וראה לקמן (הלכה כ״א) אם רשאי אחר עטיפת הראש לומר הפסוקים ״מה יקר חסדך״.

יח. יש להקפיד שהעטיפה שהעטיפה בטלית לא תהיה באופן שיכסה את כל הפנים והעינים, אלא העטיפה צריכה להיות על הראש וסביב הצואר והסנטר, למטה מפיו [תמונה י״ב]. והנוהגים לכסות

follow these instructions may continue this practice.[17] See below in halakha 21 about the practice of reciting the verses of *ma yakar hasdekha* while the head alone is covered by the tallit

Covering the face

18) When first placing the tallit on the head, one must make sure not to cover one's face or eyes. It should cover the top of the head and the right ends should be brought over the neck and chin, up to the mouth, leaving the face

Day 44

17. The *Ben Ish Hai* (*parashat Bereshit* halakha 5) states: "After reciting the blessing, wrap it around your head only, and not like those who think they know better and immediately wrap it around the entire body. We follow only the instructions given by the Arizal. After placing the tallit on your head, the four corners should be hanging down in front of you, two on the right and two on the left. Then, take the two corners on the right and cast them over your left shoulder. After that take the two corners on the left and cast them over your left shoulder as well. After that, lower the tallit over the rest of your body so that it covers both your head and your body." These instructions are taken from the *Sha'ar Hakavanot* (*Darush Tzitzit* chap. 1).

Maran the Rishon Letziyon commented (*Halikhot Olam* Vol. I, page 2) that the *Ben Ish Hai* means to counter the opinion of the *Shalmei Tzibbur* (32a) that one should wrap the entire body with the tallit immediately after reciting the blessing. The advantage of the *Shalme Tzibbur's* method is that one fulfills the mitzvah and validates the blessing immediately after reciting it. The *Shalme Tzibbur* testified that he witnessed a number of Torah scholars in Yerushalayim who followed this practice. In fact, this was likewise the practice of the author of *Ot Hi Le'olam*, as stated in the *Petah Hadevir* (Vol. II, 8:1) and of Harav Eliyahu Mani (*Zikhronot Eliyahu ma'arekhet Tet*, page 80).

Maran the Rishon Letziyon concluded that those who follow the second system may continue their practice, since it has a solid halakhic basis. This is likewise the practice of Ashkenazic Jews. Besides, this practice fits in with the custom of reciting the verses of *Ma yakar hasdekha* while the four corners are cast over the left shoulder. For those who follow the *Ben Ish Hai's* system, it is incorrect to recite these verses at that point, although if someone does it is not considered a fatal interruption.

The *Kaf Hahayim* Sofer (8:3) cited the *Ben Ish Hai*, but then he testified that the custom of the students of Yeshivat Bet El is to follow the instructions of the *Shalme Tzibbur* even though they almost invariably follow the instructions of the Arizal. He cited more support for this position as well. The *Or Letziyon* (Vol. II, page 278) ruled to follow the instructions of the *Shalme Tzibbur* and not those of the *Ben Ish Hai*. This is likewise the decision of the *Torat Hakham Barukh*. He remarked that by following this practice one avoids any problem with reciting the customary verses while performing the *atifa Yishmaelit*. Also, while putting on one's tallit in the synagogue it is common to hear someone else reciting a blessing to which one must respond Amen. By following the instructions of the *Shalme Tzibbur* and draping the tallit over one's body before performing the *atifa Yishmaelit*, responding Amen presents no issue of an interruption since one has already fulfilled the mitzvah of putting on a garment with tzitzit. Hakham Barukh followed this practice personally.

Maran the Rishon Letziyon (responsa *Yabia Omer* Vol. VII, #1) explained that there is no grave problem even if someone does interrupt with speech while performing the *atifa Yishmaelit* even if one follows the instructions of the *Ben Ish Hai*. Once a person has begun the mitzvah by placing the tallit on his head, it is possible to interrupt with speech, especially if it is for a mitzvah such as responding Amen. This is explained below in halakha 21. Nevertheless, he recommended that one not interrupt to recite verses until after draping the tallit over one's body. His personal custom was to think the words of these verses while standing in the position of *atifa Yishmaelit*, without pronouncing the words verbally.

Hakham Shalom Cohen *shalit"a* once commented that the opinion of the *Shalme Tzibbur* seems to be more correct halakhically, but he personally practices like the *Ben Ish Hai* since that is what he was taught at home in his youth.

