סימן כד

הנהגת לבישת הציצית, שכרה ועונשה

א. כתב מרן בשלחן ערוך (ר"ס כד): אם אין אדם לובש טלית בת ארבע כנפות, אינו חייב בציצית. וטוב ונכון להיות כל אדם זהיר ללבוש טלית קטן כל היום, כדי שיזכור המצוה בכל רגע. ועל כן יש בו חמשה קשרים, כנגד ה' חומשי תורה, וארבע כנפים, שבכל צד שיפנה יזכור. ולפחות יזהר שיהיה לבוש ציצית בשעת התפלה. עכ"ל.

ונמצא להלכה: שאמנם מעיקר הדין אין חיוב ללבוש טלית קטן במשך כל היום, מכל מקום ראוי ונכון מאוד שכל אדם ישתדל לקיים מצוה יקרה וחשובה זו, השקולה כנגד כל המצות, וללבוש טלית קטן תחת בגדיו במשך כל היום. [יחו"ד ח"ד סי' ב]

Siman 24

Tzitzit Customs and Its Reward

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Obligation to wear *tallit katan*

1) The *Shulḥan Arukh* states that as long as a person does not wear a four-cornered garment he is exempt from wearing tzitzit. Nonetheless, it is important and correct for everyone to make sure to wear a *tallit katan* throughout the day so that he will remember the mitzvot at all times. The tzitzit tassels each have five knots to remind us of the five Books of the Torah. They are attached to the four corners of the garment to remind the wearer that, in whatever direction he might turn, he has mitzvot to perform. At the very least, Maran concluded, everyone should make sure to wear tzitzit during the prayers.

As Maran stated, there is no absolute obligation to wear a *tallit katan* throughout the day, but it is definitely the proper behavior for every Jew, so that he will fulfill this precious mitzvah all day long. The mitzvah of tzitzit is equal in value to all the other mitzvot combined.[288]

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288. Maran the Rishon Letziyon (responsa *Yeḥave Da'at* Vol. IV, #2) discussed the issue of wearing a *tallit katan* at all times. He began by citing the **Tosafot in *Pesaḥim*** (113b). The Talmud teaches that seven individuals are sentenced to excommunication by Heaven, one of them being someone who fails to have tefillin on his head, tzitzit on his garments and a mezuzah on his door. The Tosafot remarked that this refers to someone who owns a four-cornered garment but chooses not to wear it. Alternatively, it might refer to someone who does not own such a garment, and the Talmud is teaching us that he must acquire one so that he can fulfill the mitzvah of tzitzit. In other words, a Jew is expected to seek opportunities to perform mitzvot and not seek ways to avoid the obligation to fulfill them. This is reminiscent of the Talmud's teaching (*Sota* 14a) that Moshe Rabbenu's urgent desire to enter the Land of Yisrael was based on his yearning to fulfill the mitzvot that can be fulfilled only while in the Land.

The *Mordekhi's* distinction

The Talmud (*Menaḥot* 41a) relates that an angel once met Rav Ketina and saw that he was wearing a tallit that had been fashioned to be exempt from tzitzit [and he wore no garment that was obligated to have tzitzit attached]. The

ב. נכון לחנך גם את הקטנים במצוה יקרה זו, החל מגיל שש ולמעלה, ולהלבישם טלית קטן [שם], ונתבאר לעיל בסימן ח' הלכה כ"ז, ובסימן י"ז הלכה ג'.

Training children

2) One should train one's children, once they are six years old, to wear a *tallit katan* and fulfill the mitzvah of tzitzit. This was explained above in *Siman* 8:27 and *Siman* 17:3.

angel reproached him, saying, "What will be with the mitzvah of tzitzit?"

Rav Ketina retorted, "Since when do you punish people for avoiding the obligation to perform a *mitzvat ase*?"

The angel then explained, "When God is angry and finds that it is necessary to punish people for their sins, He adds a punishment for that as well."

