

May Women Wear Tzit Tzit?

We forward the following email response from Hakham Meir Y. Rekhavi of the World Karaite Movement (R.A.) which comments on the use of tzit Tzit (a.k.a sitsith) by women Yisraelites. Restoration Records has always agreed and taught this same interpretation and we thus pass it along for the further insights it provides. Please note however that Restoration Records is not a Karaite ministry nor are we Karaites in overall belief. Karaites do not believe that Yahshua is The Messiah. Restoration Records simply finds certain interpretations of Torah and the Prophets from a more literal (pashat) view such as those used by The Karaites to be more correct than some of the Pharisaic Rabbanite views and their resulting traditions. Restoration Records believes that one should not limit the prophesied restoration of all Yisrael i.e., that of Ephraim Yisrael with Yahudah Yisrael to the interpretations and practices espoused solely by European Ashk enazim (i.e., Pharisaic Rabbinic Judaism) at the expense of ignoring other equally valid expressions of Judaism such as the Karaites and the Sephardim. Restoration Records believes that YHWH alone is our One and only true Elohim and that Yahshua HaNotzri (the Nazarene) is the one whom YHWH has sent as HaMashiach (The Messiah). Yoch (John) 17:3.

Dear [name withheld for privacy],

Hakham Nehemia Gordon passed your question onto me.

You asked;

Are Tzitzit for woman also or men only? If for women how would they be worn?

My response;

Personally, I think that the answer is yes; this is also the opinion of Yuhudha Hadhassi (Karaite Hakham 12th century) in his Eshkol Hakkofer (see page 14, column b, line 41 of the 1836 Gozlow edition). The Rabbanites claim that women do not wear sisith because women do not have to observe miswoth (commandments) that are limited to a fixed time (B. Kidd. 35a) and sisith is a miswa limited to a fixed time. Does this mean that women should not keep Shabbath because it has a fixed time in the week? Wearing sisith is no more of a fixed time than observing kashruth (dietary laws) is, are they then exempt from the laws of kashruth! This is one of those points where the Rabbanites contradict themselves for rabbinic literature claims that the wearing of sisith is not limited to a fixed time (Tosef. Kid. 1:10).

Another Rabbanite argument for women not wearing sisith is the fact that the section on sisith in Numbers commences with "Speak to the Children of Yisrael" (Num. 15:38), thus indicating that it is directed to

the males only i.e. children is in the masculine form. This is ridiculous, for as any one with a basic understanding of Hebrew grammar will know when one male is present amongst a group of females the tense becomes masculine, Hebrew like all Semitic languages, always uses the masculine because there is no neuter form, therefore Children of Yisrael does not specify males only. When the Kohanim are told to bless the Children of Yisrael is it just males they are to bless? During the dessert wanderings, was it just the males who dwelt in booths? For it is written, "In order that your generations will know that in sukkoth [booths] I made the Children of Yisrael dwell, when I brought them out of the Land of Misrayim [Egypt]" (Lev. 23:43).

There are many other examples of miswoth which commence "Speak to the Children of Yisrael" i.e. Shabbath, are women exempt from keeping Shabbath? Again, the Rabbanites contradict themselves for according to early rabbinic literature women should wear sisith (Sif. Num. 115 and B. Men. 43a).

In my family we wear our sisith on T-shirts. My wife takes an ordinary T-shirt and undoes 12cm worth of the seam on both sides of the T-shirt to form slits. She then stitches the edges of the newly formed slits to stop them from fraying, thus making them into four cornered garments. She then attaches loops to the edge of each corner and the sisith are then hung from these. The T-shirts can be then worn as a regular T-shirt or under a sweater, shirt or any form of top shirt with the sisith left to hang outside so they can be seen.

May YHWH be with you.

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Restoration Records is a ministry serving believers on Yahshua HaMashiach (Yahshua The Messiah) who are interested in the scriptural message of proclaiming "the restoration of all things" (Matt 17:11; Mark 9:12; Acts 1:6; 3:19-21) and in scripturally-based praise n worship psalms. The ministry is led, and the related websites www.restorationrecords.com and www.kahalyahshuhamashiach.org are published by Yochanan Mascaró.