ג. נכון לחנך את הקטנים במצוה יקרה זו של ציצית, החל מגיל שש ולמעלה, ולהלבישם טלית קטן [תמונה צ"ו]. ועל מורי בתי הספר לזרז את תלמידיהם שהגיעו לכלל חינוך לחנכם במצוה יקרה זו. [יחו"ד ח"ד סי' ב]. ובספרי המוסר כתבו, שנכון להלביש טלית קטן לקטן אחר גיל שלש שנים, ועל ידי כך יזכה לנשמה גבוהה. [יחו"ד שם בהערה]

Boys under bar mitzvah age

3) It is highly recommended to train boys to wear a *tallit katan* under their shirts all day long, once they reach the age of *hinukh*, which means six or seven years old. (Illustration №96) The mitzvah of tzitzit is very precious and important, and the school teachers should emphasize the importance of this mitzvah to their students.[227] According to our sacred literature, if a child is trained to always wear tzitzit from the time he is three years old, he will likely be granted a lofty soul.[228]

227. The Talmud (*Sukkah* 42a) teaches that once a child knows how to don a tallit, his father is obligated to purchase a tallit with tzitzit for him. The Midrash (*Sifri Zuta*, *parashat Shelah*) teaches: "The Torah states, 'Speak to the children of Yisrael and tell them that they must fashion tzitzit tassels,' meaning that the adult are responsible to train the children to fulfill this mitzvah. This is the source of the rule stating that once a child knows how to don a tallit, his father must purchase tzitzit for him and train him to fulfill the mitzvah." The Rama clarified that this refers to a child who understands that he must keep two of the garment's corners in front and two behind him, and who knows to hold the tzitzit in his hand while reciting the *Shema*.

The responsa *Lev Hayim* Palachi (Vol. I, #101) defined this halakha as applying to boys from the age of six or seven, citing the *Sefer Hahinukh* (#386) as his source. The *Bayit Hadash* ruled likewise, following the teaching of *Sefer Mitzvot Katan*. Based on this, Maran the Rishon Letziyon (responsa *Yehave Da'at* Vol. IV, #2) ruled that nowadays the schoolteachers are expected to train their young students to fulfill this precious mitzvah.

Notice that Maran the Rishon Letziyon used the expression "should" and not "must." This is because there is no absolute obligation to wear a four-cornered garment in order to fulfill the mitzvah of tzitzit. If someone does not wear any four-cornered garment, he is not committing any sin and will not be punished for failing to fulfill this mitzvah. Nonetheless, it is highly recommended to fulfill this mitzvah, since it has so many spiritual benefits. See below in *Siman* 24. Although the *Shulhan Arukh's* choice of terms is that the father must obtain tzitzit for his son, this is because the assumption was that every child wears a four-cornered garment. In the Talmudic era, the average garment had four corners.

228. Maran the Rishon Letziyon (responsa *Yehave Da'at* Vol. IV, #2) cited the *Eliya Rabba* teaching that it is recommended to begin training a child to wear a *tallit katan* once he becomes three years old. By doing this, the child will be granted a lofty soul. This is alluded to in the verse, "Man is a tree in the field." The produce of fruit trees grown during their first three years are *orla*, meaning that no one may derive any benefit from them. During the fourth year, however, all their produce is sacred. The same applies to our children. The *Shevet Mussar* (#31) and *Kitzur Shene Luhot Haberit* (cited in responsa *Lev Hayim* Vol. I, #101) both recommended this, explaining that as a result of the father initiating this training the child will continue on the right path throughout his life.

A child using invalid *tzitzit*

The *Mishna Berura* (17:9) stated that the proper size of a child's tallit is whatever fits him and covers his head and most of his body. If the tallit is smaller than that, the child's father is not obligated to attach tzitzit to it. If the child wears a tallit with tzitzit, but it is too small for him, he should not recite the blessing.

