טלית קטן תחת בגדיו

כז. אף על פי שמעיקר הדין אין חיוב ללבוש טלית קטן במשך כל היום, מכל מקום ראוי ונכון מאוד שכל אדם החרד לדבר ה', ישתדל לקיים מצוה יקרה וחשובה זו, השקולה כנגד כל המצות, וללבוש טלית קטן תחת בגדיו במשך כל היום. ונכון לחנך גם את הקטנים במצוה יקרה זו, החל מגיל שש ולמעלה, ולהלבישם טלית קטן. וחנוך לנער על פי דרכו גם כי יזקין לא יסור ממנה. [יחו"ד ח"ד סי' ב, ילקו"י מהדו"ק עמ' כא]. ויתבאר לקמן בסימן י"ז ובסימן כ"ד.

כח. מנהג הספרדים ועדות המזרח ללבוש הטלית קטן תחת הבגדים, ואף הציציות מכוסות תחת הבגדים. ובשעה שלובשו מסתכל בציצית, ובזה יוצא ידי חובת המצוה, ואין צריך ללבוש את הטלית קטן על בגדיו. ומנהג זה יסודתו בהררי קודש. וכן יש לנהוג לדעת רבותינו המקובלים. [הליכו"ע ח"א עמ' יא, יחו"ד ח"ב סי"א, ילקו"י עמ' פו]. ואף תלמידי הישיבות טוב ונכון שלא ישנו ממנהג אבותיהם. [הליכו"ע שם]

Wearing the *Tallit Katan* Underneath One's Shirt

Wearing *tallit katan* all day long

27) Technically, the halakha does not demand that a person wear a *tallit katan* at all, and he is certainly not obligated to wear one all day long. Nevertheless, it is highly recommended for any person who considers himself religious and wishes to maintain a strong connection with God to wear a *tallit katan* all day long. This is a precious mitzvah, which is considered equal to all the mitzvot combined. Likewise, it is proper to train one's small sons, starting from age six, to wear a *tallit katan* all day long. If we get them used to this practice, it will remain with them even in their old age. This will be discussed at length below in *Siman* 17 and *Siman* 24.

Tzitzit under the clothes

28) The custom of Sefardic Jews is to wear the *tallit katan* underneath one's shirt and to likewise tuck the tzitzit strands inside one's clothes. Although the Torah states, "you will see [the tzitzit tassels]," this does not obligate one to wear the *tallit katan* over one's shirt where it is visible. It is sufficient to look at the *tzitzit* when one first puts on the *tallit katan*.

This is an ancient, hallowed custom, and it is the correct practice according to the teachings of the kabbalists.[28] It is preferable for yeshivah students to observe this practice

28. Maran the Rishon Letziyon discussed this issue at length in his responsa *Yehave Da'at* (Vol. II, #1). The following is a synopsis of that responsum:

***Tallit katan* – under one's shirt or over it**

The *Sefer Ha'itur* (*Hilkhot Tzitzit* unit 3) states that some authorities taught that if someone wishes to fulfill the mitzvah of tzitzit in the ideal manner, he must wear the *tallit katan* over his other garments. The author of *Ha'itur*, however, disagreed with this. He explained that although the Torah states, "the garment with which you cover yourself," our Sages (*Shabbat* 27b; *Menahot* 43b) have already used these expressions to derive several other halakhot. The verse stating, "you will see it," likewise does not mean that we must look at the tzitzit or the garment at all times. It means only that when you first put on the tallit and perform the *atifa*, the tzitzit are there for you and for others to see, and that is sufficient. In this way, one fulfills the mitzvah in the ideal manner.

Rabbenu Yona (*Sefer Hayir'a* #16), and the *Mordekhi* (*Hilkhot Tzitzit* #943) citing Rabbenu Meir of Rothenburg, both instructed us to wear the *tallit katan* under our other garments. Maran in the *Bet Yosef* wrote that this appears to be the opinion of Rabbenu Yaakov in the *Arba'a Turim*, but he personally disagreed. He argued that the Torah states that the purpose of wearing tzitzit is to remember the mitzvot. Since it is necessary to remember the mitzvot at all times and at every moment, it is important to wear the *tallit katan* over one's garments so that one will be able to see the *tzitziyot* all the time and be reminded of the mitzvot. Maran cited proof for this from the *Nimuke Yosef* in the name of the Ritba.