The *Mordekhi* cited Rabbenu Avraham of Shantz explaining that the angel's complaint was that Rav Ketina owned a four-cornered garment and he purposely rounded one of its corners in order to make it exempt from the mitzvah. If in the first place one's garments do not include a four-cornered one, as is the case with modern clothing, one will not be liable for punishment just because he does not deliberately purchase a *tallit katan* with which to fulfill the mitzvah. Nevertheless, it is highly commendable to purchase one and wear it daily, demonstrating that one seeks the opportunity to fulfill as many mitzvot as possible. This was one of Moshe Rabbenu's attributes, and he demonstrated it by pleading to be allowed to enter the Land of Yisrael so that he could fulfill the mitzvot that can be performed only there.

This interpretation of the Talmud's passage was repeated by the *Sefer Mitzvot Gadol* (Unit *Asin* #20), the Tosafot (*Shabbat* 32b; *Arakhin* 2b) and Rabbenu Asher (*Mo'ed Katan* 3:80).

Conclusion of the *Yehave Da'at*

Maran the Rishon Letziyon concluded his responsum in *Yehave Da'at* by citing Rambam's (*Hilkhot Tzitzit* 3:11) ruling: "Although no one is obligated to acquire a four-cornered tallit and wear it in order to fulfill the mitzvah of tzitzit, it would be improper for anyone devout Jew to absolve himself of this precious mitzvah. One should make every effort to be wearing a garment that needs to have tzitzit attached to it so that he can fulfill the mitzvah. One must be especially careful about this when praying. It is extremely unbecoming for a Torah scholar to pray while not wrapped in a tallit. It is particularly important to make sure to fulfill the mitzvah of tzitzit since the Scriptures equate its importance with that of all the mitzvot combined, as it is written, 'When you will see it you will remember all of God's commandments and perform them.'"

This ruling concurs with the second interpretation offered by the Tosafot in *Pesahim*. If someone has the opportunity to fulfill the mitzvah of tzitzit but he ignores it, he is liable to be punished at times when God reacts with anger to the world.

A consensus for stringency

The wording of the *Shulhan Arukh* (24:1): "It is proper to wear a *tallit katan* throughout the day," suggests that he agreed with the *Mordekhi* that one need not fear being punished for failing to put on a four-cornered garment with tzitzit, as long as one does not round the corners of such a garment to make it exempt from the mitzvah.

As pointed out above, the Tosafot in *Pesahim* disagreed with this interpretation. Likewise, the *Shene Luhot Haberit* (tractate *Hullin* #14) complained that Maran ignored the Tosafot, and insisted that even if someone chooses to wear only garments that do not have four corners he is liable to be excommunicated by Heaven and he places himself in position to be punished for it when God becomes angry. It must be, he argued, that Maran had overlooked this Tosafot and was unaware of it.

Rabbenu Yona (*Sha'are Teshuva* 3:22), cited in *Sefer Haharedim*, repeated our Sages' teaching (*Menahot* 41a) that people are liable to be punished if they do not display their desire for mitzvot and the reward for performing the mitzvot by making themselves obligated to perform them. Therefore, the *Shene Luhot Haberit* concluded, one must take great care to always wear a four-cornered garment with tzitzit attached to it according to the halakha. Furthermore, Harav Shemuel Abuhab (*Sefer Hazikhronot* page 65) testified that, based on the angel's warning to Rav Ketina, all Jews meticulously fulfill the mitzvah of tzitzit at all times.

The responsa *Igrot Moshe* (*O.H.* Vol. II, #1; *Y.D.* Vol. II, #137; *Y.D.* Vol. III, #52; *O.H* Vol. IV, #4) consistently ruled that it is imperative to wear a four-cornered garment at all times, following the Tosafot in *Pesahim*.

In fact, the *Olat Tamid* (24:1) interpreted the *Shulhan Arukh* to concur with the Tosafot. The *Torat Hayim* Sofer, however, complained that it is implausible to interpret the *Shulhan Arukh* in a manner that directly contradicts the *Bet Yosef* unless there is a direct conflict in the words. Nevertheless, Harav Eliyahu of Vilna and Harav Akiva Eiger both cited the Tosafot in *Pesahim* as

ג. יש המתחסדים שלא לילך אפילו ד' אמות בלא ציצית. וכלשון הרמב"ם (הל' ציצית פ"ד הכ"ה): אמרו עליו על רב תלמידו של רבינו הקדוש, שכל ימיו לא ראוהו שהלך ארבע אמות בלא תורה או בלא ציצית או בלא תפילין. ע"כ. וראה לעיל בסימן ח' הלכה י"ד בהערה.