The *Halikhot Shelomo* (*Tefilla* page 27) stated that there is no basis to protest against someone who dresses his three-year-old in a tiny *tallit katan* and trains him to recite the blessing. Although it is normally forbidden to train a child to recite a blessing for a mitzvah if it is being performed incorrectly (for example, to have him recite the blessing for eating less than *kazayit* of *maror* at the Seder) the mitzvah of tzitzit is different. Because of its seminal importance and being that it is a mitzvah that everyone fulfills all day long, these people can be excused for training their children to recite the blessing. Although it is a blessing in vain, these children are younger than the age of *hinukh*, anyway. Harav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv (*Kuntras Mitzvat Hinukh* #22) and Harav Shemuel Wosner (responsa *Shevet Halevi* Vol. III, #6) concurred with this reasoning.

ד. נכון מאוד לחנך את הקטנים החל מגיל שש בטלית גדול, שיהיה עליהם בשעת קריאת שמע ותפלה. [תמונה צ"ז]. [יחו"ד שם]

ה. המנהג פשוט אצל הספרדים ועדות המזרח שבחורים שהגיעו לכלל מצוות, אף על פי שאינם נשואים, שמתעטפים בטלית גדול בתפלת שחרית, ואפילו אם יש להם טלית קטן תחת בגדיהם. וכן **ראוי לנהוג.** [ילקו"י מהדו"ק עמ' כ, ע"פ יחו"ד שם]

***Tallit gadol* for boys**

4) Likewise, it is proper to train boys, starting from age six, to wear a *tallit gadol* while praying *shaḥarit* [especially while reciting the *Shema* and the *Amida*] even if they are wearing a *tallit katan* under their shirts.[229] (Illustration №97)

Unmarried men

5) Among all Sefardic Jews, the custom is that boys wear a tallit while praying *shaḥarit* even though they are not yet married. Even if someone wears a *tallit katan* under his shirt, he should still wear a *tallit gadol* for the prayers. There is great importance in this practice.[230]

229. Maran the Rishon Letziyon (responsa *Yeḥave Da'at* Vol. IV, #2) explained that since the custom of Sefardic Jews is to wear a *tallit gadol* even before becoming married, this mitzvah should be performed by all boys above the age of *ḥinukh*. Usually, the *tallit katan* worn by small boys is too small to be valid for fulfilling the mitzvah, at least according to some of the *Poskim*. Furthermore, it is especially important to fulfill the mitzvah of *tallit gadol* while reciting the *Shema*, as will be explained in the following footnote.

Although many Jews observe this practice, many people nowadays do not insist that their sons wear a *tallit gadol* until they become bar mitzvah.

230. Practice of Ashkenazic Jews

The Mahari"l (*Minhagim, Hilkhot Nisu'in* 6) testified that in communities along the Rhine River the custom is that young men do not wear a *tallit gadol* until they are married. They based this custom on the fact that the verse commanding us to wear tzitzit (*Devarim* 22:12) is followed immediately by the verse, "כִּי יִקַּח אִישׁ אִשָּׁה – When a man weds a woman."

The *Sheyare Kenesset Hagedola* (17:2) complained that this is a poor excuse to make it mandatory that unmarried men fail to fulfill the mitzvah of wearing a *tallit gadol* with tzitzit. It must be, he concluded, that unmarried men in those communities made sure to be wearing a *tallit katan*. This is likewise the conclusion of the *Eliya Rabba* and the *Mor Uktzi'a*. The *Mishna Berura* (17:), however, insisted that the custom described by the Mahari"l is that unmarried men wore no tallit at all, for if they wore a *tallit katan* it would be counter to their interpretation of the verses. The responsa *Tzitz Eliezer* (Vol. XX, #8:2) defended the *Aḥaronim* who explained that the unmarried men wore a *tallit katan*, and that the interpretation of the verses applies to a *tallit gadol* only.