Based on this, Maran ruled in the *Shulhan Arukh* (8:11) that the proper way to fulfill the mitzvah of tzitzit is to wear the *tallit katan* over one's clothes so that one will see it all the time and remember the mitzvot. He repeated this in *Siman* 24:1, stating: "It is recommended that everyone make sure to wear a *tallit katan* all day long so that one will remember the mitzvot at all times. It is best to wear it over one's clothes. At the very least, one must wear tzitzit while praying."

Rabbenu Asher (*Berakhot* 3:5) cited Rabbenu Yona ruling that "although the Talmud permits one to visit a cemetery while wearing tzitzit, that was true only in the era of the Talmud when all garments had *tzitziyot* attached. It would have been impossible to take off all one's garments in order to visit a cemetery. In our times, however, we wear one special garment specifically for the purpose of fulfilling the mitzvah of tzitzit. Therefore, this garment has a status equal to tefillin and it is forbidden to wear it while visiting a cemetery, in consideration of the honor of those buried there." This ruling was adopted by Rabbenu Yaakov in his *Arba'a Turim* and by Maran in the *Shulhan Arukh* (*O.H.* 23:1; *Y.D.* 367:4).

In the *Bet Yosef*, Maran debated whether or not one may visit a cemetery while wearing a *tallit katan* under one's garments. It might be, he reasoned, that it is dishonorable to those buried in the cemetery only if one displays that one is fulfilling the mitzvah by wearing the tallit over one's other garments. If one wears it under other garments so that it is not visible, it is not at all disrespectful. Maran concluded his discussion by ruling leniently, and this is likewise the ruling of Harav Shelomo Luria, cited in the *Perisha*. The *Bayit Hadash*, *Ture Zahav* and *Sifte Kohen* (all in *Y.D.* 367) all ruled leniently as well. Harav HIDA (*Birke Yosef Siman* 23) cited the *Tif'eret Shemuel* concurring with this.

It is obvious from all these *Poskim* that the common custom is to wear the *tallit katan* under one's other garments so that even the *tzitziyot* are not visible.

The *Ma'amar Mordekhai* (24:1) pointed out that this passage of the *Bet Yosef* contradicts his ruling in *Siman* 8 that one must wear the *tallit katan* over one's garments. To reconcile this, he suggested that although Maran issued the ruling to wear it over one's garments, he was aware that this is not the accepted custom. Therefore, he justified visiting a cemetery while wearing a *tallit katan*, being that everyone wears it under his garments. His ruling to wear it over one's garments is only his recommendation, since he understood that this is the ideal way to fulfill the mitzvah.

The *Ma'amar Mordekhai* added that although the Ritba and *Nimuke Yosef* both stated that one wears the *tallit katan* over one's garments, it is clear that they were referring to those communities where men do not wear a *tallit gadol* until they are married. In those places, the unmarried men wear the *tallit katan* over their garments, but only while reciting the *Shema* and while praying. In our communities, where everyone wears a *tallit gadol* when reciting the morning *Shema* and while praying, it is clear that it is permissible to wear the *tallit katan* under one's garments.

Rabbenu David ben Zimra (responsa Vol. V, #2016) testified that the custom is to wear the *tallit katan* under one's garments, and this was the practice of Harav Eliyahu of Vilna (*Ma'ase Rav*, *Hilkhot Tzitzit* #15). The *Sha'ar Hakavanot* (page 7b) testifies that the Arizal wore his *tallit katan* underneath his clothes, over his undergarment. The Arizal taught, moreover, that it is a serious error to wear the *tallit katan* over one's garments, and complained that it runs counter to the teachings of Kabbalah. Harav HIDA cited this in his *Birke Yosef* (8:7) and *Kesher Godal* (2:2).

