**YESHIVAT HAR ETZION**

**ISRAEL KOSCHITZKY VIRTUAL BEIT MIDRASH (VBM)**

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**Deracheha: Women and Mitzvot**

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***Tzitzit* (II)**

WhAt is *yuhara*? what does it have to do with women and tzitzit?

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# *Yuhara*

**What is *Yuhara*?** In common halachic usage, the term *"yuhara*," spiritual haughtiness, denounces and prohibits seemingly pious action that is opposed to established custom, like refraining from labor on a fast day when others don't,[[1]](#footnote-1) or laying *tefillin* in the style of Rabbeinu Tam in a place where that is not usually done.[[2]](#footnote-2)

Abudarham provides a clear definition of *yuhara*, cited by Beit Yosef.

***Sefer Abudarham*, Laws of *Keri'at Shema***

Any matter in which a person is not obligated and he does it in public [as though] out of piety, and the entire people do not do it, is someone who appears spiritually haughty.

By taking on pious behaviors that most Jews do not perform, a person implicitly critiques common practice and suggests that he or she has an inflated spiritual self-image.

In the late middle ages in medieval Ashkenaz, *yuhara* became a very central halachic preoccupation.[[3]](#footnote-3)

***Yuhara* and *Tzitzit***A number of questions of *yuhara* arise specifically in connection with *tzitzit*. For example, may a man hold his *tzitzit* for *Keri'at Shema*, or is that considered *yuhara*?[[4]](#footnote-4) May he wear his *tzitzit* out over his clothing, or is that *yuhara*?[[5]](#footnote-5) May he wear two sets of *tzitzit,* one strung regularly and one strung in accordance with a minority opinion, or is that *yuhara?[[6]](#footnote-6)*

***Yuhara* and Women** Over time, it became common for women to observe positive time-bound *mitzvot* like hearing *shofar* and taking *lulav,* even though women are exempt from this category of *mitzvot*. Why was this not considered *yuhara?*

Ra'avya (twelfth-century Ashkenaz) explains that since the community as a whole performs these actions, they are not considered *yuhara* for women.

Ra'avya Section 2, *Megilla* 597

Regarding women, when they fulfill positive *mitzvot,* there is no *yuhara* according to all opinions, since everyone sits in the *sukka* and blows *shofar* and takes *lulav... Yuhara* is only applicable where one does something different from the rest of people. [This is so] even though women are exempt…

To Ra'avya*, yuhara* depends on acting differently from the community. It is unclear, however, what Ra'avya would say about an individual woman who fulfills a mitzva that other women don't.

# **Yuhara, Women, and Tzitzit**

Unlike other positive time-bound *mitzvot* such as *shofar*, it seems that women never commonly observed the mitzva of *tzitzit*. For this reason, a woman's wearing a garment with *tzitzit* might be considered *yuhara*.

Indeed, the great 14th-15th century Ashkenazi authority Maharil pens a responsum opposing women's wearing garments with *tzitzit*. The issue arises when a woman in his community begins to wear a *tallit katan:*

*Sefer Maharil* Laws of *Tzitzit* and *Tefillin* 4

…He [Maharil] said that it is not clear to him that there are women who accept upon themselves the obligation of *tzitzit*. They asked him why he does not protest Rabbanit M[arat] Bruna in his city, who wore a *tallit katan* at all times. He responded that perhaps she will not heed him, and regarding this type of situation he said, "Better that they should stray unwittingly than that they should do so intentionally" (*Shabbat* 148b).

Rabbanit Marat Bruna's actions draw specific attention because they are unusual for her place and time. It seems from the titles given her and from the impression her religious practice made on others, that she had some status in the community. We can speculate that her elevated status in the community may have led her to seek out voluntary religious practice.

It is notable that Maharil's opposition to women fulfilling the mitzva of *tzitzit* contrasts with the ruling of Maharam, who preceded him as leader of Ashkenazi Jewry,

*Tashbetz* [Student of Maharam, in his master's name], 270

In any case, one should not protest their [women] wrapping themselves in *tzitzit* and reciting *a beracha* over it, for they can obligate themselves..*.*

Maharam says that one should not protest a woman's fulfilling the mitzva of *tzitzit.* Yet Maharil opposes women’s observing the mitzva and refrains from protest only because he fears it will be counter-productive.

