

ליקוטי ופסקי הלכות "חוקי חיים"

ותלמוד
"תקני תנים"
לעשות רצונך
בלבב שלם



שע"י "חדר הוראה" שכונת מנחת יצחק פעיה"ק ירושלם תובב"א - בראשות הרב חיים אהרן בלייער שליט"א

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Shaatzneez – 1

Parshas Vayeitzei 5786

115

Issur of Shaatzneez

Severity

1. The Torah prohibits putting on a garment with a mixture of sheep wool from a ram or ewe and linen. This is derived from the pesukim, "ובגד כלאים שעטנו לא יעלה עליך", "ויקרא י"ט י"ט" (ובגד כלאים שעטנו לא יעלה עליך, "דברים כ"ב י"א") "שעטנו צמר ופשתים יחדיו".
2. **Transgresses every moment.** One who is wearing shaatzneez violates a lo saaseh every moment he is able to take it off but does not do so (רמב"ם פ"י כלאים ה"ל).
3. **Chok.** Although the issur of shaatzneez is a chok, as indicated in the posuk, "את חקתי תשמרו כי ובגד כלאים שעטנו לא יעלה עליך", some reasons have been given. One of these reasons is that the avodoh zoroh priests in Mitzrayim would wear garments made of wool and linen. Hashem prohibited us from wearing these garments to distance us from avodoh zoroh (רמב"ם מורה נבוכים ח"ג) (פ"ז, רמב"ן עה"ת פ' קדושים, חינוך מ' תקנ"א).
4. There is a Midrash which says that it was "difficult" [kaveyachol] for Hashem to redeem Klal Yisroel from Mitzrayim since they were uncircumcised, had certain hairstyles, and wore shaatzneez just like the Mitzrim (ויק"ר פכ"ג ב'). We must strengthen and learn about the issur of shaatzneez and become more aware of its severity. Doing so will naturally help us avoid this issur and speed the geulah.
5. **Holds back tefillos.** Besides for violating an issur, one who wears shaatzneez prevents his tefillos from being accepted. This is because he looks like an avodoh zoroh priest to the malach who takes Klal Yisroel's tefillos (ריקאנטי פ' קדושים). This applies even to one who wears shaatzneez unintentionally (ספר שלמי ציבור למהר"ט) (אלגאזי דיני ההכנות לתפילה סי' ג', קב הישר פמ"ו, יסוד ושורש העבודה שער הכולל פ"ח).

Types of Fabric Included in the Issur

6. **Types of wool.** The only wool that makes a shaatzneez mixture is wool from male or female sheep. Camel wool, angora rabbit wool etc. are not included in the issur of shaatzneez.
7. **Linen.** Only linen is part of the issur. Other similar fabrics, e.g., hemp, cotton, etc. are not linen and may be combined with wool.

Not Wearing Any Wool Clothes

8. Due to the severity of the issur of shaatzneez, some people are machmir and do not wear any wool clothes. Several Acharonim write that a G-d-fearing person should not wear wool clothes since it is common to find linen threads in them (חכמ"א כלל ק"ו אות כ"ה). One who is machmir on himself not to wear wool out of fear of violating the issur of shaatzneez is called "holy" (שו"ת חת"ם אור"ח סי' ט"ו).
9. **Bekeshe.** Thousands upon thousands of Chassidim today wear a bekesh on Shabbos; many do not know why. The minhag stems from a concern of violating shaatzneez with wool clothes. During the week, people did not wear wool, so Chassidim did not feel the need to only wear silk. On Shabbos, however, when people wore elegant clothes, many of which were wool, Chassidim specifically wore silk clothes to preclude any fear of shaatzneez. They also wore silk or fur coats. Some wore silk or materials other than wool even during the week for the same reason.

Dressing a Child in Shaatzneez

10. One may not dress a child in shaatzneez, even if he is very young and does not have daas, based on the issur of "feeding by hand" [sofinon beyodayim] (מנ"ח מ' תקנ"א סק"ה, שו"ת עונג יו"ט סי' צ"ו). Thus, children's – and even infants' – garments must also be checked for shaatzneez. If the child dresses himself, there is no issur of "feeding by hand," but shaatzneez is still ossur due to chinuch.

Some Principles of the Issur of Shaatzneez

11. Most of the detailed halochos of shaatzneez are only relevant to shaatzneez checkers and poskim who specialize in shaatzneez. Here, we will focus mainly on halochos relevant to the general public.

