WITH THE HELP OF HEAVEN

,613,

Or HaHalacha

The Light of Jewish Law

Questions and Answers in Jewish Law
on tzitzit and the Tallit Katan

Prepared for 613

By the distinguished Rabbi Maor Cohen

May he enjoy a long and good life

FULL ENGLISH EDITION

Fashion, Jewish law and tradition

THE AUTHOR

Rabbi Maor Cohen

Questions and answers in Jewish law
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Introduction

The responsa collection Or HaHalacha (The Light of Jewish Law) grew out of a desire to provide clear, practical answers to the many questions that arise concerning the commandments of tzitzit and the Tallit Katan, especially with regard to the distinctive shirts produced by 613, which combine a modern appearance, comfort and fashion with full adherence to Jewish law.

The work is arranged in a question-and-answer format and is based on authoritative halachic sources. It focuses on everyday practical questions, such as special garment features (buttons, zippers, snaps and thread colors). It also emphasizes the importance of this commandment, which is regarded as equivalent to the entire Torah, and helps the reader combine sacred and everyday life in a natural and aesthetically pleasing way.

Our aim in this work is to make Jewish law accessible to the wider public and enable each individual to connect with the depth of the commandment while preserving ancestral tradition and adapting to modern life.

QUESTION

The practical issue

ANSWER

The principal ruling

SOURCES

The detailed reasoning

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A clear path from the practical question to its halachic sources.

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ABOUT THIS ENGLISH EDITION

Complete translation of the supplied 16-page Hebrew publication. Questions and principal answers are visually separated from their source notes; no substantive text has been abridged. Source-page references retain the Hebrew numbering. This is an informational translation, not a certified translation. Religious rulings are those of the original authors.

Approbation from Rabbi Yitzchak Yosef

English translation - layout reproduction of the Hebrew original

Yitzchak Yosef

Rishon LeZion
Chief Rabbi of Israel

With the help of Heaven. 17 Tevet 5782.
Reference: 613-2 / 82.

To the diligent and incisive scholar, whose words are pearls, the distinguished Rabbi Maor Cohen, may he enjoy a long and good life, Herzliya.

Greetings,

I have carefully reviewed the detailed rulings and instructions that you prepared for the 613 fashion company, which manufactures various tzitzit shirts for adults and young people, in order to enable the Jewish people throughout the world to fulfill the great commandment of wearing tzitzit in accordance with Jewish law. I have seen that the material is presented with sound reasoning and understanding, in accordance with the rulings of the great halachic authorities, foremost among them the teacher of all Israel, our master Rabbi Yosef Karo, of blessed memory, author of the Shulchan Aruch, and in accordance with the rulings of my revered father and teacher, of blessed memory, as explained, with the help of Heaven, in our book Yalkut Yosef on the laws of tzitzit. In everything you have written, you have correctly understood the word of God, namely the halacha, and this is the proper ruling to teach.

You have done well to cite the precise source for each ruling so that those who wish to examine the foundations of the halacha can do so easily. It would be appropriate for the company to include with each item a number of halachic instructions [worded in a way that will not require ritual storage and disposal (genizah)].

May it be the will of Heaven that your teachings spread far and wide to increase and glorify Torah, both the Written Torah and the Oral Torah. May you merit to continue devoting yourself to the study of our holy Torah, and may your name be like that of the great scholars in the land. Amen.

With the blessing of the Torah,
Yitzchak Yosef
Rishon LeZion
Chief Rabbi of Israel



Signature and seal: facsimile from the Hebrew original

The Hebrew original bears a handwritten signature and an official stamp. Titles above are translated as printed in the original letter.

QUESTION 01

Hebrew source pages 6-7

The Merit of Wearing a Tallit Katan

QUESTION

I would like to know what merits a person gains by wearing a Tallit Katan throughout the day, and what reward there is for someone who observes this commandment carefully.

ANSWER

It is most fitting and proper for anyone whose heart is touched by reverence for God to make every effort to fulfill this precious and important commandment. It is equivalent in weight to all the commandments of the Torah; it testifies that the wearer is a servant of God; it protects a person from calamity; and its many further virtues are beyond counting. One should wear a Tallit Katan throughout the day. It is regrettable that some people forgo this commandment for various reasons. Through so precious a commandment, one may merit life in the World to Come. Happy is the person who fears God and greatly delights in His commandments. [1]

SOURCES & REASONING

[1] One should seek opportunities to fulfill the commandment of tzitzit

Answer: In tractate Pesachim 113b we learn that seven categories of people are under a heavenly ban; among them is one who does not put tefillin on his head and arm, tzitzit on his garment, or a mezuzah on his doorway. Tosafot explain that this applies when a person has a four-cornered garment but does not wear it. Alternatively, even if he has no such garment, he must seek out and purchase a four-cornered garment in order to bring himself to fulfill the commandment of tzitzit. Similarly, the Gemara in Sotah 14a relates that Moses our teacher longed to enter the Land of Israel so that he could fulfill the commandments dependent upon the Land.

The greatness of tzitzit: it is equivalent to the entire Torah

The Gemara in Menachot 43b also says: Great is the commandment of tzitzit, for it is equivalent to all the commandments of the Torah, as it is written, 'It shall be tzitzit for you, and you shall look upon it and remember all the commandments of the Lord.' Rashi explains that there is an allusion to this: the numerical value of the word tzitzit is 600; together with the eight strings of the tzitzit and the five knots, the total is 613, corresponding to the 613 commandments given to Israel (Makkot 23b). Tosafot write similarly in Berakhot 18a and Bava Batra 74a. Ramban, at the end of the Torah portion Shelach Lecha, objects that the word tzitzit is written in the Torah without a yod, giving it a numerical value of 590. See the note in Responsa Yechaveh Da'at, vol. 4, section 2, for the explanation offered there. The same work cites the Riva at the end of Shelach Lecha, who asks how tzitzit cause a person to remember God's commandments. He answers with a comparison to a person who sends a message to a friend and tells the messenger to tie a knot as a reminder, so that seeing the knot will remind him of the instruction.

Wearing a Tallit Katan testifies that one is a servant of God

See also Tosafot, Menachot 43b: the Gemara compares tzitzit to a seal, because tzitzit testify that Israel are God's servants. Servants were given a seal, as mentioned in Shabbat 57b: kavla de-avda, a servant's badge. Also relevant are Rabbi Abraham Ibn Ezra's words at the end of Shelach: anyone who has a four-cornered garment should continually cover himself with it during the day and

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SOURCES & REASONING

not remove it, so that he will remember God's commandments.