Being that the kabbalists taught that it is absolutely incorrect to wear a *tallit katan* over one's garments, and Maran wrote only that he recommends wearing it over one's garments without insisting on it, the established custom has been to wear it under one's garments. As a general rule, we follow the instructions of the Arizal even when Maran differed with them in the *Shulhan Arukh*. All the great rabbis of the previous generation wore the *tallit katan* and the *tzitzit* under their garments and hidden from view.

The *Mishna Berura* (8:26) stated that those people who tuck the *tzitziyot* inside their pants are guilty of ignoring the Torah's instructions of, "you will see it," besides the fact that they are guilty of disgracing the mitzvah, and they will be punished for this. Although people defend themselves, explaining that they spend their time around non-Jews, they could still simply tuck the *tzitziyot* neatly into the corners of the tallit. If a king would grant you a special gift with his name engraved on it, you would certainly make sure to show it off to everyone. Our tzitzit represent God's Name, as the *Shulhan Arukh* explains (24:8), and we should be proud to display them.

Despite this argument, the kabbalists taught that the proper way is to hide the *tallit katan* under one's garments, and we may certainly rely on their teaching. The *Shulhan Gavo'ah* (8:17) wrote that the custom is to wear the *tallit katan* under one's clothes since we live among non-Jews, but the *Yafe Lalev* pointed out that this is not the real reason, but rather it is because this is the correct practice according to the Kabbalah.

The *Arukh Hashulhan* (8:17) stated that "some *Poskim* ruled that the proper way to fulfill the mitzvah is to wear the *tallit katan* over one's garments, but he commented that this is not the common custom. Furthermore, he cited the kabbalists in the name of the Arizal teaching that the *tallit*

katan must be worn underneath one's other garments. He concluded, however, that he does not understand why anyone should be ashamed to display that he fulfills a mitzvah. Torah scholars are therefore displeased with the practice of tucking the *tallit katan* into one's pants unless someone needs to mingle with non-Jews who are likely to taunt him."

This complaint seems a bit strange, however, since he had just mentioned that according to the Arizal one is supposed to wear the *tallit katan* under one's garments. We do not hide the *tallit katan* because we are ashamed to display the mitzvah. At any rate, the responsa *Yaskil Avdi* (Vol. V, #3) insisted that we follow the Arizal's instructions and keep both the *tallit katan* and the *tzitziyot* covered underneath our clothes.

Tucking the tzitzit tassels inside one's clothes

The *Levush* (*Siman* 8) wrote that since the purpose of the mitzvah of tzitzit is to remember all the mitzvot, those who wear the *tallit katan* under their garments must at least have the tzitzit tassels exposed so that they can see them at all times and remember the mitzvot. This is likewise the ruling of Harav Zalman (8:18). The author of *Shene Luhot Haberit* (cited in the *Eliya Rabba* and *Artzot Hahayim*) confessed that he wore his *tallit katan* under his garments to avoid the scorn of others, but he always kept the front two tassels exposed so that he could always see them. He recommended this practice.

The *Ma'amar Mordekhai* (24:1) commented that he researched all the *Poskim*, but he failed to find anyone who recommended this compromise of wearing the *tallit katan* under one's clothes while the tzitzit tassels remain exposed. The common custom, he testified, is to wear the *tallit katan* and the tzitzit underneath one's garments, following the teaching of the Arizal cited in the *Magen Avraham*. It is clear from this that the tzitzit tassels are likewise hidden underneath the clothes.

According to all this, it is difficult to understand the teaching of the *Sha'ar Hakavanot* (7c) that it is necessary to look at one's tzitzit "at all times and every moment, as the verse states, 'you will see it and remember all of God's mitzvot.' This is likewise the teaching of Rabbenu Avraham ibn Ezra (comment to *Bemidbar* 15:39)."

All this, however, cannot override the established custom of the all Sefardic Rabbanim, *Poskim* and kabbalists to wear the *tallit katan* under one's garments and to keep the *tzitziyot* hidden from view. This is the conclusion of Harav Ovadya Hadaya.

