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]

Day 98

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

ה. מנהג מקובלים להתפלל מנחה בטלית ותפילין. וכן היה מנהג האר״י וכן היה מנהג ק״ק בית אל. ומכל מקום מנהג רוב העולם להתפלל מנחה בלא טלית ותפילין. [ראה בא״ח פ׳ וירא ה״כ, פ׳ ויקהל ה״ו, כה״ח סי׳ יח ס״ק יב]

ו. בעת שהתחיל לומר ״ברוך שאמר״, יאחוז הציציות של שתי כנפות שכנגד פניו וישארו בידו, עד סוף ״ברוך שאמר״, ואז ינשקם, ויניחם. [באו״ח פ׳ ויגש ה״ז, משנ״ב סי׳ נא ס״ק א]

הסתכלות בציצית, וההנהגה בקריאת שמע

ז. טוב להסתכל בציצית בשעת עטיפה, כשמברך. [ש״ע שם ס״ג]

During *minḥa*

5) The kabbalists have a custom to wear tallit and tefillin while reciting the *minḥa* prayer. This was the practice of the Arizal, and it was once the regular practice in Yeshivat Bet El. Nevertheless, the standard practice of most Jews is to recite *minḥa* without tallit or tefillin.

During *Barukh she'amar*

6) The custom is to grasp the two front tzitzit tassels of the tallit when beginning the blessing of *Barukh she'amar*, and to remain holding them until one completes the blessing. At that point, one kisses the two tassels and lets go of them.

Looking at Tzitzit

When putting on a tallit

7) It is commendable to look at one's tzitzit while reciting the blessing before putting on one's tallit.[290]

meantime the congregation is progressing through the prayers, it is best that he pray together with the congregation even though he has not yet received his tallit. This is better than waiting until his tallit arrives and then praying alone. He should at least be wearing his *tallit katan*.

This ruling is based on that of Maran the Rishon Letziyon (*Yalkut Yosef* first edition, page 144) regarding someone who is waiting for his tefillin to be brought to him. The *Poskim* debated which is more important – praying with the congregation or praying while wearing tefillin. Regarding the case of someone waiting for his tallit, it is likely that all the *Poskim* agree that it is best to pray with the congregation. The concept of a person being guilty of testifying falsely by reciting the *Shema* without wearing a tallit is not universally accepted, especially if the person is wearing a *tallit katan*.

290. This is the ruling of Maran in the *Shulḥan Arukh* (24:3). His source is the *Sefer Mitzvot Katan* (#28) who listed the act of looking at tzitzit as a mitzvah independent of the mitzvah to wear tzitzit. In the *Bet Yosef*, Maran cited the *Orḥot Ḥayim* (*Hilkhot Tzitzit* #32) stating that Rav Moshe Ga'on taught that we must look at the tzitzit tassels when we are about to put on the tallit and then recite the blessing.

Rabbenu Yitzḥak ben Sheshat (responsa #486) argued that there is no separate mitzvah to look at tzitzit. When the Torah states, "look at it," it means to explain why we have the mitzvah of tzitzit – namely that by wearing tzitzit one will be able to see them and be reminded of the mitzvot and inspired to fulfill them. Nevertheless, Rabbenu Yitzḥak agreed that it is commendable to look at the tzitzit when putting on the tallit and he admitted that he adopted this practice for himself.

What is meant by "when putting on the tallit"?

Maran copied the words of Rabbenu Yitzḥak that one should "look at the tzitzit when putting on the tallit." This

ח. מצוה לאחוז הציצית ביד שמאלית כנגד לבו בשעת קריאת שמע, רמז לדבר והיו הדברים האלה וגו' על לבבך (דברים ו, ו). [ש"ע סי' כד ס"ב]

ט. יש נוהגין להסתכל בציצית כשמגיעים ל'וראיתם אותו' (במדבר טו, לט) וליתן אותם על העינים. ומנהג יפה הוא וחבובי מצוה. [ש"ע ס"ד].