Why does Maharil oppose this practice? His responsum raises several arguments,[[7]](#footnote-7) but the concern for *yuhara* is the main one that gains prominence in halachic discussion:

New Responsa Maharil 7

It further seems to me that the mitzva of *tzitzit* is not like other *mitzvot* that are obligations incumbent on the individual. Rather, *tzitzit*, even though we consider it an obligation incumbent on the individual, applies specifically to one who has a four-cornered garment. But one is not obligated to purchase a four-cornered garment. Rather it is a mitzva to enter a situation in which one is obligated, as we learn with Moshe Rabbeinu: “Did he need to eat from its fruit?” [Moshe was praiseworthy in wishing to enter Israel – not because he wanted to enjoy its fruit, but in order to fulfill *mitzvot* that apply specifically there]. This applies to men. But women, why should they do this, since in the end they are not obligated…Even though I have seen women with four-cornered garments with *tzitzit*, and even today there is one in our neighborhood, it appears that they cause astonishment [at their behavior, viz. *Menachot* 40a] and it is considered spiritual conceit (*yuhara*) and they are called ignoramuses [*hedyotot*, viz. Yerushalmi *Berachot* 2:9 – “Whoever is exempt from something and nevertheless performs it is called a *hedyot*”].

A man is not obligated in *tzitzit* unless he dons a four-cornered garment. Already in Maharil's time, not all men fulfilled this mitzva regularly, because four-cornered garments were no longer standard clothing. Men wore a *tallit katan* as a special effort to obligate themselves in the mitzva.

For a woman to go out of her way to don a *tallit katan* so that she can then go out of her way to attach *tzitzit*, while she is at no point commanded to do so, is one step too many for Maharil. He writes that such an act bespeaks *yuhara*, and is not allowed.

**Rema's Ruling** Rema opens his gloss in a way that seems to leave room for a woman to wear a garment with *tzitzit* and make a *beracha* over the mitzva. But he concludes by forbidding women from wearing *tzitzit*, based on concern for *yuhara*:[[8]](#footnote-8)

Rema, OC 17:2

Gloss: And still, if they want to wrap [*tzitzit*] and recite a *beracha* on it, they may do so, as with other positive time-bound commandments. But it looks like spiritual conceit (*yuhara*) and therefore they should not wear *tzitzit*, since it is not an obligation incumbent on the individual (meaning, the individual is not obligated to procure a shawl for himself in order to be obligated in *tzitzit*).

Rema's ruling here has found wide acceptance. Although at least one major subsequent Ashkenazi halachic authority omits Rema's view from his presentation of this halacha, that has not affected halachic discourse on this issue.[[9]](#footnote-9) Sefardi halachic decisors, such as Ben Ish Chai, have adopted Rema's ruling as well.[[10]](#footnote-10)

**The Comparison to Sukka** Why should a woman’s choosing to wear a garment with *tzitzit* be any different from her choosing to eat in a *sukka* throughout the holiday of Sukkot, which is accepted in Halacha?

Let's explain: Men are obligated to eat in the *sukka* on the first night of Sukkot. For the rest of the festival, they may not eat bread, or food over which the *beracha* “*mezonot*”is recited, outside of the *sukka*. But, aside from holiday and Shabbat meals, a man might theoretically avoid these foods and not eat in a *sukka* at all. On the other hand, some men make the extra effort to eat all food (even, say, a morning yogurt and coffee) in the *sukka*.

Women are exempt from the positive time-bound obligation to eat in the *sukka*. Yet there are women who are careful to eat bread and *mezonot* only in the sukka. Some women go out of their way to eat only in the *sukka* throughout Sukkot, even with foods like yogurt that are exempt for everyone. Why does no one denounce this as *yuhara*?

