The Chicago Center
Digest
Mishna Berura
THE DAILY RESOURCE FOR MISHNA BERURA YOMI
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סימן י"א סעיף ג'-ה'

# Overview

**Siman 11 Seif 3:**

**If the *tzitzis* unravel and one is left with sixteen strings, the *tzitzis* are valid as long the length necessary to tie a bow remains intact.** (L'chatchila, it is best to tie the bottom of the *tzitzis* strings.)

- If even two strings unraveled leaving less than the length to tie a bow the *tzitzis* are invalid unless he was careful to keep the strings separated as they were tied as described in Siman 12. (M.B. 16)
- According to others it is better to not tie the bottom of each *tzitzis* string. (M.B. 18)

**Siman 11 Seif 4:**

**The *tzitzis* strings may not be any less than four *godlim* and according to others it should be twelve *godlim* and that is our custom. There is no upper limit concerning the length of the *tzitzis*.** (If the strings are too long one is permitted to shorten them.) **One of the strings should be longer than the rest so that it could be used to wrap around the other strings to make the twisted cord.** (The necessary length of the strings refers to after the strings are tied together, besides what rests on the material of the garment.)

- R"I would use long strings so that if it ripped it would still retain the necessary length. (M.B. 21)
- If one of the strings is not long enough for all the wrappings one could use different strings to complete the requisite number of wrappings. (M.B. 22)
- The required length of the strings is measured after all the knots and wrappings are completed. (M.B. 22)

**Siman 11 Seif 5:**

***Tzitzis* may not be made from wool taken from thorns or hairs pulled from the animal or leftover strings taken from a completed garment and the reason is that using these strings disgrace the mitzvah.**

- According to Sefer HaMaor any wool that could not be used to make a garment may not be used for the *tzitzis*. (M.B. 26)

# Halacha Highlights

## Tying the end of each *tzitzis* string

Rema Siman 11 Seif 3
**ולכתחילה טוב לקשר החוטין למטה**
**It is preferable to tie the strands at the bottom**

Shulchan Aruch rules that even if one's *tzitzis* unravel they remain valid as long as part of the *tzitzis* the length necessary to make a bow remains intact. Biur Halacha (ד"ה ונעשו ששה עשר), out of concern for the prohibition of *bal tosif* – adding to a mitzvah, writes that one should orally declare that he is not interested in what is now the extra string or he should cut it off altogether. Chazon Ish (או"ח סי' ג' סע' ט"ז), disagrees and maintains that since one has valid *tzitzis* without this extra string there is no need to orally nullify the extra string.

In order to avoid potential problems that arise from one's *tzitzis* unraveling, Rema advises that one tie the end of each string so that it should not unravel. Be'er Heitev (סק"ג) makes reference to Magen Avrohom who opposes the practice of tying the end of each string. His opposition is based on the concern that tying the end of each string will add more knots to one's *tzitzis* which is not allowed and certainly if the strings are twisted well, so that there is no concern that they will unravel one should not tie the ends of the strings. Mishnah Berurah (ס"ק י"ח) also cites this opinion.

Some Poskim (ספר ציצית הלכה פסוקה אות ל' ופסקי תשובות אות י"ד הע' 85) advise that rather than tie the ends the *tzitzis* strings it is preferable to put glue on the ends of the strings to prevent them from unraveling. Rav Shmuel HaLevi (שו"ת שבה"ל ח"י סי' ח'), however, opposes the practice. He writes that it is not necessary to create new ploys that were not practiced by earlier generations. Since the Poskim allow one to tie the ends of the strings if they will unravel it is unnecessary to put glue on the end of the *tzitzis* strings.

# Stories to Share

## Adding Knots

רמ"א י"א, ג': "ולכתחלה טוב לקשר החוטין למטה..."

The Ramah writes that it is preferable that one should make a knot on the bottom of each tzitzis string to ensure that they do not unravel. The Magen Avraham points out a problem with this. "I heard that one should not knot the bottom of the strings since this is like adding to the knots..."

The Arizal would knot the bottom of his tzitzis strings and so did Rav Chaim Vital. They were not worried about the possible claim that doing so added to the knots of the tzitzis and encouraged others to knot their tzitzis as well.(כף החיים, סי' י"א, ס"ק י"ג) When someone asked the Baal Shem Tov, zt"l, about this practice he explained that the Arizal and the poskim who permitted it did not disagree with the Magen Avraham's concern in principal. "The reason why the Arizal was not worried about adding to the knots was because the only problem is if one makes these knots immediately on the same day that the tzitzis were tied. But if he knots the bottom of the tzitzis strings on a different day, this is no problem at all. First the garment had the right number of knots which helps to add up to six hundred and thirteen. What he does later to the bottom of the strings is of no consequence."

בעש"ט עה"ת, פרשת שלח

A certain young man once asked Rav Horowitz if he could tighten his tzitzis on Shabbos. "Leave them alone, they are exactly right just as they are," he replied.

"This is clear from the Rema in Siman 317. Any knot whether it is on the bottom of the strings or towards the top is forbidden to tighten or tie on tzitzis since these are meant to be permanent.