Practice of Sefardic Jews

In all Sefardic communities, men and boys, whether single or married, all wear a *tallit gadol* for *shaḥarit*, at least after becoming bar mitzvah. This is the clear teaching of the *Sha'ar Hamefaked* (*Hilkhot Tzitzit* #4) regarding the custom in Yerushalayim, a clear break from the custom of Ashkenazic Jews. The *Aḥaronim* cited the *Sefer Ḥassidim* (#446) relating that someone had recurring dreams wherein an acquaintance who had passed away recently appeared and warned him that he would soon die. One time he told the man that his death was imminent. After each such dream, the man fasted, and even during his dream he recited confession tearfully after reciting *Tehillim* 25. Eventually, he fell seriously ill and was about to die when a translucent apparition of a person carrying a heavy load appeared before him. The ghost held a gold coin in his hand, with the image of a man wearing a *tallit* etched onto it. The ghost said, "Since you are unmarried and yet you wear a *tallit gadol* each day, and you gave a gold coin to a poor Torah scholar, the combined merit of these mitzvot have redeemed you from your death sentence." The man immediately broke into a sweat and began a rapid recovery.

Here are some of the spiritual advantages of the practice of wearing a *tallit gadol* even before getting married:

a) According to Harav Eliyahu of Vilna and Harav Zalman of Liozna, the *tallit katan* that most people wear is too small to fulfill the mitzvah of tzitzit.

b) Many people wear a *tallit katan* made of cotton or some other textile. According to Maran (*Shulḥan Arukh* 9),

those people do not fulfill the Torah mitzvah of tzitzit. For them it is doubly important to wear a woolen *tallit gadol* at least once a day to fulfill the Torah mitzvah.

c) According to the holy *Zohar* (*parashat Shelah* page 175a), if someone recites the morning *Shema* without wearing a tallit, he is guilty of misrepresenting himself. The *Haye Adam* (cited by the *Mishna Berura* 24:3) added that many people rely on the fact that they are wearing a *tallit katan* and therefore excuse themselves from wearing a *tallit gadol*, but he insisted that this is incorrect. Usually, the *tallit katan* is not made in a manner that fulfills all the requirements of the halakha to warrant reciting the blessing over it, he contended.

d) According to the Kabbalah, it is necessary to be wearing both a *tallit katan* and a *tallit gadol*. The *tallit katan* represents a minor halo that protects the wearer, while the *tallit gadol* represents a major halo that provides stronger protection. For some explanation of this, see the responsa *Yaskil Avdi* (Vol. VIII, appendix 24:5). The *Yafe Lalev* (17:7) states that according to the holy *Zohar* this is necessary even before a man gets married. The *Kaf Hahayim* Sofer (17:12) added that the Arizal taught (*Sha'ar Hakavanot*, Unit *Tefillat Hashahar* 2 and 3) that a person affects the supernal worlds profoundly by wearing a *tallit gadol* and reciting the blessing over it. No one, he warned, has the right to excuse himself from this.

Furthermore, Harav Yosef Hayim (*Ben Ish Hai parashat Vayera* halakha 3; responsa *Rav Pe'alim* Vol. I, #4) demonstrated that the Arizal taught (*Sha'ar Hakavanot* page 4d) that one must put on a *tallit gadol* before advancing to the mitzvah of tefillin. In the *Od Yosef Hai* (*parashat Bereshit* halakha 6) he added that one must cover one's head with the *tallit gadol* as long as one is wearing tefillin. It is obvious from all these sources that anyone who fails to wear a *tallit gadol* is missing a great dimension in his mitzvah fulfillment.

The *Sede Hemed* (*Asifat Dinim, ma'arekhet Hatan vekhala* #11) remarked that Ashkenazic Jews have the custom of refraining from wearing a *tallit gadol* until they get married, and he added that this was the common practice in his city (Bilohirsk, Crimea) even among the Sefardic Jews, to his great surprise. He spoke to the community about the greatness of the mitzvah of tzitzit, and especially how it protects from sin. It is equal in value to all the mitzvot combined. He related the story of the man who planned to sin but whose tzitzit slapped him in the face and stopped him (see the preface to *Siman* 8). He also related to them that wearing a tallit provides physical protection, as explained in *Sefer Hassidim* (#446). Fortunately, his words had the desired effect and most of the unmarried men and boys began to wear a *tallit gadol* every day.