Aruch Ha-shulchan provides one possible response to this question:

*Aruch Ha-shulchan* 17:2

But really we never heard of this [of women wearing *tzitzit*] and we don't allow them to wear a *tallit*, and all the more so, to recite a *beracha*. It is not like *shofar* and *sukka* and *lulav*, which are once a year and the mitzva is done in an instant. Rather the mitzva of *tzitzit* is all year and it is not fitting for women.

According to *Aruch Ha-shulchan*, it is "not fitting" for a woman to take on an act that is meant to be performed on a **daily** basis voluntarily, perhaps because she is then implicitly claiming that she will be constant in maintaining her voluntary commitments, and making that type of a claim might itself be a sort of *yuhara*. While "the mitzva of *tzitzit* is all year," the possibility of eating in the *sukka* applies only one week a year and taking that mitzva on would be less ambitious or showy.

Aruch Ha-shulchan seems to assume that Halacha would require a woman who fulfills the mitzva of *tzitzit* some of the time, to take pains to fulfill it *every* time she wears a four-cornered garment. It is possible, however, that each act of wearing *tzitzit* could be seen as an isolated mitzva act, unless the woman chooses to take it on as a binding custom. (See more [here](http://www.deracheha.org/voluntary-mitzva-performance).) In that case, Aruch Ha-shulchan's argument would be less persuasive.

However, even if we grant that a woman voluntarily wearing *tzitzit* need not intend to do so regularly, people could easily assume that she is making such a commitment. Perhaps just giving that impression would fall under Aruch Ha-Shulchan's definition of *yuhara*.[[11]](#footnote-11)

There is another significant difference between eating in a *sukka* and wearing *tzitzit*. Even a woman with no particular interest in fulfilling the mitzva of *sukka* will often join her family for meals there, because that is where the meal is being served. In this context, a woman who eats in the *sukka* out of intent to perform the mitzva can do so without concern for *yuhara*.

The analogy for *tzitzit* would be in Talmudic times, when husband and wife might have shared a garment, so that her wearing a four-cornered garment with *tzitzit* would not have raised concerns of *yuhara*. Once observing *tzitzit* entails both acquiring a four-cornered garment and affixing *tzitzit*, the concern for *yuhara* is stronger since the mitzva act is more demonstrative.

## Why should a woman's motivations to wear *tzitzit* be questioned? Don't we praise *chumra*?

In our current religious climate, assumption of *chumra* (halachic stringency) has become an increasingly mainstream path for seeking religious meaning. If anything, someone taking on *chumrot* often receives praise for it. Perhaps in consequence, our sensitivities to the dangers of *yuhara*, whether in excess stringency or in disregard of traditional practice, have been dulled.

A woman looking to wear *tzitzit* may have difficulty relating to discussion of *yuhara*. She perceives her desire to wear *tzitzit* as a matter between herself and God, not other people. Especially if she normally wears shawls and scarfs to which she could affix *tzitzit*, she is not making an extra effort to put herself in a position in which she could voluntarily fulfil the mitzva.

However, an act that deviates from women's prevailing practice for hundreds and hundreds of years may be defined as *yuhara* even if we do not question an individual woman's motivation. It would likely take a large critical mass of women in supportive dialogue with rabbis for this to change.

# The Scope of *Yuhara*

Three possible limitations on the applicability of *yuhara* might be relevant to our discussion of women and *tzitzit*: pious individuals, change over time, and acting in private.

**I. Pious Individuals** Unique individuals may prove exceptions to *yuhara* rules, and certain practices widely construed as *yuhara* are permitted to a great *talmid chacham*. For example, Maharil himself permits an exceptionally pious person to lay *tefillin* in the style of Rabbeinu Tam, even though he otherwise considers doing so to be an act of *yuhara:*

Responsa Maharil 137

Two pairs of *tefillin*—we have not seen the elders of our rabbis who acted thus…It seems that since it is not practiced it appears like *yuhara.* Only one whose piety is established and well-known should 'take on God's name.'

