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

Overview

Siman 19 Seif 1:

Tzitzis is an obligation incumbent upon the person rather than the garment, for as long as one does not wear the _talis_ he is not obligated to put _tzitzis_ on the garment. For this reason there is no _beracha_ recited when making _tzitzis_ since the _mitzvah_ is to wear _tzitzis_.

Siman 19 Seif 2:

If a _talis_ was made for burial shrouds it is exempt from _tzitzis_ even if it is worn occasionally while the person is alive.

- Since this halacha is subject to a dispute one should make _tzitzis_ but should not recite the beracha. (M.B. 5)
- Garments worn by merchants to model the garment for a customer do not require _tzitzis_. (M.B. 5)

Siman 20 Seif 1:

A _talis_ purchased from a Jew or a gentile merchant (who claims to have purchased it from a trustworthy Jew) **is valid. As a merchant he would not risk his reputation and lie about having purchased it from a Jew. A _talis_ purchased from a gentile who is not a merchant is invalid.**

- A Jew may be trusted even if one does not have definitive confirmation of his reliability. (M.B. 1)
- A gentile merchant may be trusted even if he does not regularly sell _taleisim_. (M.B. 2)
- Magen Avrohom limits this ruling to the purchase of a _talis_ that has _tzitzis_ but one may not purchase _tzitzis_ even from a gentile merchant but there are those who are lenient about this matter. (M.B. 4)
- A _talis_ found in the market is assumed valid. (M.B. 5)
- One may not send _tzitzis_ with a gentile unless it is covered with two seals. (M.B. 5)

Siman 20 Seif 2:

One may not sell a _talis_ with _tzitzis_ to a gentile out of concern that he will use it as a disguise to accompany a travelling Jew so that he could kill him. Even to give it to the gentile as collateral or a deposit is prohibited unless it is temporary in which case there is no concern.

- If one removes the _tzitzis_ it is permitted to even sell the _talis_ to a gentile. (M.B. 8)

Halacha Highlights

Purchasing _tzitzis_ from a reliable source

Shulchan Aruch Siman 20 Seif 1

הלוקח טלית מציצת מישראל וכו' כשר

One who purchases a _talis_ with _tzitzis_ from a Jew may assume that it is valid

The Gemara Menachos (43a) cites a Beraisa that teaches that one who purchases a _talis_ with _tzitzis_ from a Jew may assume that it is valid. This ruling is codified in Shulchan Aruch and Mishnah Berurah (סק"א) adds that the _talis_ is presumed valid even though one does not know the seller to be able to confirm his reliability. The basis of this halacha is that halacha allows one to assume that a fellow Jew is reliable and therefore one can be certain that the _tzitzis_ were spun, twisted and inserted in the garment for the sake of the _mitzvah_.

Chasam Sofer (שו"ת חת"ס או"ח סי' ו') wrote that one may also purchase _tzitzis_ strings if they appear properly twisted but nevertheless one should not purchase them from unknown travelers since there are many dishonest people and one must be cautious about these matters. Teshuvas Shemen Rokeach (מהדו"ג או"ח סי' ב') also commented that one who is careful to purchase _tzitzis_ from a reliable supplier will be blessed and specifically in our times when it is common for dishonest people to travel from city to city selling invalid _tzitzis_. Some authorities (ע' פסקי תשובות אות א') have observed that sometimes even people who are mitzvah observant allow people who are not qualified to manufacture _tzitzis_ to be involved in making _tzitzis_. Kaf HaChaim (סי' י"א סק"ד) writes that one should only purchase _tzitzis_ from one who knows the nature of the obligation to manufacture _tzitzis_ for the sake of the _mitzvah_. To address these issues there are rabbis and rabbinic organizations that issue certification for _taleisim_ and _tzitzis_ so that the consumer knows that what he is purchasing has been properly manufactured by people qualified to do the manufacturing.

Stories to Share

A Reliable Merchant

ש"ע סי' כ', סע' א': "דכיון דתגר הוא חזקה שלקחה מישראל..."

The Rambam writes: "Although it is not an obligation to purchase a tallis and put it on so as to be obligated to make tzitzis on the tallis to fulfill the mitzvah, it is not fitting to avoid fulfilling the mitzvah either. Instead, one should always try to wear a garment obligated in tzitzis so that he can fulfill this mitzvah. During davening he should be exceedingly vigilant about this since it is a disgrace to daven without tzitzis.

"One should always be careful about this mitzvah since it is equal to fulfilling all the mitzvos. As the verse states, "וראיתם אותו וזכרתם את כל מצות ה'"

יד החזקה, הל' ציצית, פ"ג, הל' י"א-י"ב

Religious Jews today are very careful to fulfill this Rambam. Yet some purchase tzitzis without a real hechsher. After all, as we find on today's amud, we may purchase tzitzis even from a non-Jewish merchant since he wouldn't dare lie and say that non-kosher strings were put in l'shmah by a Jew since he is afraid to be caught. Surely a Jewish merchant can be believed when he says the tzitzis are kosher.

But Rav Shamai Kehas Gross, pointed out that this attitude is erroneous. "Sadly, there are many non-kosher taleisim out there whose tzitizis were affixed by someone who does not know—or sometimes does not care—that tzitzis must be tied on l'shmah. In some cases they use non-Jews who are never acceptable to affix the tzitzis, since the verse says, דבר אל בני ישראל. Our sages teach that a non-Jew may not tie tzitzis.

"Due to these potential problems, one should never buy tzitzis without a reliable hechsher..."

אורח כהלכה, ח"א, הל' ציצית, סי' א', אות א'