ה. בליל כיפור נוהגים להתעטף בציצית מבעוד יום, כדי להתפלל עמו בכוונה, ולעמוד באימה וביראה. (שו"ת הרדב"ז ח"ד סי' רמד). וקודם שיתעטף, יברך אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצונו להתעטף בציצית. [חזו"ע ימים נוראים עמ' רסא]

On Yom Kippur evening

5) The common custom is that we wear a *tallit gadol* during the *arvit* prayer of Yom Kippur to enhance our ability to concentrate on the meaning of the prayers and to demonstrate our fear of God. If someone puts on the tallit before sunset, he must recite the blessing of *lehit'atef betzitzit*.[234] Even if it is after sunset, there is a basis to permit someone to recite the blessing for another 13.5 seasonal

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234. Although some of the *Poskim* ruled that one must not wear a *tallit gadol* at night, as explained above, the night of Yom Kippur is an exception. The custom of wearing a tallit during *arvit* of Yom Kippur is ancient and time-honored. The *Aharonim*, including the *Bayit Hadash*, explained that the purpose of wearing a tallit on Yom Kippur is in order to emulate the angels, whom the Prophets envisioned as wrapped in white garments. The *Mahatzit Hashekel* (18:2) cited the Midrash teaching that on Yom Kippur the chief prosecuting angel admits to God that, "You possess one nation on earth that are like the angels. They are dressed in white and covered with white robes." The *Kaf Hahayim* Sofer (18:2) asserted that there is a sound basis according to the Kabbalah to wear a tallit during the evening of Yom Kippur, and he testified that this is the custom of the kabbalists who studied in Yeshivat Bet El.

When to recite the blessing

If someone puts on his tallit before sunset in the afternoon before Yom Kippur, he must recite the blessing for the mitzvah. A tallit is considered a daytime garment, and if worn during the day it warrants a blessing. Nevertheless, the opinion of Harav Avraham Azulai, cited by Harav HIDA in his *Birke Yosef* (619:1), is that one should not recite the blessing in this case, and Harav Hayim Palachi followed this stringency. The *Yafe Lalev* explained that this ruling is based on the principle that we do not recite blessings for practices that are no more than customs. Putting on a tallit for the evening of Yom Kippur is a custom, and therefore it does not warrant a blessing.

Maran the Rishon Letziyon (responsa *Yabia Omer* Vol. X, #54:1) refuted this reasoning since putting on a tallit during the day is always a full-fledged mitzvah, and it is not an ordinary custom like that of beating the willow branches on *Hosha'na Rabba*. Putting on a tallit on the afternoon before Yom Kippur is no different than putting one on any other afternoon. Those people who have the custom (mentioned in the *Bet Yosef Siman* 46) to wear tallit and tefillin for *minha* of fast days also recite the blessings over those mitzvot. In conclusion, anyone who puts on his tallit before sunset must definitely recite the blessing. This ruling is repeated in *Hazon Ovadya* (*Yamim Nora'im* page 261).

During *arvit* at the end of Yom Kippur

The *Sheyare Kenesset Hagedola* (glosses on the *Bet Yosef* 18:3) wrote that since we wear a tallit on Yom Kippur to emulate the angels, it makes sense to continue wearing it for the *arvit* prayer after Yom Kippur. The *Mishna Berura* (18:6) concurred with this, ruling that one should not take off the tallit until after *arvit*. The *Kaf Hahayim* Sofer (18:15), however, testified that the custom in Yeshivat Bet El is not to wear the tallit during *arvit* after Yom Kippur, based on kabbalistic teachings. The night after Yom Kippur is no different than all nights of the year. The *Halakha Berura* (page 371) likewise ruled that one should not wear the tallit during *arvit* after Yom Kippur.

Those people who do not always conduct themselves with the stringencies of the Kabbalah may rely on the *Poskim* who permitted wearing the tallit for *arvit* after Yom Kippur. In fact, the responsa *Ish Matzli'ah* (Vol. I, page 58b) agreed in principle with the *Kaf Hahayim* but he testified that the common custom is that of the *Sheyare Kenesset Hagedola*.

Furthermore, most people do not bring their hats to the synagogue on Yom Kippur since they pray while wearing the tallit. For those who practice the commendable custom of wearing a hat while reciting the prayers, it is important to continue wearing the tallit for *arvit* after Yom Kippur so that they can cover their heads with it in the absence of the hats.

Harav Akiva Eiger added another argument in favor of wearing the tallit for *arvit*. According to the holy *Zohar*, if someone recites the *Shema* without wearing tzitzit, he is guilty of testifying falsely about himself. Since many people do not wear a *tallit katan* under their shirts, they must wear their *tallit gadol* in order to avoid starting the new year on the wrong note. Those who wish to follow the ruling of the *Kaf Hahayim* should make sure to bring their hats to the synagogue so that they can wear the hats during *arvit*.