So too, perhaps it would not be considered *yuhara* for a woman known for extreme piety and stringency in Halacha to wear *tzitzit*, because it is consistent with her overall religious standing.[[12]](#footnote-12)

Historically, we have one report of a few, righteous thirteenth-century women in the area of Vienna, who fulfilled the mitzva of *tztitzit:[[13]](#footnote-13)*

Rav Avigdor Tzarfati, Sefer Peirushim Upsakim al Ha-Torah

Some righteous women were accustomed…to wrap themselves with *tzitzit.*

More recently, some notable female chassidic figures have worn *tzitzit*.[[14]](#footnote-14)

**II. Change Over Time** What is considered *yuhara* may change over time, as common practice changes. For example, holding *tzitzit* during recitation of Shema was once considered *yuhara*, but is now common practice.[[15]](#footnote-15)

Rav Aharon Lichtenstein suggests that this idea may apply to *tzitzit* for women*.*[[16]](#footnote-16)

Rav Aharon Lichtenstein, "The Human and Social Factor in Halakha"

It is not inconceivable that, at some point, fully responsible and fully committed gedolim will reexamine the Mahari Mullen's [Maharil's] position regarding women's wearing *tzitzit*.

Rav Lichtenstein asserts that *yuhara* is not an absolutely objective, timeless concept, and suggests that its application to women and *tzitzit* may evolve over time. At the same time, he leaves the determination of when times have changed to "*gedolim*," great rabbinic figures.

**III. *Yuhara* in Private** Whether or not *yuhara* applies in private settings is a matter of halachic debate.

In the sixteenth century, Rav Shlomo Luria argues that the very act of seeing oneself as "beyond" the community may constitute *yuhara* in any setting:

*Yam Shel Shelomo*, *Bava Kama* 7

Out of *yuhara*, which is to say that he shows himself as one who fears Heaven, but it is excessive pride…It is fitting to excommunicate a student who is haughty with Halacha—one who is stringent with a law when a permissive ruling has spread throughout all of Israel (even if he does not do it before his Rav)—if it is not known to the sage that the student certainly acted for the sake of Heaven. [In which case] even in public there would be no concern.

According to some opinions, one can avoid a *yuhara* concern by making a practice private. The common phrase "it appears like *yuhara"* suggests that we are concerned primarily with a public display of unusual piety. Rav Ya'akov Reischer, a major 18th century European halachic authority, teaches that, in private, *yuhara* is not a concern.

Responsa *Shevut Ya'akov* II:44

For specifically an individual who fears Heaven who wishes to be stringent with himself and act modestly is certainly remembered for good and has no *yuhara…*For certainly in private a person is permitted to be stringent with himself, which is not the case in public, for it appears like *yuhara…*Whoever does thus in private, his acts clearly show his intentions, that he does not do this out of *yuhara*.

*Yuhara* requires an audience. A person's private stringency is not *yuhara*, but a pious act known only to God.

Following this type of reasoning, Bach allows stringing *tzitzit* in an unusual way, which might normally be disallowed as *yuhara*, if it is worn under clothing:

Bach, End of Siman 11

Because it appears to be *yuhara* and the practice of 'those who cause astonishment' as Beit Yosef wrote, therefore he should not alter the *tzitzit* publicly on the *tallit* upon him to be different from common custom. But under his clothing that covers him, he can affix the *tzitzit* on the *tallit katan* in accordance with that view.

According to Bach, a *tallit katan* worn under clothing does not present the same *yuhara* concern as would a visible *tallit*.

# In Practice

Some modern-day halachic authorities permit a woman to fulfil the mitzva of *tzitzit* in private*.* Rav Yaakov Ariel has written that a *tallit katan* that is not seen would apparently not violate *yuhara*.[[17]](#footnote-17) So, too, Rav Eliezer Melamed permits a woman to wear a *tallit gadol* in private or a *tallit katan* in such a way that others cannot see it:

*Peninei Halacha Likutim* 1:8:8

Therefore, in my opinion, a woman who wants to wrap herself in tzitzit for God’s sake may do so in private. There is no concern for arrogance, and it is not an expression of resentment against halakha and the tradition. If many women do so for God’s sake and in private, then over time even if they wear tzitzit in a non-private setting it will not be considered arrogance or an offense against the traditions of the Torah. Nevertheless, in my opinion, even today one should not object to a woman whose intentions are for God’s sake and who wraps herself publicly in tzitzit, for she has authorities upon whom to rely. However, one should object to women who are not meticulous about many mitzvot but who specifically wear a talit publicly in order to express their opposition to halakhic tradition.[[18]](#footnote-18)

Rav Melamed relegates these comments to a footnote, an indication that he permits the practice, but does not freely advocate it. Nonetheless, he prints it. Rav Melamed adds two important points: that we should not protest against women who seek to fulfil the mitzva even in public, and that if more religiously-observant women come to wear *tzitzit*, the concern of *yuhara* may fade.