The greatness of tzitzit: protection from calamity

Menachot 41a relates that an angel found Rav Ketina wrapped in a garment exempt from tzitzit. The angel rebuked him: 'What will become of the commandment of tzitzit?' Rav Ketina asked: 'Do you punish even the neglect of a positive commandment, when it consists only of refraining from action?' The angel replied: 'Yes. At a time of wrath, on the day of reckoning, we punish even the neglect of a positive commandment.'

The Mordechai there, section 941, writes in the name of Tosafot of Sens that this punishment concerns specifically someone who has a four-cornered garment and seeks devices to exempt himself from the commandment, for example by rounding one of its four corners. This is as the angel told Rav Ketina: at a time of wrath, neglect of a positive commandment is also punished. All this applied in their time, when people customarily wrapped themselves in four-cornered garments. Today, when four-cornered garments are not our usual clothing, there is no punishment for not fulfilling the commandment of tzitzit, even at a time of wrath. Nevertheless, he writes that the finest way to observe the commandment is to seek out a four-cornered garment and fulfill tzitzit, just as Moses desired to enter the Land of Israel solely to fulfill the commandments dependent upon the Land. This is also stated in Sefer Mitzvot Gadol, positive commandment 26; Tosafot, Shabbat 32b and Arakhin 2b; the Rosh's rulings, Moed Katan, chapter 3, section 80; and the Rokeach, section 361. See also Responsa Ginat Veradim, in the booklet Gan HaMelekh, section 78; Responsa Rav Pe'alim, vol. 1, Yoreh De'ah, section 5; Responsa She'elat Yaakov, section 15; and Responsa Even Shetiyah, section 1.

'Let your garments always be white' refers to tzitzit

Rambam writes in Laws of Tzitzit 3:11: Although a person is not obligated to buy a four-cornered garment and wrap himself in it in order to attach tzitzit, a pious person should not exempt himself from this great commandment. Rather, he should always endeavor to be wrapped in a garment obligated in tzitzit, so as to fulfill the commandment. Particular care should be taken to observe tzitzit during prayer, and it is a great disgrace for a Torah scholar to pray without being wrapped in tzitzit. A person should always be careful about the commandment of tzitzit, for Scripture considers it equivalent to all the commandments, as it says: 'You shall look upon it and remember all the commandments of the Lord and perform them.'

The Tur and Maran's Shulchan Aruch, section 24:1, likewise state that a person is not required to purchase a four-cornered garment in order to become obligated in tzitzit. The obligation to attach tzitzit applies when he wishes to wear a four-cornered garment. Nevertheless, it is good and proper for everyone to be careful and diligent about wearing a Tallit Katan throughout the day, so as to remember the commandments at every time and every hour. Our Sages similarly say in Shabbat 153a: 'Let your garments always be white' refers to tzitzit, and 'let oil not be lacking on your head' refers to tefillin. The Jerusalem Talmud, Berakhot 1:2, and Menachot 43b state that anyone who is careful about the commandment of tzitzit merits receiving the Divine Presence. This also appears in the Tur and Shulchan Aruch there, subsection 6.

The reward is in proportion to the effort

Even when wearing a Tallit Katan is difficult, for example on a very hot day, during strenuous work or exercise, or in similar circumstances, it is not fitting to remove it. Our Sages have already said, 'The reward is in proportion to the effort.' The writings of the Ari, of blessed memory, state that there is no occasion for removing a Tallit Katan other than when entering a lavatory or bathhouse (cited in Kaf HaChaim 21:15; see Piskei Teshuvot 24:1). When a person merits fulfilling the commandment of tzitzit correctly and in accordance with halachah, in all its particulars and details, he should feel immense joy and sacred emotion, forming an enduring bond with Torah and the commandments and making an everlasting covenant with them (Iggerot Chazon Ish, vol. 1, letter 10).

QUESTION 02

Hebrew source page 7

A cotton garment for fulfilling the commandment of tzitzit

QUESTION

Our examination found that some types of garments manufactured by the 613 fashion company are made from cotton. May the commandment of tzitzit be fulfilled with these garments from the outset?

ANSWER

One may fulfill the commandment of tzitzit with this garment from the outset. See the note. [2]

SOURCES & REASONING

[2] Garments obligated in tzitzit by Torah law or by rabbinic law

The Torah passage concerning tzitzit states: 'They shall make tzitzit on the corners of their garments throughout their generations' (Shelach, Numbers 15:38). The Gemara, Menachot 39b, records a dispute among the Amoraim about which garments are obligated in tzitzit. According to Rav Nachman, only a wool or linen garment is obligated by Torah law; other garments are obligated only by rabbinic law. The school of Rabbi Yishmael teaches there that every unspecified reference to a garment in the Torah, including 'on the corners of their garments,' means a wool or linen garment. Scripture specifies these materials in the laws of garment impurity: 'a wool garment or a linen garment' (Leviticus 13). Rav Yehudah and Rava, however, hold that all types of garments are obligated in tzitzit by Torah law. Rava also interprets 'on the corner' to mean 'of the same kind as the corner': tzitzit must be attached to every kind of garment. Abaye similarly cites another baraita of the school of Rabbi Yishmael: the word 'garment' would indicate only a wool garment; from where do we include other types, such as camel wool, rabbit wool, goat down, and kallakh, serikin, and shirayin? Scripture says 'or a garment,' including all types of garments.

Our early authorities disagree about which types of garments are obligated in tzitzit by Torah law. Some hold that only garments made of linen or sheep's wool are obligated by Torah law, while garments made from other materials, such as silk or cotton, are obligated only by rabbinic law. This is the view of the Rif (Laws of Tzitzit, 14), Rambam (Laws of Tzitzit 3:2), Rabbi Yosef Ibn Migash (responsum 183), and HaEshkol (chapter 32), which states that this is also the view of Rabbi Yitzchak Ibn Giat. It also appears in Responsa Temim De'im, section 80, and Sefer HaChinukh, commandment 386. The Rashba, Shabbat 27a, writes this in the name of Rav Hai Gaon and Ramban. So too do Orchot Chaim, Kol Bo, and Nimukei Yosef in the Laws of Tzitzit. Responsa Radbaz rules likewise (vol. 2, section 626; vol. 4, section 199). Maran's Beit Yosef, section 9, writes that since the Rif and Rambam agree, this is the position we follow.

