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"חוקי חיים"

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לעשות רצונך
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שע"י "חדר הזרחה" שכונת מנחת יצחק פעיה"ק ירושלים תובב"א - בראשות הרב חיים אהרן בלייער שליט"א

Halochohs compiled by HaRav Chaim Bleier – Translated from the Hebrew edition by R' Zerachya Shicker

Halochohs of

Tzitzis

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ליקוטי ופסקי הלכות "חוקי היום"

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לעשות רצונך
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שע"י "חדר הוראה" שבונת מנחת יצחק פעה"ק ירושלם טובב"א - בראשות הרב חיים אהרן בלייער שליט"א

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Please do not
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Krias HaTorah

Kashrus of Tzitzis

Parshas Shelach 5781

226

Importance of Knowing Hilchos Tzitzis

- New tzitzis.** When buying tzitzis with an excellent hechsher from a store, one can assume they are kosher and there is not so much of a need to know the halachos. Even so, when buying tzitzis one should be aware of certain details and hiddurim in the mitzvah of tzitzis that he can fulfill. For example, although the minhag is to be meikel regarding niputz [beating the fibers] lishmah (רמ"א סי' י"א ס"א), some say one should be machmir lechatchilah to get tzitzis that had niputz done lishmah (פרישה בשם מהר"ל מפראג הובא במ"ב סק"ג).
- Old tzitzis.** Shailos regarding tzitzis usually come up after some time passes and they have already been used. The knots, coils, and segments can open, the strings can rip, and the beged can rip by the neck or the corner where the tzitzis are attached. Thus, we saw it fit to set forth these halachos in a clear way, with a focus on common cases. [This topic will be continued in the next issue, be"H.]

"גדילים תעשה לך"

- To understand what is absolutely necessary and what is kosher lechatchilah, we will first discuss what is deoraisa versus derabanan. We will start with a description of some terms.
- Coils [כריכות]** are the loops made by one string around the others. **Knots [קשר]** refer to the double knots at the top and bottom of each segment which hold the coils in place so that they do not open. A **gedil** is the entire length of the section of tzitzis containing knots and coils. A **segment [חוליא]** is one group of coils between two knots. The **anaf** refers to the tzitzis strings below the final knot.

Deoraisa

- Gedil and tzitzis.** Mideoraisa, tzitzis must have two parts: the gedil – i.e., the upper part consisting of the knots and coils – as the posuk says, "גדילים תעשה לך"; and the section called the "anaf," i.e., the individual strings that are not tied or wound, as the posuk says, "ציצית."
- Minimum deoraisa size of the gedil.** Mideoraisa, there is no minimum length for the gedil. As long as there is one segment consisting of three coils, i.e., one string is wound around the others three times, followed by a double knot, the deoraisa requirement is fulfilled. Some say there also needs to be a double knot at the top, i.e., at the end of the beged. This is the minimum to be yotzei deoraisa (מ"ב סי' י"א סקס"ו).
- Minimum deoraisa length of the tzitzis.** Mideoraisa, there is no minimum length for the tzitzis. As long as the gedil and the tzitzis – the individual strings – are present, even in the smallest size, one is yotzei deoraisa (לבוש, א"ר). Some say the strings must have the length of "kedei anivah," which means long enough that they can be made into loops (חיי אדם, באור הלכה סי' י"א ס"ד ד"ה אין פחות).

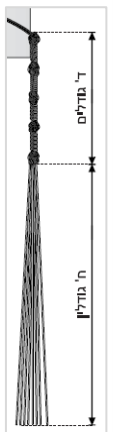
Derabanan

- Length of the tzitzis and gedil.** Some poskim say the tzitzis and gedil after it is tied needs to be a total of 4 gudalim [thumb breadths] (דיעה ראשון בשו"ע סי' י"א ס"ד). Others say it must be a total of 12 gudalim. This is the accepted minhag (לבוש) and it is treated as the absolute minimum (ביאה"ל שם). This comes out to 24 cm [Rav Chaim Na'eh] or 28.8 cm [Chazon Ish].