In a responsum on Jewish feminists, Rav Moshe Feinstein, a leading halachic authority of the twentieth century, relates directly to women wearing *tzitzit*:

Iggerot Moshe O.C. IV:49

…Indeed every woman is permitted to fulfill even *mitzvot* that the Torahdid not obligate them [women] in, and it is considered a mitzva and [they receive] reward on fulfilling these *mitzvot.* Also, according to the position of the Tosafot, they are permitted to recite a *beracha* over the *mitzvot* like our custom that they fulfill the mitzva of *shofar* and *lulav* and also recite *berachot.* If this is so, even concerning *tzitzit* it applies to a woman who is willing to wear a garment that will be different from men's clothing but will have four corners, and to put *tzitzit* on it and fulfill this mitzva.…but it is obvious that that is only if her soul desires to fulfill *mitzvot* even when she is not commanded. However, if it is not done with this intention but rather out of protest against God and His Torah, this is not a mitzva act at all, but on the contrary a prohibited act …

Rav Feinstein associates women wearing *tallit* with the Conservative and Reform movements, which reject traditional understandings of Halacha, so he assumes that protest against Halacha will be a common motivation for a woman in a *tallit*. However, he allows that it would be permissible for a woman to don a distinctly female garment with *tzitzit* if her motivation were purely to fulfill the mitzva.

## How should we relate to association of this issue with political statements or with denominational politics?

As Rav Moshe notes in his responsum, a woman's wearing of *tzitzit*, especially a full *tallit,* has come to be associated with non-Orthodox denominations and with protest against Halacha. Indeed, it is not easy to dissociate women wearing *tzitzit* from recent denominational history. Most significantly, this association seems to be what allows for unbridled protest in many rabbinic quarters.

When a woman who may not observe Shabbat wears *tzitzit*, there is strong concern for *yuhara*. Given that her overall religious practice is not in compliance with Halacha, it is more difficult to assume that she seeks to wear a garment with *tzitzit* without any intent to challenge traditional understandings of Halacha.

Making a statement through mitzva observance that seems to challenge the halachic order is unlikely to find rabbinic support.

On the other hand, if wearing *tzitzit* becomes more common among women who are Orthodox and careful to observe *mitzvot* in general, these associations could weaken over time.

In the late 1990s, Rav Zalman Nechemya Goldberg, a leading halachic decisor, penned an article on women and *tzitzit* as part of the discussion regarding Women of the Wall, a women's *tefilla* group at the Kotel with members who wear *tallit*.[[19]](#footnote-19) Toward the end of the article, he writes:

Rav Zalman Nechemya Goldberg, "Women's Prayer in Public (Response)"

We have in hand enough *mitzvot* and good deeds that one can direct women to fulfill…If after all this their souls yearn specifically for the mitzva of *tzitzit*, perhaps there is room for them to go about with a *tallit katan* under their clothing. But there is room for this, only after they excel in all that in which they are obligated. Even if they do this, it should be done in private.

A *tallit gadol* worn in public is associated with political and religious controversy. However, Rav Goldberg acknowledges the potential to permit a woman to wear *tzitzit* in a private fashion if it fits her overall spiritual and halachic attainments. That stipulation, coupled with his reluctant tone, indicates that his concerns transcend a more technical definition of *yuhara*.

In many Orthodox communities, this entire discussion is beyond the pale. Most halachically observant women do not wear *tzitzit*, and the rulings to permit it are reluctant. Both Rav Feinstein and Rav Goldberg are concerned with the possible political motivations of a woman in a *tallit.* For them, the technical aspects of *yuhara* (like the technical aspects of *keli gever)* are surmountable, but the spirit of *yuhara* (and *keli gever)* remains in question.

