TALIT (GADOL)

TALIT GADOL: DESCRIPTION

Talit Gadol: Size

The minimum size for a *talit gadol* is so you could put it over your head and wrap your body in it (even though this is not how you must wear it!).

Talit Gadol: Material

A *talit gadol* (or a *talit katan*) must be made from at least 51% natural fibers.

Talit Gadol: Color

A talit should be primarily white. Here are some details:

- A *talit gadol* should be either all white or white with black stripes. Avoid a very colorful *talit* that makes the white part look insignificant.
- Blue stripes used to be used: as with *techelet*, the blue reminds us of the sky, of God's throne (*kisei ha'kavod*), and of God.
- Even though the *talit* was originally supposed to have blue stripes, it is not the custom today to use blue stripes.
- Black stripes have no significance or importance.

Talit Gadol: Tzitzit Placement

Like all *tzitzit*, *tzitzit* on a *talit gadol* must hang over the edge of the *talit* and not hang down from the bottom (see diagram).



The tzitzit should hang down along the vertical border (screen left/model's right side)

TALIT GADOL: WHY

Talit Gadol: Mitzva

Men wear a *talit* as a *mitzva* (wearing a four-cornered garment in order to wear *tzitzit*).

Talit Gadol: Form of Honor

It is a form of honor for the congregation for the leader to dress up (some congregations have the custom of requiring the leader to wear a jacket for *mincha* for this reason). A *talit* is usually the form of dressing up for all men during prayer services.

Talit Gadol: Humility

When a person speaks directly to God, it is very important to demonstrate humility. Since the *Talmud* says that covering one's head is a form of humility (and that learned Jews/*talmidei chachamim* used to cover their heads), men who wear a *talit* for prayer should ideally use it to cover their heads whenever they wear it, but the minimum is during the *amida*.

TALIT GADOL: WHEN TO WEAR

Talit Gadol: Amida

A *talit* is required only when saying the *amida* prayer, but the universal custom (for men who wear *talitot*!) is to wear the *talit* during the entire *shacharit* service.

NOTE A *talit* is worn for *shacharit*, *musaf*, and all day and night on *Yom Kippur*; it is not commonly worn for *mincha* or *ma'ariv* (except on *Yom Kippur*).

Talit Gadol: Prayer Leader during Amida Repetition

A prayer leader should be especially careful to cover his head when saying the reader's repetition of the *amida*. A hatless prayer leader covers his head with the *talit gadol* during the private *amida* (also during the public *amida* and repetition). If wearing a hat, he does not cover his head with the *talit*.

Talit Gadol with Talit Katan

Wear a *talit gadol* even though you are already wearing a *talit katan*, as a means of honoring the prayers.

Talit Gadol: Married Men

Once a *man* has been married, he must wear a *talit* when saying *shacharit* and *musaf*, even if he becomes widowed or divorced.

Talit Gadol: Mincha

When wearing a *talit* at *mincha Torah* reading--such as for an *aliya*, *hagbaha*, or *glila*--you do not need to wear it until after *kedusha*, but some people have that custom.

TALIT GADOL: BLESSING

Talit Gadol: Which Blessing

The blessing over putting on the *talit gadol* is *lehit'ateiph ba'tzitzit.*

Talit Gadol: What the Blessing Covers

Saying the blessing on a *talit gadol*, while intending to cover all other *talitot* (whether *talit katan* or *talit gadol*), will cover:

- All *talitot* that you already put on.
- All *talitot* that you will put on later that day.
- If you go out of whichever building you are in when you say the blessing on your *talit*, you must say a new blessing if you put on a *talit* (even the same *talit*) in a different building.

EXCEPTION You may intend for the blessing NOT to cover other *talitot*.

EXAMPLE You say the blessing over your *tālīt gādōl* on the morning preceding *Yom Kippur*. You may intend for your blessing not to cover the *talit gadol* that you will put on just before *Kol Nidrei*.

NOTE If you don't have a *tālīt gādōl*, say al mitzvat *tzitzit* over your *tālīt kātān*.

NOTE If you remove your *talit gadol*, go to a different building, and put the *talit gadol* on again, you DO say a new blessing.

Talit Gadol: Placing Talit on Head

Placing the *talit gadol* over your head while saying the *talit* blessing is a *halacha*, but wearing it on your head any other time is a custom.

Talit Gadol: Replacing One You Removed by Choice

Do not say a new blessing when you replace a *talit* that you chose to take off, with the intention of putting it back on (such as removing it to go to the bathroom).

Talit Gadol: Replacing One that Fell Off

Say a new blessing when you replace a *talit gadol* that fell off your body completely (not just if it slipped off one shoulder).

Talit Gadol: Blessing when Borrowed for Aliya/Prayer Leader

If you borrow a *talit*, such as for an *aliya* or to serve as prayer leader, it is not customary to say a blessing on it.

NOTE If you want to say a blessing on a borrowed *talit*, ask the owner to "give" it to you as a gift, which you will later give back as a gift.

Talit Gadol: Blessing on Loaned or Borrowed

Do not say a new blessing when you put back on your *talit gadol* that you loaned someone if you are at the same prayer service.

Talit Gadol: Blessing between Bar'chu and Amida

SITUATION You began *shacharit* on your way to *synagogue* and are between *bar'chu* and the *amida* when you arrive. You have not yet put on a *talit*.

WHAT TO DO

- Put on a *talit* immediately.
- Say the blessing on the *talit* after you finish the *amida*.

Talit Gadol: Blessing over Public Talit

You may say the blessing on a public *talit gadol* available at the *synagogue*, even though it is not your *talit*.

REASON It is assumed that the *talitot* at *synagogues* are there to be used by anyone.

Talit Gadol: Blessing Once Married

Once a *man* is married and wears a *talit gadol*, he stops saying the blessing on *tzitzit* on his *talit katan;* it is covered by the blessing on his *talit gadol*.

TALIT GADOL: HOW TO PUT ON

Talit Gadol: Putting on in Morning

To put on a *talit* in the morning:

- Say the blessing *lehit'ateiph ba'tzitzit*.
- Put the garment over your head and down to your nose.

- Gather the two *tzitziyot* from the right side and the front one from the left side and swing them over your left shoulder (you do not need to bunch up the *talit* before doing so).
- Wait for at least 2 ½ seconds and say the appropriate verses (see a *siddur* for the text).

TALIT GADOL: HOW TO CARE FOR

Talit Gadol: Folding, Rolling, Hanging

You do not need to fold a *talit* after using it; you may roll it or hang it up. The only requirement is that you take care of it and don't crumple it or treat it disrespectfully.

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