Sefardic students in Ashkenazic yeshivot

It is important for everyone, especially yeshivah students, to honor the Sefardic tradition of wearing a *tallit gadol* every day. This is true even if they attend an Ashkenazic yeshivah where most of their friends do not wear a *tallit gadol*. Maran the Rishon Letziyon (responsa *Yehave Da'at* Vol. IV, #36) explained that this does not pose a problem based on the prohibition of *lo titgodedu*, just as it is permissible for a Sefardic student to cut his hair during the Three Weeks even while attending an Ashkenazic yeshivah. This is especially so since some Ashkenazic Jews also have the custom to wear a *tallit gadol* before their marriages, as is the custom of German Jewry.

Harav Mordekhai Tendler asked Harav Moshe Feinstein about unmarried German yeshivah students who attend a Lithuanian yeshivah such as Yeshivat Harav Hayim Berlin in Flatbush. He replied (*Sefer Masoret Moshe*) that although there is an issue of *lo titgodedu* regarding customs, it does not present a problem for those who wish to wear a tallit. He explained that once someone chooses to wear a four-cornered garment, he becomes obligated to have tzitzit attached to it and no one can accuse him of wrongdoing for obeying the halakha. Rav Feinstein mentioned that he finds the German custom difficult to understand, since the universal custom among Ashkenazic Jews is for unmarried men to pray without a tallit. After all, the Mahari"l was the "father of Ashkenazic customs," and he lived in Germany as well. Perhaps, he ventured to say, this practice was introduced to German Jews by Harav Shimshon Refa'el Hirsch. Rav Feinstein also claimed that the Ashkenazic custom was practiced by the Sages of the Talmud, as we find in *Kiddushin* (29b) that men did not wear the type of head-covering called *suddar* until they were married.

These arguments are somewhat faulty, however. The Mahari"l admitted openly that in many other areas the custom was to wear a tallit immediately after becoming bar mitzvah. The custom of waiting until after marrying was limited to the area of the Rhine River and it was not observed in the rest of Germany. The passage in *Kiddushin* has nothing to do with wearing a tallit while praying; it refers to another type of head-covering that was worn exclusively by the Torah scholars throughout the day. See above in *Siman* 8:17.

The responsa *Yitzhak Yeranen* (Vol. I, #14) cites Harav Serayahu Doblitzky asserting that in all of Europe except for the area of the Rhine River the custom was for unmarried men to wear a tallit, and cites Harav Shemuel David Munk asserting that the custom in northern France was to begin wearing a *tallit gadol* as soon as the child knows how to wear it, whereas in southern France they begin after the boy becomes bar mitzvah. The custom of waiting until after marrying was prevalent in Poland and Lithuania only.

Instead of complaining about those who have the custom of wearing a tallit, Rav Feinstein should have complained about those who have the custom not to wear one. As explained above, there are many halakhic and spiritual advantages to wearing a tallit, especially for those Jews who wear a *tallit katan* made of textiles other than

ו. אונן פטור ממצות ציצית, כשם שפטור מכל המצוות. ומכל מקום מותר לו ללבוש בבוקר הטלית קטן שלו [מנחת שלמה ח״א סי׳ צא אות כה ס״ק ג], ובלא ברכה. [הלכה ברורה עמ׳ שסג]

Day 79

Onen

6) An *onen* is exempt from the mitzvah of tzitzit just as he is exempt from all other mitzvot.[231] Even so, it is permissible for him to wear his *tallit katan*[232] without reciting the blessing for it.

sheep's wool. According to Rambam and the *Shulḥan Arukh*, the Torah mitzvah of tzitzit applies only to wool or linen garments; the obligation to attach tzitzit to garments made of other textiles is only an institution of our Sages. Although Rama ruled that garments of all natural textiles are obligated by the Torah to have tzitzit attached, the *Mishna Berura* ruled that one should be stringent and make sure to wear a woolen tallit, since this debate concerns a Torah mitzvah. In fact, Rav Feinstein himself recommended this, as mentioned above in *Siman* 10. The fact is that the great majority of Ashkenazic yeshivah students wear a cotton *tallit katan*. This practice results in the sorry fact that until they get married they almost never fulfill the Torah mitzvah of tzitzit according to Rambam and the *Shulḥan Arukh*.