את פניהם ועיניהם בשעת העטיפה, מנהג טעות הוא בידם, ועליהם לשנות מנהגם, ולנהוג כמו שביארנו. [שם]

uncovered. (Illustration № 12) This is what is called *atifa Yishmaelit*. Those people who have the practice of covering their faces completely when first putting on the tallit are following a mistaken practice. That is not at all similar to *atifa Yishmaelit*. They should change and follow the instructions given here.[18]

18. Maran the Rishon Letziyon (responsa *Yehave Da'at* Vol. V, #1) stated that it is clear that the correct manner of putting on the tallit is to wrap it around the neck but not to cover the face or eyes, unlike the common practice of Ashkenazic Jews. Covering the face is definitely not a fulfillment of wrapping the tallit in the manner of Yishmaelites, for as we know the Yishmaelites (Arabs) keep their faces and eyes uncovered so that they are able to walk about and see where they are going and do their work. If any Yishmaelite would wear a tallit over his eyes he would end up falling into a pit and would never get up. Harav Hayim Vital (*Sha'ar Hakavanot*) and other *Aharonim* make this quite clear.

The *Nimuke Orah Hayim* (Munkatch) likewise expressed wonder at those who cover their faces when putting on the tallit, arguing that it is impossible to say that this is the manner of the Yishmaelites. If they would do this they would not be able to see where they are going, and no one has ever heard that Yishmaelites hire someone to lead them around as if they were blind. That would be quite silly, of course. We can see from the Talmud that this was not the practice of Yishmaelites, and nowadays as well in the Middle East the descendants of the Yishmaelites wrap the kaffiyeh around their necks but they do not cover their faces.

The *Ketzot Hashulhan* (*Badde Hashulhan* 17:14) commented that those who cover their faces with the tallit think that this is the intent of Harav Zalman in his *Shulhan Arukh* (8) since he wrote that one should cover the head and face up to the depression below the mouth. They thought that this means to pull down the top of the tallit to cover the entire face down to below the mouth. The true intent of Harav Zalman, however, is to place the tallit on one's head and then to cast the right side of the tallit across one's neck and chin and over the left shoulder. That is the definition of "in the manner of the Yishmaelites." This is likewise the opinion of the responsa *Be'er Moshe* (Vol. III, #8).

The responsa *Kinyan Torah* (Vol. I, #2) defended the custom of covering the face with the tallit, but Maran the Rishon Letziyon refuted his words and stood by those who defined the "manner of the Yishmaelites" as covering the neck and chin up to the mouth.

Rashi (comment to *Mo'ed Katan* 24a) that although a mourner covers his head in the manner of the Yishmaelites, on Shabbat he must uncover his nose, upper lip and beard. The *Kovetz Bet Aharon veYisrael* (year 7, issue 6, page 121) cited this Rashi as proof that the person's eyes are never covered, even on the weekdays. The same proof can be derived from a number of *Rishonim*. Actually, this was already pointed out by Harav Meir Shapiro of Lublin in a letter publicized in *Kovetz Moriah* (Adar 5747, page 29). He wrote to the Munkatcher Rav that he was bothered by this, since his father had told him that the common custom of covering the face is an error. When he saw the ruling of the *Nimuke Orah Hayim*, however, he felt justified.

Up to or including the chin

If we are supposed to put on the tallit in the manner of the Yishmaelites, we should have to wrap the tallit up over the face to cover the nose and mouth, leaving only the eyes exposed, as Rashi described it in his comment to *Mo'ed Katan* 24a. Rav Hai Ga'on, cited by Rabbenu Yaakov in his *Arba'a Turim* (*Y.D.* 386), stated likewise that the term *atifa* means to cover the mouth and nose with the tallit, and he testified that the Arabs dress in that manner. Maran in the *Bet Yosef* commented that, based on a passage in the Talmud Yerushalmi, it is incorrect for a mourner to cover less than this.

The Midrash (*Midrash Tehillim* 32:2; *Yalkut Shim'oni* #723) states that King David praised God for giving him each of his body parts. Regarding his neck, he thanked God for the mitzvah of donning a tallit. We might infer from this, therefore, that the tallit is wrapped around the neck and not around the face. The same inference can be seen in the Arizal's instructions in *Sha'ar Hakavanot* and in the *Peri Etz Hayim* (Unit Tzitzit, chapter 1). The *Magen Avraham* claimed that the Arizal instructed us to cover the chin up to the mouth. Although those words are absent from the *Sha'ar Hakavanot*, it is obvious that the *Magen Avraham* interpreted it to mean that the tallit is cast around the neck only.