Forms of Shaatzneez

12. A **garment** ["baged"] is a cloth woven from threads. A **thread** ["chut"] is a group of fibers spun together into a strand. **Fibers** ["sibim"] are thin filaments which come from animals, plants, or synthetic materials.
13. **Combination of fibers in a thread.** The issur of shaatzneez has several forms. If a thread is spun from both wool and linen fibers, we do not apply the rule of bitul berov since the combination itself is the issur (תוס' נדה ס"א: ד"ה בגד, ט"ז סי' רצ"ט סק"א). Thus, even if the thread is mostly made up of wool and partially of linen, the entire thread is ossur. One may not make a garment from it or use it to sew a garment.
14. **Combination of threads in a garment.** If a garment contains several whole wool threads, one may not sew it with linen threads, even if it is made mostly of a different material (שו"ע סי' רצ"א ס"א). We do not say the wool threads are botul in the other material, as we will below (19) since whole threads are significant and are not botul. Similarly, if a garment is woven with silk threads lengthwise and linen threads widthwise, even if the majority is silk, it may not be sewn with wool since the linen threads are not botul (סי"ג ל"ת) (רפ"ג, שו"ת נודב"י מהר"ת סי' קפ"ו).
15. **Combination of fabrics in a garment.** If a piece of wool fabric was sewn to a piece of linen fabric using a thread of a different material, everyone agrees the garment is ossur since the wool and linen are connected by the stitching (שו"ת סי' ש' סק"ב).
16. If there is a piece of fabric of a different material separating the wool and linen and the stitching goes through all three pieces, some say that all poskim would agree it is ossur (יוסף אומץ פ' המצוות) (עמ"כ 342, מו"ר בספרו מלבושי ישע פ"ג הע' ל"א).

Garment with Wool and Linen Stitching

17. **Wool and linen in a thread.** A garment made of silk or cotton, for example, sewn with a shaatzneez thread, i.e., a thread that has wool and linen interwoven or spun together, is shaatzneez and ossur (שו"ת מו"ר הגר"י בלויא, מלבושי ישע פ"ג הע' י"ג) mideoraiso (יו"ד סי' ש"א ס"ג).
18. **Wool thread and linen thread.** If a cotton garment has some wool stitching and some linen stitching but the wool threads and linen threads do not touch, some say it is shaatzneez and ossur (רמב"ם פ"י ר"ש כלאים) (כלאים ה"ט, סתימת השו"ע סי' רצ"ט ס"ב טור סי' ש"ט, ערוה"ש סי' ש' (פ"ט מ"ט, רמ"א). The minhag is to be meikel (סי"ב ו"ד, חכ"א כלל ק"ו הי"ט) (חכ"א) muttar according to all poskim.

19. **70% polyester, 30% wool.** If a piece of fabric is made of threads which are in turn made mostly of one type of fiber and partially of another type, e.g., 70% camel wool [whose name is similar to sheep wool (תורני"ט פֿאַט כּלאים מ"א)] or polyester or the like [even if its name is not similar to sheep wool (הג רענ"א יר"ד סי' ד, הג רענ"א יר"ד סי' ד, הג רענ"א יר"ד סי' ד)] and 30% sheep wool, the fabric is not considered to be made from sheep wool since the sheep wool is botul berov and one may sew the fabric with linen (שו"ע סי' רצ"ט ס"א).

20. **Wool is distinguishable.** Some say this is only true if the wool fibers are not distinguishable in the fabric, but if they are distinguishable [even only to an expert, but as they are, without unraveling or singeing the thread (מ"ר מלבושי ישע פ"ב הע' ל"א)], they are not botul berov, even though they are the minority (ש"ת ח"ב ס' ד, ש"ת) שו"ת תשב"ץ ח"ב ס' ד, ש"ת) (שבת הלוי ח"ז ס' קע"ג). This is because in any mixture of issur and heter, if the issur is distinguishable, it is not botul even if it is the minority (כענין מה שמבואר ברמ"א יו"ד ס' צ"ח ס"ד).

21. Others say even if the sheep wool is distinguishable it is botul. They hold this is not the normal application of bitul berov found throughout halachah since wool and linen alone are each muttar. Rather, the reason for this heter is that the issur of shaatnez only starts after the threads are spun. If there are different types of fibers in a thread, the thread is viewed as if it was spun from the majority material, not the minority. Hence, even if the minority of wool fibers are distinguishable, one may sew those threads with linen thread (שו"ת נודב"י מהדור"ת סי' קפ"ו, ערוה"ש יו"ד סי' רצ"ט סי' ס"ד, חזו"א יו"ד) with linen thread (ס"ק קפ"א ס"ק ט"ז, שו"ת מנח"ץ סי' קט"ו).

22. **60% polyester, 30% wool, 10% linen.** If a thread is mostly made up of a different material and partially made up of even wool and linen, we follow the majority and the entire thread is considered to be made from the other material and is not shaatnez. Even if the other material only nullifies either the wool or linen, but not the two together, e.g., 45% polyester, 25% wool, and 30% linen, the entire thread is considered to be made from the other material; it is not shaatnez (שׂוּיַע) (סִי רִצָּ'ט סִיא) and may be sewn with either wool or linen.

23. It should be pointed out that these halochos are just some general rules about threads or fabrics composed of different materials. One should not derive from here that any garment that has a minority of wool or linen does not need to be checked. Even if the fabric itself is not shaatnez, several garments have additional threads, fabrics, lining, or pieces of cloth which are shaatnez. Besiyato dishmavo, in the next issue we will give several examples.