We have no complaint against the custom of Ashkenazic Jews to wear the *tallit katan* over their garments. They legitimately follow the rulings of the *Poskim* and the *Shulhan Arukh*, even when it counters the teachings of the Kabbalah. The responsa *Az Nidberu* (Vol. III, page 86) complained bitterly against the custom of Sefardic Jews, based on the *Mishna Berura*. He failed, however, to take into account all the *Poskim* and kabbalists listed here.

All the above is taken from responsa *Yehave Da'at*. In an unpublished responsum, Maran the Rishon Letziyon cited the *Petil Tekhelet* (Vol. I) testifying that many great Sefardic Rabbanim, including Harav Hayim Sha'ul Dweck, hid their tzitzit under their clothes, and that the responsa *Shemesh Umagen* (Vol. II, *O.H.* #74) concurred that this is the correct custom, and that this was the custom of all the rabbis in Tunisia and Morocco. In fact, the *Or Letziyon* cited the Rosh Yeshivah, Harav Ezra Attiya, declaring that any Sefardic Jew who displays the *tzitziyot* of his *tallit katan* might be guilty of disgracing all the Torah scholars of previous generations.

The responsa *Vayashov Hayam* (Vol. I, #3) expressed his reservation about one aspect of this halakha. In previous generations, the standard undergarment was a long tunic that covered the body from the shoulders down to the ankles. The Torah scholars wore a *tallit katan* over this tunic and then put on their robes, which covered the tunic and *tallit katan* completely. The robe was fastened around the waist with a belt. In this manner, they were able to uncover the *tzitziyot* with ease. We have no proof, therefore, that they always kept the tassels hidden underneath their robes. In fact, he argued, it is disrespectful to the mitzvah to tuck the tzitzit inside one's pants. He claimed that all his Torah mentors wore their tzitzit tassels outside their clothes. Therefore, he concluded that it is proper for us to hang the tzitzit tassels over one's clothes, emulating the custom of Ashkenazic Jews.

Several *Aharonim*, and in particular the *Petil Tekhelet*, refuted this argument. They complained that the author of *Vayashov Hayam* purposely refrained from identifying those Sefardic Torah mentors who wore their tzitzit over their clothes, because the truth is that there are none. They claim that his description of the manner of dress in older generations is incorrect, and that the rabbis wore the *tallit katan* underneath the tunic and never displayed the tzitzit tassels. The *Petil Tekhelet* has approbations from all the Sefardic Torah giants of the previous generation, and they all agreed that the custom of Sefardic Jews, based on the Arizal, is to hide the tzitzit tassels under the clothes. We may therefore follow the custom of the rabbis of Porat Yosef who were the disciples of Ezra Attiya and wore modern-style suits, with the *tallit katan* under their clothes and the tzitzit inside their pants.

Custom of Lithuanian Jews

The *Tzitz Eliezer* (Vol. XIII, #5:1) wrote to Harav Binyamin Zilber, stating that he knew thousands of Lithuanian yeshivah students, and they all wore their tzitzit tassels underneath their clothes. The great Rashe Yeshivah who taught them never complained about this practice, he testified.

The *Kuntras Hatzitzit*, by Harav Hayim Shalom Leibovitz, states (page 6): "My father told me that he heard from his mentor, Harav Yisrael Ze'ev Gustman, that most people misinterpret the *Mishna Berura*. All Lithuanian Jews, including the author of the *Mishna Berura* (8:26), had

ואף שהציציות נוגעות בבשר הירכים וכדומה, אין בזה כל איסור, ואין צריך להחמיר בזה. [ילקו"י עמ' צג, אוליי"צ עמ' כט בהערה]

וטוב שלא ילבש הטלית קטן על בשרו ממש, אלא על בגד אחר. ומכל מקום מעיקר הדין יש להקל בזה. [הלכה ברורה עמ' קסז בשם מרן הראש"ל זצ"ל. וכ"פ באוליי"צ ח"ב עמ' כח]

Day 51

and not to change their families' traditions. Although their tzitzit tassels will then be resting against the bare skin of their legs, the halakha does not prohibit this and there is no need to be stringent about it. Nevertheless, it is commendable to arrange the tzitzit tassels to be resting on another of one's garments and not on one's bare skin.[29]

---

the custom of hiding the tzitzit underneath their clothes. Rav Gustman saw the author, known as the Hafetz Hayim, a number of times since he served as a judge on the *bet din* of Harav Hayim Ozer Grodzenski. Furthermore, my grandfather, for whom I am named, was a leading disciple of his uncle, Harav Barukh Ber Leibovitz, the author of *Birkat Shemuel*. He spent all his time together with his uncle, as Harav Reuven Grozovski testified. My grandfather never allowed his tzitzit to show out of his clothes, since he had never seen any of his great mentors display their tzitzit.

