

## Overview

## Halacha Highlights

### Wrapping one's self in the *tallis*

Shulchan Aruch Siman 8 Seif 2

סדר עטיפתו כדרך בני אדם שמתכסים בכסותם ועוסקים במלאכתם

**The manner of "wrapping" is the manner in which people wrap themselves in their garment and engage in work**

According to the Gaonim the obligation to put tzitzis on a garment applies only when the garment is worn in a manner of wrapping. This is evident from the wording of the beracha – להתעטף בציצית to wrap in tzitzis. The manner of wrapping is what is described as the wrapping of the Yishmaelim which involves pulling the garment down over one's face. Ba'al Hatur disagrees, and maintains that wrapping one's head is not a prerequisite for the mitzvah. The wording of the pasuk is אשר תכסה בה—that he will cover himself in it—and this teaches that covering one's body with the garment is sufficient to generate an obligation of tzitzis and there is no need to cover one's head.

Mishnah Berurah (סק"ג) follows Ba'al Hatur, and writes that covering one's body is wrapping – "עטוף". Nevertheless, he advises that while davening one should wear his talis over his head since it generates submission to Hashem and leads to Awe of Heaven (עי מייב סק"ד). Furthermore, in Mishnah Berurah's description of wrapping one's self after the beracha (סק"ד) he mentions wrapping the talis around one's head in order to fulfill the opinion of the Gaonim as well. One must be mindful, however, that during this wrapping the talis must be around one's body as well for if one were to wrap only their head the mitzvah would not be fulfilled. Those who leave their talis folded and wrap it only around their neck do not fulfill the mitzvah since this is not considered עטוף according to any opinion (מייב סק"ג). Shulchan Aruch HaRav (כח:ח) also criticizes those people who following the beracha wrap the talis only around their head. Ben Ish Chai (שנה א' פרשת בראשית אות ה'), however, writes that one should wrap the talis around his head and it appears that he is following the Gaonim's position that one must wrap his head. This also seems to be the position of Bais Yosef (בי"י סי' י' סעי' י"א ד"ה סידר).

through Torah. Is there any better reason to rejoice?"

As the Vilna Gaon zt"l lay on his deathbed, he began to cry. His students, each a Torah giant in his own right, were astounded that their holy master appeared anxious: after a life full to the brim of Torah and *kedushah*, what could he possibly fear?

They gently asked the Gaon why he was crying.

The Gaon of Vilna took hold of his *tzitzis* and held them lovingly by his heart.

"In this world, I paid just a few kopecks for these *tzitzis*, and every moment I wore them I was able to serve my Creator with my own free will. In heaven, no money in the world will buy me the chance to willingly do Hashem's command! My opportunity is slipping away—is that not a reason to weep?"

### Siman 8 Seif 1:

**One should wrap himself and recite the beracha while standing.**

- ❖ One should put on his talis immediately after washing in the morning. (M.B. 1)
- ❖ The wrapping should be performed and beracha recited while standing. B'dieved if the wrapping or the beracha were done while sitting the mitzvah is fulfilled. (M.B. 2)
- ❖ Most Acharonim maintain that the beracha should be recited while holding the unfolded *talis* ready to wrap one's self. (M.B. 2)

### Siman 8 Seif 2:

**The manner of wrapping (עטיפה) is similar to the way people wrap themselves for work. Sometimes their heads are covered and sometimes uncovered. It is appropriate that one cover his head with his *talis*.**

- ❖ Wrapping one's body is also considered "wrapping." (M.B. 3)
- ❖ One who wears his talis folded around his neck does not fulfill the mitzvah since this does not meet the requirement of "wrapping." (M.B. 3)
- ❖ Covering one's head subdues his heart and leads one to fear of Heaven. Bach writes that one's head should be covered from the beginning to the end of davening but at the very least one should remain wrapped for the time it takes to walk four amos. (M.B. 4)
- ❖ Arizal covered his tefillin with his talis but we hold (See Shulchan Aruch 27:11) that at least part of the tefillin should be exposed. (M.B. 4)
- ❖ While wrapping one's self in the talis it should be pulled down to one's mouth and the tzitzis should be thrown over one's left shoulder. One should remain in that position for the time it takes to walk four amos and then the talis should be put in its place with two tzitzis in front and two in back. (M.B. 4)
- ❖ The Gemara implies that unmarried men did not cover their head with their talis even if they were Torah scholars. (M.B. 4)

## Stories to Share

### **Between This World and the Next**

מייב, סי' ח', ד': "שכיסוי זה מכניעה לב האדם ומביאו לידי יראת שמים..."  
The greatness of tzitzis is truly astounding. In addition to bringing humility and yiras Shamayim as we see in the Mishnah Berurah on today's amud, Rabbeinu Bechaya explains that one who fulfills this mitzvah properly will merit techiyas hameisim.

The Chazon Ish, zt"l, teaches how we should fulfill this wondrous mitzvah. "The moment you merit to fulfill the mitzvah of tzitzis you should be filled with an unbridled holy joy. Through tzitzis we tie a permanent knot between ourselves and Hashem