Maran accordingly rules in Shulchan Aruch 9:1: 'Only a garment of linen or sheep's wool is obligated by Torah law; garments of other materials are obligated in tzitzit only by rabbinic law.' In subsection 6 he writes that a God-fearing person should satisfy all opinions by wearing a garment of sheep's wool, whose obligation in tzitzit is unquestionably of Torah origin. This is also the law for Sephardim. Rabbi Isaiah the Elder similarly writes in Sefer HaMakhri'a, section 88, and Responsa HaRid, section 61. So too does Responsa Maharil HaChadashot, section 5, cited in Sefer HaAgur, section 8. The same is implied by Mishnah Berurah, subparagraph 5. Several later authorities likewise encourage the stricter practice of wearing a wool tallit: Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 9:12; Ben Ish Chai, Noach, halachah 1; Kaf HaChaim,

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SOURCES & REASONING

subparagraph 5; Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach in Halikhot Shlomo, chapter 3, note 25; and Or LeTzion, vol. 2, chapter 2, note 3. See also Responsa Iggerot Moshe, vol. 1, Orach Chaim, section 2, and vol. 2, Orach Chaim, section 1, which state that even on hot summer days one should make an effort to wear a wool Tallit Katan. See also vol. 3, Yoreh De'ah, section 52, where he writes that he himself followed the stricter practice of wearing a wool Tallit Katan even in summer.

Others hold that garments of other materials are also obligated in tzitzit by Torah law, and this is the law for Ashkenazim. Tosafot, Menachot 39b, s.v. ketiv, write this in the names of Rashi and Rabbeinu Tam: the law follows Rava because he is the later authority. Sefer Mitzvot Gadol rules similarly (positive commandment 26). This is also the view of the Rosh, Halakhot Ketanot, Laws of Tzitzit, section 18; the Mordechai, section 946, in the name of Ri; and the Tur, section 9. Rema accordingly rules in his gloss: 'Some say that all are obligated by Torah law, and this is the halachah.' Ma'aseh Rav, paragraph 17, likewise states that the Vilna Gaon did not insist on this stricter practice. Dinim VeHanhagot records that the Chazon Ish also did not insist on it, as does Shoneh Halakhot there, subsection 1. Orchot Rabbeinu, vol. 1, page 18, records that this was also the Steipler's practice.

As a practical matter, it is clear that a person wearing either a wool or cotton tallit fulfills the commandment of tzitzit from the outset. The difference is that, according to Maran's Shulchan Aruch, a wool tallit fulfills a Torah commandment and a cotton tallit a rabbinic commandment; this is the Sephardic position. According to Rema, a cotton tallit also fulfills the commandment by Torah law; this is the Ashkenazic position. Therefore, even among Sephardim, a person who previously did not wear a Tallit Katan at all but who, thanks to the 613 company, will now wear one for most of the day gains this merit, even if the garment is cotton or another material. Likewise, anyone who might cease observing tzitzit because of the heat or similar discomfort if required to wear wool should fulfill the commandment with cotton. He will thereby fulfill a Torah obligation at least according to those authorities who hold that cotton garments are obligated by Torah law. See also Yalkut Yosef, Tzitzit and Tefillin, section 9, note 1.

QUESTION 03

Hebrew source page 8

The Color of the Garment and the Tzitzit

QUESTION

We generally know the tallit that is manufactured to be white. I would like to know whether the Tallit Katan garments that the 613 fashion company produces in several colors, such as black, are kosher.

ANSWER

Under the basic law, the tallit and its tzitzit may be made in various colors. Those who are meticulous customarily make the tzitzit the same color as the tallit fabric (Shulchan Aruch 9:5). Thus, if the garment is black, the tzitzit may also be black. See the note. [3]

SOURCES & REASONING

[3] The color of the garment and the tzitzit

The Torah passage concerning tzitzit states: 'They shall place upon the tzitzit of the corner a thread of tekhelet' (Shelach, Numbers 15:38). In Yevamot 4b, Rava says that 'the corner' means 'of the same kind as the corner.' That is, the tzitzit should be of the same material as the garment: wool tzitzit for a wool garment and linen tzitzit for a linen garment. Several early authorities hold that the tzitzit must also be the same color as the tallit fabric. For example, if the garment is white, the tzitzit should be white; if the garment is green, the tzitzit should be green. Rashi writes accordingly in Menachot 41b, s.v. meitivei tekhelet: if the tallit is red, one should attach two red threads, and so forth. Rambam (Laws of Tzitzit 2:8) and Raavad (section 225) similarly state that the threads should match the garment's color. They rule according to the baraita in Menachot 41b, which interprets the verse to mean that a tallit is discharged only by tzitzit of its own kind. Rava's question there, 38b, 'Does the color determine the matter?' means only that, regarding color, there is no requirement to insert the white threads before the tekhelet threads; see there. There is also an aspect of 'This is my God and I will beautify Him' (Exodus 15:2), which our Sages interpret in Shabbat 133b: beautify yourself before Him in the commandments; make beautiful tzitzit before Him. Tosafot, Menachot 41b, s.v. ein, likewise write this. This reasoning is cited in Levush, subsection 6; Taz, subparagraph 7; and Mishnah Berurah, subparagraph 15.

Other early authorities hold that one need not be particular about this, and that the tzitzit threads need not match the corner's color. This is the view of Sefer Mitzvot Gadol, positive commandment 26, cited in Hagahot Maimoniyot there, note 9; the Tur 9:5 in the name of Ri; Rashba, vol. 3, section 280, cited in Beit Yosef there; and Terumat HaDeshen, section 46. See HaIttur, Laws of Tzitzit, gate 2, part 2, folio 74d, which distinguishes as follows: if the tzitzit are white, the tallit fabric need not also be white; if the tzitzit are another color, they must match the tallit. See there.

In practice, Maran writes in Shulchan Aruch 9:5: 'Some say that the tzitzit should be made in the color of the tallit, and those who are meticulous follow this practice.' Rema writes that Ashkenazic custom is always to use white tzitzit, even on a colored garment. It is thus clear that one may fulfill the commandment with a colored garment from the outset. Someone wishing to take account of every opinion should make both the tallit fabric and the tzitzit white. Responsa Mahari Bruna, section 73, writes this and states that this is the custom. It is also implied in Sefer HaChinukh, commandment 386. Rabbeinu Bachya, in Shelach Lecha, writes that a white tallit symbolizes forgiveness and atonement. See Rosh Hashanah

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SOURCES & REASONING

17b, which teaches that the Holy One, blessed be He, wrapped Himself in a tallit. Shabbat 153a interprets 'Let your garments always be white' as referring to tzitzit; Rashi explains that the garment is white.

