

Overview

Halacha Highlights

Attaching a piece of cloth to the corners of one's talis

Shulchan Aruch Siman 15 Seif 4

קָרַע הַטְּלִית תּוֹךְ שְׁלֹשָׁה אַצְבָּעוֹת סְמוּךְ לַשֹּׁפֵת הַכֹּנֶף אִינוּ רְשָׁאֵי לְתוּפְרוֹ
If a talis rips within three fingerbreadths of the edge of the garment one is not permitted to sew it up

R' Yehudah in the Gemara in Menachos (41a) teaches: If a garment rips more than three fingerbreadths from its edge one may sew it up but if it is within three fingerbreadths he may not sew it. Rashi explains that R' Yehudah refers to where the garment ripped in the corner and the concern is that if one were to repair the rip one may use the leftover thread as one of his eight tzitzis strands. R' Amram Gaon's understanding is that R' Yehudah refers to where a piece or strip of the garment ripped off altogether. If the ripped piece is three fingerbreadths or more, the minimal size of a garment, it can be reattached to the talis, but if it is less than that size it is not considered a garment and even reattaching it to the garment would not help since it remains halachically as though it is not there.

According to R' Amram Gaon, even when manufacturing a garment one should avoid attaching material that is less than three fingerbreadths wide. In order to assure compliance with R' Amram Gaon's position the custom developed to attach a piece of material larger than three square fingerbreadths and any ripped material beneath it is then considered non-existent. Machatzis HaShekel (83 מובא דבריו בספר צניצת הלכה פסוקה במקורות הלכה פסוקה העי' 83) questions the benefit of attaching the patch to the corner. We know (See Shulchan Aruch 10:4) that attaching a corner cannot obligate a garment in tzitzis, how then does a patch assure compliance with R' Amram Gaon? He answers that in the other case, the garment was made of leather which is exempt and attaching a cloth corner does not change the nature of the garment. In contrast, in our case the garment is obligated to have tzitzis it is just that the material at the very bottom is considered non-existent. By attaching the patch it becomes a part of the garment that is obligated in tzitzis and the ripped material beneath it is ignored.

that if there remains a full shiur in each half, the garment can be repaired either by attaching more material to each side and then attaching tzitzis, or by simply attaching tzitzis if he wants a smaller garment. According to some authorities he can even reattach the two sides of the garment. The trouble here was that the garment had split on the diagonal, leaving two triangular halves! Could he add more material to this garment. After all, right now, each half had only three corners!

He brought this question to Rav Yaakov Emden, zt"l, who ruled that the two halves were indeed no longer obligated in tzitzis. "You definitely cannot reattach these two halves, since they are like any other triangular piece of fabric which was never part of a four-cornered garment. Just like you cannot attach tzitzis to a three-cornered garment and then add another corner with more tzitzis, you may not attach more material to both of these halves or even sew them together without detaching these tzitzis and reattaching tzitzis tassels to the garment when it has four corners!"

מור וקציעה, סי' ט"ו

Siman 15 Seif 3:

A talis that had valid tzitzis and was divided into two parts and each part has enough material to be obligated in tzitzis, the tzitzis that remain on each half are not disqualified based on the principle that tzitzis must be made on a garment rather than made before the garment is fit for tzitzis.

- ❖ If each half of the garment that rips does not have the minimal size of a talis, one must remove the tzitzis before repairing the garment. (M.B. 8)
- ❖ There is a disagreement whether one who will reattach the two parts (and each half contains enough material for a talis) must remove the tzitzis first and though the majority of Poskim are lenient one should follow the stringent view. (M.B. 9)

Siman 15 Seif 4:

If one's talis ripped within three fingerbreadths of the edge of the garment one is not permitted to sew it. Rashi explains that the concern is that a string may remain and one will incorporate that string into his tzitzis. According to this rationale one is not permitted to make even a minor repair. A woolen garment could be repaired within three fingerbreadths of the edge since nowadays it is not customary to sew with woolen threads. Rav Amram explains that the reason is that the part that is repaired is considered as though it is not there since it is too small. Even if one were to reattach the piece entirely it would be invalid and attaching tzitzis to that piece does not exempt the garment from tzitzis. According to this explanation as long as the torn piece does not detach entirely, the tzitzis remain valid. According to some opinions Rav Amram invalidates the tzitzis that remained in place when the piece was reattached but if one attached tzitzis after the garment was repaired it is valid. A G-d fearing person will fulfill all opinions when possible.

- ❖ If the garment is ripped more than three fingerbreadths from the edge there is no issue to repair it. If the corner rips off altogether there is a disagreement whether the tzitzis must first be removed. (M.B. 10)
- ❖ According to R' Amram the same issue would exist if one attached material even before he put on tzitzis in the first place. (M.B. 12)
- ❖ There is a disagreement whether according to R' Amram it is necessary to remove and reattach the tzitzis after repairing the corner of the garment. (M.B. 14)
- ❖ There is a custom to sew onto each corner of a talis a piece of cloth larger than three fingerbreadths by three fingerbreadths. (M.B. 16)

Stories to Share

Two Halves of a Whole

שייע סי ט"ו, סעי' ג': "ישחלקוה לשנים ויש בכל אחד שיעור טלית..."

A certain man purchased a handsome four cornered garment to which he attached tzitzis. It was somehow ripped exactly in two. Since it was fairly large, there was much more than a full shiur of a tallis katan on each side. As we find on today's amud, the Shulchan Aruch rules