Nevertheless, rulings like those by Rav Feinstein and Rav Goldberg leave room for a woman to fulfil *mitzvat tzitzit* in a private way (and with a feminine garment).

## Why is interest in fulfilling the mitzva of *tzitzit* comparatively rare in the Orthodox community?

While some religiously-observant women may be interested in *tzitzit*, the majority are not. Why is this the case, especially when *tzitzit* is such a significant and beautiful mitzva?

The lack of interest most likely reflects deference to tradition, and to the mainstream halachic opinions discouraging women from wearing *tzitzit*.

Other factors might also be at play, though: An instinctive feeling that *tzitzit* is for men. Or that wearing *tzitzit* is a provocation. Or that it would add bulk to a woman's look. Or that constructing a female set of *tzitzit* would take a lot of know-how and effort. Or *that* *tzitzit* should be worn every day, and that would be daunting to take on.

The Lubavitcher Rebbe [suggested](http://www.deracheha.org/positive-time-bound-mitzvot) that women fulfill positive time-bound *mitzvot* through their husbands. Indeed, many women have a strong relationship to *tzitzit,* through the men in the family: whether ducking under a father's *tallit* as a child and playing with the strings, buying one for a fiancé and standing under it at the *chuppa*, or thrilling as a bar mitzva boy wraps himself in a *tallit* for the first time.

Though, depending on her life circumstances, a woman may find some of these experiences resonate less with her, they do come from a world of Jewish women past and present. Some exceptional women have worn *tzitzit*. Still, for many women, the relationship with the mitzva will remain powerful, positive, and indirect in the foreseeable future.

1. *Berachot* 17b

   Since everyone performs labor [on the ninth of Av], but he does not perform it, it appears like spiritual haughtiness. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. See Responsa Maharil 137, quoted below. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Yedidya Alter Dinari, "*Chochmei Ashkenaz Be-Shilhei Yemei Ha-beinayim*." (Jerusalem: Mossad Bialik, 1984), 32. See also Responsa Maharil 94 and 124. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Responsa of Rav Natronai Ga'on (Brody ed.), O.C. 6

   Thus said Rav Natronai: You asked: when a person recites *Keri'at Shema*, does he need to hold his four *tzitzit* or not? This practice is not the way of the sages or students. It is the way of excess [*yetirut*]*.* Once he has contemplated his *tzitzit* at the time of his wrapping and recited a *beracha* over them, afterwards, why should he hold them in his hand?

   The word "*yetirut*," excess, is quoted in *Kol Bo* (and Abudarham) as "*yehiruta*," which is "*yuhara*."

   Abudarham, laws of *Keri'at Shema*

   But Rav Natronai wrote that one who holds his *tzitzit* in his hand when he recites *Keri'at Shema* is acting with *yehirut…*

   Beit Yosef OC 24 cites Abudarham. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Responsa Mahari Bruna 96

   I was asked about the young men who wear a *tallit katan* over their clothes in public and say that it suits them to fulfil a mitzva in public, are we concerned for *yuhara* or not? I responded that everything goes according to the time and custom and person. At first glance, it seems to me that one should be concerned.

   Available here: <http://hebrewbooks.org/pdfpager.aspx?req=42821&st=&pgnum=82>. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Beit Yosef O.C. 11

   Our Great Rabbi Mahari Abuhab wrote….'The way of *tzitzit* is that we should make two holes in the *tallit* and place the *tzitzit* inside them and take them out to one side [of the cloth]…If I were not afraid, I would say that he can put on all of these *tzitzit*, as one master maintains, and as another master maintains, and he can make a condition that if one is fit, the other are as nothing [to him], and in this manner it would not be *bal tosif* (adding on to the *mitzvot*)*.* This requires study.' We have never seen anyone who is concerned for this matter at all…One who is stringent upon himself in this way appears to be spiritually haughty. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Maharil also argues that voluntary mitzva performance is out of place when it may conflict with another halachic obligation Specifically, he raises concerns that a woman might come to wear *tzitzit* made from *kil'ayim* (which is only permissible to someone obligated in the mitzva) or might come to carry on Shabbat. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Beit Yosef OC 17 cites this position, but does not rule accordingly in Shulchan Aruch.