Maharshal writes similarly in Yam Shel Shlomo, Yevamot, chapter 1, section 3, cited in Sha'arei Teshuvah, subparagraph 4. Bach, sections 9 and 24, likewise writes that this is the custom of all Israel. Taz, subparagraph 8; Magen Avraham, subparagraph 6; Machatzit HaShekel, subparagraph 6; and others also write this, on account of the verse 'His garment was white as snow.' Machatzit HaShekel explains that this reflects 'You shall walk in His ways,' emulating the Blessed One. Regarding 'The Lord passed before him,' Rabbi Yochanan said: Were it not written in Scripture, it would be impossible to say this; it teaches that the Holy One, blessed be He, wrapped Himself in a tallit like a prayer leader and said, 'When My children perform this order before Me, I forgive them.' Since Scripture says that His garment was white as snow, His tallit, so to speak, is white. This is cited in Kaf HaChaim, paragraph 15.

So too write Pri Megadim, Eshel Avraham, subparagraph 6; Shulchan Aruch HaRav, subsection 9; Chayei Adam, rule 11, paragraph 11; and Mishnah Berurah, subparagraph 16. Ben Ish Chai, Noach, halachah 11, writes similarly and finds an allusion in the words ve-hayah ha-atufim le-Lavan ('and the weaker ones belonged to Laban,' read allusively as a reference to being wrapped in white). See also the holy Zohar, Pinchas, folio 228a. Maran the Rishon LeTzion, Rabbi Yitzchak Yosef, likewise rules in Yalkut Yosef, Laws of Tzitzit, section 9, halachah 10. He adds that a soldier serving in a special military unit who must wear only green clothing for camouflage may make the entire tallit, including its threads, green, as explained above.

QUESTION 04

Hebrew source page 9

Side Buttons and Snaps

QUESTION

The sides of the tallit made by the 613 fashion company are joined with buttons or snaps. Is this valid for fulfilling the commandment of tzitzit?

ANSWER

A garment that is open along most of its length at the lower sides, has four corners, and is fitted with buttons or snaps on both sides to join it, is not exempted from tzitzit even if most of it is closed by those buttons or snaps. Since it can easily be opened, it is valid for the commandment of tzitzit. However, care must be taken not to fit the tallit with hooks bent so tightly that they cannot easily be opened. In that case, some authorities consider the garment closed and exempt from tzitzit. [4]

SOURCES & REASONING

[4] A Tallit Katan with side buttons or snaps, forming a garment

This is explained in Terumat HaDeshen, at the end of responsum 296: joining by hooks does not count as a connection unless they are bent so tightly that they cannot be undone without an additional act. Magen Avraham cites this (10:12). Mishnah Berurah likewise rules (subparagraph 29) that one should therefore not put hooks on a Tallit Katan below its midpoint, since it would be considered closed. This applies where the hook ends are bent tightly toward the other side and cannot be released without an additional act. Such a fastening counts as a complete connection, both for the laws of mixed fibers and for tzitzit; otherwise, it does not count as a connection. See also Levush, paragraph 8, cited in Magen Avraham there.

Magen Avraham adds that perhaps even a loose hook fastening is forbidden because of mar'it ayin, the misleading appearance of impropriety, since the garment appears closed. Derekh HaChayim also repeats his position. However, Biur Halakhah there, under the heading 'la'asotah,' refers to Eliyah Rabbah and Artzot HaChayim, which agree with Knesset HaGedolah and Sefer HaZikhronot in permitting it; Rabbi Akiva Eiger likewise questioned the stringent position. Biur Halakhah adds in his name that it should certainly be permitted for someone who always wears the Tallit Katan under his clothing, concealed even when walking in public, because mar'it ayin does not apply. It is certainly permitted according to our custom of always wearing the Tallit Katan beneath the clothing.

Siddur HaRav also writes: 'Every person who fears God and desires His commandments, wishing to fulfill the commandment of tzitzit all day according to every opinion, must take care that his Tallit Katan is completely open on both sides. He should not join it there even with hooks, and certainly not with stitching, even from the midpoint upward; needless to say, he should not make arm coverings [sleeves].' This is only a practice of special piety; under the basic law it is permitted. See Eshel Avraham of Butchatch, second edition, section 10, which states that buttons that open easily have the same status as hooks that open easily.

All the more so should this tallit with side snaps or buttons be permitted for people becoming more religiously observant. Certainly there is no impediment to making one or two connections with a button or the like beneath the armpits, or lower down, to hold the garment close to the body. See Sha'arei Teshuvah 16:1 and Kaf HaChayim there, subparagraph 5, based on Kabbalah. See also Orchot Rabbenu, vol. I, p. 31, and vol. IV, p. 151, recording that this was the practice of the Chazon Ish.

QUESTION 05

Hebrew source pages 9-10

Reinforcing the Tzitzit Holes

QUESTION

It is known that the 613 fashion company reinforces the holes in the tallit with metal rings. Is this valid?

ANSWER

There is no impediment to fitting the holes in the tallit with metal rings or the like, so that they remain strong for a long time. This is also stated in Responsa Minchat Yitzchak, vol. III, section 2. [5]

SOURCES & REASONING

Reinforcing the Tzitzit Hole with Metal Rings

[5] Reinforcing the tzitzit hole with metal rings

The practice of stitching around the hole to prevent tearing is explained in Mordekhai, Menachot, section 948; Rabbenu Peretz's glosses to Sefer Mitzvot Katan, section 31; and Orchot Chayim, Laws of Tzitzit, section 12, in the name of Maharam. Tur also writes this (section 11). Rema rules likewise (11:10): 'It is customary to make an imrah [a stitched reinforcement] around the hole so that it does not tear there and leave less than the required measurement; for the same reason an imrah is also made at the lower edge of the garment.' Responsa Minchat Yitzchak (III:2) states that there is no concern about putting metal rings in the holes so that they remain strong for a long time. Piskei Teshuvot, section 11, paragraph 25, says the same.

QUESTION 06

Hebrew source page 10

The Shehecheyanu Blessing

QUESTION

I bought a Tallit Katan from the 613 fashion company, which, as is known, attaches tzitzit to a fashionable, high-quality shirt, so that the garment has value in its own right. Must I recite the Shehecheyanu blessing?

ANSWER

If this is a fine and attractive garment and the purchaser is happy with it, he must recite the Shehecheyanu blessing. [6]

SOURCES & REASONING

The Shehecheyanu Blessing over a Tallit Katan from the 613 Fashion Company

[6] The Shehecheyanu blessing over a Tallit Katan

See Tosefta, Berakhot 6:15, and Rambam, Laws of Blessings 11:9. Maran rules in Shulchan Aruch 22:1: 'If one bought a tallit and attached tzitzit to it, he recites Shehecheyanu, since it is no different from new articles.' See also the discussions in Magen Avraham, subparagraph 1; Artzot HaChayim, HaMe'ir LaAretz, subparagraph 2; and other later authorities.