- Since some poskim hold that the minimum length is 4 gudalim, and this requirement is only derabanan, as mentioned above, if necessary one may rely on Rav Chaim Na'eh's measurement of 24 cm (שו"ת שבט הלוי ח"ה סי' ג'). This is especially so considering that the Chazon Ish himself held the measurement of 12 gudalim is only for the lechatchilah mitzvah but not an absolute minimum (חזו"א או"ח (סי' ג' סק"ז).

One-Third Gedil, Two-Thirds Anaf

- Miderabanan, one should lechatchilah made sure that one-third of the length of the tzitzis consists of gedil and two-thirds of anaf [the individual strings], as that makes it look nice. Since the main measurement for the length of the tzitzis and gedil is 12 gudalim, lechatchilah the gedil should be 4 gudalim and the tzitzis, 8 (שו"ע סי' י"א (סי"ד ומ"ב סקס"ו). One does not need to be exacting with these numbers; as long as it appears to be approximately one-third and two-thirds, that is enough since this whole matter is just for beauty and not an absolute requirement (הגרי"ח נאה, שיעורין של תורה סי' ה אות' ה). [Illustrations copied with permission from the sefer פאר פאר Mishnah Berurah hilchos tzitzis, written by our friend, Rav Dovid Hirsch; much credit to him.]
- Specific, or just a minimum?** Some hold that lechatchilah, the gedil should specifically be one-third of the length and the anaf should specifically be two-thirds. Accordingly, if the strings are more than two-thirds of the total length, they should be cut to make them two-thirds, provided that the total length of the gedil and anaf is 12 gudalim (משמעות ביאה"ל (סי' י"א ס"ד ד"ה יכול לקצר). However, others hold that the anaf can be longer than two-thirds and the recommendation of two-thirds is really just that the anaf be no less than two-thirds (חזו"א סי' ג' סק"י).



Number of Coils and Knots

- Five knots.** The recommended numbers of coils and segments are only for doing the mitzvah in the best way, not absolute requirements. Lechatchilah, there should be a total of five double knots with four spaces between them containing the coils. The five knots allude to the five chumashim (שו"ע סי' כ"ד ס"א). The total of ten knots [five double knots] alludes to the ten sefiros of Hashem (שו"ע סי' י"א ס"ד ומ"ב סקס"ה).
- Coils.** The minhag is to make a different number of coils for each segment, in the following order: **7, 9, 11, 13**. Altogether this adds up to 40, the gematria of [39] 'יקו"ק' אה"ד plus one for Hashem (שו"ע סי' י"א ס"ד).
- Some have the following minhag: **7, 8** [which together is the gematria of [11] 'יה' to get to 26, [13] [the gematria of [11] 'אה"ד']. Together this indicates that Hashem is One (בכונות ועוד) אריז"ל, (אחרונים, הובא במ"ב סק"ע). This is the minhag in most communities in Klal Yisroel.
- Some have the minhag to make the coils according to the Name 'יקו"ק', i.e., 10, 5, 6, 5 (הדוכר במג"א ובמ"ב שם).

Knots, Coils Became Undone

Knot and Coils Became Undone

16. If the bottom knot and some of the coils on the bottom segment became undone, or even if several knots and coils became undone, as long as one segment consisting of three coils with knots above and below them remains, it is kosher deoraisa. Miderabanan, one should fix it so that there is one-third gedil and two-thirds anaf, such that the gedil and anaf together are 12 gudalim (above, 8). However, the numbers of segments and coils are not essential; they are just based on minhag.

Tightening a Loose Knot on Shabbos

17. If one notices on Shabbos that the bottom knot of his tzitzis is loose, it is an issur of kosheir to tighten it on Shabbos since before tightening it, it is not considered a professional knot, and tightening it makes it into a professional, strong knot (קצות השלוחן סי קכ"ג בדה"ש) (סק"ד, הגרש"א שלחן שלמה סק"א אות ה, חוט שני שבת ח"ב פל"ד סוף סק"ב).