"Furthermore, Harav Yaakov Edelstein told me that in the European yeshivot no one displayed their tzitzit over their pants. I also asked Harav Refa'el Shmulevitz and Harav Aharon Chadash about their fathers' custom, and they both replied that their fathers always tucked the tzitzit inside their pants, even after they immigrated to Eretz Yisrael.

"Harav Michel Shurkin spent many years together with the generation's leading *Posek*, Harav Moshe Feinstein, and he saw that Rav Moshe wore his tzitzit inside his pants. My father also testified that Rav Moshe wore his tzitzit inside his clothes.

"It used to be that all Jews, both Ashkenazic and Sefardic, wore their tzitzit hidden completely underneath their clothes. In fact, we have clear testimony that even the Hafetz Hayim wore his tzitzit in that manner – he did not behave differently from everyone else. His erudite grandson, Harav Hillel Zacks, likewise wore his tzitzit hidden under his clothes. They did not do this simply because they feared the taunts of non-Jews. This is obvious since all these Torah scholars continued this practice even after immigrating to Eretz Yisrael."

The merit of looking at the tzitzit tassels

The *Piske Teshuvot* (#22) states that although the established custom of Sefardic Jews is to wear the *tallit katan* under their clothes, it is still highly meritorious to expose the tzitzit tassels every now and then in private and to look at them. He cited the *Sha'ar Hakavanot* stating, "Be aware that a person must look at the tzitzit at every opportunity, even every minute, since the Torah states, "you will see it." This is very good for one's soul, and anyone who is careful to observe this practice will be protected from all sins." He cited another source, the *Kav Hayashar* (chapter 45), stating, "I have a tradition from devout people who, when they had nothing else to do, would handle their tzitzit tassels and look at them, explaining that by looking at one's tzitzit one helps raise the Shekhina from its exile."

Despite this, there are no reports of Torah scholars in later generations who observed this practice. They spent every spare moment in Torah study and review, and they looked at their tzitzit tassels only while reciting the *Shema* in the morning.

29. Wearing the *tallit katan* on one's bare chest

In the previous footnote, it was related that the Arizal's personal practice was to wear his *tallit katan* under his robe but over his undergarment. This does not necessarily mean that it would be forbidden to wear it underneath all one's clothes. The responsa *Rivevot Efrayim*, however, cited a number of *Aharonim* who ruled that it is forbidden to wear a *tallit katan* on one's bare skin, since that would be disrespectful to the mitzvah. It is particularly a problem if the garment used as the *tallit katan* doubles as an undershirt whose purpose is to absorb the body's perspiration. In fact, it might be that someone wearing such a garment in this manner does not fulfill the mitzvah at all. This is because the *baraita* (*masekhet Tzitzit* #5) teaches that the *Tanna'im* debated whether it is possible to fulfill the mitzvah of tzitzit with a garment called *apikarsin*. Rabbenu Asher (comment to *Mo'ed Katan* 3:43) translated *apikarsin* as a garment made for the purpose of absorbing the body's perspiration. The *Piske Teshuvot* (footnote 197) testified that the *Hazon Ish* and Harav Yisrael Yaakov Kanyevski always made sure to wear the *tallit katan* over an undershirt, and one reason they gave for this is so that the *tallit katan* should not serve them as a garment meant to absorb their perspiration.

Harav Shelomo Zalman Auerbach (*Halikhot Shelomo* 3:11), however, countered that wearing a *tallit katan* directly on one's bare skin is not considered a disgrace to the