Regarding a Tallit Katan, Rabbi Eliezer Papo, of blessed memory, writes in Chesed LaAlafim, section 22: 'It appears that, if a Tallit Katan is made from something of little value and he takes no pleasure in it, he should not recite Shehecheyanu.' Ben Ish Chai, first year, Bereshit, paragraph 7, likewise writes: 'Shehecheyanu is not recited over a Tallit Katan, since it is not customary to make it from something valuable that gives a person pleasure. If he made it from something valuable in which he takes pleasure, he should recite Shehecheyanu.' Kaf HaChayim, subparagraph 5, and HaMe'asef LeKhol HaMachanot, subparagraph 3, also say this. It follows that even for a Tallit Katan, if it is made from fine fabric and he is pleased to wear it, he recites Shehecheyanu; if he takes no pleasure in it, he should not recite the blessing.

Responsa Igrot Moshe, Orach Chayim III:80, writes that Maran's unqualified wording in Shulchan Aruch suggests that Shehecheyanu is recited even over a Tallit Katan. However, because the basis is the acquisition of new articles, which must be of value, as explained in section 223, paragraph 6, a distinction applies: everyone recites the blessing over a Tallit Gadol, because it is certainly a valuable garment; for a Tallit Katan, only someone to whom it is valuable recites Shehecheyanu, whereas for most people it is not such a valuable garment. Even if he values it because of the commandment, it is not reasonable to recite the blessing when the garment itself is not valuable to him. See also Responsa Har Tzvi, vol. I, section 21.

Consider what Maran the Rishon LeZion, Rabbi Yitzchak Yosef, may he live long, writes in Yalkut Yosef, Kitzur Shulchan Aruch, section 22, paragraph 2: the custom is not to recite Shehecheyanu over a Tallit Katan. However, when those who organize gatherings to encourage a return to religious observance distribute Tallit Katan garments to people who have accepted the yoke of Torah, and recite Shehecheyanu over a cotton tallit, they should not be rebuked or have their custom abolished. Ideally, however, they should purchase a tallit made from ordinary fabric. [From Yalkut Yosef, Laws of Tzitzit, 5764 edition, p. 371; 5766 edition, p. 265.]

A Tallit Katan from the 613 fashion company is a stronger case, since the tallit itself is a fashionable, high-quality garment. Anyone who buys this Tallit Katan is, besides fulfilling the commandment of tzitzit, buying a garment to wear and takes pleasure in it. Therefore, anyone who is pleased with it may recite Shehecheyanu over this tallit even if it is made of cotton. It is no different from buying a high-quality shirt or suit, over which one recites Shehecheyanu if pleased with it. Anyone who is not pleased with the garment should not recite the blessing. This is my humble view.

QUESTION 07

Hebrew source pages 10-11

Sleeping in a Tallit Katan

QUESTION

Since the Tallit Katan made by the 613 fashion company is in fact my shirt, I would like to know whether I may sleep in this garment, or whether doing so would be disrespectful to the tallit.

ANSWER

One may lie down to sleep wearing a Tallit Katan, by day or by night, and this is not considered a degrading use. On the contrary, according to our teacher the Ari, of blessed memory, it is proper to remain dressed in a Tallit Katan while sleeping. [7]

SOURCES & REASONING

[7] Sleeping in a Tallit Katan

Orchot Chayim, Laws of Tzitzit, section 34, cites Rabbi Asher as saying that the custom was not to lie down in a tallit bearing tzitzit. Kol Bo, section 22, says the same. This is cited in Beit Yosef, section 21, which comments: 'We have never seen or heard of anyone being particular about this.' Rema likewise rules in section 21, paragraph 3. All the more so should it be permitted for a Tallit Katan, as explained in Shelah, at the beginning of Tractate Chullin, Sha'ar HaOtiyot, at the end of the discussion of tzitzit, folio 112a. Birkei Yosef 8:7 likewise explains that it is plainly permissible for a Tallit Katan. Shiyarei Knesset HaGedolah, glosses to Beit Yosef, subparagraph 4; Siddur Derekh HaChayim; and Torat Chayim Sofer, subparagraph 4, say the same.

Our statement that this is the practice advocated by the Ari, of blessed memory, is explained in Sha'ar HaKavanot, first discourse on the evening prayer, folio 52, column d: one should take care not to remove the Tallit Katan by day or by night, and should sleep in it at night. This is very beneficial in countering the external forces, and the only time one needs to remove it is when entering the bathhouse, and so forth; see there. Pri Etz Chayim, Gate of Tzitzit, chapter 1, says the same. These words are cited in Olat Tamid, subparagraph 6; Magen Avraham, subparagraph 2; Eliyah Rabbah, subparagraph 4 and 24:1; Birkei Yosef 8:7; Shiyurei Berakhah there, subparagraph 4; Machazik Berakhah 8:8 and 21:1; Kesher Godel 2:2; Ben Ish Chai, Bereshit, paragraph 9; Mishnah Berurah, subparagraph 15; and Kaf HaChayim, subparagraph 15. Maran the Rishon LeZion, Rabbi Yitzchak Yosef, may he live long, likewise rules in Yalkut Yosef, section 21, paragraph 14.

QUESTION 08

Hebrew source page 11

The Prohibition on Selling a Tallit with Tzitzit to a Non-Jew

QUESTION

Since the Tallit Katan made by the fashion company is a fashionable garment, may this Tallit Katan be sold to a non-Jew?

ANSWER

It is forbidden to sell a tallit bearing tzitzit to a non-Jew, lest he wear it and pose as a Jew, accompany a Jew on a journey, and kill him. Even where there is no concern that the non-Jew might kill a Jew, one should be stringent and not sell a tallit bearing tzitzit to a non-Jew. [8]

SOURCES & REASONING

[8] The prohibition on selling a tallit with tzitzit to a non-Jew

The Gemara, Menachot 43a, states that a person may not sell a tallit bearing tzitzit to an idolater until he removes its tzitzit. Why? Here they explained: because of a prostitute. Rashi, under the heading 'mishum,' gives as his first explanation that the non-Jew might give the tallit to a Jewish prostitute and she might have relations with him because she thinks he is Jewish, since he wears a tallit bearing tzitzit, thereby transgressing the Torah prohibition, 'You shall not intermarry with them.' His second explanation is that the non-Jew might give the tallit to a non-Jewish prostitute as her fee, and she might say that a Jew gave it to her, thereby defaming an upright Jew. Nimukei Yosef there writes that this second explanation is the principal one.