ואם הגיע זמן צאת הכוכבים [שלש עשרה דקות וחצי אחר השקיעה בשעות זמניות], אין לו לברך על הטלית. אבל אם התעכב מלהתעטף בציצית עד שהגיע זמן בית השמשות, שהוא תוך י"ג דקות וחצי, המברך יש לו על מה שיסמוך. [יבי"א ח"י סי' נד אות א, חזו"ע עמ' רסב בהערה]

minutes.[235] After that, the moment of halakhic dusk has arrived and it is no longer possible to recite the blessing.

235. Maran the Rishon Letziyon (responsa *Yabia Omer* Vol. X, #54:1) ruled that if someone wishes to put on his tallit on the evening of Yom Kippur just after sunset, during *ben hashemashot*, there is a halakhic basis to justify reciting the blessing on the mitzvah. This is because there is a *safek sefeka* to say that he is obligated to recite it. One *safek* is that the halakha might follow the opinion of Rabbenu Asher that we are obligated to have tzitzit attached to a daytime garment (like a *tallit*) even when wearing it at night. Even if the halakha follows the opinion of Rambam that all garments are exempt during the night, the period of *ben hashemashot* might really be daytime. Furthermore, the *Mishna Berura* (*Bi'ur Halakha* 415) asserted that the halakha follows the opinion of Ribbi Yosi that the entire period of *ben hashemashot* is definitely day until just moments before dusk. Normally, we refrain from reciting a blessing if there is a possibility that it is not warranted, or even if there is a *safek sefeka* to say that it is warranted. Nevertheless, if someone insists on reciting the blessing, he is on secure ground and no one may protest it, as stated in the *Mikhtam leDavid*. Maran the Rishon Letziyon (*Yalkut Yosef* Vol. I, page 38) issued a similar ruling regarding reciting the blessing over tefillin when putting them on during *ben hashemashot*.

Alternatively, Maran the Rishon Letziyon cited Harav David ben Zimra's ruling that regarding the blessing over a mitzvah, the principle of *safek berakhot lehakel* does not apply. In responsa *Yabia Omer* (Vol. V), Maran the Rishon Letziyon ruled that whenever Maran ruled that a blessing should be recited over a mitzvah, the principle of Harav David ben Zimra can be applied in practice. In this case, since Maran followed the opinion of Rabbenu Tam regarding sunset and twilight, people may safely recite the blessing over a tallit after sunset.

Maran the Rishon Letziyon added weight to this ruling in *Hazon Ovadya Yamim Nora'im* (page 262), based on the responsa of Mahari"l (#157:7) asserting that in reality the time for the mitzvah of tzitzit is not determined by day or night but rather by daylight or nighttime darkness. This is because the Torah's criterion is that the mitzvah applies when the tzitzit can be seen. Since there is still enough daylight during *ben hashemashot* to see the tzitzit, there is definitely an obligation to have tzitzit attached to the tallit even though it might technically be night already.

Another possible justification for reciting the blessing during *ben hashemashot* is based on the principle forwarded by the *Terumat Hadeshen* that when dealing with a mitzvah of the Torah, one may always recite the blessing if there is a *safek sefeka* to justify it. This is the reason the halakha permits reciting a blessing over the mitzvah of counting the days of the *omer* as long as there is a *safek sefeka*. Maran the Rishon Letziyon, however, did not offer this solution to the issue of tzitzit during *ben hashemashot*. This is probably because there is no proof that the *Terumat Hadeshen's* principle applies to a mitzvah that one does not necessarily have to perform. No one has the choice of not counting the days of the *omer*, but anyone may choose not to wear a four-cornered garment and not fulfill the mitzvah of tzitzit. Maran the Rishon Letziyon made such a distinction in responsa *Yehave Da'at* (Vol. VI, #40) regarding the mitzvah of a *kohen* blessing the congregation.

The *Halakha Berura* (Vol. I, page 371) ruled that one must not recite a blessing over a tallit during *ben hashemashot* even though there is a *safek sefeka* to justify it. This is because a person has the choice not to wear the tallit altogether; it is not an obligation. Therefore, it is best to avoid the issue and not place oneself in the position of reciting the blessing. Of course, this contradicts the ruling in *Yabia Omer* Vol. X and *Hazon Ovadya Yamim Nora'im*, but those volumes were composed after the publication of *Halakha Berura* Vol. I. Nevertheless, it is true that Maran the Rishon Letziyon also had some reservations about this issue. He did not recommend reciting the blessing; he only ruled that there is a basis to justify reciting it.