The *Halakhot Ketanot* (Vol. II, #63) argued that since mourners are supposed to wrap themselves in the manner of Yishmaelites, it would be incorrect for others to wear a tallit in that manner, as if they are pretending to be mourners. It would be quite an ill omen, and it is not the way of the

יט. לאחר שנתעטף בטלית גדול בשעת הברכה וכיסה בו את ראשו, ואחר כך הורידו על גופו כנ"ל, רשאי להורידו על כתפיו, בזמן התפלה [תמונה י"ג]. ומכל מקום נכון לכסות הראש בטלית עד סוף התפלה [תמונה י"ד]. [ילקו"י עמ' סז]

Covering one's head

19) After reciting the blessing and covering one's head in the manner described above, one may lower the tallit from one's head and wear it on one's shoulders during the prayers. (Illustration № 13) Nevertheless, it is proper to keep one's head covered with the tallit until the end of the prayers and especially while reciting the *Amida* prayer.[19] (Illustration № 14)

Torah to demand such a thing. Therefore, it certainly is unnecessary to cover the face with the tallit.

The author of *Pekudat El'azar* admitted that he used to cover his mouth and nose when he put on his tallit, but that later he changed practices and followed the Arizal's instructions so that he would not appear like a mourner.

Harav Zalman wrote in his *Shulhan Arukh* that when swinging the left side of the tallit across one's face it is not necessary to actually cover one's head down to one's mouth. The *Hesed La'alafim* (8:2) wrote that one should swing the tallit beneath one's mouth across one's neck, and the *Ben Ish Hai* likewise wrote that one should keep the tallit beneath the mouth. The responsa *Yayin Hatov* (#17) stated that there is no mention in the Arizal's instructions to cover the mouth, but that the common custom is to cover the mouth and nose.

The responsa *Ish Matzli'ah* (Vol. I, #5) seems to say that one should cover the neck but not the face. In the journal *Or Torah* (Shevat, 5749), Harav Rahamim Mazuz cited testimony from people who saw the *Ben Ish Hai* putting on his tallit, and that he covered his neck only and not his face, following the simple meaning of the *Sha'ar Hakavanot*. Harav Yosef Zalikha, in an essay appearing in *Kovetz Pa'ame Yaakov* (Adar 5755, page 50), likewise ruled that the mitzvah of tzitzit does not require one to cover the nose or mouth. The *Halakha Berura* (page 145; *Otzerot Yosef* #22) ruled that one should wrap the tallit around the neck and chin, but beneath the mouth.

19. As explained above in halakha 16, Maran ruled according to the opinion of *sefer Ha'itur* that the halakha does not require *atifa Yishmaelit* when putting on a tallit. The common custom, however, is to perform *atifa Yishmaelit* immediately after reciting the blessing, following the Arizal's instructions. Maran added that it is proper to cover one's head with the tallit, but the *Kisse Eliyahu* (8:2) explained that even this act of devotion applies only immediately after reciting the blessing. It is clear from the *Bet Yosef* that there is nothing wrong with pulling the tallit down onto one's shoulders afterward. This is the source for the ruling of Maran the Rishon Letziyon (*Yalkut Yosef* first edition, footnote on page 18) that it is permissible to wear the tallit down on one's shoulders. The practice of covering one's head with the tallit through the prayers is only an act of piety, not an obligation.

In responsa *Yehave Da'at* (Vol. V, #1), however, Maran the Rishon Letziyon wrote, "After [the *atifa Yishmaelit*] one may pull the tallit down onto one's shoulders in such a way that two corners are hanging in front of him and two behind him. It is proper that one keep one's head covered with the tallit until the end of the prayers." This appears as well in the newer edition of *Yalkut Yosef* (page 28). This seems to imply that covering one's head is more than just an act of piety.

While wearing tefillin

The *Od Yosef Hai* (*parashat Bereshit* halakha 6) taught that according to the *Sha'ar Hakavanot* one must keep one's head covered with the tallit as long as one is wearing tefillin. He complained about those who pull the tallit off their heads onto their shoulders when the weather is hot, saying that even if they keep their heads covered while reciting the *Amida* prayer, that is insufficient. On weekdays, one must keep the head covered with the tallit as long as one is wearing tefillin. On Shabbat and *Yom Tov*, when we do not wear tefillin, it is alright to lower the tallit onto one's shoulders after completing the *Amida* prayer.

This stringency follows the Kabbalah as taught by the Arizal, and it is correct for those who follow the customs of the Arizal. Maran the Rishon Letziyon, however, ruled according to the *Shulhan Arukh*.

The *Netivot Hayim* (Vol. I, page 176) suggested that Maran the Rishon Letziyon's lenient ruling was meant for Shabbat and *Yom Tov* when one does not wear tefillin, but on weekdays he agreed that we must follow the instructions of the Arizal, especially since Maran agreed that it is proper to cover one's head during the prayers. The *Yalkut Yosef*, however, disagreed with this interpretation since he wit-