ובמצוות, או אחר שיעברו להתגורר בסביבה של אנשים יראי שמים, יחזרו למנהג רבותינו הספרדים ויכניסו את הציציות מתחת לבגדיהם. [ילקו״י עמ׳ צה שכן השיב מרן הראש״ל זצ״ל לבעל תשובה הלכה למעשה]

הפרדת חוטי הציצית

לד. קודם שיברך צריך להפריד בידיו את חוטי הציצית זה מזה, שיהיה כל חוט וחוט בפני עצמו [תמונה ט״ז], ולא יהיו החוטין מסובכים זה בזה [תמונה י״ז] (ש״ע ס״ז, בא״ח ה״ג). ונתנו סימן בשם האר״י ז״ל: ציצ״ת ראשי תיבות, צדיק יפריד ציציותיו תמיד. [הובא במשנ״ב ס״ק יח ועוד]

ואפילו בשבת אם רואה שהחוטים מסובכים זה בזה רשאי להפרידם, ואין בזה משום מתקן מנא, ולא שאר חששות. ורק כשהם חדשים בפעם הראשונה לאחר תליית וקשירת חוטי הציצית בטלית,

everyone is observant, they should revert to following the Sefardic tradition and wear the tzitzit tassels inside their clothes.[33]

Day 53

Keeping the Strands Untangled

Untangle tzitzit before reciting the blessing

34) Before reciting a blessing on the tallit, it is important to make sure that the tzitzit strands are each hanging separately (Illustration № 16) and not tangled with one another. (Illustration № 17) According to tradition, the Arizal taught that this halakha is alluded to in the word *tzitzit*, since the letters of this word form the initial letters of *tzaddik yafrid tzitziyotav tamid* – a tzaddik keeps his tzitzit strands separated at all times.[34]

It is permissible to untangle tzitzit strands on Shabbat. This is not considered a violation of the *melakha* of *metaken mana* (making a utensil), nor does this activity violate any other of the rules of Shabbat. Nevertheless, if the *tzitziyot* tassels were recently tied onto the tallit and this is the first time they are being worn, one may not untangle the

33. The *Yalkut Yosef* (page 95) testified that these are the instructions of Maran the Rishon Letziyon to such a person who asked for practical instructions. The *Or Letziyon* (Vol. II, footnote on page 28) ruled likewise.

34. Rabbenu Yaakov (*Arba'a Turim Siman* 8) commented that the Hebrew word *tzitzit* implies that each thread of the tassels hangs separately and is not tangled with the others, based on the verse (*Yehezkel* 8:3). Therefore, we must make sure to separate any strands that become tangled. The *Bet Yosef* (8:5) cites the source for this halakha as *Menahot* (42a): Abaye taught, "One must separate [them] like a non-Jew's hairstyle." Rashi describes this to be bunching the hair and tying it on the crown of the head, but the hair spills out from above the knot in all directions since the hairs are separated from one another.

Knotted Tzitzit Tassels

The *Piske Teshuvot* (8:17) explained that if someone ties the tzitzit strands to one another intending to leave them tied together, the tzitzit are rendered invalid. Likewise, if the strands became tangled up by themselves making it nearly impossible to separate them, or if they become glued to one another, they are invalidated. The term tzitzit means tassels with strands that hang loose and independent from one another.

אם הם מסובכים, אין להפרידם בשבת, מפני שגומר מלאכתם ונחשב הדבר ל"מתקן מנא". [ילקו"י מהדו"ק עמ' כ, הליכו"ע ח"א עמ' א, עפמ"ש ביבי"א ח"ה סי' ג]

לה. אם נשתהא לבוא לבית הכנסת ויש חשש שעל ידי שישתהה בהפרדת חוטי הציצית יתבטל מלהתפלל בציבור, רשאי להתעטף בטלית אף בלא שיפרידם. ויש חולקים שהפרדת הציציות מעכבת ואינו רשאי לברך קודם שיפרידם. [משנ"ב ס"ק יח, הלכה ברורה עמ' קסא]

strands on Shabbat. In this case, untangling them is the final step in making the tallit fit to be worn and it is an example of *metaken mana*.[35]