Therefore, the custom of the German Jews is superior to that of other Ashkenazic Jews. Without question, Sefardic yeshivah students must not forsake their custom to wear a *tallit gadol* every day even if they attend an Ashkenazic yeshivah. This is the ruling of the *Yalkut Yosef* (*Shabbat* page 850), the responsa *Yitzḥak Yeranen* (Vol. I, #14), the responsa *Binyan Av* (Vol. II, #7:1) and the responsa *Si'aḥ Kohen* (Vol. III, page 40).

Nevertheless, the responsa *Vayashov Hayam* (Vol. I, page 104) ruled that it is preferable that Sefardic students attending Ashkenazic yeshivot wear their hats during *shaḥarit* instead of covering their heads with the tallit. This is for the sake of conformity and respecting the decorum dictated in the yeshivah.

231. An *onen* attaching tzitzit to a garment

It is possible that if an *onen* attached tzitzit to a garment they are not kosher since he was exempt from the mitzvah at that time. The responsa *Torah Lishmah* (#6) deals with a case of someone who pronounced a *neder* making it temporarily forbidden for him or anyone else to wear his garment, and he then attached tzitzit to it during the time it was forbidden. He ruled that the tzitzit are invalid because of the principle of *ta'ase velo min he'asui*. This is because during the period that it was forbidden to wear the garment it was exempt from the mitzvah of tzitzit.

According to Maran the Rishon Letziyon, however, the tzitzit are kosher. The principle of *ta'ase velo min he'asui* is not an issue since the garment automatically becomes obligated in tzitzit when the time passes. This will be explained below in the footnote to *Siman* 18:9. The case of an *onen*, however, is more serious since the person is exempt from tzitzit and from all mitzvot at this time and this status changes only after the body is buried. Therefore, it is likely that the tzitzit that he attached are invalid.

The responsa *Maḥane Ḥayim* (Vol. III, #4) commented that if the *onen* attached tzitzit to his own tallit it is invalid but if he attaches tzitzit to someone else's garment it is kosher. Other *Aḥaronim* ruled that the tzitzit are kosher in every case. They explained that an *onen* is considered obligated in all mitzvot but that he is blocked from fulfilling them because of his temporary status. For this reason, the halakha is that if an *onen* writes the passages for tefillin, the parchments are kosher. Even while he is an *onen*, he is considered a person who is obligated to fulfill the mitzvah of tefillin, as Maran the Rishon Letziyon explained in *Ḥazon Ovadya Avelut* (Vol. II, page 140). The same should apply to tzitzit attached to a garment by an *onen*.

232. Harav Shelomo Zalman Auerbach (responsa *Minḥat Shelomo* Vol. I, #91:25) discussed whether or not an *onen* may put on his *tallit katan* in the morning. There is no option of putting it on while intending not to fulfill the mitzvah of tzitzit, since the *Mishna Berura* (*Bi'ur Halakha*) in *Siman* 60 ruled that if someone has such intentions it would be considered as if he was wearing a four-cornered garment without tzitzit. See above in *Siman* 8:3 for a discussion about this ruling.

Rav Auerbach suggested that perhaps according to the *Mordekhi* an *onen* is permitted to wear a four-cornered garment without tzitzit. His conclusion is that the *onen* may wear his *tallit katan* since he always includes one among the clothes he wears every day. Since it is part of his daily wardrobe, wearing it should not be considered an affront to the honor of his departed relative.