   *Shulchan Aruch* OC 17

   Women and bondsmen are exempt, for it is a positive time-bound commandment. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. *Chayyei Adam* I:11:43

   Women are exempt from *tzitzit,* because it is a positive time-bound commandment, for night is not a time of *tzitzit.* In any case, if they want to wear and recite a *beracha*, they may recite a *beracha.* This is the law for every positive time-bound mitzva. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. *Ben Ish Chai*, *Lech Lecha* 13

    Even though we maintain with *shofar* and *sukka* and the like that if they [women] wanted to fulfil [them] they may do so and they receive reward like someone who is not commanded but performs, and there is no concern of 'whoever is exempt from a matter and does it is called a simpleton,' still, in this mitzva it appears like *yuhara.* [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Rav Yosef Engel (*Atvan d'Orayta* 11) goes so far as to claim that the voluntary aspect of the man's performance means that the Torah's desire is not for the wearing of *tzitzit*, but to prohibit four-cornered garments from being worn if *tzitzit* are missing. Since *tzitzit* cannot be said to be "missing" from a four cornered garment worn by a woman, her wearing *tzitzit* has no meaning.

    Rav Yosef Engel, *Atvan d'Orayta* 11

    That women are not permitted to recite a *beracha* over *tzitzit*, because it is not a positive mitzva but a negative one, that there not be a lack of *tzitzit* for the garment.

    Bach argues that when a mitzva act is not customary, we defer to stringent opinions prohibiting a voluntary performer from reciting a *beracha*. For this reason, a woman fulfilling *mitzvat tzitzit* should not recite a *beracha*.

    Bach 17

    If a woman came to ask beforehand if it is permissible for her to wear *tzitzit* and to recite a *beracha*, they should tell her not to recite a *beracha*, because it is better that they [women] not recite a *beracha* in an area of rabbinic debate. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Levush implies that an argument like this may apply to Michal, daughter of King Shaul:

    Levush OC 17:2

    But in any case it appears like silliness and *yuhara* if they [women] do thus [wear *tzitzit*]. Since it is only a man's obligation, what connection do they have to this mitzva?...Even though in other positive time-bound commandments like *sukka* and *lulav*, they are accustomed to perform it and recite a *beracha* over it, what is practiced is practiced, and what is not practiced should not be practiced. With *tzitzit,* we have not found that they [women] practiced it except for one in a thousand, like Michal daughter of Shaul and those like her, and therefore they [women] should not wrap themselves [in a *tallit*]. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Quoted, Avraham Grossman, *Ve-hu Yimshol Bach*, Jerusalem: Merkaz Zalman Shazar, 2010, p. 318. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Ada Rappaport-Albert, "*Al Ha-nashim Be-chasidut*," in *Tzadik Va-eida: Hebetim Historiyim Ve-chevratiyim Be-cheker Ha-chasidut*, ed. David Assaf (Jerusalem: Merkaz Zalman Shazar, 2001), 507. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. *Beit Yosef* OC 24

    Now that some people practice it [kissing *tzitzit* during the recitation of *Shema*], it no longer appears like *yuhara.* [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Rav Aharon Lichtenstein, "The Human and Social Factor in Halakha," in *Leaves of Faith*, Vol. I (Jersey City: Ktav, 2003), 182. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Rav Ya'akov Ariel, "May Women Wear Tzitzit?"

    With a *tallit katan* that is not seen, it would seem there is no *yuhara.*

    Available here: <http://www.yeshiva.org.il/ask/?srch=1&orderby=&q=%D7%A0%D7%A9%D7%99%D7%9D+%D7%98%D7%9C%D7%99%D7%AA&cat=1> [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Translation: <https://ph.yhb.org.il/en/03-21-05/> [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Rav Zalman Nechemya Goldberg, "*Tefillat Nashim Be-farhesya* (Response)." *Tehumin* 18 (1998): 122. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)