Tightening Tzitzis in the Bathroom

18. Strictly speaking, one may tighten a tzitzis knot in the bathroom since doing so does not involve speaking or thinking about a matter of kedushah. Nevertheless, it is worthwhile to avoid this if possible (ש"ת שבט הלוי ח"י סי ט"ז אות ב').

Strings Ripped

19. Due to the many halachic details involved in the case of ripped strings, we must give some introductions to best understand the halachos. We will focus on common cases.

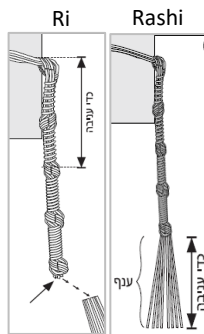
Same Four Strings on Each Side

20. The eight strings of tzitzis are really the ends of four strings doubled over. When tying tzitzis, one must make sure that the same four strings stay on their side throughout the whole length of the gedil, i.e., the coils and knots. This has significant ramifications with respect to a ripped string/strings. In practice, the minhag is to be careful about this (שו"ע סי י"ב ס"א), and this is the widespread minhag when tying tzitzis. Therefore, we will only discuss here **halachos that apply when each group of four strings did, in fact, stay on its side.**

21. To make sure this happens, after inserting the four strings into the hole in the beged, tie them with a temporary knot when they are lined up evenly, or slide a bobby pin onto them. The long string that the coils are wound with – called the shamash – should be on the side that is not tied. After the tzitzis are finished, untie the knot or remove the pin.

"Kedei Anivah"

22. **Spot of the measurement.** The measurement of "kedei anivah" is specified with respect to ripped strings, as will be explained. The Ri holds that this is measured from the corner of the beged, i.e., on the gedil section. However, Rashi holds that it is measured on the anaf, i.e., the section of strings after the bottom knot; the prevalent minhag follows Rashi. If one is in a pressing situation and has no other tzitzis, he may rely on the Ri (שו"ע סי י"ב ס"ב), but he should not make a brachah on the tzitzis (מ"ב סק"יג).



23. **Size of kedei anivah.** The measurement of kedei anivah is the length needed to make a loop ["שלייה"] around all the ripped strings together (מ"ב שם סק"א). This is 4 cm [Rav Chaim Na'eh] or 4.8 cm [Chazon Ish].

Number of Strings that Ripped

24. Rabbeinu Tam holds that if tzitzis ripped after they were tied, two of the doubled strings must always remain whole along their entire length on both sides, with a length of 12 gudalim (ביאה"ל סי י"ב ד"ה) [according to the Chazon Ish, the minimum is a tefach (חזו"א) (סי"ג סק"ד ד"ה ואף)]. The only way to be sure this is the case is if six of the eight strings are whole and 12 gudalim long. Only then are the tzitzis still kosher even though the other two ripped. This is the second opinion in the Shulchan Aruch (סי"ב ס"א), and the Rama writes that the minhag follows this opinion.

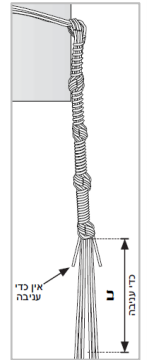
25. The Rosh holds that even if the strings on one side ripped all the way until the gedil, as long as the four strings on the other side have the length of kedei anivah, it is kosher (דיעה ראשונה בשו"ע שם) (שם). The Mechaber concludes that the halacha follows this opinion (שם).

26. **In practice.** The Mechaber favors the Rosh's opinion. Still, it is proper to satisfy Rabbeinu Tam's opinion if possible. It is clear that one may make a brachah on tzitzis that are only kosher according to the Rosh (מ"ב שם סק"א). The Rama writes that the minhag follows Rabbeinu Tam.

