The Chicago Center
Digest
Mishna Berura
THE DAILY RESOURCE FOR MISHNA BERURA YOMI
Thurs, Aug 21, 2025 ■ כ״ז אב, תשפ״ה
סימן י״א סעיף ב׳

Overview

Siman 11 Seif 2:

If a gentile spun the thread with a Jew standing over him instructing him to do it for the sake of the mitzvah – according to Rambam it is invalid whereas according to Rosh it is valid. The custom is to have the Jew assist somewhat in the process as we find by tefillin and a Sefer Torah. ***Tzitzis* threads must be twisted and that process must also be done for the sake of the mitzvah.**

- There is a disagreement whether the spinning of thread by one who is deaf-mute, insane or a child is effective if an adult stands over them. (M.B. 8)
- Even Rosh would agree that if the activity continued for a long period of time or if the gentile was interrupted in the middle, proper intent would be lacking and the threads would be invalid. (M.B. 9)
- In a difficult circumstance in which there is no Jew available to spin thread for the sake of the mitzvah one could rely upon Rosh's opinion, but in general one should not. (M.B. 11)
- "Twisting" involves folding the thread in half and twisting it into a strand and if it is folded into eight before twisting it, there is no issue. (M.B. 14)
- Every part of the *tzitzis* making process from spinning and onwards must be done for the sake of the mitzvah. Magen Avrohom rules that if the twisting was not done for the sake of the mitzvah it is invalid. If, however, one did not have specific intent the *tzitzis* are valid since we assume the stated intent before spinning the thread continued into this activity. (M.B. 15)

Stories to Share

The Strings and Knots of Tzitzis

ש״ע סי׳ י״א, סע׳ ב׳: ״וצריכין שזירה ושיהיו שזירתן לשמן...״

Today's amud continues to discuss which part of the process of fashioning the strings must be lishmah.

Rav Chaim Volozhiner, zt"l, explains the greatness of the actions of every Jew. "A person should never say in his heart, 'What am I and what influence can my puny action possibly have in the great scheme of things?' Chas v'shalom! Instead, he must know and place deep in his heart that no holy act, word or thought is ever for naught. The power of a Jew is mind-boggling since his actions reach the highest realms. But he must also be very wary of the negative spiritual repercussions of his sins, which also make a terrible negative impression.

"This is the meaning of the Mishnah in Avos, 'דע מה למעלה ממך- what is above you.' This does not refer only to Hashem's knowledge of everything we do. It can also allude to the awesome impact of every act on the upper worlds. Although we do not see this, we must believe it and take it to heart."

Rav Wolbe, zt"l, explains the mitzvah of tzitzis in view of this teaching. "We must know that, as the Midrash clearly writes, Hashem makes His conduct of the world correspond directly to our actions. Although He is all powerful, He desired that the entire world relies on us. It is our mission to do good, and in so doing push the entire world to the side of merit. With every action, we are either building the world or the reverse, chas v'shalom. This is how we rectify the kingship of Hashem, by acting in a way that generates kiddush Hashem, not chilul Hashem. This is the meaning of the mitzvah of the strings and knots of tzitzis: that the entire world and even the supernal worlds are tied to our actions. Every action, thought and deed generates huge movement throughout the entire expanse of creation."

מצות השקולות, ח״ב, פ״ב

Halacha Highlights

How many strands should be in each *tzitzis* string?

Mishnah Berurah Siman 11 Seif Koton 14

ואם כפל כל חוט לשמנה ושזרו גם כן לית לן בה

If each thread was folded into eight and twisted it is acceptable

The wording of Mishnah Berurah (סי״ק י״ד) indicates that it is preferable to twist together two threads to make *tzitzis* strings and if someone used eight it is, *b'dieved*, acceptable. This is consistent with what is found in the Rishonim about this matter (ע׳ פסקי תשובות אות י״א והע׳ 62). Avudraham (סדר עטיפת ציצית)explains that there are 32 *tzitzis* strings per *talis* and if each strand is made of two threads the total number of strings is 64. The number 64 corresponds to the number of words in the parsha of *tzitzis* that begins with the words, דבר אל בני ישראל and concludes with the words, אני ה׳ אלקיכם. The number 64 also corresponds to the 64 faces that are upon the Heavenly throne and this is meant to allude to the fact that while wearing *tzitzis* the Divine Presence is opposite the wearer.

Biur Halacha (ד״ה וצריכין), however, cites Artzos HaChaim who relates that according to some authorities it is considered a preferred fulfillment of the mitzvah if one's *tzitzis* are twisted from eight strands – כפול שמונה. Numerous other authorities also mention the preference to obtaining *tzitzis* that were made from eight strands (ע׳ ספר חיי משה לסע׳ ב׳). Biur Halacha expresses surprise at the effort that people make to acquire *tzitzis* that are comprised of eight twisted strands and are not concerned that the strands should be spun and twisted for the sake of the mitzvah. Spinning and twisting the threads for the sake of the mitzvah is mandatory whereas making *tzitzis* out of eight strands is, at most, only preferable.

Nowadays, it is common for *tzitzis* to be manufactured taking both opinions into account. The first step is to take four strands and twist them together and then to take two of these strands and twist them together so it turns out that each *tzitzis* strand is comprised of eight strands and two strands (ע׳ פסקי תשובות אות י״א).