The Chicago Center
Digest
Mishna Berura
THE DAILY RESOURCE FOR MISHNA BERURA YOMI
Wed, Aug 20, 2025 ■ כ"ו אב, תשפ"ה
סימן י"א סעיף א'

Overview

Siman 11 Seif 1:

The threads of the *tzitzis* must be spun for the sake of the mitzvah. (Some maintain that even the combing of the wool must be done for the sake of the mitzvah but the custom is to be lenient about the matter.) **One should state as he begins to spin the thread that he is doing so for the sake of the mitzvah or one should say to the woman, "Spin for me *tzitzis* for my *talis*." If the threads were not spun for the sake of the mitzvah they are invalid.**

- It is Biblically mandated to spin the threads for the sake of the mitzvah. (M.B. 2)
- One must articulate the intent to spin the thread for the sake of the mitzvah and thinking that intent is insufficient. (M.B. 4)
- Once one's intent was articulated it continues even for another day since we assume a person continues working with his original intent. (M.B. 5)
- If one began spinning thread and then declared his intent for the mitzvah, the thread that was already spun is invalid. If one began spinning the thread thinking that he was doing it for the mitzvah and in the middle of the process he orally declared his intent one could be lenient and use the *tzitzis*. (M.B. 6)
- A woman is believed to say that she declared her intent to spin the thread for the sake of the mitzvah as opposed to someone who is deaf-mute, insane or a child. (M.B. 7)
- A *mumar* lacking self control who doesn't bother putting *tzitzis* on his garments is permitted to spin thread for *tzitzis* and is even trustworthy when he relates that he did it for the sake of the mitzvah. (M.B. 7)

Halacha Highlights

Tzitzis spun and twisted by machine

Shulchan Aruch Siman 11 Seif 1
החוטין צריך שיהיו טוויין לשמן
The threads must be spun for the sake of the mitzvah

Later authorities (ע' ספר ציצית הלכה פסוקה אות ו' והע' 9 וספר פסקי תשובות אות ב' שהאריכו בכל הענין) debate whether *tzitzis* whose threads were spun and twisted by machine are valid for the mitzvah. One of the main issues of the debate is whether there is a requirement for human force – *koach gavra* – when making *tzitzis*. One pasuk writes, "Twisted cords you should **make** for yourself," and a second pasuk reads, "And you should **make** for yourselves *tzitzis*." The wording of these phrases indicates that there is a requirement for the *tzitzis* to be made through human force. Those authorities that disagree note that since we do not find anywhere in the Gemara a reference to the need for human force when making *tzitzis,* we don't have the authority to make expositions based on our understanding of a pasuk and thus there is no such requirement.

A second issue is the question of *lishma* – lit. for the sake of the mitzvah. All opinions agree that it is essential that *tzitzis* be made for the sake of the mitzvah, and the question debated by the Poskim is whether *tzitzis* made by machine meets the prerequisite of *lishma*. According to the stringent approach, a machine does not have the capacity to generate intent for the mitzvah and thus a machine is worse than a child who can make *tzitzis* as long as an adult stands over him reminding him of the correct intent. The lenient position contends that when the machine operator turns on the machine with the intent that the machine will make *tzitzis* for the sake of the mitzvah that is sufficient and the continued work of the machine continues with that initial, *lishma* intent.

Poskim advise that people should make an effort to obtain *tzitzis* that were not manufactured by machine even if it costs more money. However, they note that it is not necessary to protest against those who follow the lenient approach.

Stories to Share

Room for Leniency

רמ"א י"א, א: "והמנהג להקל הניפוץ..."

Since there are poskim who hold that the beating of the wool must also be done lishmah, a certain person procured strings made from just such material and presented them to the Steipler, zt"l. Although the Steipler, zt"l, was wont to be stringent on himself, in this case he did not use the gift but chose instead to give them to his son, Rav Chaim Kanievsky, zt"l.

He gave two reasons for ignoring this chumrah. Firstly, if he were to put them in his garment, people would understand that niputz lishmah is halachically required, when many poskim--including the Rema on today's amud—are lenient. Even worse, if he were to use them, factories would use this as a business gimmick to encourage people to buy their product.

אורחות רבינו, ח"א, ע' כ'

When someone asked Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, zt"l, why the halachah is lenient in this case, he replied with characteristic clarity. "We hold like the lenient opinion because when the prevalent custom is to be lenient in a certain matter, the rule is not to be stringent even if there is cause to do so. This is especially true in our case, since the Rama himself is lenient here."

When Rav Shlomo Zalman was merely thirteen years old, a certain rav put out a scathing attack on a shitah of the Rema, bringing what appeared to be clear proofs against him. This incensed the young gaon, who spent every available moment working on this subject until he could defend the Rema fully. Young as he was, he sent a letter to this author, explaining that he had erred. Years later when the author reissued his book, he wrote a public apology for the audacious way he had spoken about the Rema's opinion, which he admitted was correct after all.

הליכות שלמה, תפלה, ע' ל"ה