The Chicago Center
Digest
Mishna Berura
THE DAILY RESOURCE FOR MISHNA BERURA YOMI
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סימן שי"ז סעיף א'

Overview

Siman 317 Seif 1 (b):

It is permitted to tie a knot that is not permanent and not expertly made. The *halacha* of untying a knot is that same as tying it. **What is an example? If a strap tore and one tied it, if a rope tore and one tied the ends, one tied a rope around a pail, or tied an animal's reins, one is exempt. The same is true regarding laymen's knots that are intended to be permanent. It is prohibited to tie a knot that is not permanent but was tied expertly, however, for a *mitzvah*, for example, one is measuring something for the sake of a *mitzvah*, it is permitted to tie a knot that is not permanent.** Some maintain that one should not tie any knot that is a double knot since we are not experts regarding which knots are expertly made and it is prohibited to tie as well as untie it and this is the custom. However, it appears that when there is a concern for discomfort it is permitted to untie it since it is only Rabbinically prohibited and in a circumstance of discomfort the injunction is not in force. A double knot is prohibited when tying two items together but if one ties a knot on the end of a thread or band it has the same ruling as a double knot.

- If one is liable for tying a knot he is liable for untying the knot and any time it is prohibited but there is no liability to offer a Chatas the same is true for untying that knot. A knot that may be untied may be severed, if necessary, but one should not do so in the presence of an *am ha'aretz* since that will lead him to behave more leniently. (M.B. 7)
- Even if the intent is to untie the knot that day it is prohibited according to this opinion since it is expertly made. (M.B. 10)
- This is true even if it is expertly made and Shulchan Aruch refers to where there is no alternative because otherwise he should make a laymen's knot or simply tie a bow to avoid violating a Rabbinic injunction. (M.B. 12)
- Other authorities maintain that one may not tie a prohibited knot for the sake of a *mitzvah*. (M.B. 13)
- It is logical that any knot that is tight is an expert's knot and for that reason we do not tie double knots since they are tight. (M.B. 14)

Halacha Highlight

Tying double knots

Rema Siman 317 Seif 1 (b)

דיש לזהר שלא להתיר שום קשר שהוא שני קשרים זה על זה

One should be careful and refrain from untying two knots, one on top of the other

Rema cites authorities who maintain that one should avoid tying a double knot, one knot on top of another, since we are not experts concerning which knots are craftsmen's knots. Furthermore, even if it is not intended to remain permanently it is prohibited to tie or untie a double knot and he notes that the custom is in accordance with this opinion. However, in a circumstance of distress, Rema permits untying a double knot since it is, at worst, only Rabbinically prohibited and in a circumstance of distress the Rabbinic injunction is not in force. Mishnah Berurah (ס"ק י"ד) further explains that according to Rif and Rambam it is prohibited to tie a craftsmen's knot even if it was not meant to remain permanently and although we are not experts concerning which knots are craftsmen's knots it is logical to assume that knots that hold tightly are craftsmen's knots. For this reason we avoid tying double knots since they hold tightly.

Chazon Ish (או"ח סי' נ"ב ס"ק י"ז) contends that Rema's statement represents a stringency but it is not actually prohibited to tie a double knot. Rav Nissim Karelitz (חוט שני ח"ב פל"ד סק"ב ושעה"צ ס"ק מ"ב) notes that although generally Chazon Ish maintains that it is a stringency to avoid tying or untying a double knot, he agrees that one may not tighten the double knot that is tied after all the wrappings of one's *tzitzis*. The reason is that tying *tzitzis* is considered the work of a craftsman. Rav Karelitz (שם סק"ה) also rules that one may not tie even a loose double knot on the belt of one's coat or on a kerchief that a woman wears on her head. Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach (שמירת שבת כהלכתה פט"ו הע' קס"ו) disagrees and contends that Rema prohibited tying a double knot only when it is tied tightly so that it is considered a strong knot. When tying a kerchief or the belt on one's coat, the knot is not tied tightly and as long as the intent is to untie it that day it may be tied or untied.