When unsure whether the sun has set

The *Kaf Hahayim* Sofer (18:21) wrote that even if someone is unsure whether or not the sun has already set, and it might actually still be day, he still must not recite the blessing over the tallit. In such a case, there are multiple reasons to justify reciting the blessing. Nevertheless, if a regular *safek sefeka* is not sufficient to warrant reciting the blessing, additional *sefekot* will not change the halakha. If we follow the principle of Maran the Rishon Letziyon to permit reciting the blessing, we do not need more than an ordinary *safek sefeka*.

ו. מנהג כמה קהלות, שהשליח צבור מתעטף בטלית, בלא ברכה, קודם שעובר לפני התיבה בערבית. וכן יש קהלות שנהגו להתעטף בטלית גדול קודם קבלת שבת. ואף על פי שיש מהאחרונים שקראו תגר על מנהג זה, מכל מקום הנח להם לישראל במנהגם, שיש להם על מה שיסמוכו, ובפרט אם מתעטפים בטלית מבעוד יום. [ילקו"י עמ' רלא, הלכה ברורה עמ' שסח, פסקי תשובות סי' יח אות ב הערה יב]

Cantor for *arvit*

6) In some communities, the cantor for the *arvit* prayer each evening wears a tallit in honor of the congregation, but he does not recite a blessing over it. Furthermore, in some communities each member of the congregation puts on his tallit for *kabbalat Shabbat* and the Friday evening *arvit*. Although some *Poskim* argued that this custom is incorrect, there is a halakhic basis to justify it. This is especially so since those people put on the tallit before sunset on Friday afternoon.[236]

236. Custom of a cantor wearing a tallit

The *Magen Avraham* (18:2, cited in the *Mishna Berura* 18:5) stated that a cantor must always wear a tallit while praying, based on the Midrash (*Rosh Hashanah* 17b) teaching that God appeared to Moshe Rabbenu like a cantor wearing a tallit, from which the *Magen Avraham* inferred that a cantor always wears a tallit. He then cited the *Leḥem Ḥamudot* stating that, not only a cantor, but any mourner who recites kaddish must wear a tallit at that time in honor of the congregation. The *Mishna Berura* (*Sha'ar Hatziyun* 581:3) explained that even at night the cantor wears a tallit in honor of the congregation.

The *Aḥaronim* offer different rationalizations for this custom, since it seems to contradict the ruling of the *Bayit Ḥadash* and the *Birke Yosef* cited above (footnote to halakha 3) that it is forbidden to wear a *tallit gadol* at night. See the *Halakha Berura* (page 372), the *Piske Teshuvot* (*Siman* 18, footnote 12) and the *Yalkut Yosef* (page 232).

Most communities no longer practice the custom of having the cantor wear a tallit for the *arvit* prayer, unless the cantor is wearing a short-sleeved shirt without a jacket. Among Ashkenazic Jews, this custom has been more-or-less preserved. Their custom is for the cantor to wear a tallit during *seliḥot* even when reciting them during the night. In all these cases, the cantor does not recite a blessing over the tallit.

Tallit during *kabbalat Shabbat*

The custom of Yemenite Jews is to wear a tallit for the Friday evening prayers, based on the Talmud's statement (*Shabbat* 25b): Rav Yehuda cited Rav saying, "The practice of Ribbi Yehuda bar Ilay was that a basin of warm water was brought to him each Friday afternoon. He would bathe his face, hands and feet, dress and cover himself with a linen tallit with tzitzit attached, so that he appeared like a ministering angel." Compare this to the passages in Shabbat 119a and *Bava Kama* 32b.

As explained above in halakha 3, however, many *Poskim* ruled that it is incorrect to wear a tallit at night. The responsa *Bet David* (#9), citing Harav Yosef Gikatilla, wrote emphatically that "there is no basis for wearing a tallit during the evenings of Shabbat or Yom Tov. The Kabbalah dictates that one must not wear a tallit after sunset. Even if one of the *Poskim* ruled otherwise, his ruling is totally outnumbered. We must protest against anyone who wears a tallit at night, which is contrary to the ruling of the Ramban and Rabbenu Avraham ben David. Although the Talmud states that the Torah scholars had the custom of wrapping themselves in a tallit and going out to greet the Shabbat Queen on Friday evening, it was still during the day when they did that. They did not continue to wear the tallit for the *arvit* prayer."

The *Leket Hakatzir* (*Hilkhot Tzitzit* #42, page 27) cited this passage of the *Bet David* and added: "While I was in Livorno I witnessed Harav ḤIDA wearing his tallit for *minḥa* late Friday afternoon, but immediately afterward he took it off.

Nevertheless, the author of *Minḥat El'azar* adopted the custom of the Yemenite Jews. See the comments of the *Piske Teshuvot* (*Siman* 18, footnote 12), the *Halakha Berura* (page 368) and the *Yalkut Yosef* (page 232).