ד. יש ליזהר להיות מעוטף בטלית בזמן שקורא קריאת שמע, מפני שאמרו בזוהר (שמות קעה ע"א), שכל הקורא קריאת שמע בלא ציצית כאילו מעיד עדות שקר בעצמו. [ראה יחו"ד ח"ו סי' ד]. אולם אם חושש שיעבור זמן קריאת שמע, יכול לקרות קריאת שמע בלא טלית ותפילין, ויסמוך בזה על דעת האחרונים שסוברים שכל שאינו עושה כן מחמת זלזול ופריקת עול, אין בזה משום מעיד עדות שקר. [ראה יבי"א ח"א סי' ד, יחו"ד ח"ו סי' ב, הליכו"ע ח"א עמ' יח]

Walking without tzitzit

3) Some people practice the stringency of refraining from walking the distance of four cubits while not wearing a garment with tzitzit. The Talmud testifies that no one ever saw Rabbenu Hakadosh (Ribbi Yehuda Hanasi) walk four cubits without discussing a Torah topic and without wearing tzitzit and tefillin. See the footnote to *Siman* 8:14.

Tzitzit during *Shema*

4) One must take care to be wearing a tallit when fulfilling the mitzvah of reciting the *Shema* [in the morning]. According to the *Zohar*, anyone who recites the *Shema* while he is not wearing tzitzit is guilty of testifying falsely about himself. If someone finds himself in a situation when he has no tallit or tefillin and the time limit for fulfilling the mitzvah of reciting the morning *Shema* is fast approaching, however, he may recite it even without wearing tallit or tefillin. In this case, he may rely upon the *Poskim* who ruled that one is not guilty of testifying falsely unless one wishes to scorn the mitzvot of tallit and tefillin by not wearing them.[289]

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the source for the *Shulhan Arukh's* ruling. This matter needs more research. See more about this in the responsa *Tzitz Eliezer* (Vol. VIII, #4:7).

In practice

Strictly speaking, the halakha does not obligate anyone to wear a *tallit katan* in order to fulfill the mitzvah of tzitzit, and no one need fear being punished for failing to fulfill this mitzvah. This follows the conclusion of the *Bet Yosef* and it is the plain meaning of the *Shulhan Arukh*, as cited in responsa *Yehave Da'at*.

Then and now

The *Bet Halevi* (*darush* 11) explained that according to the Tosafot in *Pesahim*, the halakha is the same today as it always was. Anyone who fails to acquire a four-cornered garment and wear it in order to fulfill the mitzvah of tzitzit is liable to be punished at times when God becomes angry. His punishment will be less than that of someone who fails to fulfill a mitzvah that the Torah demands of him, such as the mitzvah of tefillin, but he will be punished since he lacks the protection that the mitzvah of tzitzit would have afforded him. Since he did not put forth the effort to fulfill the mitzvah, he has demonstrated that he lacks love for God and His Torah.

According to the *Mordekhi*, however, there is a difference between the era of the Talmud and our times. In times of antiquity, it was common to wear garments with four corners. If someone rounded off a corner in order to become exempt from the mitzvah of tzitzit, he has effectively insulted the mitzvah. He therefore deserves to be punished. In our times, it is uncommon in most societies to wear four-cornered garments and everyone would be exempt from the mitzvah of tzitzit unless he purposely wore such a garment in order to be obligated to fulfill the mitzvah. If someone does not wear any such garment, it does not display a disregard for the mitzvot and it does not warrant any punishment.

289. This is the ruling of Maran the Rishon Letziyon (responsa *Yabia Omer* Vol. I, #4).

To prayer with the congregation or with a tallit

The *Halakha Berura* (page 420) ruled that if someone is waiting for his tallit to be brought to him and in the