Strings Ripped

27. **Two strings on one side ripped completely.** If two strings on one side of the four ripped completely but the others are whole and 12 gudalim long, even if the ripped ones do not even have kedei anivah, everyone agrees they are kosher (מ"ב סק"ט). This is certainly the case if only one string ripped.

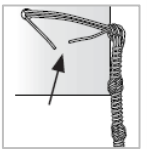
28. **Two strings, two sides.** If one string on one side and a second on the other side ripped [ב in the picture] and neither one was left with kedei anivah, everyone agrees they are posul (מ"ב סק"ג). If one has no other tzitzis, he may be meikel since he does not know that the two torn strings are two ends of the same long string. Still, he should not make a brachah.



29. **Three strings ripped.** If 3 strings ripped and are now less than 12 gudalim, they are posul according to Rabbeinu Tam (ביאה"ל ד"ה ונוהגין) and kosher according to the Rosh.

30. **All the strings on one side ripped.** If all the strings on one side ripped and all that is left of the four on the other side is kedei anivah, they are posul according to Rabbeinu Tam and kosher according to the Rosh (מ"ב סק"ז); still, one can even make a brachah on them (מ"ב סק"א וביאה"ל ד"ה והלכה).

31. **Ripped at the spot of attachment to the corner.** If one string ripped at the spot where it attaches to the corner, i.e., where the strings are attached to the corner above the top knot, it is posul (מ"ב סק"ד).



Twisting of the Strings

Twisted Strings

32. Each of the eight tzitzis strings must be twisted. This means it must be made up of two thin strands twisted together. The twisting must be done for the sake of the mitzvah [לשמח] (שו"ע סי י"א ס"א).

33. **Eightfold.** The minhag today is to make each string out of eight extremely thin strands twisted together; this is the best way to do the mitzvah (ארצות החיים הובא בביאה"ל סי י"א ס"ב ד"ה וצריכין שזירה). Perhaps the reason is so that the tzitzis resemble the bigdei kehunah: the threads of the bigdei kehunah called "משור" [which means twisted] were made of eight strands (ערוה"ש סק"א).

Unraveled

34. If the strings' twisting unraveled, the halacha is the same as if the strings ripped. Thus, if a string made up of two strands unraveled, we view the unraveled part as if it were ripped and apply the halacha accordingly. Thus, as long as kedei anivah of the strings stayed twisted, they are kosher (שו"ע סי י"א ס"ב) if the minimum number of strings remained, as described above regarding ripped strings (מ"ב סק"טז). When it comes to the twisting, one can rely on the first opinion mentioned above (25) (מ"ב סק"יז).

35. **Eightfold.** Nowadays that people usually have strings made from eight strands, even if no part of the string remained fully twisted for kedei anivah, it is still kosher. This is because even if the string unraveled into two or four strands, each strand usually still consists of at least two thinner strands twisted together and that is enough for it to be a kosher string (מ"ב סק"יז).

Keeping Them from Unraveling

36. Some say it is advisable to make a knot at the end of each string so that the strings stay twisted (רמ"א שם ס"ג, רמ"א שם ס"ג). Others say the opposite: it is better not to make knots at the ends of the strings so as not to add to the knots of the tzitzis (מג"א סק"ג) because the knots remind us of the five chumashim (above, 12) (פנ"ג א"א סק"ג).

37. Therefore, if the strings are twisted well, it is best to be machmir not to make knots at the ends. However, if they begin to unravel, it is better to make knots at the ends to prevent them from unraveling more (מ"ב סי י"א סק"ה).

38. **Glue.** Some suggest applying a drop of glue at the end of each string, beyond the minimum length (הלכה ברורה, בירור הלכה אות ד'), to keep the strings intact without making a knot (א"א, בוטשאטש ס"ד, מו"ר בשו"ע שבט הקהתי ח"ו סי ט'). Others prefer the traditional method of making a knot when necessary (שו"ע שבט הלוי ח"י ס"ח).



Next week's issue be"H:

Kashrus and Pesulim of the Tzitzis Begeid