When pressed for time

35) If someone arrived late to the synagogue and he will miss the opportunity to recite the *Amida* together with the congregation if he takes the time to untangle his tzitzit strands, he may put on his tallit without untangling them. There are *Poskim* who disagreed, arguing that one may not wear tzitzit that are tangled and that it is forbidden to recite the blessing of *lehit'atef betzitzit* until they are untangled.[36]

35. The *Ben Ish Hai* (*parashat Bereshit* halakha 3) instructed: "One must separate the tzitzit strands so that they do not become tangled with one another. On Shabbat, however, it is forbidden to separate the strands, so one should only inspect them to see that they are intact."

Maran the Rishon Letziyon (*Halikhot Olam* Vol. I, page 1) explained that this is the ruling of Harav HIDA (*Kesher Godal* 2:3) forbidding the act of separating tangled strands on Shabbat. This is likewise the ruling of the *Shalme Tzibbur* (page 29c). These *Poskim* are actually citing the original ruling of the responsa *Ginat Veradim* (*kuntras Gan Hamelekh* #65), but upon examination, it becomes clear that separating tangled strands on Shabbat is a problem only if the tzitzit have been newly made and have never been separated before this. In such a case, untangling the strands is the act that completes the tallit's manufacture, and as such it is considered an example of *makke befattish*, performing the final step in an item's manufacture. It is similar to someone who wove a bolt of cloth, and then on Shabbat he removes tangles of thread or bits of straw that became woven into the material as it was made. If the tallit had already been completed and some time later the tzitzit strands became tangled, the *Ginat Veradim* agreed that it is permissible to separate them.

This is clearly the opinion of the *Matte Moshe* and the *She'erit Kenesset Hagedola*, since they ruled that it is forbidden to examine the tzitzit tassels at dawn by the light of an oil lamp since it sometimes is necessary to examine them closely to separate the tangles. We may deduce from this that it is permissible to separate the strands by the daylight; it is forbidden only to do it by the light of the oil lamp. Actually, this ruling is cited by the *Ben Ish Hai* as well (year II, *parashat No'ah* halakha 21). This is likewise the ruling of the *Ma'amar Mordekhai*, the *Yafe Lalev*, the *Divre Menahem*, the *Me'asef Lekhol Hamahanot* and the responsa *Be'er Moshe*, all cited in responsa *Yabia Omer* (Vol. V, #3).

Contradiction in the *Ben Ish Hai*

According to this, we can reconcile two seemingly contradictory halakhot in the *Ben Ish Hai*. In Year I, he seems to rule that it is forbidden to separate tangled tzitzit strands on Shabbat, but in Year II he ruled that it is forbidden only to do it by the light of an oil lamp. Since Maran the Rishon Letziyon demonstrated that the halakha in Year I applies only to a brand-new tallit, there is no contradiction.

The *Or Letziyon* (Vol. II, 29:7) offered a different reconciliation: If the strands are not too badly tangled, it is permissible to untangle them by the daylight, but if they are tangled into a complicated jumble it is forbidden even by daylight since it is an act of repairing a utensil, or an act of untying a knot for a positive purpose. This is likewise the ruling of Harav Nissim Karelitz (*Hut Hashani* Vol. II, 34:1). According to Maran the Rishon Letziyon, however, it is always permissible unless it is a brand-new tallit with tassels that had never been untangled before.

36. The *Sefer Ha'itur*, cited in the *Bet Yosef*, ruled that the necessity to separate the tzitzit strands applies only when the tassels include both *tekhelet* and white strands. It is important, he contended, that the strands of *tekhelet*

בדיקת חוטי הציצית

לו. מן הדין אין צורך לעיין בחוטי הציציות לבדוק אם הם כשרים בכל פעם שלובש הטלית. אולם מידת חסידות היא שיעיין ושיבדוק חוטי הציצית קודם ברכה. [יחו"ד ח"י סי' א]

Day 54

Inspecting the *Tzitzit* Strands

To make sure tzitzit are intact

36) Technically, one is not obligated to examine one's tzitzit strands to ensure that they are intact and kosher before putting on the tallit. Nevertheless, it is a practice of the devout to examine the strands whenever one is about to recite the blessing on the tallit.[37]

not be tangled with the white strands so that they are clearly visible.