24. Some types of clothes bought from non-Jews, or bought from Jews but made in a non-Jewish factory, commonly contain shaatnez and may not be worn until they are checked by an expert. Some types do not commonly have shaatnez but do have a rate of occurrence significant enough to obligate them to be checked. Some types only have shaatnez very rarely and do not need to be checked, as will be explained.

25. **Lack of information.** The general public does not have updated information about the rate of occurrence of shaatnez in various types of garments. Also, the reality constantly changes due to new techniques in the manufacture of clothes and depending on the price of wool and linen. Thus, one must always consult with a shaatnez lab or shaatnez expert. otherwise, he may easily transgress this grave issur without even knowing it, chas vesholom.

26. Clothes that, for the most part, contain shaatnez. Clothes that contain shaatnez most of the time may not be worn before they are checked (ש"י"ע יו"ד סי' ש"א ס"ב). They are muktzeh on Shabbos and may not even be moved letzorech gufom umekomom (ש"י"ע או"ח סי' ש"ח סמ"ז ומ"ב סק"ד). If one wore such a garment without checking it and shaatnez deoraiso was ultimately found in it, he needs a kaporah even if he sinned inadvertently, not knowing it needed to be checked (ט"ז יו"ד סי' צ"ט סק"ט).

27. Significant minority. A garment of the type in which shaatnez is found in a significant minority must be checked lechatchiloh before use. If one wore it without checking it and shaatnez deoraiso was ultimately found, he needs a kaporoh (פמ"ג י"ד סי' כז). If one is in a pressing situation and it is difficult to check it, e.g., there is no time to check it before Yom Tov or a wedding, he may be meikel and wear it and check it afterward as soon as possible.

28. **What is considered a significant minority?** Some say in many areas of halochah, 10% is a significant minority (משכנתו יעקב יו"ד סי' ה'ובא). (בדרכ"ת סי' ל"ט סק"ג). Others say it does not depend on percentages; rather, a type of garment that shaatnez will inevitably be found after checking a significant number of garments is considered to have shaatnez in a significant minority, even if it is less than 10% (ישותי בשבט הלוי ח"ד סי' פ"א, ח"ה יו"ד סי' פ"ה סק"ה).

29. **Changing circumstances.** Some say whenever circumstances constantly change, there is always an obligation to check and one may not rely on the accepted rate of 10% since at one point in time it may be less and at another, it may be more. In such a case, clothes need to be checked simply to determine the rate of occurrence of shaatnez (כך שמעתי ממורי הגר"מ בראנדסדארפער זצ"ל בעל (קנה בשם לגבי מיעוט המצוי לענין טריפות העופות). Thus, one should always check clothes of a type that the circumstances always change, even if at that specific time, the rate of occurrence is less than 10%.

30. **Rare.** Types of clothes that only rarely contain shaatnez are not technically obligated to be checked. Still, it is proper for a G-d-fearing person to check them; doing so is not a waste of time and money (הגריש"א). If one wore this type of garment and shaatnez was only found later, he is an oneis and an oneis does not need a kaporoh (ובגד יריד ס"ה קפ"ה ס"ד).

31. One should not send a garment of the type in which shaatnez is almost never found to be checked. Doing so inundates shaatnez checkers with work at the expense of other people. This may prevent people from checking garments that need to be checked.

32. **One-time check.** An important point: although in other areas of halochah, e.g., checking food for bugs, checking for treifos, etc., there are rules about rate of occurrence which impact the obligation to check, it could be that checking for shaatnez is different. When it comes to food, each time a person eats, he must determine if he must check the food, which could potentially be very burdensome. For clothes, on the other hand, a garment is checked once and determined to be kosher forever. This may be a reason to be machmir on shaatnez checking (השעטנז להלכה ולמעשה).

33. **Accommodating people.** It is important for shaatnez checkers to make it as convenient as possible for people to get their clothes checked. One of the reasons people are lax about checking their clothes is that it is sometimes inconvenient, whether it be because it takes a long time to get clothes back or due to limited drop-off and pickup times or locations.

34. **Accommodating checkers.** Conversely, people should also realize that there are very few expert shaatnez checkers relative to the population at large. This means they have a considerable workload, especially on Erev Yom Tov and at popular times for weddings. Since checking for shaatnez requires patience, focus, and great precision, people should make sure to give in their clothes as early as possible and not procrastinate until the last minute. This will avoid any compromise in the quality of the checking.

35. Sometimes, within one garment there are sections that commonly have shaatnez and sections that have a rate of occurrence of shaatnez low enough to not require checking. Many shaatnez labs, especially in Chutz Lo'oretz, only check the sections that have a rate that obligates checking and do not check the other sections.

36. However, some hold once a checker receives a garment to check the parts that commonly have shaatnez, he must also check the parts that do not. This is because we do not rely on majority when the reality can be determined, unless doing so would be very burdensome. Sections of the garment that almost never have shaatnez do not need to be checked (שו"ת שבט הלי ח"י סי' קפ"ה, הגריש"א, ספר השעטנז הלכה פ"ז הע' ח"ח).

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