During the *Shema*

8) As part of the mitzvah, one should grasp the tzitzit tassels in one's left hand and hold them against one's heart while reciting the *Shema*. This is alluded to in the verse (*Devarim* 6:6), "וְהָיוּ הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה...עַל לְבָבֶךָ – these words...should be on your heart."[291]

Gazing at the tzitzit

9) Some people have the custom of gazing at the tzitzit of their tallit when they reach the words וּרְאִיתֶם אותו in the *Shema*, and to pull them up to the eyes. This is a commendable practice that displays one's fondness toward the mitzvah of tzitzit.[292]

Day 99

implies that one should gaze at the tzitzit while reciting the blessing of *lehit'atef*. Rav Moshe Ga'on, however, taught that one should look at the tzitzit and then recite the blessing. The *Kaf Hahayim* Sofer (24:10) likewise instructs us to look at the four tzitzit tassels while reciting the passage of *leshem yihud* before reciting the blessing.

Whether or not a person adopts the practice of reciting *leshem yihud* before putting on the tallit, if he observes the practice of inspecting the tzitzit tassels each morning before putting on the tallit, as explained above in *Siman* 8:36), at the same time he will automatically fulfill the practice of looking at the tzitzit before reciting the blessing. Anyone who does not observe the practice of inspecting the tzitzit must at least look at the tzitzit before reciting the blessing.

The *Kaf Hahayim* Sofer (8:7; 24:13) cited the Arizal's practice of looking at the tzitzit tassels two times immediately after putting on the tallit. The custom in Yeshivat Bet El was that after reciting the blessing and performing the *atifa*, the scholars remained with the tallit covering their heads only, with two tassels hanging from the right shoulder and two hanging from the left one. Gathering the four tzitzit tassels together, they gazed at them two times. After that they lowered the tallit to cover their bodies.

The spiritual advantages of looking at the tzitzit

The *Sha'ar Hakavanot* (*Tzitzit, darush* 7, cited in the *Kaf Hahayim* Sofer 24:11) teaches: "One must gaze at the tzitzit all the time, as the verse states, "You will see it." this is extremely beneficial to the soul, helping the person avoid situations of sin, besides other benefits. In the preface to *Siman* 8, the reader will find the story related in the Talmud (*Menahot* 44a) of a person who succeeded in fleeing from a grave sin thanks to his tzitzit.

Harav Yisrael Meir Kagan (the author of *Hafetz Hayim*) wrote (*Shemirat Halashon* Vol. II, chapter 3) that the verse implies that the mitzvah of tzitzit helps give a person the energy necessary to perform the mitzvot and to avert one's eyes from sinful sights. Therefore, it is advisable to take a moment several times a day to gaze at one's tzitzit. In this way, one will vanquish the evil inclination. Therefore, whenever someone begins to think sinful thoughts or when he feels that he is about to burst with anger, it is advisable that he gaze at his tzitzit in order to gain control. In the preface to *Siman* 8, it was explained that the mitzvah of tzitzit helps a person control his natural tendency to react with anger when displeased.

291. This halakha is explained in the following footnote.

292. Grasping the tzitzit while reciting the *Shema*

The *Arba'a Turim* (*Siman* 24) cited the *Sefer Ha'itur* who noted that it has been common for people to gather the tzitzit tassels in their hand and to place them momentarily on their eyes. Apparently, this custom is based on the verse, "You will see it." At other times they did not see the tzitzit at all since their tallit was covered by their other garments.

Maran in the *Bet Yosef* cited the *Hagahot Maimoniyot* (*Hilkhot Tzitzit* 3) quoting the *Midrash Shohar Tov* (35:10): "King David said to the Blessed Holy One, 'I praise You with every limb of my body...On my left hand I wind the tefillin and I grasp my tzitzit in my left hand while I recite the *Shema*. I praise You with my chest when I hold the tzitzit against my heart while reciting the *Shema*, fulfilling the verse, 'וְהָיוּ הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה...עַל לְבָבֶךָ – These words should be placed on your heart.' This is proof that there is a mitzvah to hold the tzitzit in one's left hand on one's chest over one's heart while reciting the *Shema*." The *Mordekhi* (*Sukkah*