Harav Eliyahu of Vilna, however, demonstrated that the *Shulhan Arukh* followed the opinion of Rashi (comment to *Menahot* 42a) and other *Poskim* who ruled that it is necessary to keep all the strands untangled whether or not one has *tekhelet*. Rav Eliyahu and the *Mahatzit Hashekel* also pointed out that according to the *Sefer Ha'itur* all the white strands may be tangled with one another, while the other *Poskim* ruled that each of the eight strands must hang independently.

The *Magen Avraham* (8:10, cited in the *Mishna Berura* 8:18) ruled that if someone finds that his tzitzit strands are tangled up, but if he bothers to separate them he would lose the opportunity to recite the *Amida* together with the congregation, he may wear his tallit as it is without separating the strands. The *Bi'ur Halakha* explained that this ruling seems to follow that of the *Sefer Ha'itur* that one may leave the white strands tangled with one another. It is possible that according to Rav Eliyahu of Vilna one cannot fulfill the mitzvah of tzitzit or recite the blessing of *lehit'atef betzitzit* if the strands are tangled with one another. The *Bi'ur Halakha* did not come to a final decision about this, but in the *Mishna Berura* he ruled that one must not recite the blessing if the strands are tangled.

The *Hazon Ish* (3:9) disagreed. He ruled that the mitzvah of untangling the strands is no more than a way of beautifying the mitzvah, but one certainly can fulfill the mitzvah even if they are tangled, and one may recite the blessing although the strands are tangled up. This seems to be the opinion of Maran the Rishon Letziyon (responsa *Yabia Omer* Vol. V, #3) as well.

The *Halakha Berura* (*Otzerot Yosef* page 101) commented that even according to the *Rishonim* who disagreed with the *Sefer Ha'itur* and ruled that it is necessary to untangle the strands even if there is no *tekhelet*, this does not mean necessarily that one cannot fulfill the mitzvah if the strands are still tangled. After all, the wording used in the Gemara is *tzarikh lehafrid* – he has to separate [the tzitzit strands]. Whenever the word *tzarikh* is used in the Gemara, it usually means that the act should be done but that the mitzvah is fulfilled even if someone fails to perform this act.

In practice, the *Halakha Berura* (page 161) ruled according to the *Poskim* that necessitate untangling the strands, and he cited the opinion that if the strands are tangled one must not recite the blessing. This seems to be contradicted by Harav HIDA and the *Ben Ish Hai*, who both ruled that it is forbidden to untangle tzitzit strands on Shabbat, but that one should suffice with inspecting them to see that the strands are intact. It seems from this that they permit one to recite the blessing over his tallit even if he knows that the strands are tangled.

37. Defining the necessity to examine the tzitzit strands

Rabbenu Asher, at the end of his *Hilkhot Tzitzit*, wrote that anyone who fears Heaven properly will make sure to examine his tzitzit strands before reciting the blessing of *lehit'atef betzitzit* to ensure that his blessing will be valid. If the tzitzit are torn, his blessing might be one recited in vain.

In his responsa (2:9), Rabbenu Asher complained about "the senseless stringency practiced by some Torah scholars who refrain from wearing a tallit in a public domain on Shabbat. It is true that if the tzitzit strands are torn and invalidated, one would be guilty of carrying the invalidated tzitzit strands on Shabbat (based on a passage in *Shabbat* 139b) and therefore it would be forbidden to wear the tallit outside. If this is these scholars' fear, however, they should have never recited the blessing when first putting on the tallit. A blessing recited on invalid tzitzit is a blessing recited in vain, and that is a very grave sin as well. If they examined the tzitzit strands before reciting the blessing to ensure that they are intact, they can also examine them before going outside on Shabbat and then go outside with confidence.

"It is not the common practice to examine one's tzitzit strands every time one puts on a tallit, since one may assume that they are still intact until something happens to raise the suspicion that they are no longer intact. Moreover, there is