Rav Yehudah says that a Jew might accompany the non-Jew on a journey, thinking he is Jewish because he has tzitzit, and the non-Jew might kill him on the way. As the Sages said (Avodah Zarah 25b), when someone travels alone with a non-Jew, there is a concern that the latter might kill him. There is also concern that he might feed him forbidden foods, but the Gemara gives the more serious reason of danger to life (Nimukei Yosef there). Rambam, Laws of Tzitzit 3:9, gives only Rav Yehudah's reason. Beit Yosef 20:2 writes that this is because it is more common and more serious. Maran also rules on this basis in Shulchan Aruch 20:2. Magen Avraham, subparagraph 3, adds that he might kill him 'or rob him'; see there.

Although Chayei Adam, rule 11, paragraph 42, writes that in the present era there is no concern on this ground, because they are not suspected of bloodshed, Kaf HaChayim 20:12 writes that we do indeed have such concerns, for we have heard many times of attempts to do so, Heaven forbid, and the words of our Sages remain in force. This is cited in Yalkut Yosef, section 20, paragraph 2.

Our statement that even where there is no concern that the non-Jew might kill a Jew, one should nevertheless be stringent and not sell a tallit bearing tzitzit to a non-Jew, is because the concern involving a prostitute still remains. This also appears to be the view of Olat Tamid, subparagraph 3, and Chayei Adam there, and is stated by Mishnah Berurah, subparagraph 7.

QUESTION 09

Hebrew source page 12

Front Buttons and Corners

QUESTION

A dress-style tzitzit shirt opens and closes at the front with buttons, and has two additional corners at the bottom front. Is this garment, which has six corners [four at the sides and two at the front], obligated in tzitzit? Does rounding the front portion help, and how much must the corner be rounded?

ANSWER

As a matter of halakhah, a tallit with five or six corners is obligated in tzitzit. The Sages expounded the words 'with which you cover yourself' (Menachot 43) to include a tallit with five corners. Four tzitzit are attached to the four corners farthest from one another; Shulchan Aruch 10:1 rules accordingly. Nevertheless, because there is a dispute over whether a tallit with five or six corners is obligated in tzitzit, the corners at the front of the garment should be made somewhat rounded, thereby satisfying all opinions. [9]

SOURCES & REASONING

[9] A dress shirt with front buttons: rounding the front corners

In shirts that open and close with buttons at the front, there is apparently reason to treat the front corners as two additional corners, since the garment is open all the way down the front. As to the halakhah, a baraita in Menachot 43b interprets 'with which you cover yourself' to include a tallit with five corners, because five includes four; see there. Many early authorities agree: Ba'al Halakhot Gedolot, Laws of Tzitzit; this is also implied in Pesikta, Shelach, as cited by Malbim in Artzot HaChayim, HaMe'ir LaAretz, subparagraph 4. So rule Rif, Laws of Tzitzit, folio 11; Rambam, Laws of Tzitzit 3:3; Rosh, Laws of Tzitzit, section 13; Tosafot there, under 've-Rabbi'; Rabbenu Yeshayah the First in his rulings on Menachot 43b; Riaz in Shiltei HaGibborim on Rif there; Sefer Mitzvot Gadol, positive commandments, 26; Sefer Mitzvot Katan, section 31; Rabbenu Yerucham, netiv 19, part 3; Mordekhai, Menachot, section 943, in the name of Tosafot of Sens; Sefer HaChinukh, commandment 386; Orchot Chayim, Laws of Tzitzit, section 3; and Kol Bo, section 22. Tur, section 10, also writes this. Maran rules accordingly in Shulchan Aruch 10:1, as do Olat Tamid, subparagraph 1, and Rabbi Avraham Yisrael in Kisei Eliyahu, section 10, rejecting the view of Bach discussed below.

However, a baraita in Zevachim 18b and Sifrei, Shelach, section 115, state that a tallit with five or six corners is exempt. Many early authorities agree: Yere'im HaShalem, section 401; HaManhig, Laws of Tzitzit; Rokeach, section 361; and other authorities. For this reason, many authorities write that one should ideally wear only a tallit with four corners. See Bach, section 10; Magen Avraham; Ateret Zekenim; Eliyah Rabbah, subparagraph 1; Rabbi Shneur Zalman's Shulchan Aruch, paragraph 5; Chida, Tov Ayin, section 18, paragraph 12; Chayei Adam, rule 11, paragraph 7; Artzot HaChayim, paragraph 1; Arukh HaShulchan, paragraph 1; Mishnah Berurah, subparagraph 3; Ben Ish Chai, Noach, paragraph 7; and Kaf HaChayim, subparagraph 1.

The authorities have already written (Pri Megadim, Eshel Avraham, end of subparagraph 1; Mishnah Berurah, subparagraph 3) that if most of the garment happens to be open at the front, the collar made by the tailor should be made 'somewhat' rounded. The same applies in our case to shirts that open and close with buttons at the front: ideally, the two lower front corners should be rounded, thereby satisfying all opinions.

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SOURCES & REASONING

As to how much the corner must be rounded, one may rely on Eshel Avraham of Butchatch, second edition, section 10, which states that the custom is to rely on any degree of rounding that is clearly visible to the eye. He writes: 'A slight rounding suffices; it need not extend across the entire required corner measurement. This is the custom.' Dinim VeHanhagot of the Chazon Ish, chapter 2, paragraph 3, says the same. Orchot Rabbenu, vol. I, p. 19, likewise records in the name of Rabbi Yaakov Yisrael Kanievsky, of blessed memory, that the Chazon Ish answered his question by saying that it is sufficient if it looks rounded to the eye. All the more so in our case, as Mishnah Berurah there writes, 'somewhat' rounded.

QUESTION 10

Hebrew source pages 13-15

A Garment with Side Zippers

A response from the eminent Rishon LeZion, Rabbi Mordechai Eliyahu, of blessed memory

QUESTION

May 613 garments with side zippers be worn as tzitzit shirts when the intention is to wear the garment with the zippers closed, but in practice most of the garment remains open?

ANSWER

According to the halachic rulings presented in the responsum of Rabbi Mordechai Eliyahu, of blessed memory, the obligation of tzitzit is determined by the shape of the garment and the nature of its actual coverage, and not merely by the theoretical ability to close it.

Even where there are zippers or snaps, as long as they do not constitute a permanent connection (that is, they open and close easily), the garment continues to be defined as 'open.'

Therefore, a shirt that is open over most of its area, even if it is intended to be closed, is still considered open and is subject to the obligation of tzitzit. [10]

SOURCES & REASONING

[10] Responsa Ma'amar Mordechai, volume I, Orach Chaim, section 1

The 613-specific question and answer appear on source page 13. The cited responsum is reproduced on source pages 14-15.

A shirt-tallit and the obligation of tzitzit

I was asked about the possibility of sewing a shirt that would be open on both sides, from beneath the armpits down to the bottom, so that most of it would be open. Since the bottom of the shirt would have four square corners, it would consequently be possible to use it as a Tallit Katan and attach tzitzit to it. Although it is not respectful to attach tzitzit to a garment worn to absorb perspiration, the proposed garment looks like a shirt in every respect, and this involves no diminution of the dignity of the tzitzit.

