

## SELECTED RESPONAS BY RABBI OVADIAH YOSEF

**Ovadiah Yosef** 1920- Smicha at 20, chief rabbi of Cairo Egypt at 45, Chief Rabbi in Israel at 47-, Started Shas political party for sfardim which got 14% of votes

### In his shailos utshuvot book Yechaveh Daas:

**Vol (i.e., chelek) 2, quest 1:** A review of law books written by a series of Jewish authorities over the past 1500 years indicates that the rule is, and the custom has always been, to wear tsitsis UNDER clothes. And what we see now-a-days of Jews wearing tsitsis out is a recent custom, recommended by only a few authorities, most notably Mishna Brurah, and only Ashkenazim. Ovadiah Yosef agrees that it is preferably to wear tsitsis inside clothing, but now that Ashkenazim started the custom to wear them outside, other Ashkenazim may follow suit without appearing like show-offs. But Sfardim should continue wearing them inside.

A similar situation occurred 300 yrs ago with our custom of taking out tsitsis during Shma. Yosef Karo wrote that he saw some people do it and that he dislikes it because there is no law for doing so, but now that a lot of people started doing it, he can no longer consider it show-offy.

**Vol. 2, quest 2:** Is it prohibited for men to grow their hair long due to chatsisa with tefilin. It is probably OK because of sfaik sfaika, since Rashba says chatsitsa with head tefilin is OK (and even OK to wear tefilin over hat), and Meseches Zvachim is unsure whether hair is like a person's body.

**Vol. 2, quest 3:** Ashkenazim and Sfardim have different shapes for their letters in Torah, Tefilin and Mezuzot. Lechatchila, you should use the STAM of your own tradition, but can use another if this is problematic.

**Vol. 2, quest 4:** A kid under 13 may start wearing tefillin if he can keep clean. He may even make a bracha on it.

**Vol. 2, quest 5:** 900 years ago, the Rif was against Jews composing secular songs. And that sort of still holds today. But that only applied to the lyrics. The tune is OK. You can even set Hebrew prayers to gentile tunes.

But be careful about setting prayers to tunes not to:

- lengthen a word until it loses its meaning or is hard to understand;
- take a breath within a word;
- change the accent in Gd's name,
- repeat words to fill a space in the tune,
- (chazzan) drag out "Amen" after Kadish until it extends into the public's reply.

Ovadiah Yosef doesn't like tunes that drag out the prayer, and mentioned the pun from Megilat Ruth "and he said to the kotzrim Gd be with you".

The last 14 lines of this question discusses the prohibition of repeating words in prayers, and cites Shailos uteshuvos Maharam Shik (chelek Orach Charim siman 31), Rabbi Yosef Engil, Shailos uteshuvos Porat chelek 2 (siman 7), Shailos uteshuvos Pkudat Eliezer (siman 25), Sdei Chemed (Asifas Dinim ma'arechet hefsek) as agreeing to this prohibition. Ovadiah Yosef says that even when Chazon Ish told the Admor of Rehovot that it was OK for him to sing the word "shehechianu" thrice (as told in the book "Rabbi B'Yisroel"), that was only to ease the Admor's conscience, since doing so is really wrong.

As an aside regarding the subject of repeating words in prayers, Rabbi Moshe Feinstein's Igros Moshe Orach Chaim chelek 2 (book 4) siman 22, states that it is wrong to repeat words, such as is common in "Yismchu yismchu vmalchuscha". But you **don't** have to start the sentence over if you repeat a word **in order**. But you **do** have to start the paragraph over if you add a word **out of order** such as the common phrase "mituvecha Shabos", and after some discussion Rabbi Feinstein concludes that we don't have to actually **stop** someone who is repeating a word (i.e., "ain mashtikin oso").

**Vol. 2, quest 19:** We should say bracha with format "al netilat yadaim" (plural) even when washing ONE hand due to the other being in a cast, because ain lishnot mimatbea

**Vol 2, quest 29:** The importance of making a BAR mitzvah party is learned from the Gemarah 1500 year ago. Ovadiah Yosef agrees with most authorities that it is no less important to make a BAS mitzvah for girls, for the same reason.

**Vol. 4, quest 41:** Regarding waiting to eat dairy after meat: Meseches Chulin 105a says to wait to the next meal. Rif (900 yrs ago) interpreted this as between breakfast and supper, but Tosfos Chulin 105a) interpreted this to include a meal immediately later. Rambam (800 years ago) was first to promote the 6 hour rule, and all the main ancient authorities agree. But a lot of minor ancient authorities (most notably Tosfos say 0 hours, and Rama saying 1 hours.)

**Vol. 3, quest 58:** But you don't have to wait at all to eat meat after milk, as long as you clean your mouth out, such as by eating and drinking.

**Vol. 4, quest 43:** It is OK to wash with soap made from unkosher animals