven
with applause of ancestors
with radiant joy of grandchildren.