If the shirt were to remain open on each side, there would be no doubt about the matter. The idea, however, is that after putting it on, one could close the open side with snaps, a zipper, or an adhesive fastening strip ('Velcro'). Does such a connection cancel the garment's obligation of tzitzit?

Answer

A. The form of most of a garment determines its designation

Maran rules in the Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 10:7): 'Garments that are open at the sides below and have four corners at the bottom, but are closed above: if most of the garment is closed, it is exempt; if most is open, it is obligated.' The Magen Avraham (subsection 5, and also subsection 10), and the Beit Yosef in the name of Maharik, write that this rule of following most of the garment is learned from the earlier ruling in the Shulchan Aruch (paragraph 4): a tallit made of cloth with leather corners is obligated; conversely, one made of leather with cloth corners is exempt.

Rabbi Akiva Eiger questions this comparison in his novellae to Menachot 40b: 'I have not merited to understand the comparison. There, most of the garment consists of a material exempt from tzitzit. But where most is closed, the entire garment consists of a material subject to the obligation of

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SOURCES & REASONING

tzitzit, and the garment has four corners. What difference does it make that most of it is closed? Even when it is open, the body of the garment has corners only at its end. This requires much further examination.'

It appears that he understood most of the garment to be what creates the obligation of tzitzit. He therefore found the following difficult: when most of a garment is made from a material exempt from tzitzit (leather), it is understandable that the garment is exempt even if its corners are made of an obligated material. A closed garment, however, is made of an obligated material; since it also has corners that generate an obligation, it should be obligated in tzitzit.

But in the Talmud (Menachot 40b), the source of the rule according to Rava and Rabbi Zeira states: 'If it is of cloth and its corners are of leather, it is obligated; if it is of leather and its corners are of cloth, it is exempt. Why? We require the principal substance of the garment. Rav Acha follows the corner.'

This means that exemption or obligation is determined not by a rule of majority as such, but by the principal substance of the garment. Its principal substance gives the entire garment its designation, and its nature determines whether the garment is obligated in tzitzit or exempt. Naturally, most of a garment is generally also its principal substance and determines the designation of the whole. Thus, just as a garment that is mostly leather has leather as its principal substance and is exempt from tzitzit, so too a garment that is mostly closed is principally closed. It is therefore regarded as a closed garment, exempt from tzitzit.

The Rambam likewise uses the Talmud's formulation, 'We require the principal substance of the garment,' in Hilchot Tzitzit 3:4: 'We follow only the principal substance of the covering.' The Vilna Gaon is similarly precise in his commentary there (subsection 7): 'We follow the principal substance of the garment.'

According to Maharik (shoresh 149, cited in the Kesef Mishneh and the Beit Yosef), this is learned from the verse 'with which you cover yourself' (Deuteronomy 22:12), since a person covers himself with the principal substance of the garment. Maharik adds: 'It is not called such unless most of it is leather.' That is, the majority is not itself determinative; it reveals what constitutes the principal substance. Thus, when most of a garment is closed, that is its principal character, determining the designation of the whole garment; and a closed garment is exempt from tzitzit.

According to our explanation, even when the garment is of cloth and its corners are of leather, its principal substance is determined by the majority. The part that is not adjacent to the corners is also taken into account; the garment's designation is determined by the material comprising most of it. Rashi's commentary to Menachot there does not apparently imply this, however. He explains: 'It is of cloth and its corners are of leather: its corners were cut off and leather was attached to them.' This implies that if the entire corner section, along its whole length, is of leather, then even though most of the garment above is not leather, the garment would nevertheless be exempt from tzitzit, because its entire lower portion is made of leather. This requires further examination.

B. Is a connection made with hooks considered permanent?

What is considered closed, and what is considered open? Does a connection made with hooks or loops, intended to be opened, make a garment closed? We find such a connection in the Tabernacle: 'You shall join the curtains with the clasps, so that the Tabernacle shall be one' (Exodus 26:6). It would therefore appear that a connection with clasps also makes everything into one.

Maran has already ruled, however (10:8): 'A cape that is open in such a way that it has four corners: if an estringa [fastening] is attached to it to make it closed, in order to exempt it from tzitzit, this alteration is ineffective unless it is permanently fixed at least from halfway down its length.' This implies that only permanent stitching can exempt a garment from tzitzit. But the Shulchan Aruch then continues: 'It must also be fixed below the belt, so that the closed majority is a majority visible to the eye; otherwise it is prohibited because of mar'it ayin [misleading appearances].'

In other words, two conditions are needed to exempt a garment: (a) a permanent seam; and (b) no grounds for concern about mar'it ayin.

From this, the Levush (paragraph 8, cited in Magen Avraham, subsection 12) learns that hooks should not be fitted to a Tallit Katan below the belt, because it then appears closed. That is, mar'it ayin is not only a reason not to exempt a garment from tzitzit, but also a reason not to place it in a state where it appears exempt. There is then a concern, as Rabbi Akiva Eiger explains in his glosses, that

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SOURCES & REASONING

people will say that the wearer recited the blessing improperly. He also cites Nezirut Shimshon, which writes that this should not be prohibited because of mar'it ayin. Its proof is the Shulchan Aruch's ruling in paragraph 3: 'If one folded the corners of his tallit and tied or sewed them, so that it looks as if he cut them off and it has no corners, it has nevertheless not become exempt.' The reason, as the Beit Yosef writes there, is that 'it will ultimately return to its original state.' We do not fear mar'it ayin, namely, that people will say he recited a blessing in vain.

The Shulchan Aruch of Rabbi Shneur Zalman (10:17) states: 'Garments open below on both sides, such as our Tallit Katan garments: if most of them are open, and one wishes to exempt them from tzitzit by fixing a strap connecting the two corners of the garments from halfway down, so that most is closed and the garment is exempt from tzitzit, one must be careful to fix the strap specifically below the belt. In this way, the closed majority will be a majority visible to the eye; otherwise it will be prohibited because of mar'it ayin. This applies specifically when fixing a connecting strap. But if one fixes hooks connecting the two corners of the garment, even below the belt, they are entirely ineffective in exempting it from tzitzit. Since the hooks can be opened easily, this is not considered a connection at all, unless the hooks are bent so tightly that opening them requires an act of manipulation. They are then considered a connection and can exempt the garment from tzitzit if fixed below the belt.'

According to his words, certain hooks, namely those that are tightly bent, cause a garment to be considered connected and closed, and therefore exempt from tzitzit, apart from any concern about mar'it ayin, as he discusses below in paragraph 18. Accordingly, if one attached tzitzit to such a garment while the hooks were still open, and then connected the sections of the garment with the hooks, upon opening them again one must untie the tzitzit and attach them anew, to avoid the problem of 'you shall make,' and not from something already made [ta'aseh velo min he'asui]. See Chesed La'alafim, section 10, subsection 1, and Kaf HaChaim, subsection 22.

Terumat HaDeshen (section 256, cited in Rema, Yoreh De'ah 300:3, and in Magen Avraham, subsection 12) addresses connections made with hooks in relation to shaatnez [a prohibited mixture of wool and linen]. According to his view, if the hooks are loose and can be removed with a finger, this is not called a connection. If they are so tight that they cannot be removed without tearing the holes, however, this is a connection and is prohibited. An example of the latter is hooks bent so tightly that they cannot be released except by an act of manipulation.

We find a disagreement between Maran and Rema concerning the degree of connection that creates liability for shaatnez. In the Shulchan Aruch (Yoreh De'ah 300:2), Maran rules: 'A woolen garment joined to a linen garment with one stitch is not connected and is not kilayim [a prohibited mixture]. If the two ends of the thread were gathered together, or two stitches were made, it is kilayim.' Rema, however, cites an opinion that 'it is not kilayim unless there are two stitches and the two ends of the thread are tied.' This is the disagreement between the Rambam (Hilchot Kilayim 10:4) and the Tur (section 300), as cited in Taz there, subsections 3-4. Its basis is whether the law of kilayim is equated with the law of sewing on Shabbat. On Shabbat, when one does not tie the ends of the thread and the stitching is not lasting, one is exempt (Shabbat 74b). In the Rambam's view, although the Mishnah at the end of Kilayim equates kilayim and Shabbat, one who does not make the knots at the thread ends on Shabbat is nevertheless exempt. Shabbat requires melechet machshevet [deliberate, skilled work], whereas regarding kilayim the Torah says 'together,' covering any manner in which the wool and linen are together.

For Shabbat, a connection made by a zipper, buttons, or hooks is designed to be opened and closed every day and at any time; it does not involve the prohibition of sewing. See Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim, section 317, and Ben Ish Chai, second year, Ki Tissa, paragraph 9. Regarding kilayim, however, I am uncertain about a zipper: perhaps it is considered an actual connection. According to the reasoning of the Rambam and the Shulchan Aruch, there is no doubt that it is a connection. The uncertainty is according to Rema: perhaps such a connection, just as it is not considered a connection for Shabbat, is likewise not considered one for kilayim.

The discussion in Yevamot 4b implies that kilayim and tzitzit are alike in this respect. In any event, if the connection is loose, rather than being made, for example, with very tightly bent hooks, it will not be considered a connection for tzitzit. The garment will continue to be regarded as open, leaving only the concern about mar'it ayin, discussed below.

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C. The difference between sewing the corners and closing the garment's opening

The passage from which Nezirut Shimshon proved that mar'it ayin is not a concern could apparently demonstrate that even a sewn connection does not make the garment closed. Its proof was the ruling in paragraph 3: 'If one folded the corners of his tallit and tied or sewed them, so that it looks as if he cut them off and it has no corners, it has nevertheless not become exempt.' The source of this law is the Talmud (Menachot 37b): 'Rav Mesharshiya said: One who ties his cloak has accomplished nothing. Why? Because it is considered as though he had untied it. Rav Dimi of Neharde'a said: One who sews his cloak has accomplished nothing. If he truly did not want it, he should cut it off and throw it away.'

Rashi gives two interpretations of this statement. The first appears in the comment beginning 'Hai man,' and the second is printed in Shittah Mekubbetzet, paragraph 15. According to the first, he folded his long tallit in half; if he later unfolds it, the tzitzit will be found in the middle of the tallit. Tosafot there, beginning 'Hai man,' questions this interpretation. According to the second, he folded and tied the corners, making it appear that he had cut them off and that the garment had no corners, intending thereby to remove its obligation of tzitzit. Nevertheless, 'he has accomplished nothing toward exempting it from tzitzit, since it will ultimately return to its original state.' The Beit Yosef also regards this interpretation as primary, and this is his ruling in the Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 10:3).

According to this interpretation and the ruling in the Shulchan Aruch, even sewing does not cancel the obligation of tzitzit, and certainly hooks do not, even if tightly bent. This is difficult, however, since we have seen that such hooks are considered a connection for both kilayim and tzitzit.

It appears necessary to distinguish between the garment's corner and the garment's obligation. To eliminate a corner and the garment's square shape, one must cut off the corner, 'cut it off and throw it away,' in the Talmud's language. Practically, this is preferable to any other method. If instead one sews the corner, one reveals an intention to undo it at some future time. It is therefore nonpermanent stitching. Indeed, where there is a different reason for the stitching, the garment is exempt. Thus, the Biur Halacha (paragraph 3, beginning 'Lo nifterah') writes that if craftspeople customarily turn the garment's edge inward and sew it so that the rounded fold is not visible at all, this can exempt the tallit. The Talmud's reasoning, 'If he truly did not want it, he should cut it off and throw it away,' does not apply in that case.

But when one wishes to close a garment, this is precisely how it is joined, whether by sewing or by tightly bent hooks. There is no other method here. Such a connection therefore constitutes a connection even if it is not actual sewing.

D. The concern about mar'it ayin

As noted above, according to the Levush and Magen Avraham, one should be concerned about attaching tzitzit to a garment that appears exempt, lest observers say that a blessing in vain was recited over it. The Mishnah Berurah (subsection 29), however, appears not to be concerned about mar'it ayin, unlike the Levush and Magen Avraham, provided that the connection is loose. See the Biur Halacha there, beginning 'Mishum mar'it ha'ayin,' and also Kaf HaChaim, subsection 22.

Nevertheless, to satisfy those who are concerned, it appears that if the zipper, hooks, or buttons are visible externally, and anyone seeing the garment understands that it was mostly open but has now been temporarily joined by the zipper, hooks, or buttons, there is no basis for concern about mar'it ayin, and it may be permitted.

E. Conclusion

Our Sages have already said (Menachot 43b): 'This mitzvah [tzitzit] is equal to all the mitzvot together.' Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai added: 'Whoever is diligent in this mitzvah [the mitzvah of tzitzit] merits to behold the Divine Presence.' It is a worthy idea to help people whose working conditions make it difficult to wear multiple layers: an undershirt, a Tallit Katan, and a shirt, while the sun is blazing. Henceforth they will wear a shirt alone, fulfill the mitzvah of tzitzit through it, and have it as the covering for their skin.

,613,

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